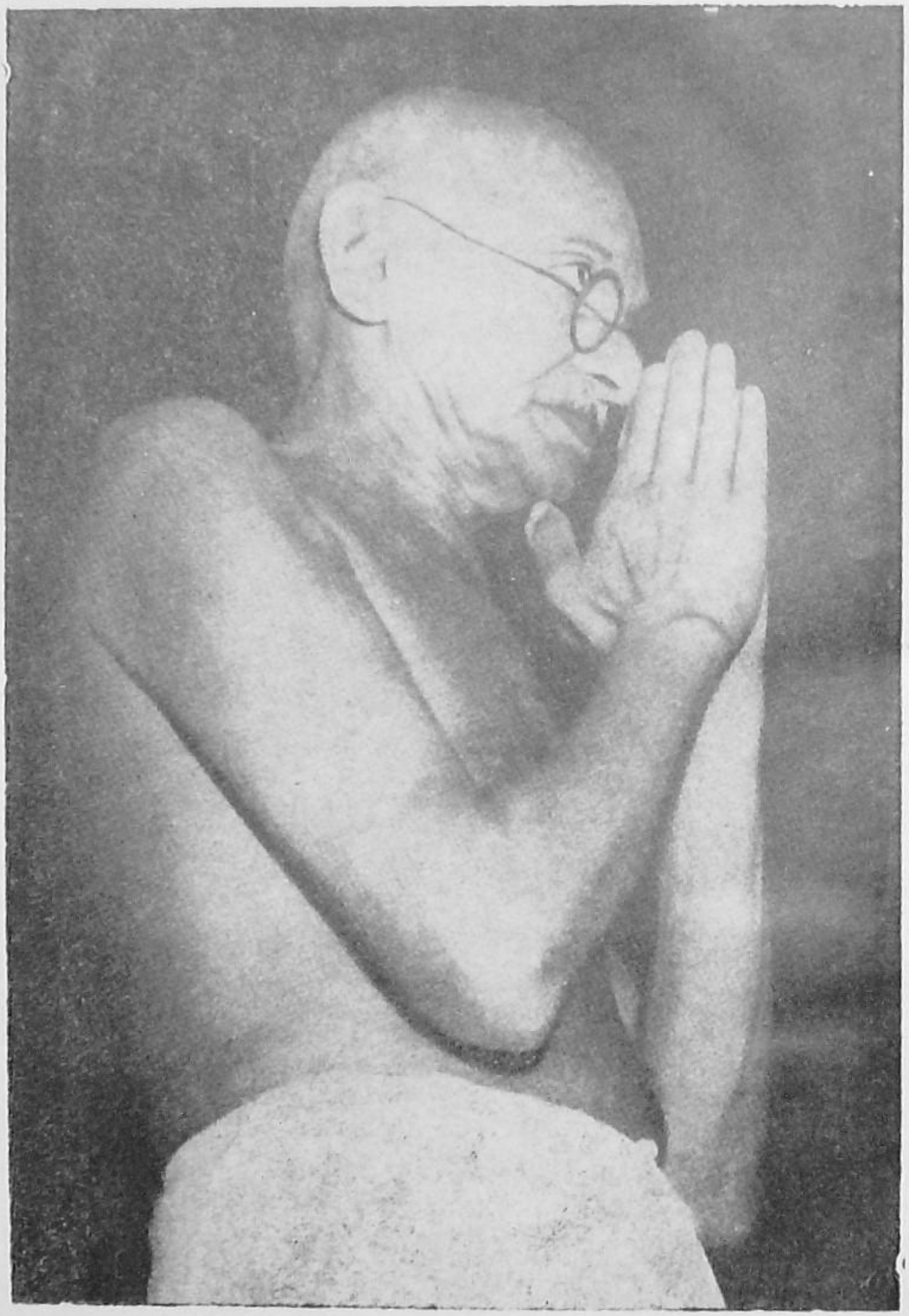
DELHI DIARY

(Prayer Speeches from 10-9-'47 to 30-1-'48)

M. K. Gandhi

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
AHMEDABAD



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

It is too early in the day to depict the history of the eventful days before and after the 15th of August, 1947. One can, however, say with certainty that the speeches which Gandhiji gave to his prayer audiences will form one of its immortal chapters. These outpourings from the heart of this Man of Prayer made history during those days. Gandhiji has himself said in one of them that they were "to be regarded and listened to as an integral part of the prayer" (page 302).

The speeches naturally fall into at least three distinct parts: those delivered during the Noakhali Tour, those at Calcutta, and the last at Delhi. In this small volume are collected those delivered in Delhi. We intend to collect the others in separate volumes as early as possible.

The present collection may aptly be described as his last message to Free India. May his spirit be with us in our efforts to make the India of his dream a living reality.

Ahmedabad, 20-3-'48

FOREWORD

This volume of about 400 pages contains Mahatma Gandhi's post-prayer speeches during the last four and a half months of his life. As the name suggests, it is really a diary of his stay in Delhi from the 10th of September '47 to the 30th of January '48. As is well-known, Mahatma Gandhi was very much distressed by the happenings that had cost so many lives, so much property and much else of so much moral and spiritual value which makes life worth living. In these pages one can read the anguish which he felt and the superhuman effort which he was making to restore and re-establish human standards of life and conduct amongst us. As is usual with his writings and speeches, he covers a vast field in these pages. But the most striking and significant utterances relate to the establishment of peace and concord among different sections of the people, particularly the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. It is a sad commentary on our life and work that instead of achieving the object which he had in view he had to lose his life. That he had lost interest in living, if he could not bring about communal unity, is apparent in these pages and one can see an undercurrent of pessimism which was a precursor of the tragedy which overtook the country on the 30th of January last. Truth and *ahimsa* work in many inscrutable ways and it may be that the miracle which was not performed by Mahatmaji during his lifetime may now be performed by him by his death. These pages are likely to contribute to the re-establishment of that peace and concord for which he worked and died.

17-3-'48

RAJENDRA PRASAD

CONTENTS

Chapter		Date	Pages
1		10-9-'47	3-7
	City of the Dead 3		
	The Refugee Problem 3		
	A True Sikh 6		
2		12-9-'47	7-10
	News from N. W. F. P. 7		
	Anger is short Madness 7		
	Forget the Past 8		
	Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh 9		
3		13-9-'47	10-12
	Trust the Government 10		
	God is the Refuge of All 11		
	Duty of the Two Dominions 11		
	Asafalisaheb 12		
4		14-9-'47	13-14
	Our Degradation 13		
	Sanitation of Refugee Camps 13		
	Duty of the Government and the People 14		
5		15-9-'47	15-16
	Heart Searching 15		
	Trust Your Government 16		
6		17-9-'47	17-20
	No Imposing 17		
	Curb Anger 18		
	Labour's Role 19		
7		18-9-'47	20-22
	Prayer Indivisible 20		
	Gajendra Moksha 20		
	Punjab After Delhi 21		
	Duty of the Military and the Police 21		

8 19-9-'47 22-23

Avoid Exaggeration 22

Be Brave and Fearless 22

9 20-9-'47 23-26

God Removes Fear 23

Protection of Minorities 24

Brothers Become Enemies 24

Refugees 25

Muslim Loyalty Essential 25

10 21-9-'47 27-29

Objector Honoured 27

Tree without Fruit Withers 27

Stick to your Homes 28

When should Government Resign ? 28

11 22-9-'47 29-32

The Duty of the Objectors 29

Healthy Tolerance 30

If India Fails 31

Unlicensed Arms 31

The Duty of the Majority 31

12 23-9-'47 32-34

Public Confession 32

Gems of Wisdom 33

The Art of Dying Bravely 33

Houses for the Refugees 34

13 24-9-'47 34-36

The Frail Boat of India 34

Junagadh 35

14 25-9-'47 36-38

Duty of the Union Government 36

Victory of Dharma 37

Penalty of Treachery 37

Duty of the Police and the Military 37

How to Quench the Flames 37

15	26-9-'47	38-41
	The Granthsaheb 38	
	Gandhiji's Ambition 39	
	A Matter of Shame 39	
	Injustice must not be Tolerated 40	
	Hindus Alone can Destroy Hinduism 40	
	Trust Alone Is Victorious 41	
16	27-9-'47	42-45
	Rama, the Supreme Physician 42	
	Granthsaheb 43	
	What is a Blunder ? 43	
	Monstrous Intolerance and Interference 44	
	Had His Faith Weakened ? 44	
17	28-9-'47	45-48
	Mr. Churchill's Indiscretion 45	
18	29-9-'47	49-50
	Fruit of Fratricide 49	
19	30-9-'47	50-52
	Duty of the Government 50	
	Individual's Capacity 51	
	Indian Muslims 51	
20	1-10-'47	52-55
	Field of Service is Unlimited 52	
	Conditions for Peace 53	
	Individual Retaliation No Remedy 53	
	Cablegrams from Muslim Friends 54	
	Most Cowardly and Inhuman 55	
21	2-10-'47	55-57
	Message of the Sikh Gurus 55	
	Right use of the Kirpans 56	
	Birthday Greetings 56	
22	3-10-'47	58-60
	All Equally Guilty 56	
	Satyagraha and Duragraha 58	

	Good Work Its Own Blessing 58	
	Sanitation of the Refugee Camps 59	
	A Frenchman's Advice 60	
23	4-10-'47	60-62
	Appeal for Blankets 60	
24	5-10-'47	62-64
	His Illness 62	
	Blankets 62	
	A Preposterous Suggestion 63	
	Mr. Churchill Again 63	
25	6-10-'47	65-68
	The Problem of Food 65	
	Self-help 65	
	Meaning of Foreign Aid 66	
	Centralization or Decentralization ? 67	
	How to Deal with Shortage 67	
	President Truman's Advice 68	
26	7-10-'47	69-71
	Appeal for More Blankets 69	
	Be True to the Congress Creed 69	
	Food Control 70	
	Warning to Ministers 70	
	Secret of *Rama Raj* 71	
27	8-10-'47	72-74
	Blankets rather than Money 72	
	Non-violence of the Brave 72	
	Duty of Newspapers 73	
	Duty of the Military and the Police 74	
28	9-10-'47	75-76
	Donate Blankets Early 75	
	Patient Hearing not Enough 75	
	The Minorities in Pakistan 75	
29	10-10-'47	77-78
	More Blankets Received 77	
	Food and Cloth Shortage 77	

30	11-10-'47	79-81
	Rentia Jayanti 79	
	Badges for Harijans 79	
	Dassera and Bakr Id 79	
	Satyagraha in South Africa 80	
31	12-10-'47	81-82
	A Word to the Refugees 81	
32	13-10-'47	83-84
	To the Refugees 83	
33	14-10-'47	85-87
	A Worthy Example 85	
	Talk with Sikh Friends 85	
	Don't Weaken the Government 85	
	Look to your Own Faults 86	
34	15-10-'47	87-89
	Collect Golden Deeds 87	
	Hindi or Hindustani ? 88	
35	16-10-'47	89-91
	Example of Mysore 89	
	Good Behaviour 89	
	Expectation from the Services 90	
	Minorities in Eastern Pakistan 90	
36	17-10-'47	92-94
	The Sovereign Remedy 92	
	Blankets 93	
	Remove Controls 93	
	Satyagraha in South Africa 93	
37	18-10-'47	95-97
	Blankets Sent to Kurukshetra 95	
	The National Language 95	
38	19-10-'47	97-99
	Is it Swaraj ? 97	
	The Only Way 99	

39	20-10-'47	100-02
	Is It the Last Crime ? 100	
	More Blankets Received 101	
	An Open Letter 101	
40	21-10-'47	102-04
	Another Crime 102	
	No Interference with Law 103	
41	22-10-'47	104-06
	A Paragraph from an Urdu Daily 104	
	Wither States ? 105	
	Dassera and Bakr Id 105	
42	23-10-'47	107-09
	To Refugees Staying with Friends 107	
	Yet Another Crime 108	
	Leprosy Conference at Wardha 108	
43	24-10-'47	110-12
	One and Only Passion 110	
	Keep Your Faith Bright 110	
	Problem of Leprosy 111	
44	25-10-'47	112-14
	Delhi Prisoners 112	
	Classes Undesirable 112	
	Jails as Mental Hospitals 113	
	Duty of Prisoners 113	
45	26-10-'47	114-16
	Lesson of Dassera 114	
	Happenings in Kashmir 115	
	Peace Continues in Calcutta 115	
	Well Done Ratlam ! 116	
46	27-10-'47	117-19
	Forced to Leave 117	
	Moral Force v. Physical 117	
	Duty of Citizens 118	

47	28-10- 47	119-21
	Honest Dealing 119	
	Aligarh Students 119	
	Evil of Ticketless Travelling 120	
48	29-10-'47	121-23
	Dilipkumar Roy 121	
	Kashmir Pangs 122	
49	30-10-'47	123-24
	Working of Ahimsa 123	
50	31-10-47	125-27
	Exemplary Behaviour 125	
	Mind — A Temple 125	
	Rich and Poor 126	
	Forcible Conversions Condemned 126	
51	1-11-'47	127-29
	Abode of God 127	
	Sheikh Abdulla 128	
	Refugees in Kurukshetra 128	
52	2-11-'47	129-33
	Full Co-operation Needful 129	
	The Time Factor 131	
	Azad Hind Fouj Officers 131	
	Pakistan Encouraging ? 132	
53	3-11-'47	133-36
	Virus of Communalism 133	
	Remove Food Control 133	
	Control Breeds Evil 134	
	Advice of Experienced Men 135	
	Democracy and Trust 135	
54	4-11-'47	136-41
	Offspring of Anger 136	
	Half-Truth v. Untruth 137	
	Well-to-do Refugees 138	
	Duty in Delhi 138	

Charges Answered 139
Slaughter of Pigs 139
Is Pakistan Theocratic ? 140
Treatment of Cattle 140
55 5-11-'47 141-45
The Harijan's Adaptability 141
How to Spread Vegetarianism 142
Remain in your Homes 143
Firm on Non-violence 143
No Denial of Credit 144
56 6-11-'47 146-48
Distorted Facts 146
Remove Controls 146
Khadi v. Mill Cloth 147
57 7-11-'47 149-51
Visit to Tehar Village 149
A Lesson 149
Advice to Refugees 150
58 8-11-'47 151-54
Recitation from Sikh Scriptures 151
Appeal for Cotton Bales 152
Manufacture of Khadi 152
Self-help and Co-operation 153
The Sister of Mercy 154
59 9-11-'47 155-57
No Divali Celebration 155
Freedom in Foreign Settlements 156
60 10-11-'47 158-61
Become Servants of God 158
Visit to Panipat 159
Dr. Gopichand 160
61 11-11-'47 161-64
Junagadh 161
Accession to the Union 162

	Kashmir and Hyderabad 163	
	Division of Kashmir ? 164	
62	12-11-'47	164-66
	Divali Felicitations 164	
	Real Illumination 164	
	Marred Kashmir 165	
	British Hatred and Suspicion 165	
63	13-11-47	166-69
	Vikrama Samvat 166	
	Conquer Evil Forces 167	
	No Going Back 167	
	Religion Admits of No Coercion 168	
	A. I. C. C. Meeting 169	
64	14-11-'47	169-71
	Ramanama Excels Everything 169	
	Return of the Refugees 170	
65	15-11-'47	171-72
	Father of the Nation ? 171	
	Controls Harmful 172	
66	16-11-'47	173-76
	Finding God 173	
	Rampur State — Then and Now 173	
	Satyagraha — Mightiest Weapon 174	
	Implications 174	
	Hindu-Muslim Solidarity about South Africa 175	
67	17-11-'47	176-79
	India and South Africa 176	
	India in the Commonwealth 176	
	Colour Prejudice 177	
	Thoughts Make the Man 178	
	People's Voice 178	
68	18-11-'47	180-82
	A. C. C. C. Resolution 180	
	Hindu-Muslim Relations 180	

Panipat Muslims' Case 180
Expectation under Decontrol 181
69 19-11-'47 182-87
A Disgraceful Scene 182
Shortcomings of the Sikhs 183
Carrying of Kirpans 184
The Military and the Police 185
Sherwani's Martyrdom 186
Pride and Friendship 187
70 20-11-'47 188-91
No Longer Non-co-operation 188
Visit to Okhla 188
Of Officials 189
Malpractices among the Refugees 189
India's Cattle Wealth 190
Management of Goshalas 190
71 21-11-'47 191-96
Dairies in India 191
Slaughter of Calves 192
Satish Babu qn the Cow 192
"Hindu" and 'Hinduism' 193
Camps in general 194
Act of Ungodliness 194
Persecution of Roman Catholics 195
72 22-11-'47 196-99
Sonipat Christians 196
Tit for Tat 197
Plea for Right Conduct 197
Co-operation among Refugees 197
Government Dilemma 198
Appeal to Business Class 199
73 23-11-'47 199-201
Silence at Prayer 199
Over-Stepping the Limit 199

	Violence not justified 200 Persecution of Harijans 200	
74	24-11-'47	201-05
	Need for Constructive Work 201 The Latest Tragedy 202 Kirpan and Its Implication 203 A Vicious Suggestion 204 Its Evil Deeds 205	
75	25-11-'47	205-08
	Refugees or Sufferers ? 205 No Occupying Muslim Houses 206 A Reasonable Demand 207 Condition for Return 207	
76	26-11-'47	208-10
	Baseless Charge 208 Abducted Women 209 Helping Hands at Harvesting 209 Kisan Raj 210	
77	27-11-'47	211-13
	Nothing is Impossible 211 The Sher-e-Kashmir 211 Terrible if True 212	
78	28-11-'47	213-16
	Guru Nanak's Birthday 213 No Communalism in Commerce 214 Renovation of the Somnath Temple 215 No Premium on Evil 215 Kathiawad Quiet 216	
79	29-11-'47	217-19
	Liquor in Delhi 217 Damage to Mosques 217 Abducted Girls 217 Controls 218	

Tax Luxury Articles 218
Voluntary Home Guards 219

80 30-11-'47 219-22

Carry an Asana 219
Telegram from Kathiawad 219
Appeal to the Hindu Mahasabha and R. S. S. 221
Idols in Mosques 221

81 1-12-'47 222-25

Why Use If? 222
Be True 223
Searching for Truth 224

82 2-12-'47 225-28

A Visit to Panipat 225
To Ministers 225
Grievances of the Refugees 227

83 3-12-'47 228-32

Importance of Promises 228
The Harijans in Sind 229
Kathiawad Again 230
Indians in South Africa 230

84 4-12-'47 232-35

Why Foreign Propaganda? 232
Good News 233
Communal Chambers of Commerce 233
The Burma Premier 234

85 5-12-'47 235-37

Muslim Withdrawal 235
Controls 236

86 6-12-'47 237-39

Condition of Neighbourliness 237

87 7-12-'47 239-40

Abducted Women 239

88	8-12-'47	241-43
	A Muslim Society's Warning 241	
	Doleful Letter from Sind 241	
	Controls again 242	
	Meaning of Decontrol 242	
89	9-12-'47	244-45
	Their Charge 244	
	Worse than Murder 244	
	A Word to Kasturba Workers 245	
90	10-12-'47	245-47
	Implications of the Charkha 245	
	Charkha and Communal Harmony 245	
	Live and Let Live 246	
91	11-12-'47	247-49
	The Verse from the Quran 247	
	Assurance of Muslim Peace Mission 247	
92	12-12-'47	249-51
	Hardships of the Refugees 249	
	The Other Side 250	
	Hooliganism at Calcutta 250	
93	13-12-'47	251-52
	Message of the Charkha 251	
94	14-12-'47	253-54
	A Friendly Act 253	
	Nayee Talim 253	
95	15-12-'47	255-59
	Disgraceful Defiance 255	
	Lawlessness and Corruption 255	
	A Cunning Move 256	
	Trust Begets Trust 258	
	An unworthy Fear 259	
	Citizen of Undivided India 259	
96	16-12-'47	260-61
	Results of Decontrol 260	
	Salaries and Civil Service 261	

97	17-12-'47	262-64
	Forcible Occupation 262	
	Sweet Talk 262	
	Conditions For Return 263	
	Indians in East Africa 264	
98	18-12-'47	264-66
	A Confused Argument 264	
	Sheer Ignorance 266	
	Negation of Religion 266	
99	19-12-'47	267-69
	Visit to a Gurgaon Village 267	
	Prices and Decontrol 267	
	Control on Petrol 268	
	Compost Manure 268	
100	20-12-'47	269-71
	Shed Cowardice 269	
	The Village Industries 270	
	Capital and Labour 270	
101	22-12-'47	271-75
	No Desecration 271	
	Duty of the Union Muslims 272	
	Be of the Congress 274	
102	23-12-'47	275-80
	Prayer Time 275	
	Non-Muslims in Bahawalpur 276	
	Refugees in Pakistan 276	
	News from Noakhali 278	
103	24-12-'47	280-82
	Was it Non-violence ? 280	
	Misplaced Anger 281	
	Christmas Greetings 281	
104	25-12-'47	282-84
	The Question of Kashmir 282	
	The Jammu Incident 283	

Pride of Pakistan 284
Recalling Ghaznavi 284
26-12-'47 285-87
105
Tibbia College 285
Abducted Women 286
No Bargaining 287
27-12-'47 288-90
106
Consistency in Thought, Word and Action 288
Duty of the Panchayat 288
Cattle Improvement 289
Enriching the Soil 289
Be an Ideal 290
28-12-'47 290-92
107
Meetings in the Open 290
Removal of Controls 291
29-12-'47 293-97
108
Hakimsaheb's Memorial 293
Open Air Meetings 293
Kashmir again 294
An Acknowledgment 295
Strange Protest 296
Advice to Union Muslims 296
30-12-'47 297-300
109
Mass Discipline 297
Hindus and Sikhs in Bahawalpur 297
Non-Muslims in Sindh 298
The Vithoba Temple 298
Rationing in Bombay 299
31-12-'47 300-02
110
No Return without Change of Hearts 300
No Real Peace without Return of the Refugees 301
Refugees and Honest Labour 301

Broadcasting the whole Prayer 301
Exaggeration Defeats Purpose 302
111 1-1-'48 302-04
Spiritual Food 302
Harijans and Liquor 303
112 2-1-'48 304-05
The Noakhali Hat 304
The Bhajan 304
Distrust Denotes Cowardice 304
113 3-1-'48 305-07
True Peace Resides within 305
Ideal of Camp Life 306
114 4-1-'48 307-08
Implications of War 307
Worse than Cowardice 308
115 5-1-'48 309-13
Results of Decontrol 309
Cotton Cloth and Yarn 310
Petrol Rationing 311
Cloth Control 312
116 6-1-'48 313-15
Squeezing must Stop 313
Strike Plague 314
True Democracy 314
Imports and Exports must Balance 315
117 7-1-'48 316-18
A Wrong Fast 316
Students' Strike 316
Grievances of Pakistan Refugees 316
Duty of the Refugees 317
Happenings in Karachi 317
118 8-1-'48 318-21
Harijans and Drink 318
Why not Satyagraha ? 319

No Communalism in the Union 320
Parties among Students 320
Deputation from Bahawalpur 321
119 9-1-'48 322-24
Need for Bravery and Patience 322
Problem of Housing Accommodation 322
A Misunderstanding 323
Why at Birla House? 323
Gentlemen Thieves 324
120 10-1-'48 324-27
Need for Discipline 324
To Bahawalpur Friends 325
Iran and India 326
Exercise Your Own Judgment 326
121 11-1-48 327-29
Peace in Prayer Meetings 327
A Letter from Andhra 328
Appeal to Parties 329
Suicidal Tendency 329
122 12-1-'48 330-35
God the Supreme Counsellor 330
Worthy of Blessing 331
No Softness 332
Call for Self-Purification 333
123 13-1-'48 335-38
Bahawalpur Refugees 335
Who Is Blameworthy? 336
Duty of the Hindus and Sikhs 337
Delhi on Trial 338
124 14-1-'48 339-43
Spate of Messages 339
A Word to Pakistan 340
My Dream 341
125 15-1-'48 343-48
Death a Deliverance 343
Killing by Inches 344

	The Sardar 345	
	Object of the Fast 346	
	No Room for Distortion 347	
126	16-1-'48	348-51
	Grace of God 348	
	Unmixed Goodwill 349	
	Fittest Answer to Fast 350	
127	17-1-'48	351-53
	Cleansing of Hearts 351	
	A Word to Pakistan 352	
	Happy in Fasting 352	
128	18-1-'48	353-58
	The Task ahead 353	
	Breaking of the Fast 356	
	Spirit of the Vow 357	
129	19-1-'48	358-61
	Congratulations and Concern 358	
	A Warning 359	
	Task before them 360	
130	20-1-'48	361-65
	A Plea for Sanity 361	
	Prime Minister's noble Gesture 362	
	Kashmir Issue 363	
	Gwalior, Bhavnagar and the Kathiawad States 364	
131	21-1-48	365-69
	Bomb at the Prayer 365	
	Ill Serving Hinduism 366	
	Pity the Bomb Thrower 366	
	Bahawalpur and Sind 367	
	A Misleading Analogy 368	
132	22-1-48	369-72
	Pandit Nehru's Example 369	
	Poverty No Shame 370	
	Gwalior Again 371	

	23-1-48	372-75
133	Netaji's Birthday 372	
	A Plea for Caution 373	
	Mysore, Junagadh and Meerut 373	
	How to Deal with Traitors 374	
	24-1-'48	375-76
134	Exchange of Prisoners — Abductees 375	
	54-1-'48	376-80
135	All Quiet in Delhi 376	
	Urs at Mehrauli 377	
	"Set me Free" 378	
	Linguistic Distribution of Provinces 378	
	No Boundary Commission 379	
	26-1-'48	380-83
136	Independence Day 380	
	Decontrol and Transport 381	
	Demon of Corruption 383	
	27-1-'48	384-86
137	Muslims and Prayer Gathering 384	
	Urs at Mehrauli 384	
	More Murders in N. W. F. P. 385	
	Harijans at Ajmer 385	
	Mirpur Victims 385	
	28-1-'48	386-88
138	To Bahawalpuri Friends 386	
	Peace in the Metropolis 386	
	Satyágraha in South Africa 386	
	Muslims in Mysore 387	
	A Word to Donors 388	
	29-1-'48	389-92
139	Deputation to Bahawalpur 389	
	Their Servant 389	
	Bread Labour 390	
	Kisans 391	
	Food Shortage in Madras 391	
Index		393-406

DELHI DIARY

1

10-9-'47

City of the Dead

Though the audience owing to the curfew was small, Gandhiji spoke for the whole of Delhi. He said that when he reached Shahadra he found Sardar Patel, Rajkumari and others to receive him. But he missed the usual smile on the Sardar's lips and his apt jokes. The police and the public whom he met on alighting from the train reflected the gloom he noticed around him. Had jovial Delhi suddenly become a city of the dead? Another surprise was in store for him. He was taken not to the Bhangi Colony where he delighted to stay, but to the palatial Birla House. Though the cause of it hurt him, he was glad to find himself in the house where.he had often stayed before. Whether he stayed among the *Valmiki* brethren or in the Birla House, he was the guest of Birla Brothers. Their men looked after him in the Bhangi Colony with single-minded devotion. The cause of the change was not the Sardar. He could never be guilty of weakness so as to fear for his safety in the Valmiki Colony. It was his delight to live in the midst of the *bhangis*, though through the New Delhi Committee's fault he could not live actually in the houses in which the *bhangis* were packed like sardines.

The Refugee Problem

The cause of the change this time was the fact that the premises he occupied were 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, Liaquatsaheb 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 to 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. "Theirs was not to reason why, theirs was but to do and die." 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. The speaker'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.

He paid a visit to the Meo Refugee Camp near the Humayun Tomb. They said that they were driven out from Alwar and Bharatpur States. He was told that they had no food save what was sent to them by Muslim friends. He knew that the Meos were easily excitable and could cause trouble. The remedy was certainly not to pack them off to Pakistan unless they wanted to go there, but to treat them as fellow human beings demanding treatment for their weaknesses like any other disease.

He then went to the Jamia Millia in whose shaping he had played a vital part. Dr. Zakir Hussain was his dear friend. The Doctor described his experiences certainly in sorrow but without bitterness. Just a short time ago he had to go to Jullunder. He would have been done to death by angry Sikhs for the crime of being a Muslim but for the timely aid of a Sikh Captain and a Hindu railway employee. He gratefully related this experience. Imagine the fact that this national institution where several Hindus had studied was in fear of receiving attention from angered refugees and their abettors. He saw over 100 refugees accommodated

somehow in the Jamia premises. He hung his head in shame as he heard the sorry recital of 'the refugees' difficulties. He then went to the Diwan Hall Refugee Camp, the Wavell Canteen Camp and King's Way. He met there Sikh and Hindu refugees. They could not quite forget his past services to the Punjab. But some pardonably angry faces were in all these camps. He was accused of hardness of heart towards the Hindus. He had not suffered as they had. He had not lost his dear ones as they had, nor had he, like them, been rendered homeless and penniless. How could he console them by saying that he had stayed in Delhi to do what he could in assisting to make the Capital of India return to normality? He could not bring back the dead ones. But death was a blessing bestowed by the Creator on all life, human and sub-human. The difference lay in the time and the manner. Right conduct was the only right way of life which made it bearable and even lovely.

A True Sikh

A Sikh friend had seen him during the day. He said that though he was born a Sikh, he could not claim to be one in the light of the *Granth Saheb*. The speaker asked him whether he knew any such claimant. The friend could not think of any. Then Gandhiji quietly put in his claim. He claimed to be attempting to live as a Sikh in terms of the *Granth Saheb*. Time was when in the Nankana Saheb he was accepted as a true friend of the Sikhs. Guru Nanak made no distinction between a Muslim and a Hindu. For him the whole humanity was one. Such was his (Gandhiji's) Sanatan Hindu Dharma. As such he claimed also to be a Muslim. He recited the great Muslim prayer on the

oneness of God and His all-protecting power day and night.

He asked all the refugees to live truly, fearlessly and at the same time without malice or hatred towards anybody. Let them not throw away the golden apple of dearly-won freedom by hasty and thoughtless action in the moment of anger.

2

12-9-'47

News from N. W. F. P.

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 safty. 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 Sikhs were as safe there as the Muslims.

Anger is Short Madness

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 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 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 we lost the sweet bread of freedom because we could not digest it. Remember that unless we stopped this madness the name of India will be mud in the eyes of the world.

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 to requisition their active services in Delhi today.

In soul-stirring words Gandhiji appealed to the Sikhs, Hindus and 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 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 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.

RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH

In conclusion Gandhiji referred to his and Dr. Dinshaw Mehta's talk with the *Guru* of the Rashtriya

Swayamsevak Sangh. He (Gándhiji) had been told that the hands of this organization too were steeped in blood. The *Guruji* assured him that this was untrue. Their organization was enemy to no man. It did not stand for the killing of Muslims. All it wanted to do was to protect Hinduism to the best of its ability. It stood for peace and he had asked Gandhiji to make his views public.

3

13-9-'47

TRUST THE GOVERNMENT

At the outset 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 Hakimsaheb 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 Hakimsaheb. 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. Shaukatulla Khan should have to abandon their home and live in a hotel for fear of the Hindus and Sikhs. He was free to confess that he would lose all interest in life if the 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 Diwan 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, therefore, 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 majority communities.

ASAF ALI SAHEB

Lastly, Gandhiji wished to refer to a vague insinuation against Asaf Ali Saheb, their Ambassador in America. He had been a Congressman ever since he had known him. He was a friend of the late Hakim-saheb and Dr. Ansari, as he is of the Maulanasaheb, who was Congress President for many years and had always been known as a staunch nationalist. He knew that Asafsaheb was not recalled from America, but that he had come to consult the Prime Minister on many important questions. It was a matter of shame that such Muslims should not feel at ease with every Hindu and Sikh. It was wrong that a single Muslim should feel unsafe in Delhi, his Capital.

4

14-9-'47

Our Degradation

Gandhiji said that he went to two Muslim refugees' camps in Idgah and opposite. No Muslim bore an angry look. They seemed to be poor. There was a very old man who was mere skin and bone. Every rib was to be seen. He was stabbed in several places. By his side was a woman eqally injured. Though not so old, she was in a dilapidated condition. He hung his head in shame when he saw them. For him all men and women were the same, no matter what religion they professed.

Sanitation of Refugee Camps

Then he observed the insanitation of the camps. They were filthy beyond description. In the Idgah the tank was dry. He did not inquire where the refugees could get their water from. The inmates performed natural functions anyhow. If he was the camp commandant and the military and the police were under him, he would take up the shovel and the pickaxe himself and ask the help of the military and the police to do likewise and then ask the refugees to follow suit so that the camps would be in a perfectly sanitary condition. As it was, the ground itself was a rubbish heap on which no human being should be asked to live before it was thoroughly cleaned out. It requried no money, it required a little forethought and the possession of a sanitary sense which would refuse to tolerate insanitation. The Hindu camps were no better on this

score. Insanitation was a national defect or better still a vice of which as a free nation the sooner they got rid the better it was for them.

Duty of the Governments and the People

From these camps his thoughts turned to the cause of this 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!

5

15-9-'47

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 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 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 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 and 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 a solitary voice in its favour.

6

17-9-'47

No Imposing

There was a very big gathering of workmen of the Delhi Cloth Mills and others from outside in the spacious courtyard of the Lines. Gandhiji had gone there at the instance of the workmen who used to supply volunteers whenever he stayed at the Valmiki Colony. On reaching the place at 6-30 p. m. Gandhiji tried to speak through the loud-speaker, but there being some defect in the instrument, another instrument was tried. It gave some work but not so as to be heard to the farthest end of the meeting. But a Punjabi friend offered to repeat with his loud voice word for word what Gandhiji spoke. The contrivance worked. Gandhiji said that after his experience of the last evening, he had decided not to offer public prayer unless the whole audience without exception wished to have the prayer. He had never imposed anything on any one, much less could he impose such a highly spiritual thing as prayer. The response must be from the heart. There could be no question of pleasing him. His prayer meetings had certainly become popular and lakhs of people seemed to have gained therefrom. But in these times of tension he could understand the resentment of the sufferers. Only no one should expect him to omit that part of the prayer, which to him seemed objectionable. It had to be accepted heartily as it was or rejected. For him recitation from the *Quran* was an integral part of the prayer.

Curb Anger

Turning to the burning question of the day Gandhiji said that he was prepared to understand their resentment and the 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 presenting to them not his own way of non-violence, much as he would like to. But 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 a 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 expected that their Muslim brothers and sisters should be driven out of India. He regarded any such thing

as a monstrous proposition. They could not have the cake and eat it. Moreover, whilst it was true that the minorities, i. e. the Hindus and Sikhs were badly treated in Pakistan, it was equally true that the East Punjab had 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 the Muslims, who had not of their own free will chosen to migrate to Pakistan, should be asked by the 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.

Labour's Role

In the end Gandhiji congratulated the working class on the Hindus and the Muslims working together. If they were working in perfect union, they had set a noble example. Workmen should have no communalism among them. Had he not said that if they knew their

power and used it wisely and constructively, they would become the real rulers and the employers would be their trustees and friends in need and deed? This happy state of things would come only when they knew that labour was more real capital than the capital in the shape of gold and silver which labour extracted from the bowels of the earth.

7

18-9-'47

PRAYER INDIVISIBLE

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.

GAJENDRA MOKSHA

After the prayers Gandhiji addressed the gathering saying that prayer was the food of the soul as bread was of the body and he was glad to note that they understood its importance.

Commenting on the *bhajan*, *Gajendra Moksha*, he said that for them the object to be saved was India

from the clutches of barbarism. The task could be performed only by God's grace.

PUNJAB AFTER DELHI

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 not rehabilitated in his own home. What was to become of the Juma 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 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 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.

8

19-9-'47

AVOID EXAGGERATION

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.

BE BRAVE AND FEARLESS

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 the adjoining

Muslim houses killing one child and wounding another. This was about the 7th of September. Maulana Ahmad 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, 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.

9

20-9-'47

God Removes Fear

No one having objected to the recitation of the verses from the *Quran Sharif*, prayers proceeded as usual this evening.

Gandhiji referred to the hymn that had been sung. In it the composer said that God removed all fear from the hearts of those who had faith in Him.

Today, the Hindus and Sikhs were frightening the Muslims in Delhi. 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. The speaker, 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 anyone at any time to return evil for evil.

Protection of Minorities

Gandhiji went on to say that the fear of the Hindus and 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.

Brothers Become Enemies?

It baffled him as to why those who had lived as brothers, those whose blood had mingled in the massacre of Jallianwala 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.

REFUGEES

He thought of the poor refugees in Delhi, in both East and West Punjab today while it was raining. They were roofless and homeless — suffering for whose sins? He had heard that convoys of Hindus and Sikhs were pouring in from the 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.

MUSLIM LOYALTY ESSENTIAL

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 *kaffirs*. Learned Muslims had told him that this was wholly incorrect. The Hindus were as much followers of inspired scriptures as the Muslims, Christians and Jews. In any event, he appealed to the Hindus and 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.

10

21-9-'47

OBJECTOR HONOURED

As one person in the audience objected to the *Al Fateha* being recited, prayers were not held on the Birla House lawn. Gandhiji, however, addressed the audience. He said that he was not going to argue with the objector. He realized the anger that raged in people's hearts today. The atmosphere was so surcharged that he thought it right to respect even one objector, but this by no means meant that he gave up God or His worship in his heart. Prayer demanded a pure atmosphere. One thing that everyone should take to heart from such objections was that those who were anxious to serve must have endless patience and tolerance. One must never seek to impose one's views on others.

TREE WITHOUT FRUIT WITHERS

Gandhiji went on to relate how he had been with Shrimati Indira Gandhi to a locality where there were large numbers of Hindus living next door to a large number of Muslims. The Hindus greeted him with *Mahatma Gandhiki Jai*, but they little knew that today there could be no victory for him, nor did he wish to live if the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs could not live at peace with one another. He was doing his level best to drive home the truth that there was strength in unity and weakness in disunion. Just as a tree that did not bear fruit withered, so also would

his body be useless if his service could not bear the expected fruit. Whilst this was true, it was equally true that one was bound to work without attachment to fruit. Detachment was more fruitful than attachment. He was merely explaining the logic of facts. A body that had outlived its usefulness would perish giving place to a new one. The soul was imperishable and continued to take on new forms for working out its salvation through acts of service.

Stick to Your Homes

Coming to the meeting with the Muslims in that area, Gandhiji said that he advised them to stick to their homes although they might be molested by their Hindu neighbours even unto death. If they had not that wisdom, they were free to shift in order to avoid death. If they could follow his advice, they would serve both Islam and India. Those Hindus and Sikhs who molested them would discredit their religions and do irreparable harm to India. It was sheer madness to think that four crores and a half could be wiped out or banished to Pakistan. Some persons had suggested that he (Gandhiji) wished to do so. He never had any wish that the Muslim refugees should be reinstated through the police and the military. What, however, he did hold was that when the Hindu and Sikh anger had subsided, they themselves would bring back the refugees with honour. He did, however, expect the Government to hold the vacated houses in good order and in trust for the evacuees.

When should Government Resign?

If the Government had not that power, i. e. if the people would not let the Government do the right

thing, he would advise them to resign in favour of those who would carry out the mad design to kill out or banish all Muslims from India. He had seen such a suggestion seriously made by a newspaper. This was an advice to commit national suicide and to uproot Hinduism. He wondered if such a newspaper should exist in free India. Was liberty of the Press to amount to license to poison the public mind? People who wanted such a policy to be pursued should ask for the resignation of their Government. The world which, up till now, had looked up to India would certainly cease to do so. In any event, so long as he had breath in his body, he would continue to advise against such utter madness.

11

22-9-'47

THE DUTY OF OBJECTORS

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.

Healthy Tolerance

I have noticed with great joy at the annual sessions of the Congress on its exhibition ground 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

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.

Unlicensed Arms

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.

The Duty of the Majority

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, Sikhs and 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.

12

23-9-'47

PUBLIC CONFESSION

Speaking after prayers Gandhiji referred to the apology which Shrimati Manu Gandhi and Abha Gandhi had read out on the previous day. While they were singing the *bhajan* during the prayers on Sunday evening, they went out of tune and as a result could not suppress their laughter. It hurt him deeply. It showed that the girls did not realize the importance of prayer. They apologized to Gandhiji afterwards. Apology was unnecessary for he had no anger against them. He was angry with himself that though the girls were brought up under him, he had not impressed them with the necessity of losing themselves in God whilst they were at prayer. He was somewhat relieved when the girls repented. He advised public confession. They gladly accepted the advice. For, he believed that public confession made in sincerity purified the confessor and protected him or her against repetition of the wrong.

GEMS OF WISDOM

Recalling the objection to the recitation from the *Quran*, he said that they were entitled to resent the treatment of the Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan. But that should not make them resent recitation from the *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.

THE ART OF DYING BRAVELY

Turning to the day's work, Gandhiji said that he had seen a deputation of the Hindus and Sikhs from Rawalpindi as also from Dera Gazi Khan. The Hindus and 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 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.

HOUSES FOR THE REFUGEES

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.

13

24-9-'47

THE FRAIL BOAT OF INDIA

Making the *bhajan* sung at the prayers the theme of his post-prayer discourse, Gandhiji said that the refrain of the *bhajan* aptly described the condition of India today. In it the poet invoked God's help to take his frail boat across the ocean.

GIVE THE GOVERNMENTS A CHANCE

Today, the spirit of revenge and retaliation filled the atmosphere. The Hindus and 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 '*larkar lenge 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 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.

JUNAGADH

Let them contemplate what was going on in Junagadh. Was there to be a war between Junagadh on the one hand and almost all the other Kathiawad States on the other? If the rest of the Princes and the people truly combined, he had no doubt that

Junagadh would not stand aloof from the other States of Kathiawad. For this the rule of law was absolutely essential.

14

25-9-'47

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 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 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 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.

Victory of Dharma

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.

Penalty of Treachery

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.

Duty of the Police and the Military

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.

How to Quench the Flames

Gandhiji told them of his meeting with the Governor-General during the day. Later on he had met

prominent workers and citizens of all the communities from Delhi and after that he attended the Working Committee meeting. Everywhere the same problem was discussed: how to quench the flames of hatred and revenge. It was for man to put forth his best effort; the result could then be confidently placed in the hands of God, who only helped those who helped themselves.

15

26-9-'47

Before the prayers started Gandhiji asked as usual whether anyone had any objection to his reciting the prayers including some verses from the *Quran.* A young man said that he should omit the recitation from the *Quran.* Gandhiji replied that he could not do that. But he was willing to omit the whole prayer. The audience said that they did not wish that and wanted the whole prayer. Thereupon, the objector became silent.

THE GRANTH SAHEB

Gandhiji said 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 *Granth 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.

GANDHIJI'S AMBITION

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.

A MATTER OF SHAME

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 and the Tibbia College. All

Muslims could not be traitors. Those who proved traitors would be dealt with severely by the Government.

Injustice must not be Tolerated

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 Sikhs was the function of the Government. 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*.

Hindus alone can Destroy Hinduism

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 *hanske liya Pakistan, larke lenge 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 destory 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.

Truth Alone Is Victorious

Referring to the question asked by a member of the audience at the end of the prayers the day before Gandhiji said that the friend had asked him to work a miracle and save India and the Hindus and Sikhs if he was really a *mahatma*. Gandhiji had never claimed to be a *mahatma*. He was an ordinary human being like any one of them, except that he was much frailer. The only difference in his favour might be that his faith in God was perhaps stronger than theirs. If all Indians — Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Muslims and Christians were prepared to lay down their lives for the sake of India, India could never come to harm. He wanted them to remember what the *rishis* had said : *satyameva jayate nanrutam* (सत्यमेव जयते नानृतम्). Truth alone is victorious, never falsehood.

16

27-9-'47

RAMA, THE SUPREME PHYSICIAN

Gandhiji referred to the newspaper paragraph about his illness. It had appeared, he said, without his knowledge and it had hurt him. The illness was not such as to interrupt his work and he was already feeling better. It should not have been given so much importance. Dr. Dinshaw Mehta had been described as his personal physician. That was wrong. He had told Gandhiji that he was not responsible for the description. Dr. Dinshaw had come to him at his call, but it was not to attend on him as a physician. He had come because he was troubled by spiritual questions. Dr. Mehta was a Nature Cure man. He was Gandhiji's friend who had often helped him. But Gandhiji did not need his assistance as such.

Dr. Sushila Nayyar, Dr. Jivraj Mehta, Dr. B. C. Roy, Dr. Gilder and the Late Dr. Ansari had been his personal physicians. But none of them had ever given anything to the Press without first showing it to him. Today, his only physician was his Rama. As the *bhajan* sung during the prayers had said, He was the curer for all ills, physical, mental and moral. This realization in a concrete form had come to him during his contemplation with Dr. Dinshaw Mehta of Nature Cure. In it *Ramanama* in his opinion had the first place. He who had Rama installed in the heart required no other aid. Even earth and water treatment was unnecessary for one possessed by Rama. That was the advice he gave to others in need. It would ill become him if he followed any other course.

There were great *hakims*, *vaidyas* and doctors who had served humanity for the sake of service. There had been the great Dr. Joshi in Delhi who had served the Hindus and Muslims, rich and poor all alike. He served the poor free and even gave them food and money for return fare. But having gained the knowledge that he had, he wanted to fall back upon none but God.

Granth Saheb Recalled

Then Gandhiji read 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 Macca; 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.

Was It a Blunder?

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 that 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.

Had His Faith Weakened?

Newspapers had displayed his 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.

17

28-9-'47

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 prompted 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.' "

They all knew that Mr. Churchill was himself a great man. He belonged to the blue blood of England. The Marlboroughs were famous in English history. He took the helm when Great Britain was in peril on the outbreak of the Second World War. He undoubtedly saved what was then the empire from that peril. It would be wrong to argue that without America and the other allies, Great Britain would not have won the war. Who brought the powers together if it was not his energetic statesmanship ? After the war was won, the great nation whom he so brilliantly

represented, whilst recognizing Mr. Churchill's services, did not hesitate to prefer a purely Labour Government for the purpose of reconstructing the British Isles which had had to pay a heavy toll of life and money. The British rose to the occasion, decided voluntarily to break the empire and erect in its place an unseen and more glorious empire of hearts. The speaker referred to the voluntary declaration of India, though broken into two parts, as willing members of the Commonwealth. This noble step was taken by the whole British nation, consisting of all parties. In this act Mr. Churchill and his party were partners. Whether the future would justify the step or not was a different matter, irrelevant to the speaker's thesis, which was that Mr. Churchill, being associated with the act of transformation, would be expected to say or do nothing that would diminish its virtue. Surely, there was nothing in modern history to be compared with the British withdrawal of power. He recalled the renunciation of Ashoka the Good, to see whom was to be the proud possessor of good fortune. But Ashoka was incomparable and did not belong to modern history. Gandhiji, therefore, was sorry to read the Reuter's summary of Mr. Churchill's speech which, he presumed, was not misinterpreted by the renowned agency. Mr. Churchill had rendered a disservice to the nation of which 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 a few lakhs turned savages 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.

18

29-9-'47

Fruit of 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.

19

30-9-'47

Duty of the Government

Gandhiji said that some friends from Mianwali had seen him during the day. They were worried about their friends left behind. In this way thousands upon thousands were still in various places in Pakistan. The friends from Mianwali told him that they were afraid that those who were left behind might either be forcibly converted, murdered or starved and the women abducted. They asked if it was not the duty of the Union Government to protect them. It was the same story from other parts. Gandhiji agreed that it was the duty of the Government to give protection to those who looked up to it or resign. It was for the people to strengthen the hands of the Government.

There were two ways of protecting the minorities in Pakistan. The best way was that Qaid-e-Azam

TAMIL NAD GRAMA SEVAK VIDYALAYAM.
T. KALLUPPATTY POST.
MADURA DT.

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.

Individual's Capacity

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 ?

Indian Muslims

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 converted not 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.

20

1-10-'47

Field of Service Is Unlimited

Speaking after prayers Gandhiji said that a sister had handed a note to him the previous evening in which she had said that both she and her husband were anxious to serve, but no one told them what to do. Gandhiji said that there were several such complaints. He had one and the same reply for all of them. The field of service unlike that of authority was unlimited. It was as vast as the earth itself. It could take in an unlimited number of workers. For instance, the city of Delhi had never been ideally clean. With the influx of refugees the sanitation had become poorer still. The sanitation of the various refugee camps was far from satisfactory. Anyone was free to take up that work. Even if they could not get to the refugee camps, they could clean their own surroundings and that was bound to affect the whole city. No one should look to anyone else to give directions. To physical cleanliness he added cleanliness of mind and spirit. This was a big job and pregnant with great possibilities.

Conditions for Peace

He 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 Alisaheb had come to confer with him and he had to attend the meeting of the Congress Working Commitee 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 Sikh refugees in Pakistan and even in the Indian Union was wrong. The Hindus and the Sikh 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 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 down, was the other to follow suit? That would merely result in 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.

Cablegrams from Muslim Friends

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 Muslims would live together as brothers.

Most Cowardly and Inhuman

He then dealt with sorrow with the reported attack on a hospital in Delhi by a mob from a near-by village resulting in the death of four patients and injury to a few more. It was a most cowardly and inhuman act, which could not be justified under any circumstances.

There was another report that some Muslim passengers had been thrown out of a moving train coming from Naini to Allahabad. He was at his wit's end to understand the rationale behind such acts. They should make every Indian hang down his head in shame.

21

2-10-'47

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 Kharak 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 tenth *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.

The Right Use of the Kirpan

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.

Birthday Greetings

Gandhiji then 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 say 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, 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. It did not matter what was being done to non-Muslims in Pakistan. If one party had sunk low, the other could not afford to do likewise. He asked them to pause and consider the evil consequences of such misdeeds. They should purge their hearts of hatred. It was their right and duty to place their grievances before their Government and to ask for redress. But to take the law into their own hands was wholly wrong. That way lay the ruin of all.

22

3-10-'47

All Equally Guilty

Congratulatory wires keep pouring in on Gandhiji. He referred to the physical impossibility for him of replying to them. Friends had suggested that he should publish some of the messages. He had had many beautiful messages from Muslim friends too but he did not consider that the present time was opportune as it was not likely to benefit the general public, who today did not believe in *ahimsa* and Truth. Evil-doers, he held, were equally guilty, whoever they were.

Satyagraha and Duragraha

Today, he was getting news of *satyagraha* being started in many places. Often he wondered whether the so-called *satyagraha* was not really *duragraha.* Whether it was strikes in mills or railways or post-offices or movements in some of the States, it seemed as if it were a question of seizing power. A virulent poison was leavening society today and every opportunity for attaining their object was seized by those who did not stop to consider that means and ends were convertible terms.

Good Work Its Own Blessing

Gandhiji referred to the fact that he was even getting letters asking him to bless people's work or the starting of their movement. In his opinion every good work carried within it its own blessings and did not need his or anyone's backing. A good man who was doing good work and who came to him understood his proposition at once. Truth was always self-evident and

it was everyone's duty to abide by it at all costs. But those who resorted to *satyagraha* should search their hearts and find out whether it was Truth that they were seeking. If not, then insistence became a mockery. He affirmed that those who were trying to get what was not in reality theirs could not possibly abide by *ahimsa*, and Truth could not be found without it.

Sanitation of Refugee Camps

Gandhiji next referred to the many refugee camps here and the insanitary conditions prevailing there and in the city. Everyone wanted scavenging to be done for them. He said that those who were not in the camps should see to their own surroundings being clean themselves. The taint of untouchability was tarnishing the fair name of Hinduism. One way of removing the blot was for everyone to become a *bhangi*. Sweeper's work was not a dirty work. It was a work that made for cleanliness. If the citizens of Delhi personally saw to the sanitation of the city, they would not only make Delhi beautiful but their example would have far-reaching results. If he were in charge of the camps he would induce the refugees to do everything for themselves. It was demoralizing for anyone to eat the bread of idleness and spend their days in gambling or playing cards. They should be glad to take up any craft that suited their taste — whether spinning, weaving, tailoring, carpentry, agriculture, or anything else. He was perfectly certain that they should learn to stand on their own legs and not depend on others' service. He felt sure that if they became absorbed in work, they would to a large extent forget their sufferings also. Gandhiji said that he knew the sufferings they had had to endure and he did not for one moment condone those who had inflicted those sufferings on them. But he must

reaffirm again and again that the correct path was to return good for evil.

A FRENCHMAN'S ADVICE

Gandhiji then referred to a kind Frenchman who had, while congratulating him, tried to persuade him to wish to live for 125 years in order to finish his work. He had, the friend said, achieved so much and, after all, if God was responsible for every happening, He would bring good out of evil. Gandhiji should not be sad or depressed. The speaker said that he could not deceive himself by kind words. Today, he felt that what he might have achieved in the past had to be forgotten. No one could live on his past. He could wish to live only if he felt that he could render service to the people. That meant that the people saw the error of their ways and listened to his words. He was in God's hands. If God wished to take further work from him, He would do so. But he certainly felt that today his words had ceased to carry weight and if he was not able to render more service, it would be best that God took him away.

23

4-10-'47

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 up 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 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 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 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.

24

5-10-'47

His Illness

In his post-prayer speech Gandhiji expressed regret that news about his illness had again appeared in the Press. He did not know who had given it out. It was true that he had a cough and a little fever but its publicity did not help him or anyone else. It was liable to cause unnecessary anxiety to many. Therefore, he requested friends not to give any publicity to his illness again.

Blankets

In response to his appeal for blankets the day before two friends had sent two good blankets and another had sent ten more. He assured the donors that they would be given to deserving people.

A Preposterous Suggestion

He had received a telegram saying that if the Hindus and 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 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.

Mr. Churchill Again

He then referred to Mr. Churchill's second speech in which he had attacked the Labour Government for bringing ruin upon India. They had liquidated the empire, he said, and brought misery upon India's masses. He was afraid the same fate would befall Burma. Was the wish father to the thought? Mr. Churchill was a great man. It hurt him (the speaker) that he should have spoken in that manner again. He put party before the nation. India consisted of seven lakhs of villages. These seven lakhs of villages had not run amuck. But supposing that they did, would that be a

justification for reducing India to slavery? Was it only the good who had a right to freedom? It was the British who had taught us that freedom with drunkenness was any day preferable to slavery with sobriety. We were rightly taught that self-government included the right to misgovernment and that good government was no substitute for self-government. Socialism was Mr. Churchill's *bete noire.* Labour could not be other than socialist. Socialism was a great doctrine. It did not admit of condemnation, but wise application. Socialists may be bad, not socialism. The victory of the Labour Party in England was the victory of socialism. Labour Government was a government by labour. He had long held the view that when labour realized its dignity, it would eclipse all other parties. Labour had withdrawn British power from India by the consent of all parties. It ill became Mr. Churchill to quarrel with the great act. Supposing that he succeeded at the next election, surely he did not dream that he would undo the act and compel India to a second dose of slavery.. He would have to face a living wall of opposition. Did he for one moment think how shameful was the act of the annexation of Burma? Did he remember the way in which India was brought under subjection? He did not wish to open the dark chapter. The less said about it the better. While he said all this, he did not want his hearers to forget that their dearly-won liberty might be lost to the world powers if they continued to act like beasts rather than men. He did not wish to be a living witness of the tragedy if it was to overtake them. Who was he to save India single-handed? But he did want his hearers to falsify Mr. Churchill's forebodings.

25

6-10-'47

The Problem of Food

Those who ought to know all about our food have gathered together on the invitation of Dr. Rajendra Prasad to give him the benefit of their advice in the grave food crisis. Any mistake made on this important matter may mean avoidable starvation and death of millions therefrom. India is not unfamiliar with starvation and death of tens of thousands, if not millions, due to famine, natural or man-made. I claim that in a well-ordered society there should be always pre-arranged methods of successful treatment of scarcity of water and food crops. This is, however, not the occasion for describing a well-ordered society and for showing how it would deal with the matter. Our concern, for the present, is to see whether we can, with fair hope of success, deal with the present food crisis.

Self-help

I think we can. The first lesson we must learn is of self-help and self-reliance. If we assimilate this lesson, we shall at once free ourselves from disastrous dependence upon foreign countries and ultimate bankruptcy. This is not said in arrogance but as a matter of fact. We are not a small place, dependent for its food supply upon outside help. We are a sub-continent, a nation of nearly 400 millions. We are a country of mighty rivers and a rich variety of agricultural land, with inexhaustible cattle-wealth. That our cattle give much less milk than we need is entirely our own fault. Our cattle-wealth

is any day capable of giving us all the milk we need. Our country, if it had not been neglected during the past few centuries, should today not only be providing herself with sufficient food, she would also be playing a useful role in supplying the outside world with much-needed foodstuffs of which the late war has unfortunately left practically the whole world in want. This does not exclude India. The distress is growing instead of showing signs of decreasing. My suggestion does not include ungrateful rejection of free supply that any foreign country may wish to offer us. All I say is that we must not go a-begging. It demoralizes. Add to this the difficulty of internal transport of foodstuffs from one place to another. We have not the requisite facility for rapid movement of grains and other foodstuffs from place to place. Further, add not the remote possibility of delivery of uneatable stuff. We dare not lose sight of the fact that we have to deal with human nature. In no part of the world is it to be found perfect or even very nearly so.

Meaning of Foreign Aid

Next, let us see what possible foreign aid we can get. I am told that not more than three per cent of our present wants. If this information is correct, and I have had it checked by several experts who confirm the figure, I am sure the case for reliance on outside help falls to the ground. The slightest dependence on outside help is likely to deflect us from trying to the fullest extent our immense internal possibilities in the shape of utilizing every inch of arable land for growing crops for daily food in the place of growing money crops. We must reclaim waste land which is capable of being placed under immediate cultivation.

Centralization or Decentralization?

Centralization of foodstuffs, I apprehend, is ruinous. Decentralization easily deals a blow to black-marketing, saves time and money in transport to and fro. Moreover, the villager who grows India's cereals and pulses knows how to save his crops against rodents. The movement of grain from station to station makes it liable to be eaten by rodents. This costs the country many millions and deprives it of tons of grain, every ounce of which we badly need. If every Indian were to realize the necessity of growing food wherever it can be grown, we should most probably forget that there was scarcity of foodstuffs in the land. I have by no means dealt fully with the fascinating and absorbing subject of growing more food, but I hope I have said enough to stimulate interest and turn the wise towards the thought of how every individual can help in the laudable enterprise.

How to Deal with Shortage

Let me now show how to deal with the three per cent of grains we might possibly get from outside. Hindus observe a fast or a semi-fast every eleventh day per fortnight. Muslims and others are not prohibited from denying themselves especially when it is for the sake of the starving millions. If the whole nation realized the beauty of this partial self-denial, India would more than cover the deficit caused by the voluntary deprivation of foreign aid.

Personally I hold that rationing has very limited use, if any. If the producers were left to themselves, they would bring their produce to the market and

everyone would get good and eatable grain, which today is not easily obtainable.

President Truman's Advice

I shall close this hurried review of the food crisis by drawing attention to President Truman's reported advice to the American people that they should eat less bread and thus save the much-needed grain for starving Europe. He added that Americans would not lose in health by the recommended act of self-denial. I tender my congratulations to President Truman on this philanthropic gesture. I must decline to endorse the suggestion that at the back of this philanthropy there is a sordid motive of deriving a pecuniary advantage for America. A man must be judged by his action, not the motive prompting it. God alone knows men's hearts. If America would deny herself for the sake of hungry Europe, should we fail to do this little act of self-denial for ourselves? If many must die of starvation, let us at least earn the credit of having done our best in the way of self-help, which ennobles a nation.

Let us hope that the Committee that Dr. Rajendra Prasad has called together will not disperse without presenting a workable solution of the food crisis that faces the country.

26

7-10-'47

Appeal for More Blankets

Speaking after prayers Gandhiji said that he had received a few more blankets since the day before. While he thanked the donors, he was constrained to say that donations at this rate would not help in providing blankets for lakhs of homeless refugees. The public should so organize the collections that large numbers of blankets might be collected in a short time. They could send them to him or entrust them to any person or organization of their choice for proper distribution.

Be True to the Congress Creed

He referred then 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 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 interest of the country ? If the Congress had now lost their confidence, they were at liberty to remove Congress ministers and bring any other men in power. Only they must not take the law into their own hands.

Let them not act in such a way that they might have to repent afterwards.

Food Control

Referring to his remarks about food control the day before, he said that he was convinced his suggestion would remove the major part of the problem of food shortage within twentyfour hours. Whether the experts would accept it or not was a different question.

Warning to Ministers

Many people came and talked to him and left literature with him to the effect that the popular ministers were acting in an autocratic fashion like their British predecessors. He had not talked to the ministers in this connection. But he was quite clear that nothing for which they had criticized the British Government should happen in the regime of responsible ministries. Under the British rule the Viceroy could issue ordinances for making laws and executing them. There was a hue and cry against the combination of judicial and executive functions. Nothing had happened since to warrant a change in the opinion. There should be no ordinance rule. Their legislative assemblies should be their only law-makers. Ministers were liable to be changed at will. Their acts should be subject to review by their courts. They should do all in their power to make justice cheap, expeditious and incorruptible. For that purpose *Panchayat Raj* had been suggested. It was not possible for a high court to reach *lakhs* and *lakhs* of people. Only extraordinary situations required emergency legislation. Legislative assemblies, even though the procedure might entail some delay, must not be superceded by the executive. He had no

concrete example in mind. He had based his remarks upon the correspondence he had received from various provinces. Therefore, while he appealed to the people not to take the law into their own hands, he appealed to the ministers to beware of lapsing into the old ways which they had condemned.

Secret of Rama Raj

To the people he appealed once again to be loyal and faithful to their Governments and strengthen them or dismiss them which they had every right to do. Pandit 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 Imamsaheb of South Africa had 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 Pandit Jawaharlal, the Sardar and people 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.

27

8-10-'47

BLANKETS RATHER THAN MONEY

Gandhiji said that a few more blankets had been received. A friend came in the afternoon and offered money or blankets. He asked him to send blankets. Another, as he was coming to the meeting, offered him Rs. 500 for the purpose and he accepted it. He would rather have blankets than money.

NON-VIOLENCE OF THE BRAVE

A good man had been to see him. 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 might have 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. Gandhiji had 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. It was a difficult task. What happened and was happening in Pakistan was very bad, he admitted, but what was happening in the Union was equally bad. It was a fruitless search to discover who was the beginner or who was more wrong. If the two wanted to be friends now, they had to forget the past. Enemies of yesterday could be friends of today, if they ceased retaliation in words or deeds.

Duty of Newspapers

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.

Duty of the Military and the Police

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 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.

28

9-10-'47

DONATE BLANKETS EARLY

Gandhiji reported that he had received at least 30 blankets during the day. He appealed to the donors to hurry up with their donations as the winter in Delhi became pretty severe from about the middle of October. Donations lost in value when they were not made in time.

PATIENT HEARING NOT ENOUGH

He was grateful to the people for giving him a patient hearing. But that was not enough. His advice, if it was worth listening to, should be acted upon.

THE MINORITIES IN PAKISTAN

The Hindus and 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 Satishbabu and others of the Khadi Pratisthan, Pyarelalji, Kanu Gandhi, Amtul Salaambehn and Sardar Jiwansinghji 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 won't be able to cope with so many refugees. They could not reproduce the original conditions. 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 the 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.

29

10-10-'47

More Blankets Received

Gandhiji announced that several more blankets had been received. There was also donation of some money and a gold ring for that purpose. He had received a telegram from Baroda informing him that 800 blankets were ready for dispatch and many more could be sent if railway permit could be secured. He hoped at this rate there would be enough blankets to save the refugees from the ravages of the cold weather.

Food and Cloth Shortage

He then referred to the problem of food and cloth shortage in the country. With the advent of independence the problems appeared to have become more acute than before. He was unable to understand the reason thereof. These were not the signs of independence. Indian independence was all the more precious for the reason that their means of achieving it had commanded universal appreciation. The fight they gave was bloodless. Such independence should help them to solve their problems more speedily than before.

As for food, the system of control and rationing in his opinion was unnatural and unbusinesslike. They had plenty of fertile land, there was enough water and no dearth of man-power. Why should there be food shortage under these circumstances? The public should be educated to become self-reliant. Once they knew that they had got to stand on their own legs, it

would electrify the atmosphere. It was well known that fright took a larger toll of life than actual disease. He wanted them to shed all fear of calamity if they took the natural step of self-help. He was convinced that removal of food control would not result in a famine and deaths from starvation.

Similarly, there was no reason why there should be shortage of cloth in India. India produced more cotton than she required for her wants. People should spin and weave themselves. He was, therefore, for the removal of cloth control too. That might result in increase of prices. He was told and he believed that if people abstained from buying cloth for at the most six months, the abstention was bound to result in a natural fall in prices. And he had suggested that in case of need in the meantime the people should produce their own *khadi*. He did not at the present stage bring in his belief in the use of *khadi* to the exclusion of any other cloth. Once the people began to produce their own food and cloth, it would change their entire outlook. Today, they had gained political independence only. By following his advice they would gain economic independence also and that would be felt by every villager. Then there would be no time or inclination left for fighting amongst themselves. It would result in elimination of other vices like drinking, gambling etc. The people of India would gain in every sense of the term. God would also help them, for, He helped those who helped themselves.

30

11-10-'47

RENTIA JAYANTI

In his after-prayer speech Gandhiji reminded the audience that that day was the twelfth day of the dark half of the month of *Bhadon*. This day was known as *Rentia Baras* or *Charkha Jayanti* in Gujarat including Cutch and Kathiawad. Meetings were held and people were reminded of the programme of the spinning wheel and the allied activities. Time was unfavourable for an enthusiastic celebration of the *Charkha Jayanti*. In its extended sense he had called the *charkha* the symbol of non-violence. That symbol appeared to have been lost, else they would not be witnessing the scenes of fratricide and the like. He asked himself whether it was not enough to stop observance of the *Charkha Jayanti* completely. But there was a lurking hope in his heart that there might be a few scattered individuals at least who might be true to the message of the wheel. It was for their sakes that the *Charkha Jayanti* should continue to be observed.

BADGES FOR HARIJANS

He had noticed the previous day a statement that Mandalsaheb and some other members of the Pakistan Government 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 crescent and the star. 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 their 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.

Dassera and Bakr Id

Gandhiji then referred to the approaching festivals of Dassera and Bakr Id and appealed to the Hindus and Muslims to be most vigilant and considerate so as not to hurt the feelings of each other. He wanted them to avoid giving cause for any outbreak of communal disturbances at the time of these festivals.

Satyagraha in South Africa

Lastly, he referred to the proposed launching of *satyagraha* in South Africa the next day. *Satyagraha* had been going on for some time. It had been suspended for some time. India's case was before the U. N. O. and the Indians, both Hindus and Muslims, in South Africa had decided to restart their *satyagraha*

the following day. His advice to them was to seek the assistance of both the Indian Union and Pakistan Governments and it was the duty of both the Governments to give all possible assistance and encouragement to the Indians in South Africa. Conditions for successful *satyagraha* were that the cause must be just and the means fully non-violent. If the Indians in South Africa observed these, success was bound to be theirs.

31

12-10-'47

A Word to the Refugees

Gandhiji said 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, 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.

32

13-10-'47

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 work including 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.

33

14-10-'47

A Worthy Example

Gandhiji reported to the audience that he had received more blankets during the day. Two teachers and some students from the Arya Samaj Girls' School had brought him some money and blankets. But what pleased him more than the gifts was the teacher's report that having read Gandhiji's appeal about food control in which he had suggested a fortnightly fast in order to save food so that no deficiency in food supply might be felt for want of import of foodstuffs from outside, teachers and the girls had decided to fast every Thursday. They had also decided to grow whatever food they could in their garden. If all followed this example, the problem of food shortage would be solved in no time.

The Charge-D'affaires of Iran and his wife came later and brought a large number of blankets which he gratefully received.

Talk with Sikh Friends

Many Sikh friends had seen him during the day. They came in two batches. He had long talks with them. The substance was that they could get nowhere by fighting amongst themselves. Whatever action was possible must be through the respective Governments.

Don't Weaken the Government

The Government had arrested some people and there was an agitation against the arrests. 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.

Look to Your Own Faults

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 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 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 whole-heartedly, he would be able to leave Delhi and follow his mission in Pakistan.

34

15-10-'47

COLLECT GOLDEN DEEDS

Electricity in the prayer ground having failed, the loud-speaker was not working. Gandhiji, therefore, asked the audience to come nearer so that they could hear him better. He told them that he had received more blankets and also money for the purpose. One sister had sent a cheque for Rs. 2000. Two Muslim friends had also sent blankets and money for buying more. He had requested them to keep and distribute them themselves. But the friends said that they were determined on handing over the gifts to Gandhiji for distribution among the Hindu and Sikh refugees. They said that there was a time when they found fault with Gandhiji. But they were now convinced that Gandhiji was the friend of all and enemy of none. In the atmosphere of mutual distrust and bitterness everywhere, such deeds were worth noticing. There was a book in English which is called the *Book of Golden Deeds*. They should have some such thing. No one should attribute motives to others for doing good. The two Muslim friends had not even given their names to him. It was said that every Muslim looked upon the Sikhs as his enemies and vice versa. It was true that many Muslims had lost sanity as many Hindus and Sikhs had. But it would be wholly wrong to condemn all for the faults of individuals, however many

they might be. Many Hindus and Sikhs had said that they owed their lives to Muslim friends and many Muslims had made a similar admission. Such good Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were to be found in every province. How he wished that the newspapers would give publicity to such news and avoid the mention of foul deeds which excited the spirit of revenge and retaliation! No doubt, there should be no exaggeration in describing good and generous deeds.

HINDI OR HINDUSTANI?

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. They had to do the right thing irrespective of what happened in Pakistan.

35

16-10-'47

EXAMPLE OF MYSORE

Speaking after prayers Gandhiji expressed satisfaction at the successful termination of *satyagraha* in the Mysore State. Mysore had joined the Indian Union. People there had been agitating for responsible government for some time. Recently they had again launched *satyagraha*. They had wired to him that they would strictly conform to the rules of *satyagraha* and that he should not worry about it in the least. Sir Ramaswamy Mudaliar, the Prime Minister of Mysore was a widely travelled man. He had come to an honourable settlement with the State Congress. He congratulated the Maharaja, the Diwan and the State Congress on the happy issue. He commended the example of Mysore to all the other States. The rulers should become strictly constitutional like the King of England so that the ruler and the ruled might both be happy and contented.

GOOD BEHAVIOUR

He was holding the prayer meetings on the grounds of a private house. They should appreciate the courtesy of the Birla Brothers in allowing them to come to their compound. It had hurt him to learn

that some of the visitors had damaged the garden and plucked fruits from the trees without the permission of the *mali*. They should not even pluck a leaf without permission. Their sufferings should not make them forget the common rules of good behaviour.

EXPECTATIONS FROM THE SERVICES

He had received a complaint that he had issued an undeserved certificate of merit to the Civil Service, the Police and the Military. He had not done so. He had only expressed his expectations of these services of the nation. That did not mean that they satisfied those expectations. The Civil Services, the Police and the Military including Britishers were now in India as servants of the people. The days when they behaved as masters, being in the pay of foreign rulers, were gone. They had to be loyal servants of the *Panchayat Raj*. They had to take orders from the ministers. They were to be above corruption and partiality. The people on the other hand were expected to give full co-operation to the administration. If the services failed in their duty, they would be guilty of breach of faith and proper steps would have to be taken to rectify the situation. The people had every right to ventilate their grievances against corrupt members of the services.

MINORITIES IN EASTERN PAKISTAN

Some people had come to see him from Eastern Pakistan. A large number of Hindus were leaving East Bengal. The friends sought Gandhiji's 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 Khwajasaheb in the difficult task before him. Suhrawardysaheb was not in Delhi. But he (the speaker) had no doubt that he (Suhrawardysaheb) 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.

36

17-10-'47

THE SOVEREIGN REMEDY

In his after-prayer speech Gandhiji referred to several letters and messages from friends expressing concern over his persistent cough. His speech was broadcast and so was the cough which was often troublesome in the evening and in the open. For the last four days, however, the cough had been on the whole less troublesome and he hoped it would soon disappear completely. The reason for the persistence of the cough had been that he had refused all medical treatment. Dr. Sushila had said that if at the outset he had taken penicillin he would have been all right in three days. Otherwise, it would take him three weeks to get over it. He did not doubt the efficacy of penicillin but he believed too that *Ramanama* was the sovereign remedy for all ills and, therefore, superseded all other remedies. In the midst of the flames that surrounded him on all sides, there was all the greater need for a burning faith in God. God alone could enable people to put down the fire. If He had to take work from Gandhiji, He would keep him alive, otherwise He would carry him away.

They had just heard the *bhajan* in which the poet had exhorted man to stick to *Ramanama*. He alone was the refuge of man. Therefore, in the present crisis he wished to throw himself entirely on God and not accept medical aid for a physical ailment.

BLANKETS

He expressed satisfaction at the rate at which blankets and quilts were being received. They would soon be distributed to people in need.

REMOVE CONTROLS

The committee appointed by Dr. Rajendraprasad had finished its deliberations. It was to consider the question of food only. But he (Gandhiji) had expressed his opinion sometime ago that control over food and cloth should be removed without further delay. The war was over. Yet the prices were going up. There was food in the country and cloth too. Yet it did not reach the people. It was a sad state of affairs. The Government was trying to spoon-feed the people. Instead of that the people should be thrown on their own resources. The Civil Service was used to carrying on work from their offices. The red tape and the files controlled their activity. They had never come in contact with the peasants. They did not know them. He wished they would be humble enough to recognize the change that had come over the people. Their initiative should not be strangled by the controls. They should be allowed to be self-reliant. Democracy should not result in making them helpless. Supposing that the worst fears were realized and removal of controls made the situation worse, there was nothing to prevent them from reverting to them. Personally he believed that it would greatly ease the situation. The people would begin to exert themselves to solve the problems and have little time to quarrel among themselves.

SATYAGRAHA IN SOUTH AFRICA

He had received a telegram thanking him for his remarks about *satyagraha* is South Africa. He had

merely stated what he believed to be the truth. There was no defeat in *satyagraha*, there was no turning back. He quoted the first line of the late Pandit Rambhaja-datt's verses — " We will die rather than accept defeat." The author had written those lines at the time of the martial law in the Punjab, when the people there were subjected to unheard of indignities. But the lines were for all time. The condition always was that the cause must be true and just. Even a handful of *satyagrahis* was enough to vindicate the honour of India.

They had also asked him to appeal for funds. The Indians in South Africa were not a poor community. But he could understand the wants of the few passive resisters. India was today passing through a financial crisis. The fratricide and the mass migration had resulted in loss of crores of revenue. He had not the heart to ask Indians under the present circumstances to give financial assistance to the passive resisters. But if anyone was prepared to give financial help, he would be glad. There were, however, large numbers of Indians overseas in East Africa, Mauritius and other places. Most of them were well off and there was no question of Hindu-Muslim differences amongst them. They were all Indians and he expected them to send money to their brethren in South Africa, who were fighting for the cause of Indian honour. Those engaged in *satyagraha* did not want luxuries. They just wanted money for the bare necessities of life. It was the duty of the Indians overseas to give the necessary assistance.

37

18-10-'47

BLANKETS SENT TO KURUKSHETRA

Speaking after the prayers Gandhiji said that he was glad to be able to report that more blankets and money were received. He hoped that if blankets came in at this rate, there would be no difficulty in providing them for all the needy refugees. He was also glad that Sardar Patel had issued a similar appeal. Gandhiji stated that Dr. Sushila Nayyar, who has been working for the comforts of the refugees, had left for Kurukshetra in the morning along with Mrs. Mathai, Mrs. R. Saran and Mrs. Krishnabai. She had taken with her a large number of blankets and clothings for the refugees.

THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE

Gandhiji then mentioned 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 inter-provincial 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 Abdulla-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 Sheikhsaheb was able to do, was surely equally easy for other nationalists.

38

19-10-'47

Speaking after prayers Gandhiji announced that since the days were getting shorter, people were finding 6 p. m. too late to attend the prayers. Therefore, from Monday the prayers would be held at 5-30 p. m. instead of 6 p. m.

Is It Swaraj?

Referring to the *bhajan* of the evening he said that there were touching reminiscences in connection with it. Almost all the *bhajans* in the *Bhajanavali* had a history behind them. The collection was made by the late Pandit Khare, an ashramite who was a musician and a devotee. He was helped by Shri Kakasaheb. This particular song was often sung by the late Maganlal Gandhi, who was the manager of the Ashram at Sabarmati. He had been with Gandhiji in South Africa and had given himself to the service of the nation. He had a good voice and a strong constitution. After his return to India he lost his robustness. The burden that fell to his lot was too heavy for one man. To carry the message of constructive work and Swaraj

to the millions was not an easy thing. He often sang this *bhajan* with great pathos. In it the poet expressed his disappointment at not seeing God face to face. The night of waiting seemed like an age. Maganlal's God was the realization of his dream of Swaraj, i. e. the Kingdom of God. That dream seemed far off. It could only be realized through constructive work. If the people had carried out the constructive programme laid before them then, they would not be witnessing the scenes that they were witnessing today. Swaraj was said to have been achieved on the 15th of August last. He could not call it Swaraj. In Swaraj brothers could not fly at each others' throats. A free India aspired to be friends with all. It aspired to own no enemies in the whole world. But alas! today her own sons, the Hindus and Sikhs on the one side and the Muslims on the other were thirsting for one another's blood.

Gandhiji told them all this in order to impress upon them that if they wanted to realize their dream of real Swaraj, they had to feel a constant yearning for it like the late Shri Maganlal Gandhi. God was formless. Man imagined Him in various forms. If they wanted to see God in the form of *Rama Raj*, the first requisite was self-introspection. They had to magnify their own faults a thousandfold and shut their eyes to the faults of their neighbours. That was the only way to real progress. Today they had fallen. The Hindus and Sikhs were looked upon as enemies by the Muslims and vice versa. They had no respect for each other's religion. Temples were destroyed and converted into mosques, mosques were destroyed and converted into temples. It was a sad state of affairs. It could not but lead to destruction of both the religions.

How were they to quench the flames? He 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 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 Abdullasaheb and some Muslim friends were at the prayer meeting the day before. So was the widow of Kidwaisaheb'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.

39

20-10-'47

Is It the Last Crime ?

The Rajkumari informed me last night after prayers that a Muslim Health Officer was butchered yesterday, while he was on duty. He was, she told me, a good, conscientious officer. He leaves a widow and children. The widow was so distracted that her one wish was that she and her children were also similarly butchered, now that their caretaker and bread-winner was removed from their midst by cruel hands.

I told you only last evening that all was not well with Delhi as it appeared on the surface. So long as tragedies, such as I have described, continue to occur, there is little ground for rejoicing over the silence that reigns on the surface in Delhi. Is it the silence of the grave as was once said of the surface silence during his Viceroyalty by the then Lord Irwin, now Lord Halifax ?

The Rajkumari added that it was no easy task to get together a sufficient number of Muslim friends who would perform the burial rites in strict accord with the *Quran*.

This narrative must cause any sensitive mind, as it causes me, a shudder. Should Delhi come to such a pass ? It is a sure sign of cowardice for the majority to dread a minority however powerful it might be.

I hope that the authorities will trace the perpetrators of the crime and bring them to justice.

If it was the last of such crimes, I should have little to say, deplorable though even such a crime

would always be. But I very much fear that it is a pointer. The conscience of Delhi must be quickened by it.

More Blankets Received

Money for blankets continues to pour in. My thanks go out to all the donors. It is good, too, that not one donation is ear-marked for this community or that.

An Open Letter

It is my painful duty to draw attention to another menace, if it be one. A Britisher writes in an open letter "To whom it may concern":

> "Several of us are living in a lonely spot in a disturbed area. We are pure British and for years we have devoted ourselves at great personal sacrifice to the welfare of the people of this country . . . We now find that a secret word has gone out that all the British left in India are to be murdered. I read in the newspapers Pandit Nehru's assurance that the Government will protect the persons and property of all loyal citizens of the State. But there is no protection for persons living in little country places or almost none. None at all for us. It is a physical impossibility."

There is much else in this open letter which can be quoted with advantage. I have reproduced enough to warn us of the lurking danger. Of course, it may be only a scare and there may be nothing beyond it. There may be no secret circular.

There is, however, prudence in not disregarding such warnings. I am hoping that the writer's fears are wholly groundless. I agree with him that all promise of protection by authority in isolated places is vain. It simply cannot be done, no matter how efficient the military and police machine may be, which, it must

be admitted it is not at present. Protection must come first from within, i. e. from rock-like faith in God and secondly from the goodwill of the neighbouring population. If neither is present, the best and the safest way is to leave India's inhospitable shore. Things have not come to such a pass. The duty of all of us is to regard with special attention all the Britishers who choose to remain in India as its faithful servants. They must be free from every kind of insult or disregard. The Press and public bodies have to be circumspect in this as in many other respects if we are to render a good account of ourselves as a free and self-respecting nation. Those who respect themselves cannot make good the claim if they will not respect their neighbours however few or insignificant they may be.

40

21-10-'47

Another Crime

In his post-prayer speech Gandhiji said that he had heard of another sad incident. It was not a communal murder. The victim was a Hindu Government officer. A soldier shot him dead, because he would not act as he was directed. This tendency to use the gun on the slightest pretext was a grave portent. There were barbarous people in the world, with whom life had no value. They shot dead human beings as they would shoot down birds or beasts. Was free India to be in that category? Man had not the power to create life, hence he had no right to take it. Yet the Muslims murdered the Hindus and Sikhs and vice versa. When this cruel game was finished, the blood lust was bound

to result in the Muslims slaughtering the Muslims and the Hindus and Sikhs slaughtering themselves. Gandhiji hoped they would never reach that savage state. That was their fate, unless they (both the States) pulled themselves together and set things right before it was too late.

No Interference with Law

Gandhiji then referred to another question. In some places authority had arrested several people who were implicated in rioting. Under the old regime people appealed for clemency to the Viceroy, who had to follow prescribed rules however faulty they were. Now they appealed to their ministers. Were they to act according to their own sweet will? He thought not. The ministers could not act capriciously. They were bound to let the law take its own course. Clemency of the State had a definite place and had to be exercised under due safeguard. The only way such cases could be withdrawn was by complainants appealing to the courts concerned to release the prisoners concerned. Heinous crimes did not admit of such easy discharges. In such cases it was not enough for the complainants to abstain from giving evidence against the accused. The latter had to confess their crimes and ask for mercy. And if there was sincere co-operation from the complainants free pardon was a possibility. What he wanted to stress was that no minister had the right to interfere with the course of justice even for his dearest ones. It was the function of democracy to make justice cheap and expeditious and to ensure all possible purity in the administration. But for ministers to dare to replace or influence courts of justice was the very negation of democracy and law.

A friend had warned Gandhiji that as his speeches were recorded on the radio, he should not talk for more than 15 minutes at the outside. He appreciated the warning. He had, therefore, cut down further remarks and hoped thenceforth to follow the practice.

41

22-10-'47

Speaking after prayers Gandhiji said that he was still receiving blankets and money for blankets. He was glad for the generous nature underlying the gift.

A Paragraph from an Urdu Daily

A friend had read out a passage from an Urdu daily to him in the afternoon. He hardly ever read Urdu newspapers. He knew Urdu but he could not read it with the required ease. Friends read out to him passages from Urdu newspapers from time to time. In the paragraph that was read out to him that day, the editor had stated among other inciting things that the Hindus were determined to turn out the Muslims from the Union. They must either go or have their heads cut off. He hoped that it reflected the opinion of the editor only. If it reflected the opinion of a substantial section of the public, it was a matter of great shame, and anxiety for the very existence of India. He had told them the consequences of this ruinous policy the previous evening. It was bound to lead to the Hindus and Sikhs killing each other ultimately. A friend had told him that a start in that direction had already been made. The newspapers had taken the place of the *Gita*, the Bible and the *Quran* with the people. For them the printed sheet was gospel

truth. The fact threw a great responsibility on the editors and newswriters. The kind of stuff that was read out to him that afternoon should never be allowed to be published. Such newspapers should be banned.

WITHER STATES?

Another friend had spoken to him of the chaos that was to be found in the States. The British exercised a certain amount of control over the States. With the lapse of paramountcy that was gone. The Sardar had taken the place but he had not the might of the British bayonet to help him. It was true that most of them had acceded to the Indian Union. Nevertheless, they did not feel bound to the Central Government. Many fancied that they were freer than under British suzerainty to treat the ryots as they chose. He himself belonged to a State and was a friend of the Princes. As such he wished to warn the Princes that the only way to save themselves was to become real trustees for their people. They could not live as autocratic rulers. They could not annihilate their people. Whatever might be in store for India, if any of the Princes dreamt of becoming absolute rulers, they were greatly mistaken. They could only live on the goodwill of their people. The millions of India had resisted the might of the British Empire and won their freedom. Today they seemed to have gone mad. Let not the Princes follow suit. Autocracy, profligacy and drunkenness would lead to sure ruin.

DASSERA AND BAKR ID

Lastly Gandhiji referred to the approaching festivals of *Dassera* and *Bakr Id*. 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 *Dassera* 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 harrassing 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 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.

42

23-10-'47

TO REFUGEES STAYING WITH FRIENDS

Gandhiji read out a note written to him by two refugees from Rawalpindi. They were staying with friends in the city. They had lost everything and wanted to know if there was any means of people like them getting blankets or quilts. Gandhiji's reply was that free blankets and quilts were meant for really destitute refugees who were staying in the refugee camps. It was the duty of friends and relatives to supply covering for those staying with them. But he could well imagine the difficulty of those who were hardly able to make the two ends meet. They could not give blankets to those staying with them. He was clear that there should be some means of helping such people. The difficulty was that some people would ask for free gifts of blankets etc. when they were not destitutes in reality. If he started supplying free blankets to all who asked for them, it would be impossible to cope with the demand. He had given them to some hoping that no one would deceive him and those who came to him with requests for blankets really needed them.

Birla Mandir was full of refugees. Birla Brothers took pains to give relief to as many as they could. Goswamiji was trying his level best to help the refugees. But the problem was so colossal that it was difficult to cope with it adequately. All that he could say was that he did not wish a single individual to suffer for lack of blankets in the fast approaching winter.

Yet Another Crime

He had heard with sorrow of another murder. A poor Muslim, who had a spectacles shop, went to open it hoping that things had at last settled down. He was murdered as he was opening his shop. Why should such a thing happen? Where were the police and military? The shop was not in a lonely place. Why did not any of the neighbours try to stop the act. He could understand the bitterness of the Hindus and Sikhs at the sufferings of their brethren in Pakistan. But the desire for revenge and retaliation must be checked. They must not degrade themselves by wreaking vengeance on innocent Muslims in the Union. Delhi was as much the home of the Muslims as of the Hindus and Sikhs.

Leprosy Conference at Wardha

But he had thought of reserving his remarks for the evening to the problem of leprosy in India. There were lakhs in India suffering from leprosy. People abhorred the disease and those suffering from it. He considered those entertaining unclean thoughts worse lepers than those who were suffering physically. Why should there be a stigma about leprosy any more than about any other illness?

In the past, service of leprosy patients was more or less the sole privilege of the Christian missionaries. But later on philanthropic Indians (though very few) had come out for the service. He saw one such institution in Calcutta. Another such philanthropist was Shri Manohar Diwan. He was Shri Vinoba's pupil and was prompted by the latter to take up the service. Gandhiji would call him a true *mahatma*. He was not a doctor. But he had studied the subject and as a

result of his whole-hearted efforts had arisen a colony of leprosy patients near Wardha. There was the Maharogi Seva Mandal, which directed and organized leprosy relief work in C. P. Under the aegis of the Maharogi Seva Mandal, a conference of leprosy workers was being called at Wardha on the 30th of the month. The idea originally was started by Shri Jagadisan, an admirer and disciple of the late Shri Srinivasa Sastriar. Shri Jagadisan had himself suffered from leprosy. He put it before the Advisory Medical Board of the Kasturba Trust and the result was the coming conference. Dr. Sushila Nayyar was going to Wardha in connection with the conference. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Dr. Jivraj Mehta should have attended it. But they could not leave Delhi at present being engaged in national work. He was telling them about the conference in order to draw their attention to one of the pressing problems before them. Were they to concentrate their energies on nation-building work or continue to dissipate them in fratricide? Communal hatred was perhaps the worst kind of leprosy imaginable. How he wished that people would develop abhorrence and horror of this leprosy so that they could be cured of the fatal malady!

43

24-10-'47

One and Only Passion

In his after-prayer speech Gandhiji said that it had appeared in the Press a few days ago that he would open the Asiatic Labour Conference which was meeting in Delhi on the 17th instant. He did not know who had given that news to the Press. He knew nothing about the whole thing. He had asked a newspaper man to contradict the report but no contradiction had appeared. He wanted to say that he was at present concentrating all his energies on the one pressing problem of the day. He could not put his mind to anything else. Hindus, Muslim, Parsis, Christians and others were equally the sons and daughters of India and had equal rights of citizenship. This was the ideal he had before him from early youth. With the achievement of independence that ideal seemed to be melting away. The *bhajan* that they had just heard said, "Whether anyone praises one or abuses, it should not matter for all was to be dedicated to God." That is what he (Gandhiji) was trying to do. He would go on repeating what he believed to be the truth irrespective of whether anyone liked it or not.

Keep Your Faith Bright

He referred with sorrow to the sad plight of moneyed men of yesterday who were today homeless refugees without shelter and clothes. God would end their sufferings before long, if they kept their faith bright and stuck to the right path.

Problem of Leprosy

He then turned to the problem of leprosy. He had spoken about it the previous day. Shri Jagadisan, who had suffered from the disease himself and was still a convalescent, had been doing a great deal for the service of leprosy patients. He usually stayed in Madras. But he had come to Wardha two weeks back to help in making arrangements for the Leprosy Conference. He (Shri Jagadisan) had sent him some articles and correspondence which he (Gandhiji) had read only in the morning. In that Shri Jagadisan had pleaded for the disuse of the word leper, which had come to have a stigma about it. He had said that those suffering from leprosy should be called leprosy patients and not lepers. There were many other contagious diseases like scabies, cholera, plague, even common cold. Leprosy was far less infectious perhaps than these. Why should there be a stigma about leprosy any more than about other infectious diseases? The speaker had told them that real leprosy was attached to an unclean mind. To look down upon fellow human beings, to condemn any community or class of men, was a sign of a diseased mind, which he considered far worse than physical leprosy. Such men were real lepers of society. He himself did not attach much importance to names. A rose would not lose its fragrance if it was called by any other name.

He had remarked the day before that Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Dr. Jivraj Mehta would not be able to attend the conference at Wardha because of pressing work at Delhi. He was glad, however, to learn that Dr. Jivraj Mehta would be able to attend the conference.

Lastly he informed the audience that the following evening the prayers would be held in the jail and,

therefore, he would not be able to have communion with them on Saturday.

44

25-10-'47

DELHI PRISONERS

Prayer was held in the Delhi Central Jail this evening for the sake of and in the presence of the prisoners of whom there were not less than 3000. Speaking after prayers Gandhiji said that he was very pleased when he received the invitation to hold the prayer meeting amidst prisoners. He was a seasoned ex-prisoner himself. He had served various terms in South Africa and in India. In South Africa there were Indians described then as coolies, Negroes and the third class were Europeans. All the three were kept separately in jails. When there was an influx of *satyagrahi* prisoners, they put the Indians and Negroes in the same compound. Jail rules were very strict. There was no distinction between political and non-political prisoners. They were all criminals. In a way it was right. All those who broke the law committed a crime against it.

CLASSES UNDESIRABLE

In India their struggle for independence was a mighty one and the topmost people took part in it. As a result there was not only a distinction between political and non-political prisoners, but there were again A, B and C sections amongst the politicals. He did not believe in those divisions. He also believed that all men committed offences, big or small. Some were caught and put in jail. Others managed to escape

detention. He was told by the Chief Jailer of an Indian jail that he often thought himself to be a bigger criminal than the prisoners under him. No one, however, would be able to deceive the biggest Jailer above.

Jails as Mental Hospitals

What should their jails be like in free India? He had long held the opinion that all criminals should be treated as patients and the jails should be hospitals admitting this class of patients for treatment and cure. No one committed crime for the fun of it. It was a sign of a diseased mind. The causes of a particular disease should be investigated and removed. They need not have palatial buildings when their jails became hospitals. No country could afford that, much less could a poor country like India. But the outlook of the jail staff should be that of physicians and nurses in a hospital. The prisoners should feel that the officials were their friends. They were there to help them to regain their mental health and not to harass them in any way. The popular governments have to issue necessary orders, but meanwhile the jail staff could do not a little to humanize their administration. What was the duty of the prisoners?

Duty of Prisoners

As an ex-prisoner he would advise his fellow prisoners that they should behave as ideal prisoners. They should avoid breach of jail discipline. They should put their heart and soul into whatever work was entrusted to them. For instance, the prisoners' food was cooked by themselves. They should clean the rice, *dal* or whatever cereal was issued so that

there were no stones and grit or weevils in them. Whatever complaints the prisoners might have should be brought to the notice of the authorities in a becoming manner. They should so behave in their little community as to become better men when they left the jail than when they entered it.

Gandhiji had learnt that there were Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims amongst the prisoners. Let not the poison of communalism enter their ranks. They should all live together as friends and brothers so that when they went out they might be able to check the madness outside. He wished *Id Mubarak* to all Muslim prisoners and hoped that the non-Muslim prisoners would do likewise to their Muslim brethren.

26-10-'47

LESSON OF DASSERA

Gandhiji began his post-prayer speech by referring to a letter in which a member of the audience asked whether it was any use saying that retaliation and revenge were wrong when his followers year after year depicted Rama as burning the effigy of Ravana on Dassera day and thus encouraged the sentiment of revenge. Gandhiji said that there were two fallacies in the question. He did not know who his followers were unless it was he himself. Again the interpretation of the ceremonial was quite wrong. It not only did not encourage private revenge but discouraged it by showing that it belonged exclusively to God known to Hinduism as Rama. He was the sole infallible reader of men's hearts and therefore knew who was Ravana.

If everyone arrogated to himself the position of Rama, who would be Ravana ? Imperfect men had no right to judge other imperfect men. It was unmanly and irreligion for the Hindus to lay their hands on the Muslims and vice versa. That way lay ruin of Hinduism and Islam. He, the speaker, was therefore glad that as a *sanatani* Hindu he represented not only the Hindus but the Muslims and members of the other religions.

Happenings in Kashmir

They might ask whether he was aware of the happenings in Kashmir. He certainly was so far as the newspapers gave the news. If the newspaper reports were correct, the happenings in Kashmir were certainly bad. The charge was that the Pakistan Government was coercing Kashmir to join Pakistan. No one could coerce Kashmir or for that matter Hyderabad or little Junagadh or any other State into joining one or the other Dominion. What was the solution ? He humbly put it to all the Rajas and Maharajas that they were not the real rulers of their States. The present Princes were the creation of British imperialism. The British power had quitted India. The real rulers of all the States were their people and their will must be supreme. The Rajas and Maharajas would remain only as trustees. The people of Kashmir must decide without any coercion or show of it from within or without to which Dominion it should belong. The rule was of universal application.

Peace Continues in Calcutta

He had received a telegram from Calcutta saying that there *Dassera* and *Id* had passed off most peacefully. At Calcutta a *Shanti Sena* had been raised

during his stay there. The telegram said that the *Shanti Sena* was working strenuously in that behalf. They had sent their members to East Bengal also. There too *Dassera* and *Id* appeared to have passed peacefully. Why should not they in Delhi and everywhere else follow in the footsteps of Calcutta? Some Muslims had been to see him during the day. He was friend of all and, therefore, people of all communities came to him. He wished these Muslim friends *Id Mubarak*, but his heart was heavy in the midst of distrust.

WELL DONE RATLAM!

He had received a telegram from the secretary of the Harijan Seva Sangha at Ratlam. The Maharaja there had declared that there would be responsible Government in the State and he would be a trustee henceforth and that all the temples in the State were declared open to the Harijans. Harijans and caste Hindus went with the Maharaja to the state temple. If Hinduism was to live, the last trace of untouchability had to be eradicated from every Hindu heart. The communal trouble was closely connected with the canker of untouchability. All men were equal before God. To look down upon a human being because he was not of their faith was a sin before God and man. It was a species of untouchability.

46

27-10-'47

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.

MORAL FORCE v. PHYSICAL

It is suggested with much force that popular Governments established in the country have not the prestige that the ability to overawe the Indian members of the services gave the foreign bureaucracy. This is only partly true. For, the popular Government

wields a moral force which is infinitely superior to the physical force that the foreign government could summon to its assistance. This moral force presupposes the possession of political morale that popular support would give to an indigenous government. It may be lacking today. There is no means of checking it save by the resignation of the Ministry at the Centre. What we are examining specially this evening is the condition of the Central authority. It must never be and, what is perhaps more important, never feel weak. It must be conscious of its strength. Therefore, if it is at all true that there is the slightest insubordination among the services, the guilty ones must go or the ministry or the minister-in-charge must resign and give place to the one who would successfully deal with official disorderliness. Whilst I voice, not without hesitation, the complaints that persistently come to me, I must cling to the hope that they have no bottom to them and that if they have, the superior authority will satisfactorily deal with them in so far as they have any justification.

Duty of Citizens

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.

47

28-10-'47

HONEST DEALING

In his post-prayer speech Gandhiji referred to a letter from a member of the audience. In it the correspondent stated that he had hired on payment some screens and tents from a Muslim tent merchant. The shopkeeper had now gone to Pakistan. The correspondent did not know to whom he was to deliver the hired articles in the absence of the owner. Gandhiji said that the matter should be referred to either the Sardar or Shri Neogy.

ALIGARH STUDENTS

Gandhiji then referred to a visit from an Aligarh College student who told him that many students from Pakistan had not returned to Aligarh. But those who were in the college had decided that they would like silently to do whatever they could to promote communal harmony. The best way his visitor suggested was for

some of them to go to the Hindu and Sikh refugee camps and distribute blankets etc. among the refugees. Gandhiji, while he appreciated the desire to serve their Hindu and Sikh brethren, said that that kind of aid was unnecessary at the present stage. It was likely to fall flat. What he advised was that the students should go to Pakistan and ask the Muslims why the Hindus and Sikhs had left their homes. They should also induce those whom it concerned to go to the refugees and ask them to return to their homes as he expected the Hindus and Sikhs to do likewise for the Muslim evacuees. As a general rule nobody would care to leave his home without just cause. In Gandhiji's opinion peace between the two was not possible without this restoration.

Evil of Ticketless Travelling

Gandhiji next referred to ticketless travel which had become a common disease these days. People evidently thought that under independence travelling by trains or buses was free for all. As a result of ticketless travel Government had already incurred a loss of nearly eight crores of rupees. Who was to bear the loss? Over and above this there was the problem of feeding and clothing of lakhs of rafugees. India was not so rich as to bear this heavy burden. If things like these continued, India would be ruined. If the railway earnings ran into crores, it was equally true that the expenses of running trains were no less heavy. If, therefore, such things continued much longer, stark ruin faced India. He had heard that things in Pakistan were no better.

Gandhiji then impressed on the audience the necessity of observing the laws of sanitation in railway

compartments. Spitting within the compartments was an instance in point. He also deprecated disregard of railway rules like pulling the alarm signals without sufficient cause.

If he were at the head of the railway administration, Gandhiji said, he would advise the railway management to tell the public that unless they purchased tickets trains would be stopped and they would resume journey only if the passengers willingly paid the fares due.

48

29-10-'47

DILIP KUMAR ROY

Speaking after prayer Gandhiji introduced to the gathering Shri Dilip Kumar Roy who sang the *bhajan* for the evening. Gandhiji said that though he knew nothing of the art of singing he felt that the voice of the singer was sweeter and richer than when he first heard him sing in the Sasoon Hospital in Poona where he had undergone an operation as a prisoner. Probably, very few persons in the world had Shri Roy's natural sweetness of voice. He belonged to the *ashram* in Pondicherry of *Rishi* Aurobindo. The audience should know that there was no race or religious distinction at the *ashram*. He remembered that the late Sir Akbar Hydari went to the *ashram* as on a pilgrimage. Naturally, Shri Roy was a chip of the old block, and had no prejudices. He had been to see him earlier in the day when he had sung two songs, viz. the *Bande Mataram* and Iqbal's the *Sare Jehanmen Achchha*. The concluding line of the evening *bhajan* meant that the

wealthy had their crores in palaces, horses etc. and the devotee had his all in and through his God whom he knew as Murari, Rama, Hari etc. If they all took the lesson to heart, they would shed all prejudices.

KASHMIR PANGS

Referring next to the situation in Kashmir Gandhiji said that when the Maharajasaheb 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 Abdulla as his minister with all the powers accruing to the office. And it pleased him to read in the papers that the Sheikhsaheb 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 Shrinagar, burning and looting villages along the route, destroying even the electric power house, thus leaving Shrinagar in darkness. It was difficult to 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 Shrinagar. That must save the situation to the extent of giving confidence to the Kashmiris, especially to the Sheikhsaheb 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 Sheikhsaheb and his Muslim, Hindu and Sikh comrades, men and women, dying at their post 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, Muslims and 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.'

49

30-10-'47

WORKING OF AHIMSA

This evening when as usual before the prayer meeting the audience was asked if there was any objector to the *Quran* verses being recited as part of the prayer, one member spoke up and persisted in his objection. Gandhiji had made it clear that if there was such objection, he would neither have public prayer nor the after-prayer speech on current events. Consequently, he sent word that there would be neither prayer nor speech before the public. But the gathering would not disperse without seeing Gandhiji. He, therefore, went to the rostrum and said a few words on

the reason for abstention and the working of *ahimsa* as he understood it. He said that it was unseemly for anyone to object to the prayer, especially, when it was on a private lawn. Nevertheless, his *ahimsa* warned him against disregarding even one objector when an overwhelming majority were likely to overawe one person into silence. It would be otherwise if the whole audience objected. It would then be his duty to have the prayer even at the risk of being molested. There was also the further consideration that the majority should not be disappointed for the sake of one objector. The remedy was simple. If the majority restrained themselves and entertained no anger against, or evil design on, the solitary objector, it would be his duty to hold the prayer. The possibility, however, was that if the whole audience was non-violent in intention and action, the objector would restrain himself. Such he held was the working of non-violence. He further held that truth and non-violence were not the monopoly of a few adepts. All universal rules of conduct known as God's commandments were simple and easy to understand and carry out if the will was there. They only appeared to be difficult because of the inertia which governed mankind. Man was a progressive being. There was nothing at a standstill in nature. Only God was motionless for, He was, is and will be the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, and yet was ever moving. We need not, however, worry ourselves over the attributes of God. We had to realize that we were ever progressing. Hence, he held that if mankind was to live, it had to come growingly under the sway of truth and non-violence. It was in view of these two fundamental rules of conduct that he and the audience had to work and live.

50

31-10-'47

EXAMPLARY BEHAVIOUR

Two persons had again objected to the recitation of the verses from the *Quran* at Gandhiji's prayer meeting, one of the objectors being the same who had objected the previous evening. Both were quite restrained in their objection. Gandhiji asked the audience if it was proper on his part not to hold the prayer because one or two men out of several hundred objected and thus disappointed the rest. Decency demanded that those who had any objection to the recitation from the *Quran* should desist from attending his prayers. The only way to avoid the impasse was for the audience, as he had said the previous evening, not to be angry with the objectors and not to molest them in any way whatsoever. He also asked the police not to interfere with the objectors. All with one voice said they would not in any way interfere with them. And the prayer proceeded. Shri Dilip Kumar Roy happened to be present again and he sang a *bhajan*.

Speaking after prayers, Gandhiji congratulated the objectors on their exemplary restraint and the audience for having maintained perfect calm.

MIND — A TEMPLE

Commenting next on the *bhajan* sung by Shri Dilip Kumar Roy Gandhiji said that although the *bhajan* sung was a simple tune, the trained voice of the gifted singer had imparted to the simple tune a sweetness all its own. The refrain of the *bhajan*, Gandhiji said,

had likened the mind of the devotee to a temple of worship wherein pure love resided permanently and illumined the heart. The heart being illumined, the vision became clear. This was non-violence in action. A mind not set on God was given to wandering and lacked the quality of a temple of worship.

Rich and Poor

Referring next to the wide gap that was still existing between the rich and the poor among the refugees, Gandhiji said that he had noticed, while in Noakhali as in Delhi, that rich people managed to flee from affected areas, leaving the poor in a helpless condition. This should not be. The rich and resourceful should have fellow-feeling for the poor and never leave them in the lurch. They must all sink or swim together. Adversity should abolish all distinctions of high and low or rich and poor. Then their refugee camps would be models of sanitation and solid co-operation.

Forcible Conversions Condemned

Gandhiji then 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.

51

1-11-'47

ABODE OF GOD

The previous day's objector turned up at Gandhiji's prayer meeting today also. Gandhiji said that he was glad that the objector only courteously registered his dissent from the recitation from the *Quran*. The rest of the large audience renewed their declaration that they would bear no malice and do no injury to the objector. The prayer, therefore, went on as usual. Shri Dilip Kumar Roy sang the *bhajan*, whose first line, Gandhiji said, meant that the devotees belonged to the land where there was neither misery nor sorrow. Gandhiji explained that in his opinion it had a double meaning. The one was that they belonged to a country, i. e. India in which there was neither misery nor sorrow. He could not recall a time when there was no misery nor sorrow in India. The first meaning, therefore, meant an aspiration of the poet. The second meaning had reference to the soul and the body which was its abode. Thus the soul inhabited a body which was in the language of the *Gita*, the abode of true religion and not the abode of fleeting passions. The condition attached to the success of the pursuit was

that the owner of the abode was free from the six noted enemies whose names were anger, malice, greed, passion etc. The blissful state was capable of attainment by everyone. And if that happened on any appreciable scale, the poet's dream about India would be quickly realized. Describing the misery of India he related the conversation he had with a lady doctor who had come from the Kurukshetra Camp. It was a pitiful sight. The Camp could take in more doctors, more medicines, more covering and warm clothing. Many had no change of clothes. The mothers of babies could keep them warm with the greatest difficulty.

SHEIKH ABDULLA

Then he invited the audience to cast their mental eyes on Kashmir and picture to themselves the condition of the people there. When he listened to the sound which the aeroplanes above made in their journey to Kashmir, his heart went out to the Prime Minister, Sheikh Abdulla and his people. He was a friend of all and made no distinctions between man and man. He represented the non-Muslims as well as the Muslims. Gandhiji remarked that those who were fleeing from Kashmir out of fear should not do so. They should learn to be brave and fearless and should be prepared to lay down their lives in defence of their homes. This applied equally to all whether old or young or women or children. He would not mind if the whole of the military and the people of Kashmir died at their post in defence of fair Kashmir. How he wished that the Afridis and other freebooters were sensible enough to leave Kashmir alone.

REFUGEES IN KURUKSHETRA

Lastly, Gandhiji said that if the refugees in Kurukshetra suffered terribly, he was sure, the refugees

of Pakistan could not suffer less. This senseless and consequent misery was too great a price to pay for the prevailing madness. He, therefore, commended to the audience to treasure the thought. The best contribution they could make towards the deliverance from misery was to shed all enmity and to regard every Muslim and others as friends.

52

2-11-'47

FULL CO-OPERATION NEEDFUL

Shri Brijkrishna had reported that there was a much larger audience than usual and about ten objectors to the recitation from the *Quran*. There were among the objectors the old friends too. But the objectors were perfectly restrained and courteous. Gandhiji was also told that there was a suppressed objection from a much larger number. 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 people came not to share the worship of God but they came 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 *kaffirs*? Were not the Hindus *kaffirs* 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 *kaffir* 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 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.

The Time Factor

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.

Azad Hind Fouj Officers

Gandhiji was, however, sorry to learn that the free-booters 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 Subhash 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 mur-dering 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 Abdullasaheb 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.

PAKISTAN ENCOURAGING?

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 from 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 *Granth Saheb* with due respect. He was informed that such instances of the Hindus and 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 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.

53

3-11-'47

Virus of Communalism

If two quantities of poison mix together, who will decide which was first on the field and if such a decision could be arrived at what end would it serve? We know this, however, that virus has spread throughout the Western Pakistan area and that it has not as yet been recognized as such by the powers that be. So far as the Union is concerned, it has been confined to a small part of it. Would to God that the virus would remain under isolation and control! There would then be cause for every hope that it would be expelled in due time and that soon from both the parts.

Remove Food Control

In view of the fact that Dr. Rajendraprasad has called a meeting of the Premiers or their representatives and others to help and advise him in the matter

of food control, I feel that I should devote this evening to that very important question. Nothing that I have heard during these days has moved me from the stand I have taken up from the beginning that the control should be entirely removed at the earliest moment possible, certainly not later than six months hence. Not a day passes but letters and wires come to me, some from important persons, declaring emphatically that both the controls should be removed. I propose to omit the other, i. e. cloth control for the time being.

Control Breeds Evil

Control gives rise to fraud, suppression of truth, intensification of the black market and to artificial scarcity. Above all, it unmans the people and deprives them of initiative, it undoes the teaching of self-help they have been learning for a generation. It makes them spoon-fed. This is a tragedy next only, if indeed not equal, to the fratricide on a vast scale and the insane exchange of population resulting in unnecessary deaths, starvation and want of proper residence and clothing more poignant for the coming inclement weather. The second is certainly more spectacular. We dare not forget the first because it is not spectacular.

This food control is one of the vicious legacies of the last world war. Control then was probably inevitable because a very large quantity of cereals and other foodstuff were exported outside. This unnatural export was bound to create a man-made scarcity and lead to rationing in spite of its many drawbacks. Now there need be no export which we cannot avoid if we wish to. We would help the starving parts of the world, if we do not expect outside help for India in the way of food.

I have seen during my lifetime covering two generations several God-sent famines, but have no recollection of an occasion when rationing was even thought of.

Today, thank God, the monsoons have not failed us. There is, therefore, no real scarcity of food. There are enough cereals, pulses and oil seeds in the villages of India. The artificial control of prices, the growers do not, cannot understand. They, therefore, refuse willingly to part with their stock at a price much lower than they command in the open market. This naked fact needs no demonstration. It does not require statistics or desk-work civilians buried in their red-tape files to produce elaborate reports and essays to prove that there is scarcity. It is to be hoped that no one will frighten us by trotting out before us the bogey of over-population.

Advice of Experienced Men

Our Ministers are of the people, from the people. Let them not arrogate to themselves greater knowledge than those experienced men who do not happen to occupy ministerial chairs — but who hold the view strongly that the sooner the control is removed the better. A physician writes to say that the food control has made it impossible for those who depend upon rationed food to procure eatable cereals and pulses and therefore, he says, the people needlessly suffer from ailments caused by rotten stuff.

Democracy and Trust

In the place of controlled food, the Government can easily run the very stores for selling good grains which they will buy in the open market. They will thus bring about automatic regulation of prices and

set free the hoarded cereals, pulses and oil seeds. Will they not trust the grain dealers and growers? Democracy will break under the strain of apron strings. It can exist only on trust. If the people die because they will not labour or because they will defraud one another, it will be a welcome deliverance. The rest will then learn not to repeat the sin of being lazy, idle or cruelly selfish.

54

4-11-'47

Offspring of Anger

Before he commenced his prayers Gandhiji said that though no one, except the courteous old friend who had registered his usual objection, had got up to object to the recitation from the *Quran*, he proposed to deal with a very pathetic letter of objection received from a Punjabi Hindu refugee who had suffered much. He did not know whether the objector was present at the meeting or not. Whether he was present or not, the speaker would not 'gnore the letter, if only because it was written with deep pain. It was fairly well argued but was full of ignorance which was born of anger. Anger was written in every line of it. Practically the whole of his time was devoted to listening to the tale of woes, whether recited by the Hindu or Sikh refugees or the local Muslim sufferers. His spirit was equally touched and wounded and if he allowed himself to be moody, it was no expression of *ahimsa*. He would be weeping the whole day long leaving no time either for obeisance, food or sleep. But from early youth he had used himself in terms of

ahimsa not to weep over the sorrows that came under his notice but to harden his heart in order to enable him to combat the sorrows. Had they not been told by the seers of old that one who was full of *ahimsa* was bound to have a heart softer than a flower and harder than flint ? He had endeavoured to live up to the advice and so when confronted with complaints like those in the letter in question or the recital of their anger and sorrow by his visitors, he hardened his heart so as to battle with the problem of the day. The letter was written in the *urdu* script. He had asked Shri Brijkrishanji to note down the points of the. letter.

HALF-TRUTH v. UNTRUTH

The first was the charge of breach of his (Gandhiji's) word. Had he not said that if there was even one objector at his prayer meetings, he would respect the objection and not lead public prayer for the evening in question ? This was a half-truth, more dangerous than full untruth. When he stopped the prayer meeting for the first time, he had announced that he suspended it for fear that the overwhelming majority of the audience might resent the objection even to the point of molesting the objector. This was several months ago. Since then the audience had learnt the art of self-restraint and when he got the assurance from the audience that they would harbour neither resentment nor anger in their hearts, he consented again to lead public prayer. The result was happy as he knew. The objectors were strictly courteous in their behaviour and beyond registering their objection they did nothing to interfere with the prayer. He hoped, therefore, that the writer of the letter would see that there was not only no breach but that the

result so far had been quite happy. He assured the audience that so far as he knew himself, he had not been guilty of any such breach throughout his long life of public service.

The writer of the letter then taxed him for reciting some verses from the *Quran* when he did not do so with reference to the *Japji* or the Bible. Here, too, the writer betrayed ignorance of the description he had given as to how the whole of the prayer verses had been adopted. He had already pointed out that very often *bhajans* were taken from the Bible as well as the *Granth Saheb*.

Well-to-do Refugees

The third complaint of the writer was that there were known Congress leaders who had left the West Punjab or some other part of West Pakistan and did not live like refugees sharing their trials and difficulties but were occupying buildings more palatial than those they had occupied in Pakistan. They lived a life of utter isolation from the refugees, who were often without shelter, without warm clothes or even change of clothes and without adequate food. If the complaint was true, it betrayed a disgraceful state of things. He (Gandhiji) had not hesitated at the prayer meetings to condemn in general terms the richer refugees for isolating themselves from the poorer ones, instead of sharing the latter's tribulation.

Duty in Delhi

The complainant then in sarcastic language twitted him (Gandhiji) for not going to Pakistan as he had intended. Why, Gandhiji was asked, he preferred to help his Muslim friends instead of going to Pakistan to the help of the Hindu and Sikh sufferers ?

Little did the complainant know that he could not neglect his duty in Delhi and with any hope go to Pakistan to alleviate the sufferings of the Hindu and Sikh brethren. He confessed that he was a friend of the Muslims and the others because he was an equal friend of the Hindus and Sikhs. He did not believe in any exclusive service. If he served one, the spirit actuating him to render that service was that he served the one individual as part not only of India or one religion but the whole of humanity. It was for Hindus and Sikhs of Delhi, refugees and others, to prove by their friendliness towards the Muslims of Delhi that it was superfluous for him to be in Delhi. They would then find him rushing to Pakistan with full confidence that his visit would not be fruitless.

CHARGES ANSWERED

The complainant would not even leave the Kasturba Fund alone. He asks what is being done of the Kasturba Fund and why it cannot be diverted to the service of the refugees. In the first instance, the fund was raised whilst he was yet in jail, for a specific purpose, i. e. the service of the women and children of the villages of India. It had a board of trustees. Its secretary was the ever vigilant Thakkarbapa and accurate accounts were being kept which the public could see. Therefore, it could not be diverted as the writer suggested and there was no occasion for the diversion. Money was being liberally subscribed and the public knew how liberal the response was to his little appeal for blankets. Sardar Patel had issued a special appeal which had received and was still receiving generous response.

SLAUGHTER OF PIGS

The last complaint of the 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 the Muslims.

Is Pakistan Theocratic?

Had not the Qaid-e-Azam said that 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.

Treatment of Cattle

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 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 *pinjrapoles* 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, he had been instrumental in saving more cows from the butcher's knife than any other individual.

55

5-11-'47

THE HARIJAN'S ADAPTABILITY

As there was no opposition to the recitation from the *Quran*, save from the usual courteous friend, the prayer took place without any preliminary remarks from Gandhiji. The *bhajan* of the evening was sung by a Harijan inmate of the *Harijan Nivas* in Kingsway. Remarking upon the well-modulated voice of the Harijan, Gandhiji said that it was a matter of pleasure to him, as it must be to the audience, that man for man, given equal opportunity a Harijan was in no way inferior to any caste Hindu or any other man. Indeed, he had found that in certain things, as for instance, vocal and instrumental music or in artisanship, an

average Harijan showed greater adaptability. He did not wish to convey that the Harijans were not as prone to vice as any other class of human beings. But he did wish to convey that in spite of the severe disability which untouchability placed upon the Harijans, it did not prove any bar to equal progress provided equal opportunity was given to them. Another matter of pleasure was that the ancient and celebrated temple of Pandharpur was thrown open to the Harijans precisely on the same terms as to the other Hindus. The chief credit belonged to Shri Sane Guruji who had undertaken to fast unto death if it was not finally opened. He wished to congratulate the trustees and the general public of and around Pandharpur upon the right step they had taken. He hoped that the last trace of untouchability would soon be a thing of the past. Such a step would make no small contribution towards the dissolution of the communal poison that had taken possession of both the parts of India.

How to Spread Vegetarianism

Gandhiji then dealt with several questions that had come to him through the post. A Muslim friend complained that in his part of the Union vegetarian Hindus insisted upon the Muslims living in their midst, abstaining even from fish and mutton. He (the speaker) had no patience with such intolerance and narrow-mindedness. Vegetarians in India, from religious conviction, were said to be in a minority. The vast majority of the Hindus throughout India, whenever they got an opportunity, did not hesitate to eat fish, fowl or mutton. What right had vegetarians to impose their cult on the Muslims? They would not dare to impose it on their Hindu non-vegetarians. The whole thing appeared to him to be ridiculous. The correct

way for people to spread vegetarianism was to reason out its beauties, which should be exhibited in their lives. There was no other royal road to bringing round others to one's view.

Remain in Your Homes

A Hindu critic said that he (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.

Firm on Non-violence

Another letter rebuked him 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 credit, 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 Abdulla'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.

56

6-11-'47

Distorted Facts

After prayer Gandhiji referred to two newspaper cuttings that a friend had sent him. He knew the writer's name but he did not propose to give the name or the particulars in the two extracts. All that he wanted to say was that the writings were meant to serve Hinduism; yet they were full of deliberate untruths. Facts were distorted when there was no invention. He made bold to say that that was not the way to serve any cause, much less that of religion. It did not hurt the persons who were attacked when the attack was not founded on facts, but was backed by fiction. He, therefore, warned the public against countenancing such newspapers, no matter how well known the writers might be.

Remove Controls

The second thing that Gandhiji mentioned was that he had the pleasure of meeting the Ministers from the various Provinces or their representatives who had come to Delhi to assist Dr. Rajendraprasad in coming to a decision upon the recommendation of the Committee of non-officials, which the Food Minister had called into being and which had presented its report to him. When, therefore, Gandhiji heard about the meeting he asked Dr. Rajendraprasad to give him an opportunity of addressing them in the hope of being able to clear their doubts, if they had any. For, he (the speaker) felt quite sure of the stand he had taken up. Dr. Rajendraprasad readily accepted his proposal

and Gandhiji was glad to meet old friends. He (Gandhiji) had been saying that so far as his opinion on the communal trouble was concerned, he had become a back number, but he was glad to be able to say that such was not the case with reference to his stand on the food question. He had held the view that there should be no food control nor cloth control, as long ago as when Mr. Casey, the Governor of Bengal, and he had the pleasure of having several interviews. At that time he did not know whether he had any backing or not. But during the recent controversy he was agreeably surprised to discover that he had a very extensive backing from members of the public, unknown and well-known. Among the voluminous correspondence he had on the subject, he could not recall a single writer who dissented from him. He knew nothing about the view held by magnates like Shri Ghanashyamdas Birla and Lala Shriram, nor did he know that he was to have any support from the Socialist circles except when Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia met him and expressed his whole-hearted approval of the ground he had adopted. He had no hesitation in suggesting that in the circumstances that faced the country on the food question Dr. Rajendraprasad should be guided by one member or more from his committee rather than by the permanent staff.

KHADI v. MILL CLOTH

He then referred to the control on cloth. Though in this matter he personally was, if possible, on surer ground than in the matter of removal of food control, nevertheless he was afraid that about cloth he had not the backing that he had about food control. His submission was incredibly simple. The Congress had readily supported the opinion he had held about

khadi as an entire substitute for any mill-cloth, foreign or indigenous. It had established the Khadi Board under the late Jamnalalji, which after his (Gandhiji's) discharge from the Yeravda Prison was expanded into the All India Spinners' Association. India had 40 crores of inhabitants. If the Pakistan area was deducted from it, it would still have more than 30 crores. They had as much cotton growing in the country as they needed. There were enough spinners to turn their cotton into weavable yarn and they had more than the required number of weavers in the country for weaving the hand-spun yarn. Without any outlay of very large capital they could manufacture in the country all the wheels, hand-looms and other accessories without difficulty. All that was needed, therefore, was robust faith in themselves and the determination to use nothing but *khadi*. They had known that it was possible to have as fine *khadi* as could be desired and to produce patterns superior even to those manufactured by mills. And now that India was free from the foreign yoke, there could be no hostility such as *khadi* had to face from the representatives of the foreign rulers. It was, therefore, a most surprising thing for him (Gandhiji) that now that they had come into their own, nobody talked of *khadi*, nobody seemed to have his faith in the possibility of *khadi* and that they could think of nothing but mill-cloth for clothing India. He had not the slightest doubt that *khadi* economics was the only sound economics for India.

57

7-11-'47

Visit to Tehar Village

Gandhiji, having gone to meet the Muslim sufferers at Tehar and having been obliged to give more time than was expected, went directly to the prayer meeting on his return. After the usual prayer Gandhiji referred to his visit and said with sorrow that the Muslims in and near Tehar were obliged to go through needless suffering. Several of them were land-owners, but their land they could not till for fear of molestation. They had sold their cattle, ploughs and some other movables. They were guarded by the military. The sufferers, who had gathered round him and had swelled to over 2000, said through their spokesman that they were anxious to go to Pakistan as life had become impossible and many of their dear friends and relatives had already gone there. It would be a mercy, therefore, if they were sent away to Lahore as early as possible. They said that they had no complaint to make against the military patrol. But he did not intend to take up the time that evening with a full description of the meeting at Tehar. He had told the gathering there that he had no power, but he would gladly carry their message to the Prime Minister and his deputy, who was also the Home Minister.

A Lesson

He then 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.

Advice to Refugees

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.

58

8-11-'47

There were three objectors to the recitation from the *Quran* apart from the usual courteous objector. Before commencing the prayer, therefore, Gandhiji asked the audience whether they would abide by the original condition that they would harbour no anger against the objectors and patiently and calmly with undivided attention go through the prayer meeting. The audience immediately said with one voice that they would abide by that condition. The objectors remained silent throughout the prayer. It went on without any interruption. This earned Gandhiji's congratulations at the end.

Recitation from Sikh Scriptures

Gandhiji then referred to a letter he had received from a Sikh friend who said that he was a constant attendant at the prayer meetings, which he (the writer) liked. The correspondent appreciated the tolerant spirit behind the prayer. He had specially appreciated Gandhiji's references to the *Granth Saheb*, *Sukhamani*, *Japji* etc. But he felt he could speak for the whole of the Sikh community in saying that they would be touched by Gandhiji's having daily recitation which he (Gandhiji)

could choose from the many extracts from the Sikh scriptures, which the correspondent offered to recite before Gandhiji. The speaker at once accepted the offer adding that he would come to a decision after he had listened for himself to the recitation by the writer. To that end he suggested that the writer should get an appointment from Shri Brijkrishanji.

Appeal for Cotton Bales

Next he referred to the offer that had come to him from Bombay from cotton merchants in response to his mention that the refugees should get cotton and calico and a supply of needles so that they could make *rezais* for their own use, which would save probably lakhs of rupees and give the refugees the required cover without any difficulty. Such a procedure would also increase the self-esteem of the refugees and they would learn the first lesson in healthy co-operation. He at the same time added that there was no dearth of cotton mills in Delhi itself. There were several mills running in the city, but he welcomed the offer from Bombay because he did not wish to put an unnecessary strain upon willing donors. The larger the number of donors, the better it was for them and the country. He hoped, therefore, that the cotton merchants would, as early as possible, send all the bales they could. Such co-operation from moneyed men would lessen the burden that lay upon the Government. When they had come into their own, everyone was a willing partner in the Government of the country if he did his duty as a citizen in the fullest sense of the term.

Manufacture of Khadi

He did not doubt that when the cotton bales came, he would be able to induce the mill-owners to give

enough calico for the *rezais*. The mention of cotton bales brought him to the subject of cloth control. He held that manufacture by the hand of enough *khadi* for the needs of the whole people was as easy as possible in India, given the condition that the raw material, i. e. cotton was available in sufficient quantity in the country. He never knew that there ever was a cotton famine in India. There never could be any for the simple reason that they always grew more than enough cotton in the land. Thousands of bales were exported from the country and yet there was no scarcity of cotton for their mills. He had already drawn the attention of the audience to the fact that all the instruments of production for hand-carding, hand-spinning and hand-weaving were available in India, as also a very large population. He could, therefore, only say that there was nothing but inertia which made them think that there was scarcity of cloth in the country. Nobody wanted cloth control. Not the mills, not the mill-hands, nor the buying public. The controls were ruining the country, increasing the army of idle hands who, for want of useful occupation, were a constant source of mischief.

Self-help and Co-operation

Harping back to the refugees in this connection, Gandhiji said that if the refugees were determined to occupy themselves usefully, they would first prepare *rezais* for themselves and then use every moment, men and women, for ginning, carding, spinning, weaving etc. The energy set free by this co-operative effort by so many lakhs of refugees would electrify the country and make the people follow the refugees and turn every idle hour to the growing of more food and preparing of *khadi* in their own homes. Let it also be

remembered that if cotton, instead of being baled, was taken directly from the field to the homes of the spinners in the neighbourhood, one process would be saved, cotton would be undamaged, carding would be easy and cotton seed would be left in the village homes into the bargain.

THE SISTER OF MERCY

Lastly, the speaker referred to a visit he had received from Lady Mountbatten. She had become a Sister of Mercy, was constantly on the move in both the Dominions, visited the refugees in the various camps, saw the sick and the suffering and thus tried to give them what comfort she could. During her visit to the Kurukshetra Camp she was asked by the inmates when Gandhiji would visit them. She heard the yearning from so many lips that she held out every hope that he (Gandhiji) would pay them a visit. Gandhiji assured her that she was quite justified in holding out the hope. As a matter of fact he had arranged to go to Panipat where both the Hindus and Muslims were anxious for him to visit them. In the same trip he had thought of combining the visit to the Kurukshetra Camp. But he had found that Kurukshetra could not be included in the same trip. Therefore, it was necessary to defer his visit to Kurukshetra till after the conclusion of the forthcoming meeting of the A. I. C. C. It was, however, suggested to him that whilst it was cumbersome to arrange for a loud-speaker in a big camp like Kurukshetra, there was no difficulty in speaking through the radio to the inmates of the Camp from Delhi, provided that the necessary connecting instrument was installed in the Camp. He could then speak to the inmates on Tuesday or Wednesday and later visit them. In the meantime he hoped to finish his visit to Panipat.

59

9-11-'47

I regret that as I have to go to Panipat tomorrow, I had to take silence early today so as to be able to speak to the Hindus and Muslims of Panipat on reaching there. I hope to return to Delhi in time for the prayer when I shall be able to speak. The newspapers wrongly report that I am going to Kurukshetra tomorrow. I said definitely that I did intend to go to the Kurukshetra Camp though not before the conclusion of the forthcoming A. I. C. C. meeting. I expect to speak to them through the radio probably on Wednesday at a time to be announced in due course.

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 the 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 moneyed 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 this 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.

Freedom in Foreign Settlements

I must now refer to a visit of friends from French India during the week. They complained that what I had said regarding what was claimed to be a *satyagraha*

in Chandranagore, was misused to suppress the aspiration of the people in French India for the fullest measure of autonomy under the Indian Union, whilst retaining at the same time, the wholesome influence of French culture. They also told me that, as under the British Government, there were, in French India, those who might be likened to fifth columnists, who, in order to serve their selfish purpose, co-operated with the French authorities who, in their turn, were aiming at suppressing the natural aspiration of the inhabitants of French India. I would be very sorry indeed if the account given by the visitors from French India were accurate. Anyway, my opinion is quite emphatic. It is not possible for the inhabitants of these small Foreign Settlements to remain under servility in the face of the millions of their countrymen who have become free from the British rule. I am surprised that my friendly act towards Chandranagore could be distorted by anyone to suggest that I could ever countenance an inferior status in the little Foreign Settlements in India. I hope, therefore, that the information given to me has no foundation in fact, and that the great French nation would never identify itself with the suppression of people, whether black or brown, in India or elsewhere.

60

10-11-'47

BECOME SERVANTS OF GOD

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 Nawabsaheb. 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 trouble 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 Governer-General he had no legal right to interfere with the affairs of Pakistan. As such he occupied the same position as Lord Mountbatten, who was merely a constitutional Governor-General. He could go to the wedding of one who was more than a son to him and who was to be married to the heir-presumptive to the British throne only with the permission of his Cabinet and was to return on the 24th of this month. He, therefore,

thought of Jinnahsaheb 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 Jinnahsaheb was behind the Junagadh accession, it was a happy augury.

VISIT TO PANIPAT

What, however, he wanted to tell the audience was about his visit to Panipat. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was with him. The Rajkumari was also to be with him, but she was at the Government House and he could not afford to wait beyond 10-30 a. m. by his watch. He was glad that he went to Panipat. 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 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 we had gone there. It seemed to him cruel that the refugees were dumped

on 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.

Dr. Gopichand

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 Punjabees. 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.

61

11-11-'47

JUNAGADH

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."

Accession to the Union

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 Nawabsaheb 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 Nawabsaheb of Junagadh was *ab initio* void, unless the ryots of Junagadh could be proved to have set the seal upon the accession by the Nawabsaheb. 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.

KASHMIR AND HYDERABAD

Finally, what Gandhiji said about Junagadh equally applied to Kashmir and Hyderabad. Neither the Maharajasaheb 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 Abdulla, speaking for the people of Kashmir and Jammu, wanted it. Sheikh Abdulla 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.

Division of Kashmir ?

He had heard whispers that Kashmir could 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 Indian States 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.

62

12-11-'47

Divali Felicitations

As that day was *Divali*, Gandhiji began by saying that he ought to congratulate them on the occasion. It was a great day in their calendar year. New year according to the *Vikrama Samvat* would begin from Thursday. They should understand why it was always celebrated by illuminations. In the great battle between Rama and Ravana, the former, representative of the forces of good, overcame the latter who represented the forces of evil. This victory established *Rama Rajya.*

Real Illumination

Today alas! there was no *Rama Rajya* in India; therefore, how could they celebrate *Divali?* He alone

could celebrate victory who had Rama in his heart for it was God alone who could illumine their souls and such illumination alone was worth while. The *bhajan* emphasized the writer's desire to see God. Crowds went to see man-made illuminations but the light they needed today was the light of love in their hearts. Then alone would they be worthy of receiving congratulations. Today thousands were in the most dire suffering. Could everyone in the audience lay his hand on his heart and say that everyone of these sufferers, whether Hindu, Muslim or Sikh, was as his own brother or sister? That was the test for them. Rama and Ravana represented the eternal duel going on between the forces of good and evil. The real illumination came from within.

MARRED KASHMIR

Gandhiji then went on to relate how Pandit Jawaharlal had just returned from seeing wounded Kashmir. He had been unable to attend the Working Committee meetings either the day before or that day in the afternoon. He had brought Gandhiji some flowers from Baramula. These gifts of nature were always beautiful. But the beauty of that lovely country was that day marred by the shedding of blood and loot. He had gone to Jammu, too, where all was not well.

The Sardar had had to go to Junagadh at the request of Shri Shamaldas Gandhi and Shri Dhebarbhai, who wanted his guidance. Both Jinnahsaheb and Bhuttosaheb were angry because they felt that the Indian Government had practised a deception on them and were forcing Junagadh to accede to the Union.

BANISH HATRED AND SUSPICION

In order to bring about peace and goodwill throughout the land, it was the duty of everyone to banish

hatred and suspicion from their hearts. No victory in Kashmir or in Junagadh would avail if they did not feel the existence of God within them and forget all their petty internal differences. *Divali* could never be properly celebrated until they had brought back to India all those Muslims who had fled from here out of fear. Nor could Pakistan live unless it did likewise for the Hindus and Sikhs.

He then referred to his visit to Broadcasting House from where he spoke to the refugees in Kurukshetra.

Regarding the Working Committee meetings Gandhiji said that he would tell them the next day what was possible for him to tell. He concluded by hoping that all would go well with them and with India during the next year that was to begin from Thursday and that God would illumine their hearts so that they might be enabled to serve not only each other and India, but through it the whole world.

63

13-11-'47

VIKRAMA SAMVAT

In his post-prayer speech this evening Gandhiji referred to the New Year's day as he had also referred to the *Divali* day.

He drew the attention of the audience to the universal custom that on their New Year's day they read sacred resolutions to do better than before so as to justify their celebration of the next *Divali*. That celebration should mean that the participants had successfully carried out their resolutions.

Conquer Evil Forces

He hoped that his listeners would make one supreme resolution, namely that whatever others did or did not do, whether in Pakistan or in the Indian Union, they would carry out their resolution to be good friends of the Muslims. That meant that throughout the year they would conquer the evil forces within themselves and establish the supremacy of Rama, the God of good. Incidentally, Gandhiji said that he would like to refer to the fact that whereas every year that day had magnificent illuminations, in the opinion of his informants, the day before there was only an apology of illuminations just to satisfy the superstition that if there was no illumination at all, it would be an ill omen following them throughout the year. He called this superstition because no amount of outward illumination, however brilliant it might be, could possibly serve any good purpose when it was not a visible sign of the light within.

No Going Back

The speaker then began to redeem of his promise of the previous evening that he would give them what he could of the deliberations of the Congress Working Committee during its three sittings. He was glad to inform them 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.

Religion Admits of No Coercion

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 Corgress. He, therefore, hoped that

during the year that had just commenced, the Hindus and 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 Hindu or Sikh.

A. I. C. C. MEETING

The A. I. C. C. meeting would be held on 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.

64

14-11-'47

RAMANAMA EXCELS EVERYTHING

Gandhiji took the *bhajan* of the evening as his text for his discourse. When he was fasting in the Aga Khan Palace which was converted into a prison to accommodate Devi Sarojini Naidu, Mirabehn, Mahadevbhai and him, this *bhajan* had gripped him. He did not wish to go into the causes of the fast. Its relevance simply was that he was sustained throughout the twentyone days not by the quantity of water he drank or for some days by the quantity of orange juice he took, or by the extraordinary medical care and attention he was receiving, but by enthroning in his heart God whom he knew as Rama. He was so much enamoured of the

lines of the *bhajan*, but whose words he had then forgotten, that he asked his associates to send a telegram for the exact words of the *bhajan*. To his joy he received the full text of the *bhajan* in the reply telegram. Its refrain was that *Ramanama* was everything, and that before it the other gods were of no consequence. He wished to recall this instructive episode from his life in order to emphasize to the audience the fact that the momentous session of the A. I. C. C. which was to meet in New Delhi on the day following, i. e. Saturday, should carry on their deliberations with God in their hearts. This they were bound to do as they were representative of Congressmen and as such they would not be worth their salt if their chiefs, the Congressmen, had God in their hearts instead of Satan.

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 Sikhs could be returned with honour and in safety to their homes in 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 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!

65

15-11-'47

FATHER OF THE NATION?

Gandhiji felt the audience would naturally expect him to tell them something of what he had said at the A. I. C. C. meeting in the afternoon but he did not feel like repeating himself. As a matter of fact it was what he had been saying to them all these days. If he was called, in all sincerity, the Father of the Nation, it was true only in the sense that he had had a great hand in making the Congress what it had become after his return from South Africa in 1915. That meant that he influenced the nation greatly. But today he could no longer claim such influence. This fact, however, did not, at least should not, worry him. All had but to do their duty and leave the result in

God's hands. Nothing happened without God's will. Theirs was only to strive. So he had gone to the A. I. C. C. meeting as a matter of duty, to tell the members what he believed to be the truth if he got the permission to speak to the members before they commenced the business of the meeting.

Controls Harmful

What he wanted to tell the audience, however, was about controls. He could no more than just touch upon the subject in the A. I. C. C. meeting as he had taken a long time over the other matters of moment.

He felt that it was criminal to have controls. The control system might have been good during war time. It might be good also for a military nation. It was harmful for India. He was sure that there was no scarcity of foodstuffs or cloth in the land. Rains had not failed them. They had enough cotton in the land and enough hands to work at the spinning wheel and the loom. Moreover, they had mills. He felt, therefore, that the two controls were bad. There were other controls too as for instance on petroleum, sugar etc. He could see no justification for them. They tended to make people lazy and dependent. Laziness and dependence were any day bad for the nation. He had daily complaints about these controls. He hoped that the nation's representatives would come to a wise decision and advise the Government to remove these controls which promoted corruption, hypocrisy and black-marketing.

66

16-11-'47

FINDING GOD

The *bhajan* of the evening said that man's highest endeavour lay in trying to find God, said Gandhiji. He could not be found in temples or idols or places of worship built by man's hands, nor could He be found by abstinences. God could be found only through love, not earthly, but divine. That love was lived by Mirabai who saw God in everything. He was all in all to her.

RAMPUR STATE—THEN AND NOW

Applying the refrain of the *bhajan* in daily life he (Gandhiji) 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 Nawabsaheb also for he was a friend of the well-known nationalist Muslims of the day, the late Hakimsaheb Ajmal Khan and the late Dr. Ansari. The Hindus and 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 Swayamsevak Sangh men whose ambition was to rid the Union of all Muslims.

SATYAGRAHA — MIGHTIEST WEAPON

The question wás how the 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 the 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.

IMPLICATIONS

It was the fashion nowadays to use the word *satyagraha* for any kind of resistance, armed or otherwise. This looseness harmed the community and degraded *satyagraha*. If, therefore, they understood all the implications of *satyagraha* and knew that the living God of Truth and Love was with the *satyagrahi*, they would have no hesitation in believing that it was invincible. Gandhiji said that he was sorry to say what he did about the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. He would be glad to find that he was wrong. He had seen the chief of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. He had attended a meeting of the members of the R. S. S. Since then he had been upbraided

for having gone to the meeting and had many letters of complaints about the organization.

HINDU-MUSLIM SOLIDARITY ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA

Gandhiji then 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. They all knew Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit. She was not there because she was Pandit Jawaharlal's sister but because she was able and did her work efficiently. She had a good team with her and they were all speaking with one voice. What had pleased him immensely, Gandhiji said, was Ispahanisaheb's and Zaffarullasaheb'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. True, Indians in South Africa were not penniless, they were not hungry but man could not live by bread alone and money was nothing as compared with human rights which were denied them by the South African Government. The Hindus and 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 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. So far as South Africa was concerned, he hoped that the Government and the Whites of South Africa would profit by what was being said in this matter by the distinguished Hindus and Muslims and that with one voice.

67

17-11-'47

India and South Africa

Yesterday I spoke about Rampur and our countrymen in South Africa. Today I feel I must deal more fully with the latter subject. I have lived in South Africa for twenty years from 1893 to 1914 with a break probably of one year. During that long and formative period of my life I came naturally in closest contact with all kinds of Indians as also with the White settlers of that sub-continent almost as big as ours. Between then and now if South Africa has risen, India has made giant strides. What seemed to be impossible only the other day has happened. We need not go into the causes. The fact is that India has come into the British Commonwealth, *i. e.* she has exactly the same status as the Union of South Africa. Should members of one Dominion be helots in another Dominion? An Asiatic nation enters the Commonwealth for the first time in its history with the willing consent of all the members of the Commonwealth.

India in the Commonwealth

Mark now the following message that the administrator, Dr. S. P. Barnard, of Orangia sent to the Natal Indian Congress of Durban five days after the entry of India in the Commonwealth:

"As you are celebrating Independence of the new Dominions which you consider a great day in the annals of Indian history, I hope all Indians in South Africa will now emigrate voluntarily to the new Dominions to act as missionaries of the gospel they have been taught in South Africa, namely to live in peace and order and not fight in communal riots in which hundreds are being killed in India."

Colour Prejudice

It is worthy of note that Dr. Barnard evidently doubts whether the entry was a great day. And then he treats the Natal Indian Congress with the gratuitous advice that the Indians of South Africa should emigrate to India and become "missionaries of the gospel they have been taught in South Africa, namely, to live in peace and order and not fight in communal riots." I very much fear that this message is typical of the average White man's mind in the South African Dominion. Hence the series of disabilities on our countrymen for the crime of being Asiatics and having a coloured pigment. I appeal to the best Western mind of South Africa to revise this anti-Asiatic and anti-colour prejudice. They have an overwhelming African population in their midst. They are worse treated in some respects than the Asiatics. I urge the European settlers to read the signs of the times. Either this prejudice is wrong from every point of view or the British people and their fellow members of the great Commonwealth have made an unpardonable mistake in admitting Asiatic countries as members. Burma is about to get her independence, Ceylon will presently become a member of the Commonwealth. What does it mean? Membership of the Commonwealth is, I am taught, as good as independence, if not superior to it.

Responsible men and women of these independent States need to ponder well as to what they will do with their independence. Is all this movement towards multiplying independent States, though proper and healthy in itself to result in another war more deadly, if possible, than the last two or is it to end, as it should, in the promotion of universal brotherhood?

Thoughts Make the Man

"A man becomes what he thinks," says an *upanishad mantra*. Experience of wise men testifies to the truth of the aphorism. The world will thus become what its wise men think. An idle thought is no thought. It would be a serious mistake to say that it (the world) will become as the unthinking multitude act. They will not think. Independence should mean democracy. Democracy demands that every citizen has the opportunity of receiving wisdom as distinguished from a knowledge of facts so-called. South Africa has many wise men and women as it has also many able soldiers who are equally able farmers. It will be a tragedy for the world if they do not rise superior to their debilitating surroundings and give a proper lead to their country on this vexed and vexing problem of White supremacy. Is it not by this time a played out game?

People's Voice

I must keep you for a moment over the much debated question of control. Must the voice of the people be drowned by the noise of the pundits who claim to know all about the virtue of controls? Would that our ministers who are drawn from the people and are of the people listened to the voice of the people rather than of the controllers of the red-tape which,

they know, did them infinite harm when they were in the wilderness! The pundits then ruled with a vengeance. Must they do so even now? Will not the people have any opportunity of committing mistakes and learning by them? Do the ministers not know that they have the power to resume control wherever necessary, if decontrol is found to have been harmful to the people, in any instance out of the samples, by no means exhaustive, that I am giving below? The list before me confounds my simple mind. There may be virtue in some of them. All I contend is that the science, if it is one, of controls requires a dispassionate examination and then education of the people in the secret of controls in general or specified controls. Without examining the merits of the list I have received I pick out the few out of the samples given to me: Control on Exchange, Investment, Capital Issues, Opening branches of Banks and their investments, Insurance investments, all Import and Export of every kind of commodity, Cereals, Sugar, *Gur*, Cane and Syrup, *Vanaspati*, Textile including Woollens, Power Alcohols, Petrol and Kerosene, Paper, Cement, Steel, Mica, Manganese, Coal, Transport, Installation of Plant, Machinery, Factories, Distribution of cars in certain provinces and Tea plantation.

68

18-11-'47

A. I. C. C. Resolutions

Addressing the prayer gathering this evening Gandhiji referred to the resolutions passed by the A. I. C. C. He said that they were most of them such as expected some duty to be performed by the public, as also something to be done by the Central Government and the Provincial Governments.

Hindu-Muslim Relations

Thus, the main resolution expected every non-Muslim citizen to be fair to every Muslim citizen so as to enable him to feel perfectly secure in any part of India as to his person and property. The resolution equally demanded from the Governments, so far as it lay in their power, to afford such protection. It also expected that the Governments and the public would so act as to enable all the Muslim evacuees who had left their homes under pressure to return and take up their usual avocations. The real test was that the columns who were marching on foot towards Pakistan would feel such a change in the atmosphere as to make them turn towards their homes. He was glad to be able to say that some persons of the column that was moving from the Gurgaon District were turning homeward. If they (the public)acted correctly, he was quite sure that the whole column would follow suit.

Panipat Muslims' Case

Gandhiji said that he was informed that the case of the Panipat Muslims was somewhat of the style of

the Gurgaon column. If railway conveyance was available, the Muslims might go to Pakistan under pressure. When he went to Panipat the other day, he was told that no Hindu inhabitant of Panipat wanted the Muslims to leave their homes, if only because each was helpful to the other. The Muslims were accomplished artisans, the Hindus were traders for the most part depending upon the Muslim neighbours for the supply of wares to deal in. But the advent of a large number of refugees disturbed the even tenor of their lives. The speaker could not understand the change of attitude, which the occupation of the Muslim houses by the refugees after his visit to Panipat signified, and the proposed exodus of the Muslims from that place. That was all contrary to the letter and spirit of the resolution he referred to. He almost felt like going to Panipat and living there and studying for himself the condition as it was reported to have developed.

Expectations under Decontrol

Similarly, Gandhiji took the resolution on several controls. Every citizen, Gandhiji said, whether rich or poor, was expected not to use more foodstuff than was necessary whilst the feeling of scarcity of food lasted. When control was lifted, naturally, the expectation would be that the growers would willingly give up hoarding and make available for the public, on fair returns the cereals and pulses they were holding and the grain-dealers would think more of selling the grain at the cheapest rate possible consistently with a reasonable profit for themselves and the Government would be expected to loosen and finally give up the control at the earliest possible moment.

The same thing, only more forcibly, applied to cloth. The most disturbing factor, however, was the information

that was given to him, viz. that the members of the A. I. C. C. who voted for the resolutions were not sincere in their professions. He hoped that the information was wholly baseless and if it was so, he had no doubt that so many representatives of the people could not but bring about a healthy change in the conduct of the public, so as to restore the credit that India enjoyed on the 15th of August and for a few days after.

69

19-11-'47

A Disgraceful Scene

Addressing the prayer gathering this evening Gandhiji said that the previous evening he had referred to the main resolution of the A. I. C. C. regarding Hindu-Muslim relations. It was his misfortune, he remarked, to refer on Wednesday evening to an illustration of how it was being defeated in Delhi. Little did he know that the very evening that he was expressing his misgivings, the truth would be illustrated in the heart of Old Delhi. He was told last night that there was a large crowd of Hindus and Sikhs collected in Chandni Chowk in front of a shop that belonged to a Muslim, but which was given to a refugee on condition that the shop would have to be returned to the owner when the latter came back. Happily, the owner turned up having never wished to leave his business for ever. The officer-in-charge went to the occupant and asked him to vacate it in favour of the owner. The occupant hesitated and then promised to vacate on the officer returning in the evening for possession. He (the officer)

found that the occupant instead of delivering possession had evidently informed his friends who, it was reported, collected in a threatening mood demonstrating against the shop being vacated. The few police in Chandni Chowk were unable to cope with the crowd. So they summoned more assistance. It came and the military or the police, as the case may be, fired in the air. The frightened crowd dispersed not however without stabbing a passer-by. Happily the wound was not fatal. The result of the rowdy demonstration was, however, curious. The shop in question was not vacated. Whether the authority was finally defied or whether at the time of speaking the shop had been vacated, he (the speaker) did not know. He hoped, however, that authority to be authority would never be defied with impunity under the state of the precious freedom India had attained. All he could say was that the whole thing was disgraceful. The crowd, he was told, must have numbered not less than 2,000.

In giving the version as it had come to him, Gandhiji said, he had underrated it. If, however, there was still room for correction and if it was brought to his notice, he would gladly share it with the audience.

SHORTCOMINGS OF THE SIKHS

Nor was this all. In another part, an attempt was being made to force the Muslim occupants out of their places so as to make room for the Hindu and Sikh refugees. The technique was that the Sikhs brandished their swords and terrified the Muslims, threatening dire vengeance if they did not vacate their homes. He was also told that the Sikhs were given to drinking with the results which could easily be surmised. They danced with naked swords to the terror of the passers-by. He was further told that whereas in Chandni

Chowk it was the custom for the Muslims not to sell *kababs* or other flesh foods in that vicinity, the Sikhs and also probably other refugees freely sold these forbidden foods in Chandni Chowk much to the annoyance of the Hindus in that locality. The nuisance had become so great that men found it difficult to pass through the crowds in Chandni Chowk for fear of receiving unwelcome attention. He wished to appeal to his refugee friends to desist from the practices he had described for the sake of themselves and the country.

Carrying of Kirpans

As to the *kirpans*, Gandhiji continued, whilst there was for a short time a ban on the carrying of *kirpans* beyond a certain size, during the ban he was approached by many Sikh friends to use his influence for the removal of the ban and the prescription of a particular size. They quoted a judgement of the Privy Council which was given some years ago ruling that the *kirpan* could be carried by any Sikh without any limitation as to size. He had not read the judgement. He (Gandhiji) understood that the judges interpreted the word *kirpan* to mean a 'sword' of any size. The then Punjab Government met the Privy Council judgement by declaring that it was open to anyone to possess a sword. And so, in the Punjab any citizen could carry a sword of any size he liked.

He (the speaker) said that he had no sympathy either for the Sikhs or the Punjab Government. Some Sikh friends had come to him producing texts from the *Grantha Saheb* in favour of the speaker's view that the *kirpan* was never meant to be a weapon of offence or to be used anyhow. Only a Sikh who carried out the injunctions of the *Grantha Saheb* could use a *kirpan* on rare occasions of having to defend innocent

women, children, old people and others against heavy odds. It was for that reason that one Sikh was supposed to be equal to one and a quarter lakh opponents. Therefore, a Sikh who was given to drink and indulged in other vices, forfeited the right to carry a *kirpan* as a religious symbol of purity and restraint, which is meant to be used only in the strict prescribed manner.

Gandhiji was of opinion that it was idle, even harmful, to invoke the aid of the past judgements of the Privy Council in order to justify licence. We had just got out of what the speaker had described as a state of bondage. It was wholly improper in a state of liberty to break up all healthy restraints under which alone a society could grow. He would ask the Sikh friends, therefore, not to sully the great *Sikh Panth* by using the *kirpan* in favour of any questionable conduct or behaviour. Let them not unmake what was made by arrays of martyrs of whose bravery the whole humanity was proud.

The Military and the Police

Gandhiji then asked the audience to have a peep into another scene. He had a description given to him of a camp in which rude behaviour was imputed to the military. All camp life should be a model of cleanliness within and without, of which the military and the police should become jealous guardians. He hoped, therefore, that the information given to him was by no means applicable to these guardians of law and order in general, but that it was an exception. The military and the police should really be the first to feel the glow of freedom. Let it not be said of them that they could only be well-behaved under the terrible restraint superimposed upon them. Let them show by their correct conduct that they could be as worthy

and model citizens of India as any in the world. If these guardians of law disregarded the law itself, running the Government might become an impossibility. And it would be most difficult to carry out the resolutions of the A. I. C. C. as they should be.

SHERWANI'S MARTYRDOM

Having given them the gloomy side of the picture, Gandhiji said that he would fain give them the bright side also. He quoted from a note given to him by an eye-witness of the story of exemplary bravery:

"Mir Maqbool Sherwani was a young brave leader of the National Conference in Baramula. He was in the early thirties.

"On learning that he was an important leader of the National Conference, the invaders tied him up to two posts in a place near the Nishat Talkies. They beat him first and then asked him to repudiate the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and its leader Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Abdulla. They asked him to swear allegiance to the so-called Azad Kashmir provisional government which had its headquarters in Palandari.

"Sherwani stoutly refused to repudiate his national organization and told the invaders to their face that the Sher-e-Kashmir was at the head of affairs now, that Indian Union troops had arrived and that the invaders would be driven out in a few days.

"This enraged and frightened the invader gang who riddled him with fourteen bullets. They cut off his nose and disfigured his face and stuck a notice on his body with the words:

'This is a traitor.
His name is Sherwani.
This is the fate all traitors will get.'

"But within 48 hours of this cold-blooded murder and sadistic terror Sherwani's prophecy came true and the invaders ran pell-mell out of Baramula, with Indian Union troops hot in pursuit."

This was a martyrdom, said Gandhiji, of which anyone, be he a Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or any other, would be proud.

Pride and Friendship

In his concluding remarks Gandhiji said that a friend had related an instance of pride which would not be humbled even under distressing circumstances and of friendship which would stand any strain. This was the story of Narayansingh who was an officer of long standing. He had lost his extensive property in the West Punjab. He was now in Delhi, disdained to beg or to go under because of loss of possessions. He met an old friend whom he would not allow to condole with him as he thought nothing of the adversity that had overtaken him. The Sikh officer was glad beyond measure to meet in Ali Shah, a brother officer and common friend. Ali Shah had lost his all. Some misfortune had overtaken him though it was not due to communal frenzy. He was as brave as Narayansingh and each was proud of the other's friendship. They forgot their misfortunes in that they met each other after twentyfive years' separation.

70

20-11-'47

No Longer Non-co-operation

Addressing the prayer gathering this evening Gandhiji said that he had received two chits from the same writer in one of which he said that he had given up his job and would like to work under him (Gandhiji) and the other suggested that he should sing a *bhajan* at the prayer. As to the first, he could not help saying that it was wrong of him to have given up his job. It was true that during the British regime he had advised non-co-operation, but now there was no such thing. A man could, if he liked, even while serving somewhere for the sake of earning his livelihood, render service to his country. Every bread-winner did so if he earned his livelihood honestly and without partaking in any violence. The writer should also realize that Gandhiji had nothing for him. If, however, he wanted to do some service he should offer himself to the *goshala* to which he was about to refer.

As to singing a *bhajan* at the prayer meeting it was not everybody who could be allowed to sing. Only those persons could sing by previous permission who were known to be servants of God.

Visit to Okhla

The speaker then referred to his visit to the refugee camp at Okhla in the company of Sucheta-devi and some of her co-workers. He was glad to notice the praiseworthy cleanliness about the camp. It was dotted with *dharmshalas* meant for pilgrims who

visited the place at the time of fairs which, he understood, took place periodically at the place. These buildings were now utilized for the refugees. There was some difficulty about proper water supply, which the management was striving to overcome. He had no doubt that if the water supply could be guaranteed for a much larger number of refugees than the present occupants, the place was capable of giving shelter to many more.

Of Officials

While he was speaking on the subject of refugees, Gandhiji said that he would like to draw attention to some of the shortcomings which had been mentioned to him. He was told that there was black-marketing going on among the refugees themselves. The officials who were concerned in the work of looking after the refugees were not reported to be above reproach. He was told that it was not possible to get accommodation without having to bribe the officer-in-charge nor was their conduct supposed to be otherwise above reproach. Naturally, no charge could be universal, but even if there was one black sheep among many, the many suffered in the consequence.

Malpractices among the Refugees

Then he was told that the refugees themselves were not above resorting to petty thefts. He expected perfect straightforwardness from them. It was reported to him that the *rezais* that were distributed among the refugees were in some cases torn up, the cotton was thrown away and the calico was turned into shirts etc. He was told of several other things of a like nature, but he must not detain the audience over a recitation of all the misdeeds attributed to the refugees. He wanted to hasten to the subject of the evening.

INDIA'S CATTLE WEALTH

There was the usual annual function in connection with a *goshala* that was going on at Kishangunj in Delhi. Acharya Kripalani was to preside at the function the next day and he (Gandhiji) was pressed to go there even if it was only for ten minutes. The speaker felt that he must not go to any function by way of ornament. He could do nothing in ten minutes, see nothing. And he was much too occupied with communal matters to be able to do justice to any other thing. The management realizing his helplessness excused him and were satisfied if he said his say at the prayer meeting about the service of the cow, especially regard being had to *goshalas*. This he gladly consented to do. He had not hesitated to say that the preservation and development of the cattle wealth of India and the proper treatment of the cow and her progeny was a far more difficult task than the winning of political freedom. He claimed to be a devoted worker in the cause and to possess true knowledge of how the cow could be saved. But he confessed that somehow or other he had hitherto failed to impress the general public, i. e. the masses, with the necessity of giving proper care and attention to the problem. Those who were responsible for the management of *goshalas* knew how to finance them, but they were too ignorant to know the science of dealing with the cattle wealth of India. They did not know how to bring up the cow so as to increase her milk yield and improve the stock of bulls that she gave.

MANAGEMENT OF GOSHALAS

Therefore, *goshalas* throughout India, instead of being institutions where one could learn the art of

properly breeding the cattle of India and being model dairies and places where one could buy good milk, good cows, equally good breeding bulls and strong oxen, were merely places where cattle were kept somehow. The result was that instead of being the premier country in the world for exhibiting splendid cattle and where abundant pure milk could be had at the cheapest rate possible, it probably occupied the lowest rank in the matter. They did not even know how to make the best use of cattle-dung and urine, nor did they know how to make use of dead cattle, with the result that through their ignorance they lost crores of rupees. Some experts contended that the cattle wealth was a burden on the land, fit only to be destroyed. He did not share the opinion, but if the general ignorance prevailed for any length of time he would not be surprised to find that cattle had become a burden on the land. He hoped, therefore, that the management of the *goshala* in question would apply themselves to making it a model institution from every point of view.

71

21-11-'47

DAIRIES IN INDIA

Referring to the question of the protection and development of the cow in his post-prayer speech this evening Gandhiji said that probably at the time he was speaking to the audience, the annual function at the *goshala* of which he spoke the previous evening, was still going on. He would like to mention one thing. He did not during his speech of the previous

evening mention the various dairies conducted in India in the interest of soldiers. Dr. Rajendraprasad had told him that the dairies were still going on. He had visited the Central Dairy in Bangalore years ago when Colonel Smith was in charge. He saw there some beautiful cattle. One was a prize cow supposed to be the best in all Asia, yielding 75 lbs. of milk per day or at a time, he was not sure which. That cow was free to roam about without restriction and here and there was to be found fodder for the cow to which she was free to help herself. That was the bright side of the picture.

Slaughter of Calves

The other side he did not see but he was authentically told that most of the male calves were destroyed as they could not all be turned into draft cattle. These dairies occupied hundreds of acres of land, if not much more. It was all in the interest mainly of the European soldiers. These dairies cost several crores. He considered it to be no longer necessary now that the British tommy was no more in India. The Indian soldier, he was sure, would feel ashamed if he knew that these expensive dairies were conducted in his behalf. He was sure also that the Indian soldier would not claim any special treatment to which the ordinary citizen was also not entitled.

Satish Babu on the Cow

The most authentic and perhaps exhaustive literature up to date on the cow and the buffalo was to be found in the monumental work of Shri Satishchandra Das Gupta of the Khadi Pratishthan. It was not filled with extracts from extant literature but it was based on personal experience and written during one of his

imprisonments. It was translated in Bengali and Hindustani. Those who studied the book would find it of great service in promoting the well-being of India's cattle and in the endeavour to increase the yield of milk. There was in the book also a comparison between the cow and the buffalo.

"HINDU" AND "HINDUISM"

Gandhiji then 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."

Camps in General

Continuing Gandhiji said that the sister who was with him when he went to the Okhla camp was a little upset because she thought that his remarks about malpractices in some refugee camps might have reference to the Okhla camp. It was impossible for him after a hurried visit to the camp to cast any such reflection upon that camp. He had taken care in the speech to refer to malpractices in the camps incidentally.

Act of Ungodliness

Gandhiji said that he could not help mentioning the fact that according to his information about 137 mosques in Delhi were more or less damaged during the recent disturbances. Some of them were converted into *mandirs*. One such was near Connaught Place which nobody could miss. There was a tricolour flying there. It was converted into a *mandir* with the installation of an idol. He (the speaker) considered all such desecration as a blot upon Hinduism and Sikhism. It was, in his opinion, a wholly ungodly act. That the Muslims in Pakistan had resorted to such desecration could not be pleaded in extenuation of the blot he had mentioned. Any such act, in his opinion, constituted an act of destroying Hinduism, Sikhism or Islam as the case may be. Gandhiji referred the audience to the recent resolution of the A. I. C. C. on the subject.

Persecution of Roman Catholics

At the risk of being longer than usual, Gandhiji felt bound finally to refer to a case of persecution of the Roman Catholics near Gurgaon, which was brought to his notice. The village in question where it took place was known as Kanhai — about 25 miles from Delhi. One of his visitors was an Indian Roman Catholic Chaplain and the other was a catechist belonging to a village. They had produced to Gandhiji a letter from the Roman Catholics in the village relating the story of persecution at the hands of the Hindus. This was curiously enough in *urdu*. He understood that the inhabitants of that part of the country, whether they were Hindus or others, could only speak Hindustani and write in the *urdu* script. The informants told him that the Roman Catholics there had been threatened if they did not remove themselves from their village. He hoped that it was an idle threat and that these Christian brothers and sisters would be left to follow their own faith and avocation without let or hindrance. Surely, they were not less entitled to their freedom than they were under the British regime, now that there was freedom from political bondage. That freedom could never be confined to the Hindus only in the Union and the Muslims only in Pakistan. He had in one of his speeches already told the audience that when the mad fury against the Muslims had abated, it was likely to be vented on others; but when he made the remark he was not prepared for such an early verification of his foreprepared for such an early verification of his forebodings. The fury against the Muslims had not yet completely abated. So far as he knew, these Christians were utterly inoffensive. It was suggested that their offence consisted in being Christians, more so because

they ate beef and pork. As a matter of curiosity Gandhiji had asked the Chaplain whether there was any truth in the remark and he was told that these Roman Catholics, of their own accord, had abjured beef and pork not only now but long ago. If this kind of unreasoning prejudice persisted, the future for independent India was dismal. The Chaplain himself had recently had his bicycle taken away from him when he was at Rewari and he narrowly escaped death. Was this agony to end only with the extinction of all the non-Hindus and non-Sikhs ?

Gandhiji said that he had no desire to live to witness such a dissolution of India and he would ask the audience to join him in the wish and prayer that good sense would return to the Hindus and Sikhs of the Union.

72

22-11-'47

SONIPAT CHRISTIANS

Reverting to the ill-treatment of Christians in a village near Gurgaon, Gandhiji said in his after-prayer speech this evening that he had received information that somewhat similar treatment was meted out to Christians at Sonipat. There, he was given to understand that at first the missionaries were requested to allow the use of their houses for the refugees, which they gladly did and for which they were thanked too. But the thanks were turned into a curse in that their other buildings were pressed into service, and they were ultimately asked to leave Sonipat if they did not wish to find life in Sonipat too irksome for them. If the facts

were as stated, evidently the plague was extending and one would not know where the plague was to land India.

TIT FOR TAT?

In a discussion with some friends Gandhiji was told that much improvement was not to be expected in the Indian Union unless there was abatement of the corresponding nuisance in Pakistan. What had appeared in the papers about Lahore was cited as an instance. He himself never swore by newspaper reports and would warn readers of newspapers not to be easily affected by stories reported therein. Not even the best of them were free from exaggeration and embellishment. But supposing that what they read in the papers was true, even then a bad example was never a pattern to follow.

PLEA FOR RIGHT CONDUCT

Imagine, he said, a rectangular frame without a slate. The slightest rough handling of the frame would turn the right angles into acute and obtuse angles and if the frame was again rightly handled at one corner the other three would be automatically turned into right angles. Similarly, if there was right conduct on the part of the Government and the people in the Indian Union, he had not a shadow of a doubt that Pakistan would respond and the whole of India would return to sanity. Let the reported ill-treatment of the Christians against whom, so far as he knew, there was no charge, be an indication that insanity must not be allowed to go further and that it should be promptly and radically dealt with if India was to give a good account of herself to the world.

CO-OPERATION AMONG REFUGEES

Gandhiji then referred to the refugee problem. 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 moneyed men of Lahore had built the model town of Lahore, which the Hindus and 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 of 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.

Government's Dilemma

The last subject Gandhiji referred to was the proposed removal of controls especially on food and cloth. The Government had hesitation in removing the controls because they fancied that there was real

scarcity of foodstuffs and cloth in the land and that, therefore, there might be an inflation of prices which would hit hard the poor people, who were supposed, through these controls, to keep the wolf from the door and cover their nakedness. They suspected the honesty of the merchants, the growers and the middlemen. They feared that they were waiting hawk-like for the day of removal of controls so that they might prey upon the poor people and fill their pockets with ill-gotten gains. It was for them a choice of two evils and they considered the present control as a lesser evil.

Appeal to the Business Class

Gandhiji, therefore, appealed to the mercantile classes, growers and middlemen to disarm the suspicion and assure the authorities that decontrol would not only not lead to inflation but would lead to the comparative happiness of the poor people and ease if not eradicate black-marketing and corruption.

73

23-11-'47

Silence at Prayer

In his after-prayer speech Gandhiji exhorted the audience to observe silence which had become the usual thing but which was broken through the murmur among women, of whom there was a large number present that evening. On his drawing the attention of the audience to the murmur, there was complete silence.

Overstepping the Limit

He then apologized to the radio men for his occasional breach of the rule that his speech should

not exceed twenty minutes, not even fifteen, if possible. He said that he could not always observe the rule for his main purpose was to reach the hearts of the audience that was physically before him. The radio came next. He did not know whether there was any arrangement whereby the radio could record longer speeches. He was not in the habit of speaking without purpose or for the sake of hearing his own voice.

VIOLENCE NOT JUSTIFIED

Gandhiji then turned to a written question which had been sent to him by a member of the audience. He had asked whether a person whose right was in danger could not defend it violently. The speaker's answer was that violence in reality defended no right and no one. If every right flowed from duty well-performed, then it was unassailable. Thus he had a right to his wage only when he had fully performed the duty undertaken by him. If he took the wage without doing his work, it became theft. He could not associate himself with continuous insistence on rights without reference to the performance of duties on which the rights depended and from which they flowed.

PERSECUTION OF HARIJANS

Then the speaker came to the reported attack on the Harijans' liberty in Rohtak and elsewhere by the Jats. This was nothing new. Interference with the liberty of the Harijans was in vogue during the British regime too. What was, however, new was that the persecution had become more pronounced instead of dying out during their newly acquired freedom. Did not the freedom belong to every one of India, no matter to what strata of society he belonged? Was the Harijan still the serf that he was upto the other

day? In his opinion one wrong led to another. Our misbehaviour, irrespective of the doings in Pakistan, towards our Muslim brethren led to our ill-treatment of the Christians. Our conduct regarding the Harijans pointed in the same direction. The Harijan Sevak Sangh was established to undo the wrong done by the rest of the Hindus to the Harijans who were misdescribed as untouchables and treated as such. If we had realized the full significance of the change that came upon India on the 15th of August last, the glow of freedom would have been felt by the meanest in the land. We would then have been spared the awful events of which we had been helpless witnesses. It seemed as if everybody was working for his own advancement and nobody for India.

74

24-11-'47

Need for Constructive Work

You are good enough, when I enter the prayer ground, to keep ample room for me and my daughters to help me to pass through you. I would urge you to observe the same orderliness when after the prayer I pass out. There is an unseemly rush to touch me as I pass out. The crowd press in upon me. I know and value your affection. I want it to take the shape not of effusiveness but of some constructive service of the country such as I have pointed out on many an occasion and in my numerous writings. The first and foremost today is communal harmony. Formerly discord was of a negative character. Today it is of a most virulent type. The Hindus and Sikhs on the one hand and the Muslims

on the other have become enemies of each other with the shameful results which we have already seen.

The attendants at the prayer should not only be free from rancour against one another, but should actively assist in re-establishing the communal harmony which was our pride during the Khilafat days. Have I not attended the huge friendly gatherings of those days? They gladdened my heart when I witnessed them. Will those days never return?

The Latest Tragedy

Take the latest tragedy that took place in the heart of the Capital City yesterday. Some Hindu and Sikh refugees are reported to have gone out to an empty Muslim house and unlawfully attempted to occupy it. A scuffle ensued and some were injured, though none fatally. This incident, bad as it was, was exaggerated out of all proportion. The first report was that four Sikhs were murdered. The sequel was to be expected. Retribution followed and several stabbings took place. A new technique seems to have been established now. The Sikhs with drawn swords, which seem to have taken the place of the little *kirpans*, with or without the Hindus, visit Muslims houses and demand evacuation. This is a monstrous state of things in this, the Capital City, if the report is true. If it is untrue, it may be dismissed. If it is true, it demands urgent attention not only from the authorities but the public as well. The former will be impotent if the public is not behind them.

I am not sure what my duty is in this case. Things are evidently going from bad to worse. The full moon day of *Kartik* will be soon upon us. All kinds of rumours have been poured in upon me. I hope that

they are all untrue, as they proved to be for the *Dassera* and the *Bakr-Id.*

One lesson to be learnt from these rumours is that we are living a hand-to-mouth life, which is not good for any State or nation. Every servant of the nation has to consider seriously the part he has to play towards the abatement of this corroding nuisance.

KIRPAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

It is well to consider at this stage a long letter from Sardar Santsingh 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 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 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 judgement 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. 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.

A Vicious Suggestion

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.

Its Evil Deeds

I must not be asked to recount the evil deeds of Pakistan. The recounting won't help either the Hindu or 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 the sins and thus became fellow sinners. Odds became even. Shall we now awake from the trance, repent and change or must we fall?

75

25-11-'47

Reefugees or Sufferers?

In his post-prayer speech Gandhiji said that some people had objected to being called refugees. They said that the whole of India according to his own showing was equally the home of every Indian. Therefore, every one of them had the right to settle in any part of the Indian Union. They had suffered heavily in Pakistan and, therefore, they had come to the Union. They should be called sufferers. He had no objection to calling them sufferers if that was a more pleasing

term. Refugee was a familiar word in the English language from whose spell they were not yet disengaged. The Hindustani papers translated the word correctly as शरणार्थी (*sharanarthi*). 'Sufferers' was also an English word which his visitors had used. He suggested दुःखी (*dukkhi*) as the equivalent, which the visitors accepted. This evening he wanted to talk to them about these sufferers.

No Occupying Muslim Houses

He had met three sets of people during the day. The first was a family from Lahore who had lost their all including seventeen members of the family in Pakistan. They asked him to get them a house in Delhi. He told them that he was not the Government and even if he was, he could not help them. There were no vacant houses in Delhi. Sufferers like them should go and live in the camps like others. They said that they were not beggars to live on charity. He replied that he would not have a single individual live on charity. Those in the camps should work for the food, shelter and clothing that they got there. They retorted that they had their children. But so had the other sufferers, replied Gandhiji. The more capable class among them should use their talents to organize the life in the camps and give the benefit of their experience and knowledge to all their fellow sufferers. These friends argued that there were many Muslims still with houses. Gandhiji felt ashamed and hurt to hear this argument. Many thousands had been forced to leave their homes. These sufferers had not been mellowed by their sufferings. But his appeal fell on deaf ears. Gandhiji then said that instead of expecting the much-injured Muslims to give up their few homes, their argument would have force if they asked him (Gandhiji) to leave his

comfortable place in their favour. This seemed to silence the friends.

A Reasonable Demand

After that came some Sikhs from Hazara. They did not seem to wear *kirpans*. They said that they were farmers and wanted facilities for farming. He asked them why they did not go to East Punjab. They replied that East Punjab would not take anyone else except those from West Punjab. They held that there was not enough land in East Punjab to take in those from the N. W. F. P. also. There were 8000 of these sufferers from Hazara. They had been directed to go to the Central Government. In Gandhiji's opinion, the Government should settle them on agricultural land as early as possible. The Sikh friends said that they did not wish to push out the Muslims from their homes. All they wanted was some land and ploughs, bullocks and seeds by way of loan. Then they would produce their own food. They showed willingness to go to any part of the Union where they could get agricultural land. Gandhiji thought that these sufferers were reasonable and that their reasonable wish should be gratified.

Condition for Return

A member of the audience had asked when they could expect to go back. He replied that they could go at once, provided they in the Union ceased to hound out the Muslims and were prepared to welcome back those who had felt compelled to migrate to Pakistan. Then he would be free to go to the West Punjab and tell the Muslims there that they should welcome the Hindus and Sikhs who had felt compelled to leave their homes in Pakistan. Today, however he heard the

foolish talk that the three and a half crores of Muslims should be turned out of the Indian Union. It seemed to him to be intolerable. He did not wish to witness that catastrophe. Sometimes he felt that he had become a futile burden on earth. But whether he was alive or dead, the sufferers would some day return to their homes.

76

26-11-'47

A Baseless Charge

Speaking after prayers Gandhiji referred to a letter received by him from Bombay. The writer had enclosed a cutting from a Bombay newspaper and had not disclosed his name. The cutting said that the All India Radio was being used to broadcast Gandhiji's post-prayer speeches, which amounted to propaganda for the Congress. It was a Fascist technique with non-violence thrown in as a mask. The people were sick of listening to his speeches. Gandhiji's reply was that though some people might be of that opinion, there were others who wrote to him that his speeches put heart into them. The accusation was baseless. A government which used the radio for singing its own praises was worthless. The good deeds of a government alone was the right propaganda. As for himself, he only talked about things which had an intimate connection with prayer and religion. If they were not interested in his talks, they need not listen to him. He was not interested in speaking for the radio. His one object was the service of humanity and it was for that alone that he spoke to them. If the public stopped coming for prayers, he would not be making any post-prayer speeches.

Abducted Women

Gandhiji then 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 told them that they had nothing to feel ashamed of.

Helping Hands at Harvesting

Gandhiji then went on to relate how the secretary of a Provincial Congress Committee, who was a farmer himself, had come to him and said that while formerly all men and women in the villages used to lend a helping hand at harvesting time, today the farmers had to hire labour for that purpose. That increased the cost of food grains and removed the spirit of free and willing co-operation, which was an asset in itself. Gandhiji knew of the good custom. He advised all, with all the emphasis at his command, to practise it.

The secretary said also that at least the Food Minister, if not most, should be *kisans*. It was unfortunate that today none of the Ministers were *kisans*. The Sardar was born in a farmer's family and though he knew something about agriculture, he had become a barrister by profession. Their Prime Minister was a learned man, a great historian and a great writer, but he knew nothing about agriculture and farming. The other Ministers were all well-to-do men, who had never worked on the land. Yet more than 80% of India's population consisted of *kisans*. Only a *kisan* knew how to increase production and the fertility of the land. Only he could understand the whys and wherefores of profiteering by the *kisans* and overcome the evil. In democracy, the *kisan* should be the ruler. Gandhiji would certainly like to push forward an honest and capable *kisan*. Such a *kisan* would not know English. He (Gandhiji) would ask Pandit Jawaharlalji to be his (the *kisan's*) secretary and see the foreign Ambassadors on his chief's behalf and take pride in such service. Such a *kisan* Prime Minister would not ask for a palace to live in. He would live in a mud hut, sleep under the sky and work on the land during the day whenever he was free. The whole picture would change immediately. In *Panchayat Raj*, the man who should count most in India was naturally the *kisan*. How to advance him was the question.

77

27-11-'47

Nothing Is Impossible

In his after-prayer speech Gandhiji told the audience that he had been to see H. E. the Governor-General and had met Liaquatalisaheb who was staying in the Government House. There he learnt that the Governor-General, the Prime Ministers of the two Dominions, Sardar Patel and the Finance Minister had conferred together and had come to some conclusions which might bring about peace to this strife-torn country of theirs. Nothing was impossible for sincere men in the way of bringing concord out of discord.

The Sher-e-Kashmir

Then Gandhiji had a visit from Sheikh Abdulla who was affectionately called Sher-e-Kashmir. Though there were just a handful of Hindus and Sikhs in Kashmir, the Sheikhsaheb took pains to carry them with him. He had been to Jammu also. What had happened there was most shameful for the Hindus and Sikhs. But that did not make the Sheikhsaheb 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 the 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 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 the 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, other manufactures and fruits from Kashmir could come to the Union as freely as before.

Terrible if True

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 Liaquatsaheb 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 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.

78

28-11-'47

GURU NANAK'S BIRTHDAY

Speaking after prayers Gandhiji said that that day being Guru Nanak's birthday, he had been invited to attend a meeting of the Sikhs. Baba Bachittarsingh came and insisted that he must go. Gandhiji was at first reluctant. He told Babasaheb that the Sikhs were annoyed with him for the bitter pill they had had to swallow at his hands. Whatever he had said about them had been said out of genuine affection and fullness of heart. Still many Sikhs had resented his words. Therefore, he did not think that his going to the meeting would serve any useful purpose. But Babasaheb said that thousands of Sikh men, women and children, many of whom had suffered heavily in Pakistan, were anxious to hear him and he must not disappoint them. He consented. Babasaheb went to inform the meeting and promised to return within half an hour. He brought Sheikh Abdullasaheb with him. Gandhiji was surprised. The Sikhs and Muslims could not bear to see each other these days. How could the Sheikhsaheb attend a Sikh meeting? But

Babasaheb said that the Sheikhsaheb had brought together the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in Kashmir and the Sikhs would like to hear him too. So Gandhiji and Sheikh Abdullasaheb attended the meeting. Both addressed the meeting. Thousands of Sikhs listened in silence and did not in any way indicate resentment at their words. It pleased him. He had told them that it was a New Year day for them. They should pledge themselves to make a new and clean beginning from the day. Whatever the Muslims might have done in Pakistan, they must keep their hands clean. Two wrongs did not make one right. The essence of Guru Nanak's teaching was tolerance and Hindu-Muslim unity. A friend had written to him that Guru Govindsingh had several Muslim disciples and he protected them. Though the tenth *Guru* had taken to the sword, he used it only against perpetrators of wrong and to protect the innocent and the weak. It had hurt him deeply to see not a single Muslim as he passed through Chandni Chowk. It was a shame for the Hindus and Sikhs in Delhi that the Muslims should feel terror-struck.

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, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, 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.

Renovation of the Somnath Temple

Gandhiji then came 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 Jamsaheb had promised to pay one lakh.

No Premium on Evil

Many Hindu and Sikh girls had been abducted by Muslim *goondas*. Some people had told him that in some places *goondas* were demanding money as ransom.

He could never tolerate the giving of premiums upon vice which he considered abduction to be. He would, therefore, advise fathers and husbands never to give way to temptation. He would trust the Pakistan Government to rescue the abducted girls as he would expect the Union Government to do likewise in respect of the Muslim girls abducted by Hindus and Sikhs.

KATHIAWAD QUIET

Lastly, he had told them the previous 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.

79

29-11-'47

LIQUOR IN DELHI

In his after-prayer speech Gandhiji said that he had heard and read in newspapers that the consumption of liquor in Delhi had gone up tremendously. Liquor brought many vices in its wake. If the Sikhs had really turned a new leaf from yesterday, the liquor consumption should become even less than before.

DAMAGE TO MOSQUES

Many mosques had been damaged during the riots. Some had been converted into temples. The idols should be removed without the intervention of the police or the military. These things could take place only if there was real contrition. He knew that the idols could not be placed in the mosques by the Sikhs. What, however, he did say was that reformation among the Sikhs would automatically affect the Hindus in the right direction. In the present instance the Hindus and Sikhs had worked hand in hand.

ABDUCTED GIRLS

As to the abducted girls, Gandhiji said that a large number of Hindu and Sikh girls had been abducted in Pakistan. God alone knew what awful things they were being subjected to. The Hindus and 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.

CONTROLS

Dealing with controls Gandhiji said that it was good that the control on sugar had been removed. It was now up to the factory-owners and the dealers to see that there was no rise in prices, because of the removal of the control. He would understand a rise in prices owing to a rise in the price of sugarcane and a corresponding rise in the price of sugar. But in no case should the rise be due to the greed of the factory-owners and dealers. The factory-owners should combine so as to prevent any rise in the price of sugar except for the rise in the price of sugarcane. Honest behaviour in the case of sugar would accelerate the removal of the control on foodstuffs and cloth. The speaker mentioned that *gur* was any day superior to sugar. It was prepared in the villages. This should always be cheaper than sugar and easily available.

TAX LUXURY ARTICLES

A friend had written to him complaining of the increase in the third class railway fares. He said that it were better if an additional tax was put upon articles of luxury such as tobacco, cigars, cigarettes etc. The suggestion appealed to him. But not having studied the subject as fully as was necessary, he was unable to give a definite opinion. He merely mentioned the

suggestion so as to draw the attention of the authorities concerned. He knew that our Ministers had to be chary of spending a single pice without a just cause. One good test was whether what the villages gave to the State the State returned to them manifold in the shape of manifold services they needed and whether what was spent could be proved to be on their behalf.

VOLUNTARY HOME GUARDS

A free India need not keep a huge standing army. Voluntary home guards would protect their homes and contribute to the defence of the country.

80

30-11-'47

CARRY AN ASANA

Referring to the cold stones and the cold ground on which the audience was sitting, Gandhiji suggested that they should all carry an old newspaper or some other kind of *asana* wherever they went. That used to be a common custom in the olden days, though it had been given up in modern times. It was a useful custom. Although he did not want people to become delicate, he felt that sitting on the cold floor in wintry weather was unnecessary and not good for women in particular.

TELEGRAM FROM KATHIAWAD

Next, Gandhiji 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 there 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 Swayamsevak 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 that 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 THE HINDU MAHASABHA AND R. S. S.

Gandhiji appealed to the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh both of which were Hindu organizations and had many well-educated men on their roles, 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 Sikhs to desist from bringing ruin to their country and religion.

81

1-12-'47

WHY USE 'IF'?

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 my 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.

BE TRUE

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 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, 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.

SEARCHING FOR TRUTH

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?

82

2-12-'47

A Visit to Panipat

Gandhiji returned from Panipat a little after 5-30 p. m. and arrived on the prayer ground as the *Ramadhun* was being sung. He apologized for being late and then gave a brief account of his visit. He had gone there in order to see whether he could persuade the Muslims of Panipat not leave Panipat for Pakistan. If they could have the courage to remain in their own homes, it would not only be good for them but also for the whole of India, including Pakistan. He had met the Hindu and Sikh refugees too. They called themselves refugees and not sufferers. They were unhappy and were bound to remain so till they too went back to their homes. The same was true of a great many Muslims who had been forced by circumstances to leave the Union and go to Pakistan. The Muslims of Panipat mentioned why they felt that they could not stay there.

Two Ministers

Dr. Gopichand and Sardar Swaransingh were also in Panipat. The Maulanas of Delhi and Deshbandhu

Gupta whose home was in Panipat also met Gandhiji there. The Muslim friends of Panipat told him that though on his last visit they had told him that they would not go, the situation had since then deteriorated. Neither their life, honour, nor property was safe. How then could they stay? Gandhiji told them that those whose refuge was God and who had nothing but love in their hearts for all mankind would fear for nothing. They would suffer death or loss of property, but they would protect their honour. He had left Delhi at 10-30 a. m. and reached Panipat at 11-30 a. m. He was talking to the Muslims till 3 p. m. After that he met the Hindu and Sikh refugees. The audience was over 20,000. Dr. Gopichand also addressed them and so did Sardar Swaransingh. When the Sardar-saheb stood up, the patience of the refugees gave way. Gandhiji did not think that they meant any disrespect to the Sardar. They merely wanted to give expression to their feeling that they had had enough of speeches. It was time for them to put forward their grievances. They were angry and loudly asserted that the Muslims must go. Their representatives tried to calm them. One of their leaders then sang a Punjabi song, after which there was quiet. The leader then spoke to them in Punjabi and rebuked them for creating disorder in the meeting. Sardar Swaransingh then spoke and did likewise. He spoke of two things that they must do and the Government would also do, whatever Pakistan did or did not. The first was to rescue abducted Muslim girls and restore them to their families. The second was to consider null and void all forcible conversions. The Muslims who had been made Hindus and Sikhs must be assured that they could remain in India as Muslims without any hindrance. The Sardarsaheb also

declared that mosques would be protected and those that had been converted into temples would be restored. Gandhiji was glad to hear this from both the Ministers. As for protection of life and property, the Government would do all that it could. But the Government could only succeed if the people co-operated with them.

Grievances of the Refugees

The refugees had a number of grievances. They said that the food was bad and insufficient. The East Punjab Governor was, however, looking into the matter. Out of the clothes that were sent for the refugees, good blankets often disappeared. They were given old and torn ones. One boy came and took off his clothes in front of him and told him to restore his father who had been killed. How could anyone do that? But he could understand the boy's grief and sympathized with him.

Gandhiji took the leader of the refugees in his car on the return journey. He said that the management should be given to representative refugees instead of to the local Hindus as at present. At present there was favouritism. He advised the representative to talk to the fellow sufferers and if they felt that it was their duty to keep the Muslims in Panipat free from fear and molestation, he should assure them on their behalf and induce them not to leave their homes. That would be a real victory in Panipat, which was famous for battles.

Gandhiji said that he was relating all this to the audience so that they might know how low they had sunk. They had their own Government, but they were not prepared to obey them. Pandit Jawaharlalji had said that he would rather be called the first servant

of the nation than the Prime Minister. Were all Government officials really servants of the people? If so, there would be no scope for luxuries. They would then all for ever be thinking of the people and their needs. That would mean *Rama Raj* or the Kingdom of God on earth. That would be real and complete independence. The independence of today stifled him. It was unreal and unstable.

83

3-12-'47

Importance of Promises

Speaking after prayers Gandhiji said that some friends who had been to him during the day had complained that the leaders made promises when they took power on the 15th of August last but now they were breaking them. He did not know what promises the leaders had broken. He was not the Government, but if he had some concrete proof of the allegations made, he would speak to the leaders concerned. Such charges, when carefully examined, often boiled down to misunderstanding on the part of the hearer. He himself had many a time been the victim of such misunderstanding. He had never deliberately deceived anybody. Yet his words had sometimes produced a different impression on the other person, than what he had meant to say, and he had been accused of breach of promise. He believed that most of the suffering in the world was the result of misunderstandings. One should think before speaking and never waste a single word. One's speech should be a true reflection of one's thoughts, and actions should reflect the spoken word.

India had come into her own. The leaders had the reins of Government and the disposal of millions of rupees was in their hands. They had to be most vigilant. They must be humble. People often thought nothing of not keeping their word. They should never promise what they could not do. Once a promise was made it must be kept at all cost. This rule applied to every individual and not to the members of the Government only.

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 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.

KATHIAWAD AGAIN

Gandhiji then went on to speak of Kathiawad. He was receiving contradictory telegrams from there. One said that the allegations mentioned by him on the first day were all true; another group said that they were wrong. The Congressmen had had no hand in the disturbances. Whatever loot and arson had taken place was the work of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Today he had a telegram on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha and the R. S. S. It said that they had no hand whatsoever in the arson and loot. Surely, someone out of the three was wrong. He was convinced that if the Hindus had lost their balance and harassed the Muslims, they should make no attempt to hide it. If, on the other hand, the Muslims had exaggerated things in the first instance, they should say so openly. If it was proved that the Hindu Mahasabha and the R. S. S. had had no hand in the disturbances, he would congratulate them. He was trying to find out the truth. But as an individual, he had no authority.

INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Referring to South Africa Gandhiji said that India had not carried her point at U. N. O. Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit had told the Indians in South Africa that though they had lost, it was not a defeat, for, India

had a majority of votes, though not the 2/3 majority which was required to get the motion through. She asked the Indians in South Africa not to lose heart. She, as a representative of the Union, could not go further. He went a step further and said that there was no question of a defeat for those who believed in the golden law of *satyagraha*. That weapon he had discovered in South Africa. Supposing India had won at U. N. O. and General Smuts had agreed to concede the demands of the Indians in South Africa, but the White population of South Africa refused to submit, what could India do? Such things were happening in India today. The Hindus from Pakistan and the Muslims from the Union were being driven out. Each Government declared its impotence to protect the minorities. There was a large number of Hindus in Bannu. They could not go out of their houses except at the risk of losing their lives. If they remained indoors, starvation stared them in the face. What were they to do? He would repeat the same advice to them as he had given to the Muslims here. They should say clearly and openly that they would not leave their homes. They would live where they were born and brought up but with honour.

South Africa was the country of the Negroes. Outsiders like the Boers had no greater rights than the Indians who had gone there. But the Europeans suppressed the Negroes and deprived the Indian settlers of elementary rights. It was quite proper to place India's case before the U. N. O. But if the U. N. O. would not or could not secure justice for the Indians of South Africa, should not the latter fight for their rights? In his opinion, they should, but not with the force of arms. The true and only weapon was *satyagraha* or soul force. The soul was immortal, the body was perishable.

If the Indians in South Africa had courage and self-respect, they would fight for their fundamental rights with the force of the soul.

84

4-12-'47

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 mean-time, 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.

Good News

Gandhiji was then glad to turn to a pleasing news. He had received a nice letter from the Muslims from Hoshangabad. There the Sikhs had invited the Muslims on Guru Nanak's birthday and assured them that they were friends and brothers. How he wished that the Sikhs and Hindus in general would follow the lead! Then they could wash out the ugly stains that tarnished the fair name of India today.

Communal Chambers of Commerce

Referring to the communal Chambers of Commerce, Gandhiji said that he 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.

The Burma Premier

The Prime Minister of Burma had been to see him. 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, Muslims and everybody. It was wrong to make a difference between the Sikhs and Hindus. Master Tarasingh had compared the Hindus and 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.

85

5-12-'47

MUSLIM WITHDRAWAL

Gandhiji remarked in his post-prayer speech this evening that he could not read and give a reply to the letters, which were given to him as he came to the prayer ground, there and then. He could only do so the following day if a reply was necessary. In one of the letters the writer had referred to Gandhiji's conversation with Liaquatsaheb and said that what Liaquatsaheb had told Gandhiji about Kathiawad was found to be unture. The friend had obviously not followed his subsequent speeches. He had spoken of Shri

Shamaldas Gandhi's telegram wherein he had admitted what had happened and contradicted the very gross exaggerations. That very day Gandhiji 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.

Gandhiji told the audience that he was making no appointments from the 6th to 13th December. The reason was that the Kasturba Trust, the Talimi Sangh, the Charkha Sangh and the A. I. V. I. A. were all holding meetings in Delhi during those days and Gandhiji wanted to be free for them as far as possible,

CONTROLS

Control on cloth and food would soon go, he hoped. What was their duty after that? He expected the *kisans* to bring forth all the grain that they had stored, and he expected the merchants not to indulge in profiteering, so that the Government and the people and the permanent service might cease to feel uneasy. Today there was apprehension in their mind. He hoped these fears would be falsified and that the black market nuisance would abate, if it did not disappear altogether. If there was some shortage, the people would automatically exercise self-control, so that no one need starve. The people's Government could not shoot all

profiteers. In democracy the people's will must rule and if the people of India had fallen so low that they would not do the right thing, he did not know that the present Government should hold office. But his hope was that with the removal of the control, the situation would improve all round. It would be a negation of democracy if the Government did everything and the people did nothing or thwarted the former. There was no reason why the *kisans* could not grow more food with proper guidance. If the Food Department would concentrate on ways and means of increasing production, he was sure there would be no food shortage.

As for cloth control, Gandhiji had no misgivings. No one had suggested that there was not enough cotton in India. In addition to the mills they had ample man-power in India to spin cotton and weave the hand-spun yarn. If the millions took to hand-spinning and the weavers wove hand-spun yarn, there need be no cloth shortage even if all the mills, somehow or other, had to close down.

86

6-12-'47

CONDITION OF NEIGHBOURLINESS

The *bhajan* and the *Ramadhun* in the prayers this evening were sung by Shrimati Subbalakshmi, the famous singer from South India. Gandhiji commended her for the sweetness of her voice. He said that during prayers one must lose oneself in Rama.

He then apologized for taking more than fifteen minutes over his speech the previous evening. He hoped to be stricter thenceforth.

Gandhiji then 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 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 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 and 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 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 the enemies they had become. They had won their independence through means that were above board. The world had complimented 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, 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.

87

7-12-'47

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 the 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.

88

8-12-'47

A Muslim Society's Warning

A Muslim society warns me against accepting any statement whether from Muslim sources or non-Muslim ones and entering upon argument. The better course is to verify them and then act. The society further proceeds to advise me that I should go to Kathiawad and see things for myself. This, I have already said, I cannot do today. I must attend to my duty in Delhi and round about. These advisers forget, too, that by the friendly method I adopted I have a definite withdrawal to the extent necessary from the very parties who had complained. The moral is that where there is pursuit of truth for its own sake, the result is always happy as has been verified in innumerable cases. Patience and perseverance are essential in any such search.

Doleful Letter from Sind

Doleful letters continue to come from Sind. The latest from Karachi says that there are practically no murders, but there is no life of self-respect for the Hindus. Thus, Muslims from the Union enter your house whenever they like and calmly declare that they have come to occupy it. They have no authority. Yet, you dare not say no. Such instances are not rare. The Karachi of a few months ago has become a dream. This is the substance of a long letter which I hold to be trustworthy. This betokens anarchy. This kind of treatment is what may be called killing by inches and at the same time killing the soul also. I would plead

with the Pakistan authorities to arrest this lawlessness. It is an unhealthy growth, the sooner removed the better.

Controls again

Sugar control has gone and control on cereals, pulses and cloth will go. The object of the removal is not to lower the prices at a bound, it is to return to normal life. Superimposed control is bad any day. It is worse in this country in that we are a nation of millions spread over a large area 1,900 miles long and 1,500 broad. I need not take into account the division of the country. We are not a military nation and we grow or can grow our own foodstuffs and enough cotton for our requirements. When this control is removed, the nation will breathe free, it will have the right to make mistakes. This ancient method of progressing by making mistakes and correcting them, is the proper way. Keep a child in cotton wools and stunt it or kill it. If you will let it develop into a robust man, you will expose his body to all weathers, teaching him how to defy them. Precisely in the same manner, a government worth the name has to show the nation how to face deficits, bad weathers and other handicaps of life through its own collective effort instead of its being effortlessly helped to live any how.

Meaning of Decontrol

Thus considered decontrol means that the business of foresight is transferred from the few members of the Government to the millions composing the nation. The Government will have new tasks to perform towards the nation so as to enable it to discharge the duty devolved upon it. Methods of transport have to

be put in order, and those of growing more food have to be brought home to the people and to that end the agricultural department has to learn how to serve the small grower rather than the capitalist grower. The Government has on the one hand to trust all arms of the nation as well as to watch and check their movement, regard being had always to the interest hitherto neglected of the small grower, who represents the largest majority of the millions. He is the consumer of his own crops reserving a small percentage for the mere consumer who, in exchange for the food stuffs he gets, gives cash for buying the other necessaries of life. Control has meant less payment to the grower than he would otherwise command from the open market. Hence, to the extent that he gets a higher price, the prices of food must rise. These, the consumer will not grudge. The Government has to see that in the new set up the whole of the percentage in the rise of prices goes to the grower. This has to be made clear to the public from day to day or week to week as the case may be. The wealthy factory owners or middlemen have to work in co-operation with and in subordination to the Government. I understand that the process is going on. There should be perfect co-ordination among these few men or corporations who have hitherto exploited the poor for their selfish purpose and have not hesitated to enter into unhealthy rivalry among themselves. This has to go especially in the case of food and cloth where the profit motive is to be wholly absent. Any successful attempt at adding to their profit owing to decontrol will defeat its purpose. Let us hope that these moneyed interests will rise to the occasion.

89

9-12-'47

THEIR CHANGE

In his after-prayer speech Gandhiji referred to a newspaper report saying that Sardar Patel and he were going to Pilani for change of air. Neither Sardar Patel nor he had any time for such a change. Their change consisted in getting rest at night. But he had no right to speak for the Sardar, who might seek a quiet place for giving himself cessation from interviews and office work. For himself, he had no cares of office and he had vowed to do or die in and about Delhi. He had heard too that elaborate preparations were being made in Delhi for sending all kinds of provisions for them. This was fantastically false. The report about Pilani, he saw in the papers. Why they did not verify the report from the Sardar or him, he did not know.

WORSE THAN MURDER

Gandhiji next referred to a Sindhi friend's letter. Some days back he had referred to the letter of a doctor from Sind describing the hardships of the Harijans in Sind. The letter said that the doctor had been put under arrest and that several other workers were also arrested, though not with the doctor. The idea, it was said, was not to let anyone, who could speak for the Harijans, be free in Sind. It was a terrible state of affairs. He warned the Pakistan Government that such treatment was bound to drive away all workers. It was worse than outright murder.

A Word to Kasturba Workers

Referring to his own talk to the women workers of the Kasturba Trust that afternoon, he said that the Trust was meant for the service of women and children in the villages of India. The workers had been mostly drawn from the cities. The cities up till now had exploited the villages. The right thing would be that the cities should be there to be exploited for the villages. But today the capitalists brought raw materials from the villages and used them to make money. If these *sevikas* wanted to serve the villages, they had to become villagers at heart. They had to cease to be city-minded. They should take to the villages the good things of the cities, as for instance cleanliness and sanitation, but even these had to be given a rural garb. Then alone they would be able to check the exploitation of the villages and improve the lot of women and children there.

90

10-12-'47

Implications of the Charkha

In his after-prayer speech Gandhiji talked about the Charkha Sangh. He had gone to the Harijan Nivas to attend the meeting of the Charkha Sangh the day before and the Talimi Sangh that day. The Charkha Sangh stood for the propagation of the *charkha* and what it stood for, i. e. *ahimsa*. It taught and encouraged people to produce their own cloth. It taught all the processes beginning from the ginning, slivering and spinning of cotton to the preparation of cloth. If the people did that, they would be benefitted in two ways. They would save the money spent in buying

cloth and they would utilize their time in an artistic handicraft. He had said already that to suffer from shortage of cloth in India was sheer madness. The Charkha Sangh had succeeded in distributing a few crores of rupees among the poor villagers against useful work, but it had not succeeded in making the message of the *charkha* popular among the seven lakhs of villages of India. If all these villages had hummed with the *charkha*, the world and they would never have witnessed the tragic scenes that were happening. The villages would have been happy busy hives. But today people thought only in terms of the mills in which only a few could work. The interest of moneyed men came before those of the masses. He had no quarrel with the former. He was staying with one. But their ways and his ways were different. Everyone talked of serving the poor. The socialists talked of the rule of the masses. The socialist revolution and socialization of big industry might come in its time, but today even they should work for the *charkha* and all it implied. They should tell the people to become self-sufficient at least in clothing.

CHARKHA AND COMMUNAL HARMONY

Continuing Gandhiji said that he had been working to that end for more than thirty years. He had called the *charkha* the symbol of non-violence. If the message of the *charkha* had spread, there would be no talk of turning out the Muslims. Large numbers had left Delhi. There was talk about turning out the rest. Would the Hindus go and live in their mosques? That would be the ruin of Hinduism.

LIVE AND LET LIVE

News had come from Ajmer that a large number of Muslims had been scared away. Out of the

remaining, some had been killed and the poison was spreading to the villages. There was a big *Dargah* at Ajmer where the Hindus and Muslims both offered worship. Had they gone mad now? Gandhiji wanted them all to pray for good sense to prevail. In their efforts to kill or turn out the Muslims, they would kill Hinduism. Similarly, the Muslims would kill Islam by wiping out the Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan. The only way to live was to let live.

91

11-12-'47

The Verse from the Quran

Before the prayers started a member of the audience stood up and requested Gandhiji to explain the meaning of the verse from the *Quran* that was recited in the prayers. Gandhiji did that in his post-prayer speech. In the verse the devotee called upon Allah the All Merciful to save him from the clutches of the accursed Satan. He was the Lord of the Day of Judgement. Allah was one. He had no son and was not the son of anyone. In the end was the prayer that He might lead the devotee on the path trodden by those who were blessed with His grace.

They might ask him why the Muslims did the deeds that went contrary to the above teaching. He asked them in return: did the Christians live up to the message of the Bible or the Hindus up to the message of the *Upanishads?* All Muslims were not bad and all Hindus were not good.

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 the 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.

92

12-12-'47

HARDSHIPS OF THE REFUGEES

A refugee had written to Gandhiji that in accordance with what Gandhiji had said about the return of the non-Muslims to Pakistan the previous evening, he would like to go back as early as possible. In the Union no one cared for the refugees and the refugees were being subjected to great hardships. Gandhiji agreed that the refugees were being subjected to great hardships and that in spite of all the efforts of the Union Government to help them. It must be remembered that the task was so colossal that the best of governments would be hard put to it to cope with it wholly to the satisfaction of everyone. He was, however, not prepared to advise anyone to return to Pakistan today. He would have to verify the statement of the Peace Mission and then to see what suitable arrangements could be made for the return of those who wished to go back.

The Other Side

Gandhiji next referred to two angry letters that had come to him, one from Burma and the other from Bombay. They were from Muslims though the writers had chosen to remain anonymous. These friends insisted that the charges of atrocities which had been withdrawn by the Kathiawad Muslims were true. Gandhiji did not see how he could pay any serious attention to anonymous letters. These friends should produce names, facts and figures in support of their charges and only then could Gandhiji ask the local authorities to inquire into them.

A wire from Ajmer said that the disturbances there were not of the magnitude described and that the trouble had not been started by the Hindus. He mentioned this telegram merely to let them know that there were people holding a different view also. He did not know where the truth lay.

Another friend commented on his remark saying that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had said that the expenditure on the renovation of the Somnath temple would not be met from the State treasury. The friend saw no reason why it should not be so met. Gandhiji believed that if the State spent money for such purposes for one community, it must also do so for the others. That would be wrong.

Hooliganism at Calcutta

Referring to the hooliganism at Calcutta, Gandhiji said that people seemed to have come to believe that they could get anything through violence. It was entirely wrong. In the past he had fasted as a protest against such violence even when it was directed against a foreign Government. Now that they had their own

Government, was lawlessness to be tolerated? People complained against Government measures to suppress disorderly behaviour. He would have them understand that freedom could never mean exemption from punishment against offences. If their was anything which they considered unjust, they could agitate against it in a proper manner. Had they tried out peaceful means and found them wanting? Their freedom was a baby of a little over three months. If they obstructed the Government in the reported fashion, it would become impossible for it to properly discharge its functions of supplying food and other amenities to the people. Did all this mean that Indians could be only destructive and that they were unfit for carrying out constructive policies? The fight against the British Government was passive resistence, not violence. Now that they had their own Government, it was wrong to resort to methods which were taboo against the foreign Government.

93

13-12-'47

MESSAGE OF THE CHARKHA

In his after-prayer speech Gandhiji referred to his discussions at the recent meeting of the Charkha Sangh at the Harijan Colony. Why had he laid so much emphasis on the *charkha?* Years ago when he first started talking of the *charkha*, he did not know that it was still a living industry in the Punjab and some parts of Gujarat and Kathiawad. It was first thought of as a means of supplementing the income of the poor *kisan* and the village women. Later on he

discovered the tremendous power hidden in the *charkha*. That power was the power of non-violence which could not be defeated by the mightiest military force. It was this realization which had made him call the wheel the symbol of non-violence.

They all knew the history of the spinning wheel, the history of the Dacca muslin and all its associations. In those days the spinning wheel was the symbol of our slavery. The artisans had to work at the rate fixed by their masters and they could not say no. The same wheel, plied with the full consciousness of its potentialities, had become the symbol of freedom. If all men and women and children of age out of the forty crores of India plied the wheel, they would spin all the yarn required for weaving enough *khadi* for the use of the millions and save crores of rupees. But that was not of great consequence. The greatest thing he valued was the power generated by the co-operative effort of these forty crores of people. Was there any other occupation which could employ such numbers without exploiting anyone? The mills could never do that. They could employ only a few lakhs leaving under partial or full unemployment the millions. In the past they had plied the wheel say, for his sake, but without understanding its full import. That was why the wheel was largely discarded. He wanted them to take to it now with deliberation and understanding. It meant freedom from exploitation. If it meant non-violence, as it did, it also meant a moral life. If they did that they would never discard it again, they would have no communal or other quarrels and they would become the harbingers of peace for the whole world.

94

14-12-'47

A Friendly Act

In his post-prayer speech this evening Gandhiji said that he had received from a member of the audience, as he was coming, a letter saying that a Muslim friend who, having to leave for Pakistan under pressure, had left with him his hard-earned savings, which he had converted into gold and silver. The writer had asked whether he (the speaker) could see to the gold and silver being sent to the owner. Gandhiji said that if the metals were sent to him with the name and address of the owner he would gladly ask the authorities to trace the owner and send the property to him.

Nayee Talim

As was promised, he dealt with *Nayee Talim* as it came next in the order in which the subjects were dealt with during his visits to the Harijan Nivas. *Nayee Talim* was only eight years old — not a long experience for an all India body dealing with such a subject as the education of the nation on a new basis. It was popularly and correctly described as education through handicrafts. This was part of the truth. The root of this new education went much deeper. It lay in the application of truth and love in every variety of human activity, whether in individual life or a corporate one. The notion of education through handicraft rose from the contemplation of truth and love permeating life's activities. Love required that true education should be easily accessible to all

and should be of use to every villager in his daily life. Such education was not derived from nor did it depend upon books. It had no relation to sectional religion. If it could be called religious, it was universal religion from which all sectional religions were derived. Therefore, it was learnt from the Book of Life which cost nothing and which could not be taken away from one by any force on earth. The question then rose whether there were such teachers filled with truth and love and whether they could draw pupils who would care for truth and love in this unmoral age of disbelief. This question was to be answered by Dr. Zakir Hussain, the Chairman, and the Secretaries, Shri Aryanayakam and Shrimati Ashadevi. If they believed in truth and love not as a policy but as a life principle, he knew that the possession of these would act as a magnet which would draw to itself the hardest human being. They should possess the qualities that were attributed to the steadfast man as described in the verses sung at the evening prayer. If they did not possess these attributes or if they abandoned the task undertaken by them, the eight years old infant must die. Of the three, the burden mostly fell on the Secretaries. He could not claim that the infant Association had blossomed into an organization that existed irrespective of persons, be they even the organizers.

95

15-12-'47

Disgraceful Defiance

Here is what pained me to read in the papers :

"The buildings of six Municipal schools have been occupied by refugees and, in spite of the best efforts of the Delhi Municipal Committee, they have not vacated them. The Committee proposes to approach the police authorities to get the buildings vacated."

This report appears to be reliable. It is a shameful instance of lawlessness and worse. That such defiance can take place in the Capital of the Union reflects no credit on anybody. I am hoping that the trespassers themselves will repent of their folly and vacate the school premises and, that failing, their friends will succeed in bringing sense to them and that the Government will not feel compelled to put their threat into execution. There is a general charge against the refugees that the terrible affliction they have gone through have not made them sober, sensible and industrious workers. Let us hope that the refugees in general and these trespassers in particular will by their repentance disprove the charge.

Lawlessness and Corruption

On Saturday I dealt with lawlessness in Calcutta in another setting and by non-refugees. It is up to all leaders, no matter to what persuasion or party they belong, to be jealous guardians of India's honour which she cannot keep if lawlessness and corruption become the order of the day. I mention corruption in the same context for it belongs to the same brood.

I hear from many trustworthy sources that it is on the increase. Will everyone be for himself and none for India ?

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. Herewith 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 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 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 the Rehabilitation Commissioner on behalf of the owners. 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 the 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 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 must sink or swim together. Only they must not have evil designs. There is no such thing as an honourable partnership between conspirators.

Citizen of Undivided India

A friend from Eastern Pakistan asks: "How can I declare myself as an inhabitant of undivided India when it is cut into two and when to be of one part excludes you from the other?" Whatever the legal pundits may say, they cannot dominate the mind of man. Who can prevent the friend from declaring himself as a citizen of the world even though legally he is not and though he may be, as he will be, prevented from entering many States under their laws? Legal status should not worry a man who has not reduced himself to the state of a machine as many of us have. So long as the moral condition is sound, there is no warrant for anxiety. What every one of us has to guard against is the harbouring of ill-will against a State or its people. Thus, one cannot do so against the Muslims of Pakistan or its Government and still claim to belong to Pakistan as also to the Union of India. Such a state, if it is general, must lead to war. Any State will declare traitorous the conduct of every inhabitant who entertains hostility against it and even helping the enemy State. Loyalty cannot be divided.

96

16-12-'47

Results of Decontrol

In his post-prayer speech this evening Gandhiji gave the audience certain figures placed before him by Shri Brijkrishna Chandiwala indicating the results of decontrol in as far as it had gone. As a result the price of *gur* (jaggery) had fallen to eight annas a seer from a rupee. He hoped that it would fall still lower. In his youth *gur* was sold at one anna. The price of *shakkar* had fallen from Rs. 34 to Rs. 24 per maund. One rupee now brought one and a half seers of pulses instead of 14 *chhataks*. The price of gram had fallen from Rs. 24 to Rs. 18 per maund. The black market price of wheat had been Rs. 34 per maund. It had come down to Rs. 24. He was rightly accused of knowing nothing about orthodox economics and the fluctuations of prices. He talked of decontrol in his ignorance, but the consequences would have to be borne by the poor people. The results, however, so far had falsified the fears. The poor seemed to be better off without the control. He had received numerous congratulations for decontrol. He could not appropriate them for many causes and many persons had worked towards the same end. If the middleman and the grower thought more of the whole country than of themselves, he had no doubt that decontrol all round would be an unmixed blessing. All fear about decontrol was due to the supposition that the business community would not play the game. The sceptics distrusted the producer and the middleman. If the majority of the

people were selfish and untrustworthy, how could democracy, *Panchayat Raj* work? Gandhiji would ask the Government to utilize the services of non-civilians equally with those of the civilians. The difference was that the latter were highly paid and the former were volunteers. Each was amenable to law for any fraud.

Salaries and Civil Service

He had received complaints about the high salaries of the civil servants. The Civil Service could not be done away with all of a sudden. Their number had already been reduced, with the result that those remaining had to work harder. The Sardar had, therefore, congratulated them for their work. He (Gandhiji) did not grudge credit where it was deserved, but he could not help noting that they drew salaries which before independence the Congress had considered too much. The real Civil Service were the people. After all, Congressmen had been working without any salaries in the past. If a Congressman becomes a parliamentary secretary today, why should he be paid a high salary? He did not know that parliamentary secretaries were needed. The Congress party must be chary of imposing more paid secretaries on the Government. It would be wrong to tone down the high standard the Congress had set before the country. Greater care was necessary in that they had now crores at their disposal. It would be imprudent to let the expenditure go up when the income remained stationary. Every business firm had to see that the credit side was larger than the debit side. Could they run the business of free India by ignoring this basic fact? They had some money today and they could squander it in any way they liked. But it would not last long unless they acted like wise businessmen.

97

17-12-'47

Forcible Occupation

In his post-prayer speech Gandhiji referred to the letter of a Punjabi friend from the East Punjab. He had a house there and had his business in the West Punjab. Like others he had to leave the West Punjab and on coming to the East Punjab found his house occupied by a Government servant. In spite of all his efforts, he was unable to get it vacated and could just get two rooms in his own house. He asked Gandhiji if the East Punjab Government should help him to get possession or whether he must resort to a court of law for the purpose. Gandhiji agreed that the Government should help him to get his house vacated without his having to go to a court of law. And as the occupant was a Government servant, it should not be difficult for the Government. Whilst he held that houses belonging to the refugees should be vacated, he had to remind the refugees that some of them were forcibly occupying other people's houses. They were reported to have broken open the locks of vacant houses especially when they happened to belong to Muslims. Such lawlessness was not good for the country or for the individual concerned. Could bloodshed, arson and loot ever benefit anybody?

Sweet Talk

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.

Conditions For Return

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, 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.

INDIANS IN EAST AFRICA

Next, Gandhiji referred to East Africa. The railway was made by the Sikhs under great hardship. The Sikhs were an enterprising community. And now an Anti-Indian Immigration Bill was brought before the local legislature. Indians, Hindus and Muslims, had gone to East Africa before the Europeans. They had gone there not as exploiters with rifle in hand. They were businessmen. They had become friends with the indigenous population. They had worked for the prosperity of the land. It was discreditable to treat them as interlopers. The representatives of the Indians in East Africa had wired to Pandit Nehru and had sent Gandhiji a copy thereof requesting the Indian Government to intervene on behalf of the Indian settlers. India was independent and could not tolerate legislation against her nationals. He hoped that the authorities in East Africa would realize the inadvisability of losing India's friendship. Pandit Nehru would, he was sure, do all that was possible to help the Indians in East Africa.

18-12'-47

A CONFUSED ARGUMENT

In his post-prayer speech this evening Gandhiji dealt with a letter in which the correspondent had said that he was painfully surprised to hear from Gandhiji's lips that it hurt him to continue to receive letters in English. Gandhiji had said that India was

friends with all. If he had equally friendly feelings towards Muslims and Englishmen, how was it that he was working for preserving Urdu and displacing English ? Gandhiji was amazed at the question. It displayed gross ignorance of facts. English was an international language but it could never become the national language of India. English was a foreign language, not so Urdu. He was proud of the fact that Urdu was a language which had evolved in India and was an Indian language. It was originally the language spoken in the military camps during Muslim rule and the military largely consisted of Indians, whether Hindus or Muslims. Muslim rulers had become domiciled in India. When Gandhiji returned to India as a barrister, he was a youngster. After two years' stay in India, he went away to South Africa, where he had stayed for twenty years. Ever since his return to India from South Africa, he had been crying from the house top that the national language of India could be none but the one that was spoken in the North by the Hindus and Muslims and written in the *nagari* or *urdu* script. It was the language of Tulsidas. The poet saint had not disdained to use Arabic and Persian words even in his time. That language which had undergone evolution was the interprovincial speech written in the two scripts. The provincial languages must be helped to develop and become richer. The all India speech or national language must displace English, which blocked the progress of all the Indian languages. With the disappearance of English rule must disappear English speech. Its proper and unrivalled place was as an international medium. Urdu was a language replete with Arabian and Persian words including some of the grammar. Hindi tended to exclude Arabic and Persian

words. Hindustani was a happy blend of the two with the grammatical structure unaffected by Arabic or Persian.

SHEER IGNORANCE

The correspondent then reminded Gandhiji that if it was difficult for Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to forget Urdu, was it not equally difficult for the South Indians to forget Fnglish ? This question again betrayed ignorance. He had been to Madras often enough. When he went there before he had become a *Mahatma*, he could not make himself understood by the *jatkawala* in English, but he could do so in his broken Hindustani. English was not the mother-tongue of the Tamilians as Urdu was of Sir Tej. Lala Lajpat Rai was a friend of his. Gandhiji used to twit him by asking him when he would learn to speak and write in pure Hindi. Lalaji said that he could not do that. And yet Lalaji was a staunch Arya Samajist. He said that his mother-tongue was Urdu in which he could hold audiences spell-bound. Gandhiji had twice been the President of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. They had then welcomed his drive for the national language as defined by him. Why did they now resent it ? Was he any the less Hindu or Indian for his desire for a blend between Hindi and Urdu ?

NEGATION OF RELIGION

Gandhiji then referred to the riot at Ajmer with sorrow. Did they think they could protect Hinduism by killing the Muslims in the Union or driving them out ? Did they hope to serve all India speech by excluding the Urdu script or language ? He would not be with them for ever. They would remember his words when he was gone. All religions taught men to be good and peaceful. Intolerance was the negation of religion.

99

19-12-'47

VISIT TO A GURGAON VILLAGE

In his post-prayer speech this evening Gandhiji told the audience that he had been to meet the Meos who had been rendered homeless. Many had been driven away from the States of Alwar and Bharatpur. Some had gone to Pakistan, others were undecided whether they should stay or go away. Dr. Gopichand Bhargava had accompanied him and had assured them that those who wanted to stay had every right to do so. Their lives and property would be safeguarded by his Government. Gandhiji said that he could never be reconciled to the exchange of population. To uproot lakhs and lakhs of men, women and children from their homes was a devilish act. In the face of the calamity, it was idle to speculate as to who started or whose was the greater violence. Such calculation was not the way to peace. Those who wanted to go to Pakistan of their own accord were free to do so. No one would obstruct them. Nor could any one compel them to leave the Union. The Meos were a fighting community. Some said that they were like a criminal tribe. Even if the charge was true, the State could not banish them. The right way would be to reform and induce them to become worthy citizens.

PRICES AND DECONTROL

A friend said that where he was living, decontrol had caused a rise in the price of sugar. Gandhiji said that in other places prices were reported to have fallen. There must be a local cause for a local rise.

Control on Petrol

There was the transport difficulty which came in the way of proper distribution. Dr. Mathai had his difficulties. There was shortage of coal and wagons. The Minister was trying to overcome them as early as he could. India carried on her business when there were no railways. But now when she had them, shortage of transport caused a real difficulty. What was then a proper substitute for or addition to railway transport? Motor transport at once came to the mind. But that transport could not function if there was no petrol. This pointed to the removal of the control over petrol. He did not know why it should be difficult. One could not do things by halves. If control had to go, it should at least go from petrol. Petrol was not a thing which was required by everybody. The Government might keep enough for their own requirements. They could any day buy petrol in the black market in daylight. If motor transport became easily available, there would be no dearness in the price of salt. He was told that production of salt was fair enough but the difficulty of transport came in the way.

Compost Manure

The food shortage was due to deficient production. One potent way of increasing production was proper manuring. Artificial manures, he was told, were harmful for the soil. Shrimati Mirabehn who had become a *kisan* and loved animals, especially the cow, as well as human beings, had been instrumental in getting together a Compost Conference in Delhi. Dr. Rajendraprasad and Sardar Datarsingh and others had participated in it. After three days' deliberations they had passed a series of resolutions, enunciating ways and

means of preparing compost manure from cow dung and human excreta and refuse. The compost manure emitted no bad odour. It would save lakhs of rupees and also increase the fertility of the soil without exhausting it. The participants in the Conference had as their sole object increase in production. Shrimati Mirabehn had gone to Rishikesh that day and she would continue the work of cattle improvement and making compost manure universal in India. It was a difficult task whose fruition depended upon the co-operation of the people.

100

20-12-'47

SHED COWARDICE

Gandhiji expressed sorrow at the recrudescence of trouble in Delhi even though it was on a very minor scale. If the Hindus and Sikhs of Delhi or the Pakistan sufferers in Delhi were determined not to let the Muslims stay here, they should say so boldly and openly and the Government should declare that it could offer the affected Muslims no protection. It would be a declaration of bankruptcy on the part of the Government. It would mean a decline and extinction of the Hindu and Sikh religions if the disease spreads. Similarly, if Pakistan would let no Hindu or Sikh stay there with safety and honour, it would mean extinction of Islam in India. He wanted them to shed all cowardice. He held it to be cowardice to force out any one by indirect means. If the Muslims were bad, goodness on the part of the Hindus and Sikhs would make them good. In the *bhajan* that they had

just heard Mira said that she felt happy when she saw a devotee of God and grieved when she looked at worldly men. The sight of the godly men made her feel godly. The way to deal with bad men was to reform them, not to turn them out or kill them.

The Village Industries

Gandhiji then referred to the meetings of A.I.V.I.A. that he had attended at the Harijan Colony during the week between the 6th to the 13th instant. He had told them about three meetings but was unable to deal with A.I.V.I.A. meetings. He had said that the spinning wheel was the Sun in the village system of India, if not for her few cities also. The various village industries were like planets revolving round the Sun. Without the Sun the planets were nowhere. He felt that the reverse was equally true, though he could not prove it scientifically. But he could say so confidently about the villages. There were many villages round about Delhi. If they developed village industries, the villages and the city of Delhi would add to each other's prosperity. Then they would have no time to think of communal strife. He had heard that many artisans in Delhi and round about were Muslims. Their departure had greatly disturbed the life of the city. At Panipat large numbers of Muslims were employed in making blankets. Their departure had greatly hampered the work, if it had not stopped it altogether. Hindus and Muslims in many cases had their different industries. Hindustan and Pakistan were both suffering heavily as a result of this dislocation.

Capital and Labour

Gandhiji had talked to them about compost manure the previous evening. The excreta of animals and

human beings mixed with refuse could be turned into golden manure, itself a valuable commodity. It increased the productivity of the soil which received it. Preparation of this manure was itself a village industry. But this, like all village industries, could not give tangible results unless the crores of India co-operated in reviving them and thus making India prosperous. This was the fundamental distinction between capital and labour. Capital exploited the labour of a few to multiply itself. The sum total of the labour of the crores, wisely utilized, automatically increased the wealth of the crores. Therein lay true democracy, true *Panchayat Raj*. Unless India concentrated her whole energy on this vast constructive effort, and if her children occupied themselves in unseemly communal strife, her fate would be like that of the Yadavas of old who wasted their time in drink, debauchery and gambling and ended by cutting one another's throats.

101

22-12-'47

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, 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.

Duty of the Union Muslims

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 them even if she had. It is a thousand pities that neither the Hindus nor 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.

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 Hindu and Sikhs mistook the poison for nectar and have, therefore, become enemies of the Muslims of India and have to their disgrace retaliated and so become 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 ".

102

23-12-'47

Prayer Time

A friend had given a note to Gandhiji suggesting that in view of the increasing cold, prayers might be held at 5 p. m. instead of 5-30 p. m. Gandhiji said that from the 21st December the day would be gradually lengthened, but he would respect their wishes all the same. He asked those who wanted the prayers to be held earlier to raise their hands. A large number wanted the prayers earlier, there was no dissentient and it was, therefore, decided to put back the prayer time by half an hour.

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, 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 the 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.

REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN

The day's Statesman 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 under-nourished and scantly 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 become 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.

NEWS FROM NOAKHALI

Gandhiji then 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 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 heart, 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 heart 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, particularly 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.

103

24-12-'47

WAS IT NON-VIOLENCE?

In his post-prayer speech this evening Gandhiji said that some Sikh friends had been coming to see him. And he had seen some newspaper cuttings. There seemed to be a general impression that he had become an enemy of the Sikhs. They would not have worried much about that but for the fact that his word seemed to carry weight with the world outside India. The world thought that India had won her independence through non-violence and if it was so, it was a unique thing in history. How Gandhiji wished that it was so! But he had already said that it was not. The cowardly or the weak and the lame of heart could never practise non-violence. The physically disabled could always practise non-violence if they had the grace of God. He had blindly thought that the Indian fight was non-violent. But the events that had taken place lately had opened his eyes to the fact that theirs was passive resistance of the weak. If Indians had really been bravely non-violent, they could never have indulged in the acts of which they were guilty. They had before them the instance of Prahlad, the twelve year old boy, who had alone stood up against the might of the king, his father. He would rely on none but God.

Misplaced Anger

Gandhiji said that he could not but laugh at the anger of the Sikh friends. They attributed to him many things that he had not said. He made no distinction between the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. He had criticized the Sikhs for their drink habit and for the atrocities that they were reported to have committed. That did not mean that all the Sikhs had acted in the wrong manner. Nor did it mean that the Hindus could be absolved. As they were a virile race, he certainly expected more from them. He had freely acknowledged their many merits if he had pointed out their faults. Those who tried to minimize or overlook cruel deeds done were enemies of the Sikhs; not he, who owned no enemy. Whatever he had said, he had said as a staunch friend. He was not unaware of the lofty teachings of the *Granth Saheb*. The Sikh friends should never fear that they would be misjudged by the world because of what he had said.

Christmas Greetings

Gandhiji next referred to the Christmas day of the morrow. It was a festival for the Christians as *Deepavali* was for the Hindus. He did not think that either festival was meant for indulgence in drinks, dances and merry-making. These were holy days making one examine oneself and do better next year. He offered greetings to all Christian friends in India and outside and hoped that they would enforce in their own lives the teaching of Jesus Christ. He warned the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs against entertaining any ill-will towards the Christians, who were a minority in India. Nor should they entertain any wish about converting them to Hinduism, Islam or Sikhism. He did not believe in such conversions. He wanted the

Christians to be good Christians, the Muslims to be good Muslims, the Sikhs to be good Sikhs and the Hindus to be good Hindus under all circumstances. That to him was real conversion.

He had seen in the newspapers that in view of the fact that State patronage to Christianity or any other religion would not be given, 75% of the Churches in India would have to be closed down. Gandhiji said that religion could never be served through money. The Christians should rejoice that an artificial prop was being removed. God was Omnipresent. Our bodies were the real temples rather than buildings of stone. The best place for congregational worship for any religion in his opinion was in the open with the sky above as the canopy and mother earth below for the floor. Every individual was the protector of his own religion against the whole world.

104

25-12-'47

THE QUESTION OF KASHMIR

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 from an Urdu daily, the *Zamindar*, read out to him that day. In that the Muslims were openly invited for recruitment and join the *jehad* (crusade). Abuses were showered all round. He knew Maulana Zafarali 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, Muslims and Sikhs were to be perpetual enemies? Whatever the provocation, Gandhiji advised the Hindus and 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 Abdulla 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.

The Jammu Incident

He had heard of the murders of numberless Muslims and abduction of Muslim girls in Jammu. The Maharajasaheb 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 Abdulla 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 Abdulla 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.

Pride of Pakistan

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.

Recalling Ghaznavi

Gandhiji next 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 the renovation of Somnath? He hoped that no true Muslim would be proud of the acts which are imputed to Mahmood Ghaznavi. He 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 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.

105

26-12-'47

In his post-prayer speech this evening Gandhiji informed the audience that the prayer next day would be held at a village about eleven miles away from Delhi. There was a *Panchayat* established there and he was told that people from that part would gather there to take part in the prayer meeting.

TIBIA COLLEGE

Gandhiji then talked to them 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 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 gave trained students in the *Ayurvedic*, the *Unani* and the Western systems. 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 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.

Abducted Women

Gandhiji next talked to them of another subject which could bear repetition. 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. 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 could 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.

No Bargaining

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*.

106

27-12-'47

CONSISTENCY IN THOUGHT, WORD AND ACTION

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 practice 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.

DUTY OF THE PANCHAYAT

Gandhiji congratulated them on having built a *Panchayatghar*. Unless they did the work of the *Panchayat*, the effort would be a waste of time and labour. Distinguished travellers from the world came

to India in the days of yore from China and other countries. They came in quest of knowledge and put up with great hardships in travelling. They had reported that in India there was no theft, people were honest and industrious. They needed no locks for their doors. In those days there was no multiplicity of castes as at present. It was the function of the *Panchayats* to revive honesty and industry. If he asked them after one year, would they show a clean record and would they show that they had no court save their *Panchayat?* It was the function of the *Panchayats* to teach the villagers to avoid disputes, if they had to settle them. That would ensure speedy justice without any expenditure. They would need neither the police nor the military and they would not need to trouble Shri Randhavasaheb except as a friend.

CATTLE IMPROVEMENT

Then the *Panchayat* should see to cattle improvement. They should show steady increase in the milk yield. Our cattle had become a burden on the land for want of care. It was gross ignorance to blame the Muslims for cow slaughter. Gandhiji held that it was the Hindus who killed the cattle by inches through ill-treatment. Slow death by torture was far worse than outright killing.

ENRICHING THE SOIL

The *Panchayat* should also see to an increase in the quantity of foodstuff grown in their village. That was to be accomplished by properly manuring the soil. The Compost Conference recently held in Delhi under the inspiration of Shrimati Mirabehn had told them how the excreta of animals and human beings mixed with rubbish could be turned into valuable manure.

This manure increased the fertility of the soil. Then they must see to the cleanliness of their village and its inhabitants. They must be clean and healthy in body and mind.

BE AN IDEAL

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, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and 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.

107

28-12-'47

MEETINGS IN THE OPEN

In his after-prayer speech this evening Gandhiji told the audience that he had been to attend a meeting of businessmen in Delhi at the Hardinge Library. There was a very big crowd round the building. The hall was too small for the surging mass of people. When there was a noted man expected to address meetings, he would advise their being held under the canopy of the sky on a wide *maidan* so that all

who cared could join. If they were noisy and would not allow the meeting to be held, the meeting would disperse without doing its business in the open. And if the people became used to outdoor life, they would be spared the headache of finding houses for thousands and thousands. They could stay outdoor for most of the time or else build thatched houses for themselves in the open.

Removal of Controls

Gandhiji was daily receiving telegrams and letters congratulating him on the removal of controls. It had a miraculous effect all round and the prices had gone down. Although the control on cloth was still there, the prices of towels etc., he was told, had gone down. The businessmen knew that he (Gandhiji) was merely voicing the opinion of the millions when he said that the controls should go. The goods of black market were, therefore, coming into the open market and selling at reasonable prices. He was told, too, that there was plenty of sugar to be had. The price was Re. 1 per seer and it was lowered to As. 15 and even As. 14 very often. He was told that the removal of the control had brought much relief to the people. He could take no credit for what was happening in the matter of controls. The real credit went to the masses whose wish he was voicing. If his personal voice had any effect, the unseemly communal trouble would have ceased long ago. In this matter they dubbed him as a visionary and a madcap. He knew that they were wrong and he was right. If he had been right and practical on many occasions in the past, why was he unpractical in this matter of life and death? Tulsidas had said that the essence of religion was mercy and forgiveness. That was exactly what Gandhiji had been asking them to follow.

Returning to the matter of controls, Gandhiji said that the controls on cloth, firewood and petrol should also be removed forthwith. He had dealt with cloth control at the meeting of businessmen. As for firewood, people were not going to consume more firewood than necessary, if the control was removed. Removal of the control could not adversely affect the poor in the matter of firewood. It was the control on petrol that was hitting them hard on all sides because he understood that it hampered road transport. They did not have enough railway transport. To make new railways and wagons was a long time project. They did not need new railways. The removal of the control on petrol would make it wholly unnecessary. Swift road transport of foodgrains, cloth and salt would lower the prices of those articles. The salt tax had gone and yet salt had become more expensive than before. It was partly due to transport difficulty and partly due to some bungling about contracts. A few contractors were said to be fattening at the expense of the consumers. The evil must be rectified. The people should be taught to prepare salt wherever they could. He held that it was the easiest thing to do, now that salt was free.

108

29-12-'47

HAKIMSAHEB'S MEMORIAL

Yesterday was the anniversary of the late Hakimsaheb Ajmalkhan, the beloved of all the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and Jews of India. A staunch Muslim, he served equally all the inhabitants of this fair land. The best monument of his labours he left was the famous Tibbia College and Hospital, which catered for all classes of students and provided for tuition in the *Unani*, *Ayurvedic* and Western systems of medicine. Communal frenzy has suspended even this non-communal activity, I suppose, simply because the originator and founder of the college was a Muslim, however great, good and universally respected he was. How I wish the late lamented patriot's memory could at least give a new life to the college, if it could not bury the present Hindu-Muslim feud!

OPEN AIR MEETINGS

I touched yesterday upon the desirability of having our public meetings and functions in the open under the canopy of the heavens. If this were to become an ordinary custom, it would require a well thought out lay-out. There would be open squares, in big cities and small, designed for such uses. It must radically change our habit. Noises and disorder would give place to stillness and order. Under the new habit, we would talk when we must and then in a low enough voice, never beyond the pitch required for a given moment. We would respect our neighbours' rights and model individual or group behaviour so as not to

encroach on others. This would mean, at times, exercise of great self-restraint. Under such social behaviour we would not have the disgraceful noises and dirt in the busiest parts of Delhi. Large crowds would then move without jostle or jar. Let us not consider this to be impossible of achievement. Some group has to make a beginning in right earnest. Think of the saving of time, energy and expense under this rule of life!

KASHMIR AGAIN

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 Muslims. The invaders have called their invasion a holy war for the defence of Muslims reported to be ground down under Hindu misrule! Sheikh Abdullasaheb 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 Abdullasaheb 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 the Sheikhsaheb. Will not the Pakistan Government and the Union Government close ranks and come to an amicable settlement with the assistance of impartial Indians? Or, has impartiality fled from India? I am sure it has not.

An Acknowledgment

I have a money order for Rs. 50 from a sister in Mathura for blankets for the refugees. She does not wish to disclose her name, not even to me. She will be satisfied if I acknowledge the receipt in a prayer speech. This I thankfully do now.

STRANGE PROTEST

It is strange that I receive telegrams from the ryots of the States, whose chiefs have declared their wish to merge in the Union. If a prince or a semi-prince feels too isolated to carry on efficiently, who can compel him to do so? Those who waste money on telegrams are advised not to do so. There seems to me to be something wrong about the senders of such telegrams. Let them approach the Home Minister for light and guidance.

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.

30-12-'47

MASS DISCIPLINE

Gandhiji in post-prayer address this evening began with an admonition to those who crowd round him at the end of the prayer and make it impossible for him even to have his evening walk in peace. Mass discipline was an essential condition for a people who aspired to be a great nation. If the people learnt to behave in a disciplined manner, there would be no noise or confusion even in a gathering of lakhs. He wanted all to inculcate the virtue of 'military discipline'.

HINDUS AND SIKHS IN BAHAWALPUR

Gandhiji then 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.

The Vithoba Temple

A telegram to Gandhiji stated that although the trustees of the Vithoba temple of Pandharpur in Maharashtra had decided to throw it open to the Harijans, some members of the priestly class — whose number was by no means small — had taken exception and had even started a hunger strike in protest. He

would tell these friends, remarked Gandhiji, that theirs was a very unbecoming attitude. It was un-Hindu. The Vithoba temple was one of the most sacred shrines in Maharashtra. The decision to throw it open had been taken by the trustees after due deliberation. Nobody had opposed it then. If his voice could reach the hunger strikers, he would tell them in all humility but with firmness that by what they were doing they were ill-serving Hinduism. In the all-embracing shrine of Vishnu there was room for all. Even the impure became pure in His sacred presence. How could the admission of the Harijans defile it? In his opinion it was a blasphemy to regard the Harijans as impure. There were black sheep and white in all communities and it was just the same with the Harijans. So long as a single Hindu, irrespective of his caste or creed, was excluded from the Vithoba temple, it was an inert, lifeless shrine. The real *pran-pratishtha* was performed only when the temple was thrown open to all — including the Harijans. The present hunger strike by the priestly class, therefore, said Gandhiji, was not a pious act, but an impious one — it was a sin. Gandhiji hoped that they would realize their mistake and give up their hunger strike.

Rationing in Bombay

Lastly, Gandhiji referred to a complaint which he had received in connection with some rationing order that was said to be in force in Bombay. Under it, it was alleged that one could get only one pound of rice in a week. This entailed great hardship on the Madrasi and the Maharashtra communities residing in Bombay. If, driven by desperation, they obtained the necessary supply of rice for themselves from outside, they came in for heavy fines and even imprisonment. Gandhiji

was of opinion that food rationing in the cities ought to be abolished forthwith. He was sure that if they did that, stringency in the matter of foodgrains would disappear and food prices come down, as had happened in the case of other articles that had been decontrolled. That would put an end to the black market in food which had become one of the biggest headaches of the administration.

110

31-12-'47

NO RETURN WITHOUT CHANGE OF HEARTS

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 the 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.

No Real Peace without Return of the Refugees

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.

Refugees and Honest Labour

The same questioner had suggested that the refugees should be provided with work so that they might not become beggars. Gandhiji would welcome such a demand from all the refugees. The Government could desire nothing better, if only to save the crores spent on feeding and clothing the refugees. Gandhiji invited the questioner to propagate his view. If the refugees took to honest labour, there would be a decided improvement in the present disturbed condition.

Here the speaker gave an instance of a sister who had complained that during her absence during the day, her house had been broken open and occupied by some Sikhs. All the culprits but one were taken into custody. Gandhiji advised all to live by the sweat of their brow, as honourable citizens, even if this involved a degree of discomfort.

Broadcasting the Whole Prayer

Proceeding Gandhiji read from a letter suggesting that not only his speech but the prayer songs too be recorded for the benefit of the wider public. The Broadcasting Department had offered to record his speech in the public interest, but he would be pleased

if it were found possible to record the verses and songs as well, though these might not be as melodious as cinema songs. He selected only such persons to recite and sing who, he thought, were imbued with a prayerful spirit. Gandhiji, however, wanted his speech itself to be regarded and listened to as an integral part of the prayer.

Exaggeration Defeats Purpose

In conclusion Gandhiji referred to the exaggerated accounts sent to him of the atrocities perpetrated in Ajmer and Junagadh. He had already dealt with the Junagadh exaggerations. It was true that there had been murder, loot and arson in Ajmer but the *Durgah Sharif* was regarded as quite safe. No harm had been done to it. Exaggeration defeated its own object. They hurt the Muslim cause and made amity much more difficult than it was.

111

1-1-'48

Spiritual Food

In his post-prayer address on the New Year's day, Gandhiji expressed pleasure at the large size of the gathering, but regretted that seven minutes had to be lost in making seating arrangements for women. Even one minute lost by a meeting meant so many minutes lost to the nation. Men should learn to give place to women and a community or country in which women were not honoured could not be considered civilized. Having attained independence, all of us should from now on behave as citizens of a free and proud country. Gandhiji hoped that the gathering would be even

larger in future, if all who attended would come in a prayerful mood, for prayer was the food of the spirit. He hoped that those present would not only maintain silence, but would carry *shanti* with them to their homes.

HARIJANS AND LIQUOR

Gandhiji next referred to a Harijan Conference recently held in the U. P., where a Minister is said to have counselled the Harijans to give up dirty clothes and liquor. Upon this came a spontaneous retort from a Harijan that the Government could burn all dirty clothes, if they would cut off the toddy trees root and branch, and close all liquor dens. Gandhiji admired the courage of this Harijan brother, but he would advise the Harijans and the general public that the remedy lay in their own hands and that even if liquor were being sold, they should avoid it as poison. Indeed, liquor was worse than poison. While the latter killed the body, the former destroyed the awareness of the spirit and all that was noble in man including the sovereign quality of self-control. At the same time Gandhiji advised the Government to convert liquor dens into restaurants for the supply of clean and wholesome refreshments and to provide instructive literature and other recreation to wean the addicts from the lure of intoxicants. From experience gained in many a country, reinforced by his own observation in India and earlier in South Africa, Gandhiji was confident that abstinence from intoxicants would materially enhance the physical and moral strength of the workers as well as their earning capacity. Prohibition was therefore included in the Congress programme since 1920 and now that freedom has been won, the Government should proceed to implement that pledge and be prepared to renounce the tainted revenue. In

the end, in fact, there would be no loss of revenue and the gain to individuals would be very great. That way lay the path of progress of our nation.

112

2-1-'48

THE NOAKHALI HAT

It was raining on Friday evening when Gandhiji arrived at the prayer ground, wearing his now famous Noakhali hat to the amusement of the audience. So he began his post-prayer talk with a humorous reference to his straw hat — of the type worn by the *kisans* in Noakhali as shelter against the sun — which he valued both as a present from a Muslim *kisan* and as a cheap substitute for an umbrella, all made of local material.

THE BHAJAN

Gandhiji next commended the melodious tune of the song sung at the prayer. This song was, however, more appropriate to the morning time being an appeal to the Lord to wake and grant *darshan* to the waiting devotees. God of course never slept but the song voiced a devotee's feelings.

DISTRUST DENOTES COWARDICE

Proceeding Gandhiji referred to a letter recently received from Allahabad. According to the writer, barring a few honourable exceptions, no Muslim could be trusted to remain loyal to the Indian Union, more specially in the event of an inter-dominion war and the majority of Muslims, with the exception of a few nationalists should, therefore, be turned out. Gandhiji observed that it behoved man to trust the word of his

fellow men in the absence of any evidence to the contrary. Only last week, nearly a lakh of Muslims had met in Lucknow and made an unequivocal declaration of their nationalism. If a man was demonstrably disloyal or dishonest, he could even be shot though that was not his way. But needless distrust was a sign of ignorance and cowardice and it had led to communal hatred and bloodshed and migration on a colossal scale. Its continuance would only result in perpetuation of the division of India and the eventual destruction of the Dominions. If war broke out, which God forbid, he would not like to live but if the people shared his faith in *ahimsa*, there would be no war and all would yet be well.

113

3-1-'48

TRUE PEACE RESIDES WITHIN

On Saturday evening Gandhiji held the prayer at the Wavell Canteen where a large crowd had assembled to listen to his post-prayer address. Gandhiji expressed pleasure at being able to fulfil an old engagement and address the refugees at the camp. He was happy that the audience included as many women as men and invited all his hearers to join him in the prayer that peace and amity may return to our land and the universe. Peace does not come from outer possession such as wealth or palaces but from within. All religions have proclaimed this truth. When a man attains such peace, his eyes, words and actions bear witness to it. Such a man is content to live in a cottage and does not care for the morrow. God alone knows what

tomorrow will bring. As a man, like us, Shri Ramchandra had no knowledge that he would be exiled just when it was expected that he would ascend the *gadi*. But he knew that true peace was independent of externals and was supremely unaffected by the prospect of his exile. If the Hindus and Sikhs had known this truth, this wave of madness would not have swept over them and they would have remained in peace, irrespective of what the Muslims had done. If these words went home to the Hindus and Sikhs, the Muslims would assuredly make an automatic response.

Ideal of Camp Life

Proceeding Gandhiji observed that he had heard that this camp was run satisfactorily, but he could not quite endorse this claim until and unless the refugees co-operated to maintain better order and sanitation in the camp than one noticed in the streets of Delhi. He was aware of the sufferings they had undergone. Some of them belonged to the higher strata of society but for them to hope for the same standard of comfort here would be futile. They should all learn to adapt themselves to the new conditions and to improve them as far as possible. Gandhiji recalled the migration of Englishmen from the Transvaal to Natal on the eve of the Boer War in 1899. They knew how to make the best of the situation and all lived as equals. One — an engineer — lived and laboured as a carpenter with him. We lack such training, having remained subject to alien rule for centuries. Now that we were free — and what a priceless gift is freedom! — Gandhiji expected the refugees to turn their misfortune to good account and to transform the camp into an ideal one — such that visitors from all over India, if not the world, would be proud of it. The *mantra* recited in

the course of the prayer called upon us to dedicate all we had to God and to draw only what we really needed. If we translated this *mantra* into our lives, not only this camp but Delhi, which had of late acquired a bad name, would be renovated and our lives would be filled with inner happiness.

114

4-1-'48

Implications of War

In his post-prayer address on Sunday evening Gandhiji expressed pleasure at the fair attendance despite the rain and hoped that so many had come with a sincere desire to join the prayers and not through idle curiosity. Unhappily people were talking everywhere about the possibility of a war between the two Dominions. Gandhiji 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.

WORSE THAN COWARDICE

The speaker next referred to an incident which had occurred in Delhi the previous night. A party of refugees had tried to effect unauthorized entry into vacant Muslim houses. The police arrived on the scene and had to disperse the crowd with tear gas. Today we had our own Government. How could it function satisfactorily if the public behaved lawlessly? What was worse, women and children were placed in front of the party to evade remedial action by the police. This amounted to an affront to womanhood and cowardice on the part of men, possibly worse than a similar use of cows by the Muslims in bygone times in their fight with the Hindus. Gandhiji again appealed to the refugees to maintain peace and order, particularly at the present time when the relations between the two Dominions were strained, and thus help in the preservation of our new-born freedom.

115

5-1-'48

Results of Decontrol

From the numerous letters and wires giving me thanks for the decontrols and pleading for more, I pick up the following written in English from a well-known businessman. He reduced to writing his thoughts at my instance.

"As desired by you I am giving below the following data about sugar, *gur*, *shakkar* and various other foodstuffs showing their present and past prices before decontrol :

	Present Rates	Rates prevalent during the month of November before decontrol of sugar was taken up by you.
Sugar	Rs. 37-8 per md.	Rs. 80 to 85 per maund
Gur Pansera	Rs. 13 to 15 ,, ,,	Rs. 30 to 32 ,, ,,
Shakkar	Rs. 14 to 18 ,, ,,	Rs. 37 to 45 ,, ,,
Sugar Cubes	As. 11 per packet	Rs. 1-8 to 1-12 per pac.
Sugar *Desi*	Rs. 30 to 35 per md.	Rs. 75 to 80 per maund

"Thus there is 50% fall in prices of sugar and its allied products.

Food Grains

Wheat	Rs. 18 to 20 per md.	Rs. 40 to 50 per maund
Rice *Basumati*	Rs. 25 ,, ,,	Rs. 40 to 45 ,, ,,
Maize	Rs. 15 to 17 ,, ,,	Rs. 30 to 32 ,, ,,

Grams

Grams	Rs. 16 to 18 per md.	Rs. 38 to 40 per maund
Moong	Rs. 23 ,, ,,	Rs. 35 to 38 ,, ,,

Urad	Rs. 23	,,	,,	Rs. 34 to 37	,,	,,
Arhar	Rs. 18 to 19	,,	,,	Rs. 30 to 32	,,	,,

Pulses

Gram Pulse	Rs. 20	per	maund	Rs. 30 to 32	per	maund
Moong ,,	Rs. 26	,,	,,	Rs. 39	,,	,,
Urad ,,	Rs. 26	,,	,,	Rs. 37	,,	,,
Arhar ,,	Rs. 22	,,	,,	Rs. 32	,,	,,

Oils

Sarson	Rs. 65	per	maund	Rs. 75	per	maund

Woollen and Silk Cloth

"Due to decontrol of woollen and Silken cloth the markets are flooded with silk and woollen cloth. The prices in silk and woollen cloth have fallen by 50% at least and even 66% in some cases.

Cotton Cloth and Yarn

"In anticipation of the decontrol of cotton cloth and yarn, the prices are gradually falling. In the atmosphere created by the decontrol of sugar, the prices of cloth are also coming down. If cotton cloth is decontrolled altogether, the prices of cloth are sure to fall by at least 60% and the quality of the cotton cloth will also improve. Mill-owners will have to vie with one another. The supply will be available in abundance as is the case now with woollen and silk cloth which were decontrolled long ago. In case cotton cloth is decontrolled, its export to foreign countries may be totally prohibited for at least three years to make the decontrol of cotton cloth a thorough success.

"The jugglery of the departmental statistics should not stand in the way of the decontrol of entire food grains, cotton cloth and yarn.

Petrol Rationing

"The rationing of petrol was only a war measure and is no longer needed now. As a matter of fact it is only enriching enormously a few transport companies and they only want it. The teeming millions have nothing to do with it. Needless to say that the owner of one vehicle who has got a licence for even a single route is earning ten to fifteen thousand rupees per month on a single vehicle. If there is no petrol rationing and there is no monopoly system of the plying of vehicles, one vehicle owner cannot earn more than 300 per month. So much so that a regular trade is going on for the obtaining of petrol permits for vehicles. For a petrol permit for a lorry, a man can easily obtain rupees ten thousand by simply selling his permit to the transport dealer. If petrol rationing is removed, transport, food, cloth, housing and various other problems confronting the country at present will be solved. Petrol rationing and the monopoly system of transport are only enriching the transport companies, but have upset the lives of the masses.

"Do come to the rescue of suffering humanity by getting the controls removed. The country will become worth living not only for the favoured few but for the unfavoured millions. Controls were only war measures. They should have no place in 'Free India'."

The figures seem to me to be unchallengeable. This belief may be due to my ignorance. If so, the wise ones will please remove it by producing counter-facts which can be tested. I have ventured to accept the foregoing statements because they have found general support from those who are in the know.

Surely, timidity has no place in democracy when people in general believe in and want a particular

thing. Their representatives have but to give shape to their demand and make it feasible. A favourable mental attitude of the multitude has been found to go a long way in winning battles.

India is said to receive only one per cent of the whole output of petrol in the world. That is no cause for despair or despondency. Our motors run in spite of it. Does it show that not being a warlike country, we need no more and that if we did and the petrol output remained stationary, the world would starve for want of petrol ? Let the critic not scoff at my gross ignorance. I seek light. I cannot do it, if I hide my darkness. A pertinent question arises : if our quota of petrol is poor, how is it that the black market supply is inexhaustible and that unnecessary traffic goes on without hindrance ?

The facts adduced by my correspondent are start-ling, if true. This control blesses the rich and curses the poor in whose behalf it is maintained. If monopolies are a fact and work in the manner stated, they have to go without a second's thought.

Cloth Control

As for cloth control, there is not a single argument to support it, if *khadi* which has been acclaimed as the 'livery of our freedom' has not gone into oblivion. We have cotton enough and capable hands enough to ply the *charkha* and the loom in our villages. We can clothe ourselves comfortably and without fuss and without heavy transport facilities. Our railways in the dead regime were first a military necessity, then for transporting cotton bales to the ports of export and distribution of calico manufactures imported from foreign parts. All this centralization becomes a super-fluity when our hand-spun calico called *khadi* is

manufactured and mostly used in our villages. Let us not swear at our villagers to conceal our laziness or ignorance or both.

116

6-1-'48

SQUEEZING MUST STOP

In his post-prayer speech on Tuesday evening Gandhiji said that he had heard that several refugees were still trying to occupy vacant Muslim houses and the police was using tear gas to disperse the crowd. It was true that the refugees were faced with great hardship. It was hard to lie in the open in the biting cold of Delhi. When it rained, tents were not sufficient protection. He would understand the refugees clamouring for houses, if they would not make the Muslim houses their target. For instance, they could come to Birla House and turn him and the owners including a sick lady out and occupy the house. That would be open dealing, though not gentlemanly. The squeezing out of the Muslims that was going on was crooked and ungentlemanly. To scare away the already frightened Muslims and then occupy their houses would not be good for anyone. He had heard that that day the authorities had offered some housing accommodation to the refugees elsewhere, but they insisted on occupying Muslim houses. This was a clear indication that it was not necessity which was the driving force, but the wish to get Delhi cleared of the Muslims. If such was the general wish, it would be much better to tell the Muslims to go, instead of driving them away indirectly. They should understand the consequences of such a step in the Capital of the Union.

STRIKE PLAGUE

Gandhiji then referred to the news from Bombay that dock labourers and others were thinking of going on a strike. He appealed to all :concerned, whether they belonged to the Congress, the Socialist Party — if the latter could be counted apart from the Congress — or the Communist Party to desist. This was no time for strikes. Such strikes were harmful to all concerned and to the country as a whole.

TRUE DEMOCRACY

Proceeding Gandhiji remarked that the Rajasaheb of Aundh had given Responsible Government to his people several years ago. His son, Appasaheb also had devoted his life to the service of his people. The Rajasaheb and some others had almost decided to accept the Merger Scheme. The Sardar had said that the *rajas* would get a pension, but Gandhiji believed that the Rajasaheb of Aundh would not care to be a burden on the people. He would want to earn by his service of the people what he got. The Rajasaheb had written to Gandhiji asking whether the *Panchayat* system that he had introduced in his State could not continue to function in spite of Merger. The Rajasaheb had been told that the form of Government in his State after merging must conform to that in the rest of India. In Gandhiji's opinion, there was no law which could stop a *Panchayat* from functioning wherever the people wanted it. Aundh may cease to be a State, it would not cease to be a special group of villages named Aundh. Every such group or its member could have the *panchayat* system whether the rest of India had it or not. True rights came as a result of duty done. No one could snatch away such rights. The *Panchayat* was there to serve the people. In the true democracy

of India, the unit was the village. Even if one village wanted *Panchayat Raj*, which was called republic in English, no one could stop it. True democracy could not be worked by twenty men sitting at the Centre. It had to be worked from below by the people of every village.

Imports and Exports must Balance

In the end Gandhiji referred to a letter which a friend had written to him saying that in any happy and prosperous country, the imports and exports should balance each other. He, therefore, suggested that India should limit her imports so that they were a little less than her exports. If things went on as they were today, India would soon exhaust her resources. He, therefore, suggested cutting down toys and the like unnecessary things being imported. Again, up till now India had been exporting raw materials and importing finished products. That was bound to disturb the balance and impoverish the country in more senses than one. Gandhiji agreed with the correspondent that India should become self-sufficient as far as possible and that the trade between India and other countries should be based on the principle of mutual help and never on exploitation.

117

7-1-'48

A Wrong Fast

In his after-prayer address on Wednesday evening Gandhiji referred to a note received by him in which the writer said that he had undertaken a fast which would be continued. Gandhiji said that he considered the fast to be wrong. He was of opinion that during his lifetime those who undertook such fasts should consult him.

Students' Strike

Gandhiji had seen in the newspapers that the students in Delhi proposed to organize a strike on the 9th instant. He had told them the day before that this was no time for strikes. Strike by students, he considered generally to be wrong. He had conducted many strikes during his life, more or less successfully. But he could tell them that all strikes were not right and certainly not non-violent. If the students would listen to him, they would give up the idea of the proposed strike.

Grievances of Pakistan Refugees

Next, Gandhiji 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.

Duty of the Refugees

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.

Happenings in Karachi

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.

118

8-1-'48

Before the prayers started several slips were passed to Gandhiji by members of the audience. One of them had complained that he had sent a note the day before which had not been replied to. Gandhiji said that it was impossible for him to read all the letters that he received every day. If there was anything important, the friend should have repeated his question.

HARIJANS AND DRINK

Another friend referred to what Gandhiji had said about the Harijans and the drink habit. The

friend asked why the Harijans should be asked to give up liquor while the soldiers and the rich continued to indulge in it. Gandhiji's reply was that the question was unnecessary. If the rich would waste money on drink, that was no reason for the poor to do likewise. There was no reason why anyone should copy the evil habits of others. So far as he was concerned, he was of the opinion that the upper classes had less reason to drink than the lower. The latter tried to drown their poverty and misery in drink. For the former there was no such excuse. It might be said that the soldiers could not do without drink. Gandhiji did not agree with that. He knew of soldiers, both Indians and Englishmen, who did not touch liquor. The prohibition laws would make no distinction between the rich and the poor, the Harijans and the others. But they should not wait for the prohibition laws to be passed before giving up the evil habit. Drink wrought more havoc amongst the Harijans and the labour class than any other class of society. Hence his special appeal to the Harijans to give it up.

WHY NOT SATYAGRAHA ?

Another friend had asked him why he did not go to Pakistan. He said that he had already told them that he could not do so till things were perfectly all right in the Indian Union. As to another question Gandhiji said that it was in their hands to enable him to go to Pakistan. He would want to go there when Delhi showed a clean slate. The same friend had also contended that if *satyagraha* was a potent remedy for all ills, why it should not be tried in Pakistan. Gandhiji agreed that if the Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan could resort to *satyagraha*, it would prove efficacious for all their troubles there. But where was that *satyagraha*

today? He saw no *satyagraha* anywhere in India on any appreciable scale. Everywhere people wanted the police and military for their protection. We seemed to have displaced God and preferred the military.

No Communalism in the Union

The same friend had asked further that Pakistan was determined to drive away all the Hindus and Sikhs unless they remained there as serfs. Therefore, the writer said that unless all the Muslims or at least an even number left the Union, how could the non-Muslim newcomers be accommodated? Gandhiji said that an even number of Muslims had probably already left the Union. But there were large numbers of Muslims in the Union still. Seventy thousands had collected at the Conference called by the Maulana-saheb. They were the representatives of the Union Muslims. Were these Muslims to be driven away or exterminated? Gandhiji could never be a party to that. There was no bravery in such a course of action. Whatever others might do, he did not want the Union to become communal in its outlook. One should copy the good in others, never the evil.

Parties among Students

Gandhiji then referred to a letter by some students saying that the proposed students' strike on the 9th was being organized by the Communist students, not Congress students. Gandhiji said that while he congratulated the Congress students who had dissociated themselves from the proposed strike, he would reiterate what he had already said about such strike, viz. that for the students there should be no party politics. There should be no Socialist, Communist, Congress and other groups among students. They should be all

students first and last determined to gather as much knowledge as possible and that for the sake of the service of the people, not for the sake of getting jobs.

DEPUTATION FROM BAHAWALPUR

Lastly, Gandhiji referred to a deputation from the Bahawalpur refugees. There were also some people from Mirpur. Pandit Nehru came in while the Mirpur men and women were with him. Pandit Nehru assured them that all efforts were being made to rescue the Hindus and Sikhs from Mirpur. But there were insurmountable difficulties in the way. He was, however, trying to do his best for them. The Bahawalpur deputation said that while those from the West Punjab and the N. W. F. P. etc. could apply for employment, the applications of people from Bahawalpur were being rejected on the plea that they were State subjects. They said that Sardar Patel had issued orders that there should be no discrimination of this sort, but still it was going on. Gandhiji could not believe it. He was sure that if any such thing had happened, it must have been the result of some misunderstanding somewhere. He would gladly inquire and tell their spokesman if he called in the next day. The members of both the deputations were restrained in their statements.

119

9-1-'48

NEED FOR BRAVERY AND PATIENCE

In his after-prayer speech on Friday evening Gandhiji said that he had met the head *pujari* of the *mandir* at Bahawalpur during the day. He had narrated to Gandhiji how a large number of Hindus took shelter in the temple when the massacre started. They were not safe in this either and so they had fled by the back door along with the *pujari*. He said that he had tried to save as many men and women as he could, but he could not save all. He appealed to Gandhiji to do something for those left behind. Gandhiji assured him that he was doing all that was possible for one man. He had no power. The country having been divided into two, one Dominion could not very well interfere with the working of the other. Times were such that each one of them must have utmost bravery and utmost patience. No one could dishonour men and women who were ready to lay down their lives for their honour and virtue. Death must come sooner or later. He appealed to them to shed all fear and have faith in God. He was All Powerful and not a blade of grass moved without His will.

PROBLEM OF HOUSING ACCOMMODATION

Some refugees had been to see him during the day. They were better off than many and had been able :to bring away some money with them. Some Muslim friends of theirs had a house in Delhi. They had left Delhi and told their Hindu friends from Pakistan to occupy their house at Delhi. Now the

Government had asked them to vacate it. The Government had the right to requisition any house. But they must see that the lawful occupants got some housing accommodation in its place. They could not ask them to go and sit on the road-side. The Government had to turn out those who had forcibly occupied Muslim houses. But the case he had mentioned was different and required different treatment.

A Misunderstanding

Gandhiji then referred to a letter in which the writer said that Gandhiji had remarked about a week ago that in Bombay people were getting one seer of rice per day in rationing. The friend said that the quantity was not one seer but one quarter per day. Gandhiji feared that the writer had made a mistake. If memory did not betray him, he had mentioned one seer per week. This was less than a quarter seer per day. How could any one get one seer of rice a day in these days of rationing ?

Why at Birla House ?

Another friend had written to him that many poor people could not come to attend his prayers on the Birla House grounds. He asked why Gandhiji was not staying at the Bhangi Colony as before. Gandhiji had explained the reason on his arrival at Delhi. But he would repeat it. When he arrived in Delhi, Delhi was like a dead city. The riot had just broken out and the Bhangi Colony was full of refugees. The Sardar, therefore, decided to put him up at the Birla House instead. Gandhiji did not know if the Bhangi Colony was vacant now. Even if it was, he did not think it would be right for him to shift there. His main object in staying in Delhi was to give to the Muslims whatever comfort

and aid he could. That object was served better by his staying at the Birla House. The Muslim friends felt safer in coming there than in the poor quarters of Delhi. Moreover, it was much easier for members of the Cabinet to come to see him at the Birla House as most of them were staying close by. They were all very busy men and going to the Bhangi Colony would require much more time than coming to the Birla House.

Gentlemen Thieves

He appealed to the people to maintain peace in the Capital of India. He had heard that there were many thieves and *thugs*, who went about Delhi dressed as gentlemen. Such a state of affairs should be remedied without delay.

120

10-1-'48

Need for Discipline

Prior to Gandhiji's post-prayer speech on Saturday evening a man in *sadhu's* clothes stood up and wanted to read a note that he had written for Gandhiji. Gandhiji asked him to deliver the note to him, but the *sadhu* insisted on being allowed to read it in front of the audience there and then. It was after some argument that he at last sat down. In his speech Gandhiji said that it was an indication of the present deterioration that men who claimed to be *sadhus*, who claimed to practise restraint in all walks of life and studied the holy scriptures, should behave in that fashion. It was good that the friend had sat down in the end, but why should he have needed any persuasion and argument ?

To Bahawalpur Friends

As Gandhiji had walked to the prayer ground, the refugees from Bahawalpur had staged a demonstration and shouted slogans asking for help for the 70,000 Hindus and Sikhs left behind in Bahawalpur. They became perfectly quiet when Gandhiji sat down for the prayers. Gandhiji commended their example to all. He had been told that the people from Bahawalpur would disturb the prayer meeting that day. He had not believed it and according to his expectation they had maintained perfect silence during the prayers. It pleased him to note how peaceful the prayer gathering these days were. The sufferers from Bahawalpur had given expression to their anguish in a restrained manner. He knew their sufferings. He assured them that everything possible was being done for the Hindus and Sikhs of Bahawalpur. He had the word of the Nawabsaheb that though he could not bring the dead back to life, the remaining Hindus and Sikhs could live there in peace and safety. No one would interfere with their religion. The Union Government was also alive to its duty and was doing all that was possible. He wanted them to bear in mind that there was a far larger number of the Hindus and Sikhs in Sind including a large number of Harijans. They did not feel safe there. He had just read a telegram from Sind saying that what had taken place in Karachi was far worse than the newspaper reports led one to believe. His advice to them all was not to lose patience and courage. They should never accept defeat. The word " defeat " should be deleted from their dictionary. For that it was necessary that they should curb their anger and patiently think out their duty under the circumstances. He had been explaining it to them every day.

IRAN AND INDIA

Gandhiji then told the audience that the representative of Persia had been to see him that day. The Ambassador said that India and Persia had been very old friends, and that they were from the same Aryan stock. India, he added, was the biggest power in Asia and they felt great in India's greatness. The visitor wanted Persia and India to be bound in ties of genuine friendship. Gandhiji reminded the audience that Gurudev (Tagore) had been to Persia at their invitation and had been very pleased at what he saw there. He had said, "the Persians are our own people." The Persian Ambassador was anxious that the relations between India and Persia should not become strained in any manner. Gandhiji asked him what made him think of such a possibility. Then he told him that some Iranis had been molested and even killed in Bombay. People had gone mad. In the frenzy of the moment, some people might have injured some of the Iranis too as Muslims. But the Iranian Ambassador had assured him that the Bombay Government had taken prompt action to put down the trouble. He was very satisfied with the attitude of the Provincial as well as the Central Government. On behalf of his own Government, he assured India that although there were some people who wanted trouble in view of the exaggerated reports of the happenings in India, the Persian Government was watchful and did not wish to lose India's friendship on any account. He said that the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh traders in Persia were living in perfect peace and amity so far.

EXERCISE YOUR OWN JUDGMENT

Lastly, Gandhiji referred to a friend's letter saying that although many people had congratulated him on

removal of controls, the measure was not an unmixed blessing. Gandhiji advised him to share his thoughts with the people. After all Gandhiji's eyes, ears and hands were the people. He had to rely on what they told him. Therefore, he could not ignore large numbers of letters and telegrams welcoming removal of controls. He did not believe that they were all inspired by selfish motives. However, he did want to know the other side too. He advised the people not to take anything for granted because he advocated it. If their own experience told them otherwise, they should stick to their own judgment in defiance of twenty *mahatmas*. Then alone will they be able to make good the independence (if one could call it by that name) that had come to India.

121

11-1-'48

Peace in Prayer Meetings

Today being Sunday, a much larger number attended the prayer meeting. The women and children were very noisy. Speaking after prayers Gandhiji said that it was only the day before that he had congratulated them on maintaining perfect peace during the prayer meetings. If the women must talk or if they had not trained their children to keep quiet during prayers, they should stand away from the rest so as not to disturb the prayer gathering. God was omnipresent and omnipotent. He was all merciful and long suffering. It was unbecoming to abuse His generosity by creating a disturbance in the prayer meetings. There was no fun, he said, in their coming to see the old man or merely to hear his voice. If they found some sense in what he said, they should try to practise it in their own lives.

A Letter from Andhra

Gandhiji then referred to a letter from Andhra. He gave the following relevant extracts from the letter:

"I hate to point out the shortcomings of an individual, but to shut one's eyes to the terrible consequences of the rot set in in the individuals of an organization like the Congress, noble in its origin and admirable in its achievements, would be heinous. This rot in the Congress is that of the peoples' representatives in the legislative bodies of the provinces who are the prototype of the rank and file. They are vociferous about stopping the wide-spread corruption, but they themselves resort to worse corruption. They take money from the people to get licences of every description, indulge in black marketting of the worst type, trade on the ignorance of the masses, and corrupt the sources of justice, and force the administrative machinery to get transfers for the administrative personnel. The people are crushed between these two sets of people. Two hundred and fifty of these legislators let loose on the people in a province without opposition are, in my opinion, the worst plague. Is it after all for replacing the White rapacity by the Black that many noble souls who are no more with us suffered and sacrificed everything worth living for in their lives? There must be an escape out of this morass. If these legislators are not so numerous, the evils would be less. Fifty members in the lower house and half that number in the upper house for each province which is going to be smaller on the linguistic basis would reduce the nuisance. Will the constitutionalists embody this principle of less the number the better in the constitution of our country and save us from the rapacious legislators and incidentally from top heavy expenditure?"

Appeal to Parties

He had a confirmatory letter from an old and aged Andhra friend from Andhra. Gandhiji appealed to all whether Congressmen, Socialists or Communists to live and work for the good of India. If they all ran after power, where would India be? They should think of the interests of the country rather than their own or of those of their friends.

Suicidal Tendency

Gandhiji then mentioned the visit from some Muslim friends. They asked how long they were to put up with pin-pricks. If the Congress could not protect them, they should say so in plain language so that the Muslims might go away and be spared the daily insults and possible physical violence. Those friends were speaking for the Delhi Muslims in general. Gandhiji advised them to hold to their place. He wanted all Nationalists not to mix religion with politics. They were Indians first and last in all secular matters. Religion was a personal affair of the individual concerned. Times were hard. In Pakistan the Muslims had gone mad and had driven away most of the Hindus and Sikhs. If the Hindus in the Union did likewise, they would spell their own ruin, To try to suppress another was always suicidal. All right-thinking men should work against this tendency.

122

12-1-'48

God the Supreme Counsellor

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, Sikhs and 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 salts and sour limes. It will end when and if I am satisfied that there is a reunion of hearts of all the communities brought about without any outside pressure, and from an awakened sense of duty. The reward will be the regaining of India's dwindling prestige and her fast fading sovereignty over the heart of Asia and, there through, the world. I flatter myself with 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 house top 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 searchlights inwards, for this is essentially a testing time for all of us. Those who remain at their post of duty and perform it diligently and well, now more so than hitherto, will help me and the cause in every way. The fast is a process of self-purification.

CALL TO SELF-PURIFICATION

I told you yesterday of two letters from Andhra. One was from the aged friend, no other than Desha-bhakta Konda Venkatappayya Garu. I give here extracts from it:

> "The one great problem, apart from many other political and economic issues of very complicated nature, is the moral degradation into which the men in Congress circles have fallen. I cannot say much about other provinces, but in my province the conditions are very deplorable. The taste of political power has turned their heads. Several of the M. L. A.s and M. L. C.s are following the policy of make hay while the sun shines. Making money by the use of influence, even to the extent of obstructing the administration of justice in the criminal courts presided over by Magistrates. Even the District Collectors and other revenue officials do not feel free in the discharge of their duties on account of the frequent interference by the M. L. A.s

and M. L. C.s on behalf of their partisans. A strict and honest officer cannot hold his position, for, false reports are carried against him to the Ministers who easily lend their ears to these unprincipled self-seekers.

"Swaraj was the only all absorbing passion which goaded men and women to follow your leadership. But now that the goal has been reached, all moral restrictions have lost their power on most of the fighters in the great struggle who are joining hands even with those who were sworn opponents of the national movement and who, now for their personal ends, enlist themselves as Congress members. The situation is growing intolerable every day with the result that the Congress as well as the Congress Government have come into disrepute. The recent Municipal elections in Andhra had proved how far and how fast the Congress is losing its hold upon the people. The Municipal elections in the town of Guntur were suddenly ordered to be stopped by an urgent message from the Minister for Local Bodies (Madras) after every preparation was made for carrying on elections. Only a nominated council was in power for, I believe, the last ten years or more and for nearly a year now the Municipal administration has been in the hands of a Commissioner. Now the talk prevails that the Government would soon nominate councillors to take charge of the Municipal affairs of this town. I, old, decrepit, with a broken leg, slowly limping on crutches within the walls of my house have no axe to grind. I no doubt entertain certain strong views against some of the Provincial and District Congress Committees now standing divided. And I have made no secret of my views.

"The factions in the Congress circles, the money-making activities of several of the M. L. A.s and

M. L. C.s and the weakness of the Ministers have been creating a rebellious spirit amongst the people at large. The people have begun to say that the British Government was much better and they are even cursing the Congress."

Let the people of Andhra and the other provinces measure the words of this self-sacrificing servant of India. As he rightly says, the corruption described by him is no monopoly of Andhra. He could only give first-hand evidence about Andhra. Let us beware.

My Bahawalpur friends I have asked to be patient. Sardarsaheb saw me only at noon. Being silent and preoccupied, I could say or write nothing. Shri Shankar from his office was too busy to come so that I could not place your case before him and possibly save the Sardar's precious time.

123

13-1-'48

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.

BAHAWALPUR REFUGEES

Gandhiji then referred to his written message of Monday. In that he had said that Shri Shankar of

Sardar Patel's department would not come to see him because Shrimati Manibehn had said that he was busy. She informed him that there was some misunderstanding. She had only said that Shri Shankar could not come at 2 p. m. but he could at some other time. He was sorry that he did not correctly catch the message or forget it. He had not taken it amiss that he was busy the whole day. He would not expect Government servants to go to private persons. As it was, Shri Shankar was ready to oblige him another time. He mentioned this incident only to console the Bahawalpur refugees.

WHO IS BLAMEWORTHY ?

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 Sikhs. Thus they were in the habit of singling out Pandit Nehru and him for praise and by contrast blaming Sardar Patel. Some 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 Sikhs? They had just heard Gurudev's favourite song, "If no one responds 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 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.

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.

124

14-1-'48

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 my opinion, weighty and congratulating me on my resolve and entrusting 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 a few selections, from the abundance which is hourly increasing, to the Press. 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 Gandhiji 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, 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 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 Sikhs can return to and live in safety in Pakistan.

"Supposing that there is a wave of self-purification throughout India, Pakistan will become *pak*. 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 or 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 the Divine Will."

125

15-1-'48

DEATH A DELIVERANCE

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 voice 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 who 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 disturbing 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 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 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 opportunity 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 people 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."

126

16-1-'48

GRACE OF GOD

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 a 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 Comorin 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. Friendship should replace the present enmity. Demands of equity supersede the letter of 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 the Yeravda prison.

FITTEST ANSWERS TO THE 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 consulation 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. But 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 ? "

127

17-1-'48

Cleansing of Hearts

" 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."

128

18-1-'48

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 Govindsingh'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 Shaheed-

saheb's bonafides 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 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 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 idolater 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 the 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 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 Gandhiji 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 hundred people representing the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak 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 Fouj (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 Maha-sabha leaders and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak 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, nor 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."

129

19-1-'48

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 the 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."

A 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.

TASK BEFORE THEM

"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. The 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 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."

130

20-1-'48

Electricity having failed, the loud-speaker was not working. Gandhiji addressed the meeting in a feeble voice and at the end of it Dr. Sushila Nayyar reported the substance of his speech to the audience from her notes.

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 beween 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 reappoachment. Must receive top priority if peace actually desired. Withdrawal of aggressive Indian troops from Kashmir and handing it over to whom-ever 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 Abdulla. 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, BHAVNAGAR AND THE KATHIAWAD STATES

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.

Lastly, Gandhiji referred to the newspaper report that the princes of Kathiawad had decided to become

in effect one State. He congratulated them on this very wise step, and also congratulated the ruler of Bhavnagar, who had given the lead by introducing full responsible Government in his State and placing himself at the people's disposal as their first servant.

131

21-1-'48

BOMB AT THE PRAYER

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.

Ill Serving Hinduism

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 whole-heartedly, 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.

132

22-1-'48

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.

PANDIT NEHRU'S EXAMPLE

Gandhiji then went on to say that a friend had written to him that although Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other Ministers and the officials might lodge some refugees in their houses, that would not even touch the fringe of the refugee problem. Gandhiji agreed that the Ministers and the officials together could not house more than a few thousands at the most. The virtue of the offer consisted not in the number so to be accommodated but in the fact that the example of the leaders doing the act would be proving infectious. The British people appreciated the least act of self-denial

on the part of the king for the sake of the people. All civilized people would appreciate and value such acts of leaders of men. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had set an example before the whole country. That this was so was proved from the fact that more refugees were being attracted to Delhi. They felt evidently that they would be best treated in Delhi. While it was proof of the popularity of Panditji's example, it was proof also that we had not learnt the art of self-restraint.

Poverty no Shame

The second difficulty to which his attention was drawn was that while the Congress had been in the wilderness it had set before the people the ideal of service, self-denial and simplicity. In those days it was difficult to collect even a lakh of rupees. Today, the Congress Government was in charge of crores of ruppees and could raise as much as it liked. Were they to spend it as if there was no change from foreign rule to indigenous rule? Some people seemed to think that India's leaders and ambassadors must live and spend money in a style befitting their independent status and vie with independent America and England in stylishness. They thought that such expenditure was necessary in order to uphold India's prestige in foreign countries. Gandhiji did not think so. Independence was not synonymous with stylishness or pomp. We had not cut our cloak according to our cloth. There was no merit in hiding our poverty. India's status in the world depended upon her moral supremacy which her passive resistance had brought her. In this she had no rival as yet, for the other nations, great or small, were proud of their armaments and military valour. That was their capital. India possessed only her moral capital, which increased

with the spending. On any other condition the Congress claim to revolutionize values, when they came into power, would be forfeited. People criticized the Ministers for accepting high salaries and not bringing the artificial British standard down to the natural Indian standard. These critics knew nothing of the private life of their Ministers. But the fashion was for Congressmen and others to expect high emoluments wholly out of keeping with what one was making out of office. One who managed to live on Rs. 150 per month would not hesitate to demand and expect Rs. 500. Such persons felt that they would not be appreciated unless they demanded high salaries and lived in the old Civil Service style and dressed up as such. That was not the way to serve India. They should not forget that a man's value did not depend upon the amount of money that he earned. The process of self-purification, which they all must share, demanded right thought and action.

GWALIOR AGAIN

Lastly, 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.

133

23-1-'48

NETAJI'S BIRTHDAY

Today being the anniversary of Subhashbabu'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 Subhashbabu'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 Subhashbabu 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. Subhashbabu 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.

134

24-1-'48

Gandhiji on arrival at the prayer ground was greeted by an unusually large gathering. The women with crying babies were chattering among themselves. Gandhiji, therefore, exhorted the audience to maintain perfect quiet during the prayers and this was done for a time only. The prayer over, Gandhiji had again to call attention to the noise of the women and children and appealed for silence with some effect.

EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS — ABDUCTEES

Gandhiji then 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.

At this stage the chatter had become so great that Gandhiji said that he could not proceed with what he wanted to say. He, therefore, brought the meeting to a close and in doing so again stressed the importance of women observing complete silence at the prayers and that those with children should stand at the fringe in order that silence might not be broken.

135

25-1-'48

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. Gandhiji began his address after the prayer by suggesting that the audience should try in future to bring with them an *asana* made of straw or the thickest *khaddar*, as it was not advisable for them to sit on bare damp ground.

All Quiet in Delhi

Gandhiji then 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.

Linguistic Redistribution of Provinces

Continuing Gandhiji referred next to the proceedings of the Congress Working Committee, which had been sitting for the last two days. Gandhiji said that they had been discussing the question of re-constitution of provinces on a linguistic basis. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel were both present in that day's meeting. The Congress had already adopted that principle and had declared its intention to give effect to it constitutionally as soon as they came to power, as such redistribution would be conducive to the cultural advancement of the country. But such re-distribution should not militate against the organic unity of India. Autonomy did not and should not mean

disruption or that hereafter provinces could go the way they chose, independent of one another and of the Centre. If each province began to look upon itself as a separate, sovereign unit, India's independence would lose its meaning and with it would vanish the freedom of the various units as well.

The charter of India's independence as conceived by the Congress was based on village autonomy. But all the villages were to derive vitality from the Centre, as the latter in its turn derived all power and authority from the former. It would be fatal if it led to narrow provincialism, mutual bickerings and rivalries — between Tamil and Andhra for instance, Bombay and Karnatak and so on. The re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis was necessary if provincial languages were to grow to their full height. Hindustani was to be the lingua franca — *Rashtra Bhasha* — of India, but it could not take the place of the provincial tongues. It could not be the medium of instruction in the provinces — much less English. Its function was to make them realize their organic relationship with India. The world outside did not know them as Gujaratis, Maharashtris, Tamilians etc., but only as Indians. We must, therefore, resolutely discourage all fissiparous tendencies and feel and behave as Indians. Subject to this paramount consideration, a linguistic re-distribution of provinces should give an impetus to education and trade.

No Boundary Commission

Gandhiji hoped that they would not need a Boundary Commission to delimit the frontiers on the new basis. That was the foreign way which they had discarded. The best thing would be for themselves to determine the boundaries on the new basis by mutual agreement

and consent and place the same before their Prime Minister for his final sanction. That would be true independence. To go to a third party in the shape of a Boundary Commission for a settlement would be a negation of independence. They must evolve inter-dependence and mutual help.

136

26-1-'48

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 weak-

ness. 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 toboo. 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.

Decontrol and Transport

Decontrol of cloth has been welcomed in all quarters. There never was scarcity of cloth. How can there be when there is enough cotton and enough hands in the land for spinning and weaving? Equally welcome is the removal of control on firewood and coal. It is remarkable that there is now a glut in the market of *gur*, the poor man's supply for caloric deficiency. There would be no remedy of glut nor of reaching places outside the boundary of production unless there is quick locomotion. Let a correspondent in the know speak on this subject.

"Needless to say that efficiency of the Rail and Road Transport is the chief factor for the success of the Decontrol Policy. If there is no improvement in the Railway Transport, there is danger of countrywide famine and the entire collapse of the decontrols. The present working of the Railway Transport is a living danger to these decontrols and controls alike. The terrible contrast of different prices prevalent in the different parts of India for the same commodity is chiefly due to this transport bottleneck. If *gur* is sold at Rs. 8 per maund at Rohtak and at Rs. 50 in Bombay, we must say that there is something wrong with the working of the Railways. Thousands of wagons in the length and the breadth of the country are not kept moving. Wagons are not even unloaded for months and months together. Corruption is rampant in a most virulent form in the booking of these wagons, in the garb of 'scarcity of wagons and coal' and 'priority for different commodities'. For the booking of one wagon load one has to spend hundreds of rupees and spend days together in the railway yards. Even the best efforts of the worthy Transport Member have cut no ice in so far as the supply of these wagons and their constant moving is concerned. The entire Rail and Road Transport requires a complete overhauling by the Transport Member to make the decontrols a thorough success. Then only decontrols shall prove a blessing to the poor for the benefit of whom they are being pursued. Millions of villagers, farmers and labourers are hit owing to the defective system in this Rail and Road Transport, as their produce seldom reaches in the markets.

"As stated in my previous letter the rationing of petrol ought to be removed and the monopoly and

the permit system of the Road Transport may be abolished altogether. This monopoly system is benefiting a few transport companies only but has rendered the lives of millions and millions of our countrymen difficult.

"95 per cent of the success in decontrols solely depends upon the efficient working of the railways and vehicles, i. e. in keeping the wagons moving, and abolishing the rationing of petrol and the permit and monopoly system of the lorries. This shall bring from the remotest corners of the country lakhs of tons of foodstuffs and all other produce profusely to the entire markets of the land."

DEMON OF CORRUPTION

The subject of corruption referred to by the correspondent is not new. Only it has become much worse than before. Restraint from without has practically gone. Corruption will go when the large number of persons given to the unworthy practice realize that the nation does not exist for them but that they do for the nation. It requires a high code of morals, extreme vigilance on the part of those who are free from the corrupt practice and who have influence over corrupt servants. Indifference in such matters is criminal. If our evening prayers are genuine, they must play no mean part in removing from our midst the demon of corruption.

137

27-1-'48

MUSLIMS AND PRAYER GATHERING

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 Government to take appropriate action in such matters, but so far as the public was concerned, they should remain unmoved.

Harijans at Ajmer

Gandhiji had learnt from Rajkumari Amrit Kaur on her return from Ajmer that the Harijans there lived amidst great squalor and filth. He wondered at the apathy of the Hindus and the authorities. Here in Delhi too the Harijan *bastis* were filthy enough, but what the Rajkumari saw in Ajmer beat all record. That Harijans were employed in dirty work was no excuse for neglecting them. The scandal should be stopped without delay.

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 slowly. Dictates of humanity brooked no delay.

138

28-1-'48

To Bahawalpuri Friends

In his post-prayer address on Wednesday evening Gandhiji said that he had received a complaint from some Bahawalpuri friends that they had asked for, but failed to get, an appointment with him. Gandhiji knew that they were in distress and would manage to find time for them if that would comfort them. He, however, desired to assure them that everything possible was being done. A telegram had been received from the Nawabsaheb that Dr. Sushila Nayyar and Mr. Leslie Cross had reached Bahawalpur. They must wait and watch further developments.

Peace in the Metropolis

By God's grace peace had been restored among the three communities in the Metropolis and this was sure to improve the over-all situation.

Satyagraha in South Africa

Gandhiji then referred to another kind of *satyagraha* launched by the Indian community in South Africa. Indians in South Africa were not permitted free entry into the various provinces. In defence of their honour as men and women, the *satyagrahis* had marched to

Volkurst and then motored to Johannesburg where they held a meeting. This was a courageous step and if the people as a whole became *satyagrahis* in the right spirit, victory was sure to crown their efforts. In the question of the march the Government had shown a degree of tolerance and not effected any arrests. But with the progress of the movement, it was feared that arrests would follow. So long however, as the movement was conducted peacefully, there was no reason for the Government to resort to persecution. Why should Whites consider it *infra dig* to talk matters over with non-Whites? Gandhiji suggested that the authorities should contact the *satyagraha* leaders and satisfy their reasonable demands. Today, India and Pakistan, just become new Dominions, were entitled to expect friendly treatment from sister Dominions of the Commonwealth. But if the South African Government still treated Indians as inferiors on the score of colour, he had no hesitation in declaring that they would be putting themselves in the wrong. It was unthinkable that Dominions should quarrel among themselves.

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 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.

A Word to Donors

In conclusion Gandhiji had a word of advice for those who sent him money through unregistered post for Harijan and other work. He recalled that once his father had sent him a precious stone by ordinary post and then in his anxiety had to wire and enquire as to its safe arrival. Similarly, a friend had now sent him over Rs. 1,000 in an ordinary envelope. If the letter had been tampered with, it would have meant so much loss to the Harijan cause as well as to the donor. Safe receipt of such donations testified to the honesty of the Post Office staff and Gandhiji warmly congratulated them and appealed to all departments to maintain a high standard of integrity in their dealings with the public. At the same time he cautioned prospective donors against taking unnecessary risks and exposing the services to temptation and advised that all such moneys should be sent by money order or through an insured envelope, deducting the remittance charges from the donations if necessary.

139

29-1-'48

DEPUTATION TO BAHAWALPUR

In his post-prayer address on Thursday evening Gandhiji first explained how Dr. Sushila Nayyar happened to proceed to Bahawalpur in company with Mr. Leslie Cross of the Friends' Unit. The latter, God's good man and a friend to all, had volunteered for this task. When Shrimati Sushilabehn heard about it, she asked if she could accompany him. She had been associated with the Friends' Unit while working in Noakhali. She was of Gujarat in the Punjab and her family, which was noted for friendship with Muslims, had sustained grievous losses there but her mind was not poisoned. She knew the local languages and was not afraid to go. Gandhiji consulted Mr. Cross who welcomed her offer. Gandhiji was being asked which of the two was the principal. He was proud to own Mr. Cross as a valued friend and Shrimati Sushila as his daughter. Both had mutual regard and both went, in a spirit of service, to study the position and report to him on return. In selfless service there was no distinction. If there could be any, naturally, Mr. Cross was the principal.

THEIR SERVANT

Gandhiji next 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.

Bread Labour

Proceeding Gandhiji referred to the complaints brought to him that the refugees, though provided with food, shelter and clothing, were averse to any work. If a man was in distress, the key to his happiness lay in labour. God did not create man to eat, drink and make merry. The *Gita* taught that one should perform *yagna* (bread labour) and partake of the fruits of that labour. Millionaires who ate without work were parasites. Even they should eat by the sweat of their brow or should go without food. The only permissible exception was the disabled for whom society provided. There was a variety of work for the refugees to do, such as maintaining sanitation including cleaning of latrines, spinning and other crafts. They should learn to make the best of the situation in which they found themselves.

KISANS

Gandhiji then spoke about peasants. If he had his say, our Governor-General and our Premier would be drawn from the *kisans*. In his childhood he had learnt in the school books that the *kisans* were heirs to the kingdom of the earth. This applied to those who laboured on the land and ate from what they produced. Such *kisans* to be worthy of high offices might be illiterate provided they had robust common sense, great personal bravery, unimpeachable integrity and patriotism above suspicion. As real producers of wealth, they were verily the masters while we had enslaved them. It had been suggested to Gandhiji that the higher secretariat posts should also be manned by *kisans*. He would endorse this suggestion provided they were suitable and had knowledge of the work expected of them. When *kisans* of this type were forthcoming he would publicly ask ministers and others to make room for them.

FOOD SHORTAGE IN MADRAS

In conclusion Gandhiji referred to the food situation in Madras. Emissaries on behalf of the Madras Government had approached Shri Jairamdas to arrange for food supplies to that Province. Gandhiji felt sorry at this attitude. He wished to impress on the people of Madras that they could find enough food within their own Province in the shape of groundnuts, cocoa-nuts and a variety of other edibles. They had enough fish which the majority ate. Why should they then need to go out with a begging bowl? It would not do for them to insist on rice — and polished rice at that, which was bereft of all nutritive value — or obligingly to accept wheat. With rice flour they could mix

groundnuts or cocoa-nut powder and thus keep the wolf from the door. What they needed was self-reliance and faith. He knew the Madrasis well and had in South Africa in his ranks men drawn from all the linguistic areas of the Province. Whilst on march their daily ration consisted only of a pound and a half of bread and an ounce of sugar. But wherever they encamped for the night, they astonished him by singing and cooking edibles picked from the grasses on the veldt. How could such resourceful people ever feel helpless ? It was true, we were all labourers. In honest labour lay our salvation and the satisfaction of all vital needs.

INDEX

A

Abductees 375
Abductions 197, 212, 216, 218, 220, 226, 239ff, 283, 350, 356, 385
  of Girls 217
  of Women 209
  See Women
Abdullasaheb, Seikh 97, 99, 128, 132, 144, 164, 186, 213, 283ff, 294ff, 364
Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana 12, 159, 272
Accession 132
Accident 365
Accommodation 362
Accounts 139
Accusation 376
Accused 367
Activity 253
  Questionable, 374
Administrator 346
Advancement,' Cultural 378
Advisory Medical Board 109
Aeroplanes 131
Africa 31, 377
  East 94, 264
  South 49, 97, 99, 112, 171, 175, 176ff, 203, 230ff, 265, 274, 288, 303, 386, 392
African Races 140
Afridis 122, 128, 131,
Aga Khan Palace 169
Agreement, Mutual 379
Agricultural Department 243
Agriculture 210
Ahimsa 58ff, 73, 123ff, 136ff, 144, 188, 245, 305, 330
Ahmed Said, Maulana 23
A. I. C. C. 154ff, 167, 169 170ff, 172, 174, 180, 182, 186, 194, 238
Air Force 235
A. I. V. I. A. 160, 236, 270
Ajmal Khan, Hakim 39, 173, 285, 293
Ajmer 246ff, 250, 266, 271, 302, 385
Akbar Hydari, Sir 121
Alexander the Great 193
Alexander, Horace 61
Al Fateha 27
Ali Brothers 173
Aligarh 119
Ali Shah 187
Allah 247
Allahabad 55, 304
Allegations 228, 230
All India Spinners' Association 148, 160
All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference 186
Alwar 5, 267
Ambassadors 210, 326
Ambedkar, Dr. 91
Amenities 251
America 12, 68, 232, 370, 377
Americans 362
Amery 25
Amils 4
Amity 308, 326, 355
Amman 54
Amrit Kaur, Rajkumari 385
Amtul Salaam 76

Anarchy 241
Anathalaya in Pataudi House 22
Andhra 328ff, 333, 335, 379
Angels 354
Anger 7, 11, 18, 27, 81, 136, 281
Anglo-Indians 96
Animosity 307
Annihilation 229
Ansari, Dr. 10, 12, 42, 173, 286
Antagonism 354
Appasaheb of Aundh 314
Appeal 358, 366, 375
Appeasement 349
Appreciation 377
Arabia 51, 265ff
Arbitration 19, 163
Area, Linguistic 392
Arjun Dev, Guru 43, 55
Armament 370
Arms 9, 31, 53, 76, 235, 273, 352, 361, 374
Army 76, 145, 219, 278, 364, 372
Artisans 270
Aryan 193
Aryanayakam, Shri 254
Arya Samaj 43, 85, 266
Aryavarta 193
Asafalisaheb 12
Asana 219, 376
Ashalata Devi, Shrimati 254
Ashoka, the Good 47
Ashram of Pandicherry 121
Asia 31, 46, 99, 192, 331
Asiatic Labour Conference 110
Asiatic Nation 176
Asiatic Races 140
Assam 349
Assistant Rehabilitation Commissioner 257
Assurances 258, 263, 339, 354, 357
Atrocities 222, 232, 250, 281, 302
Attack 283, 294, 340
Aurobindo, *Rishi* 121
Authorities 250, 258, 279
Autocracy 105
Autonomy 157, 378
Award 350
Azad Hind 162
Fouj 131, 356

B

Bachittarsingh, Babasaheb 53 213ff
Bahawalpur 276, 297ff, 321ff, 325, 335ff, 367, 386, 389
Nawabsaheb of 276
Bakhtiar Chishti 377
Bakr Id 80, 105, 203
Bande Mataram 121
Bangalore 192, 387
Banks 179, 256
Bannu 24, 231, 389
Baramula 165
Barbarity 362, 375, 378
Bargaining 287
Barnard, Dr. S. P. 176ff
Baroda 77
Basis, Linguistic 378ff
Bastis 385
Beggars 342
Bengal, East 76, 90ff, 116, 193
Beni Israel 193
Bhadon 79
Bhaibunds 4
Bhangi 59, 229ff, 371
Colony 3, 323ff
Bharat Milap 106
Bharatpur 267
Bhargava 23
Bhavnagar 364
Maharaja of 220
Bhopal, Nawabsaheb of 358

Bhuttosaheb 158, 165
Bible 33, 104, 138, 247
Birla Brothers 3, 89, 107
Birla, Ghanashyamdas 147
Birla House 313, 323, 333, 360, 365
Birla *Mandir* 107
Bismillah 279
Black Market 134, 172, 189, 199, 236, 260, 268, 291, 300, 328
Black Sheep 299
Blankets 60, 62, 69, 72, 75, 77, 93, 95, 101, 104, 107, 120, 139, 227
Blessings 260, 354, 371, 378
Blood-brothers 99
Bloodshed 234, 262, 305
Boers 231
Bomb 367
  explosion 365, 367
  thrower 366
Bombay 152, 208, 220, 250, 299, 361, 367, 379, 382
Bonafides 354
Book of Life 254
Bose, Subhash 131, 144
  See Netaji
Boundary Commission 379ff
Boycott 360
Brahman 371
Bravery 322, 351, 367
Bread Labour 342, 390
Brij Krishna 129, 152, 260, 389
Britain, Great 46, 48
British Cabinet 350
  Commonwealth 176
  Crown 46
  Empire 105
  Government 70, 73
  Imperialism 115
  Isles 47
  People 177, 369
  Raj 95
  regime 188, 195, 200
  rule 157
  rulers 317
  standards 371
  suzerainty 105
  throne 158
  Tommy 192
Britishers 31, 37, 90, 101ff, 105
Broadcasting Department 301
  House 166
Brotherhood 131
Brutality 209
Buddhism 235
Bureaucracy, Foreign 117
Burma 63ff, 177, 234ff, 250
Business 263
  Class 199
  men 233, 257, 261, 264, 290, 309

C

Cabinet 53, 117, 158, 276, 337, 349
  emergency 295
  members 324
Cablegrams 339
Calcutta 44, 108, 115ff 250, 255, 338, 353
Calico 152
Cape Comorin 349
Capital 220ff, 370, 381
  Issues 179
Capitalists 245
Casey, Mr. 147
Caste 131, 339, 371
  and creed 263
  Hindus 116, 229
Cattle 140ff, 190ff, 193
Cawnpore 381
Centre (Governmental) 118, 379
Central Dairy 192
  Government 105, 198, 214
  Jail 112

Centralization 67
Ceylon 177, 235
Chambers of Commerce
Communal, 233
European, 233
Marwadi, 233ff.
Muslim, 233
Chandni Chowk 182 ff, 214
Chandranagore 157
Charkha 245 ff, 251 ff, 312
Jayanti 79
Sangh 236, 245 ff, 251
Chimanlal, Diwan 11
China 289, 377
Chitral 300
Christianity 194, 273
Christians 26, 41, 44, 57, 193, 195ff, 201, 215, 247, 274, 281ff, 290, 293, 354, 356, 366
Christian Missionaries 108
Christmas 281
Churches 282
Churchill, Mr. 45ff, 63ff, 143
Citizens 118, 152, 186, 259, 267, 275, 287, 298, 302, 357, 360, 362
Rights 91
Citizenship 110
Civilians 135, 261
Civil Servants 261
Service 90, 93, 261, 371
Civilization 302, 370
Cleansing of Hearts 337, 351, 373
Inward 376
Cloth 93, 181. 236ff, 242ff, 245ff, 291ff, 310, 312, 381
control 153
shortage 77ff, 237
Clothing 277, 390
Coercion 168
Colour 387
prejudice 177
Commonwealth 47, 177, 387
Communal basis 117
bitterness 373
differences 355, 372
disturbances 257
frenzy 293
harmony 119, 167, 202, 207, 246
hatred 305
matters 190
peace 354, 364
poison 142, 274, 296
prejudice 225
quarrels 252
riots 177
schools 360
situation 376
spirit 233
strife 175, 225, 270ff
trouble 147, 291, 373, 387
unity 341
Communalism 19, 114, 117, 133, 214, 320
Communists 320, 329
Party 314
Communities 157, 264, 351, 358ff, 361, 368, 371, 373ff
major 380
minor 380
Compost Conference 289
manure 268ff
Compromise 279
Compulsion 298
Concord, unity and goodwill 358
Confession 32, 284
Congregational worship 130
Congress 30, 35, 44, 69, 83, 138, 144, 147, 150, 168ff, 171, 174, 208, 222, 261, 274ff, 282, 314, 320, 328, 333ff, 370ff, 378ff
Committees 334

Governments 370
men 170, 174, 216, 220ff, 222, 230, 261ff, 329, 371
Of Natal Indians 176ff
Party 261
programme 303
Working Committee 53, 165ff, 170, 378
Conscience 352, 362
Consistency in thought, word and action 288
Conspirators 259
Constitution 328
Constructive Work 201
Control 77, 93, 135, 146, 172, 179, 181, 218, 236ff, 242ff, 268, 291ff, 311ff, 350
of cloth 134, 147
of food 133ff
Conversions 18, 106, 126, 226, 230, 240, 281ff, 356, 367
Co-operation 76, 90, 126, 129, 151ff, 209, 227, 243, 269, 271, 354
Corruption 199, 255, 381, 383
Cotton 152, 237, 242, 310
Famine 153
merchants 152
mills 152
Countries, foreign 232, 236
Cow 140ff, 191ff, 268, 289
Cowardice 269, 304ff, 337
Creed 131, 339, 371
Cross, Mr. Leslie 386, 389

D

Dacca 252
Dairies 191 ff.
Dargah 247, 377, 384
Dassera 80, 105ff, 114ff, 203
Day of Judgment 247
Death 6, 134, 226, 350, 353ff. 368, 372
Decentralization 67
Decontrol 179, 242 ff, 260, 267, 300, 309ff, 381
Defence 219, 294, 386
Delhi Fort 131
Democracy 18, 51, 93, 103, 135ff, 178, 210, 237, 261, 271, 311, 314
Dera Gazi Khan 33
Dhebarbhai, Shri 165, 220, 232
Director of Industries 263
Discipline 113, 297, 324
Distrust 304, 351, 358, 374
Divali 155, 164, 166
Division of India 242, 305
Dominions 11, 154, 163, 177, 230, 238, 307 ff, 349, 351 ff, 354
"Do or Die" 14, 21, 244, 278, 330
Dream 341 ff
Drinks 150, 271, 281, 342
Drugs 150, 342
Duragraha 58
Durgapuja 106
Duty 272, 277, 314, 317, 332

E

East, the 273, 381
Economics 260
Education 253ff, 290, 379
Empire, British 226
England 46, 64, 89, 349, 370
English Language 95, 233ff, 264ff, 379
men 48, 265, 306
Enmity 341, 349, 355, 361ff
Exte rmination 368ff
Equality 274, 349 ff, 372, 380
Europe 68, 377
Europeans 112, 215, 231, 264
Evacuation 75, 202, 276, 300, 368, 388

Evacuees 12, 120, 127, 180, 220, 258
Exchange of Population 76, 132, 134, 267, 301
of Prisoners 375
Exploitation 243, 245, 252, 271, 315, 380
Exploiters 233, 264

F

Factories 179, 263
Faith 102, 110, 126, 342, 366, 376
Fanaticism 140, 282
Farmers 209, 382
Fascist technique 208
Fast 316, 330 ff, 339 ff, 351 ff, 367 ff, 378
Fear 227, 259 ff, 345, 352, 355 ff
Fifth Columnists 40, 157
Food 93, 153, 236, 243, 251, 277, 317, 390
Control 68, 70
Minister 146, 210
Shortage 77 ff, 237, 391
Fort of Agra 342
Fort of Delhi 342
Fratricide 19, 49, 79, 94, 109, 134, 234, 368
Freedom 7 ff, 156, 168, 185, 195, 234 ff, 251 ff, 288, 303, 308, 351
of worship 30, see Independence
French Culture 157
India 156 ff
Friendship 349, 357, 360, 375
Friends' Unit 389
Frontier Province 8, 24, 340

G

Gambling 78, 271
Gandhi, Maganlal 97 ff
Shamaldas 165, 212, 232
Gaznafarali, Raja 239
Ghaznavi, Mahmood 284 ff
Gilder, Dr. 42
Gita, 33, 104, 127, 145, 355, 365, 390
God
of Love 174
of Truth 174
Instrument of 366
Will of 172
Goodwill 278, 308, 349, 357
Goondas 215, 240, 287, 338
Gopichand, Dr. 160ff, 225ff, 267
Governor-General of India 122, 158, 211, 276, 391 see Mountbatten
Government
of British 157, 251, 335
of Congress 284
Foreign 118, 215
of India 9ff, 28, 34, 85ff, 101, 117, 131, 152, 160, 165, 172, 197, 206, 218, 226ff, 236ff, 242ff, 250ff, 261ff, 272ff, 295ff, 301ff, 323, 353, 385ff
of Mysore 373
of Pakistan 229, 307, 318, 368, 378
Responsible 314
Govindsingh, Guru, 55ff, 353
Granthsaheb, 6, 33, 38, 43, 132, 138, 151, 184, 204, 222, 281, 355
Guarantee 279, 368, 378
Gujarat 79, 251
Gujarat (Punjab) 340, 347, 389
Gurgaon 160, 180ff, 195ff, 267
Gurudev 131, 326, 337
Guruji (of R. S. S.) 9ff, See R. S. S.
Gwalior 364, 371

H

Halifax, Lord 100
Handicraft 248, 253
Harijan 79ff, 116, 141ff, 200ff, 229 ff, 244, 298 ff, 303, 318 ff, 325, 385, 388
  Sevak Sangh 160, 201
High Commissioner of Pakistan 356
Hindi 88, 95 ff, 155, 266
  Sahitya Sammelan 266
Hindu
  Government 102
  Mahasabha 173 ff, 220 ff 230, 275, 356 ff, 361
  Organization 221
  Party 364
  Raj 71
  Sanatani 372
  Scriptures 43, 80
  State 35, 91
Hinduism 10, 21, 26, 29, 40, 52, 59, 71, 89, 106, 114 ff, 126, 140, 146, 193ff, 221, 234, 246ff, 266, 281, 295, 299, 332, 365 ff, 372 ff
Hindustani 88, 95 ff, 193, 233, 266, 356, 379
Home Minister 149, 345 ff
Honour 248, 255, 269, 273, 300, 338, 349, 356, 359, 368, 386
Humanity 311, 357, 368
Humayun 53
Hunger-strike 298 ff
Hyderabad .115, 158, 163

I

Id 115 ff
  Mubarak 114, 116
Idgah 13
Idolater 355
Idols 217, 221, 355
Ignorance 166, 260, 289
Immigration Bill 264
I. N. A. 356
Independence 36, 48, 61, 74, 110, 120, 155, 178, 188, 228, 238, 261, 280, 290, 302, 316, 370, 379ff
  economic 78
  political 78
India 10, 25, 30ff, 80, 99, 108, 120, 128, 134, 153, 166, 226, 275, 306, 346ff, 378
  divided 282, 381
  undivided 257
Indian 112, 131, 164, 215, 230ff, 251, 264, 280, 295, 358, 379, 386
  overseas 94
  princes 283
  standard 371
Inter-dominion Agreement 375
Intolerance 44ff, 266
Iran 85, 232, 326
Islam 8, 52, 63, 80, 106, 115, 132, 194, 229, 247, 269, 273, 281, 295, 332, 386
Islamic Law 140
  power 284
  world 132
Irvin, Lord 100

J

Jagadisan 109, 111
Jahangirpur 364, 373
Jallianwala Bagh 24
Jamia Millia 5
Jamnalalji, Shri 148
Jammu 194ff, 211, 283ff
Jamsaheb 215
Japji 138, 151

Jawaharlal, Pandit 53, 71, 165, 175, 210, 227, 229, 337, 345, 368, 370, 378, 386 see Prime Minister
Jehad 283
Jesus Christ 281
Jews 26, 193, 215, 274, 293, 354, 356
Jiwansingh, Sardar 76
Johannesburg 273, 387
Jones, Harvey, Major 158
Joshi, Dr. 43
Junagadh 35ff, 115, 158ff, 161ff, 165ff, 212ff, 215, 224, 284, 302, 373ff
  Deputy Prime Minister of 161
  Nawabsaheb of 162ff
  Prime Minister of 161ff
  Provisional Government of 161ff
Jumma Masjid 8, 21

K

Kabir 38
Kaffirs 26, 130
Kakasaheb Kalelkar 97
Karachi 4, 132, 241, 272, 317ff, 325, 340, 347ff
Karnatak 379
Kashmir 115, 122ff, 128, 131ff, 144ff, 158, 163ff, 211ff, 214, 282ff, 287, 294ff, 307, 349, 363ff, 385
  Azad 186
  Division of 282
  Freedom League of 363
  Maharajasaheb of 163ff, 364
  Muslims of 364
Kasturba Fund 139
  Trust 109, 236, 245
Kathiawad 35 ff, 79, 212 ff, 216, 219 ff, 222 ff, 225, 230, 232, 235, 250
  Hindus 224
  Princes 162
  States 364
Khadi 78, 147ff, 152ff, 252, 312, 376
  Board 148
  economics 148
  Pratishthan 76, 192
Khan Brothers 7
Khare, Pandit 97
Khilafat 202, 283
Khwajasaheb 91
Kingdom of God 61, 98, 228
Kirpan 56, 184ff, 202ff
Kisan 210, 236ff, 251, 268, 304, 391
  Prime Minister 210
Raj 210
Konda Venkatappayya, Deshabhakta 333
Krishna, Lord 130, 368
Kumbha Mela 83
Kurukshetra 60ff, 95, 128, 154ff, 166, 198
Kutubuddin Bakhtiyarkaki Chistisaheb 271

L

Labour 19ff, 209, 270ff, 381ff, 390
  Government 47
  Party 64
Lajpat Rai, Lala 266
Lahore 33, 54, 132, 149, 197ff, 206, 238ff, 248ff, 256, 263, 276, 339ff, 363
Language
  international 265
  national 255ff
  provincial 379
Law 103, 140ff, 185, 302, 349ff, 372, 375
  absence of 242, 249, 251, 255, 262, 308, 380ff

and order 117
international 162
of life 286
League, Muslim 274ff, 283 See Muslim League
Leaguers 274, 374
Legislation 264, 381
assembly 70
body 328
Leprosy 108ff
Liaquatsaheb 4, 53, 211ff, 235
Liberty 64, 331
Lingua franca 379
Liquor 217, 303
Lohia, Ram Manohar 147
Looting 232, 262ff
and arson 216, 230, 302, 373
Love 234, 253ff, 366 See *ahimsa* and non-violence
Loyalty 259, 372, 374
Lucknow 272, 305
Lyallpur 203, 238
Lynching 49, 362
law 45

M

MacDonald Award 350
Madness 7, 306
Madras 111, 266, 272, 391ff
Mahadevbhai 169
Maharaja of Kashmir 283, 294ff
Maharaja of Ratlam 116
Maharogi Seva Mandal 109
Majority 31, 100, 119, 124, 137, 231, 238, 243, 260, 272ff, 279, 294, 304, 348, 350, 391
Marlboroughs 46
Massacre 347, 356
Matthai, Dr. 268
Maulanasaheb 320, 356 see Abul Kalam Azad
Mecca 43, 273
Medium of instruction 379
of Speech 95
Mehrauli 337, 384
Mehta, Dr. Dinshaw 9, 42,
Mehta, Dr. Jivraj 42, 109, 111
Meos 5, 73, 267
Merger scheme 314
Merrut 373ff
Mianwali 50
Middle East 54
Migration 94, 235, 300, 305ff
Military 21ff, 37, 74, 90, 99, 108, 117, 128, 149, 183, 217, 240, 257, 265, 289, 320, 330, 365, 370
Militarization 235
Mills 237, 252
Ministers 118ff, 122, 135, 146, 219, 272, 317, 334, 362, 369, 371, 391
Minority 24, 74ff, 90ff, 96, 100, 126, 142, 167, 231, 256, 258, 272ff, 279, 281, 288, 294, 298, 347, 359
Mirabehn, Shrimati 169, 268ff, 289
Miscreants 367, 377
Molestation 227, 351, 377
Mosques 98, 194, 217, 221, 227, 246
Mountbatten, Lord 158,
Lady 56, 154
Muslim League 35, 159, 173, 205, 272, 337, 374
Nationalists 374
State 91
Mysore 89, 373, 387
Diwan of 89
Maharaja of 89
State Congress of 89

N

Nagari 97, 265
Nanak, Guru 6, 38, 43, 233ff
Nankanasaheb 21

Nation 234 ff, 242 ff, 287, 357, 367, 370, 383
exploited 169
Military 172
Nationalism 97, 305
Nationalization 97
Nationalists 304, 329
Muslims see Muslim
Nayee Talim 253
Navy 235
Nayyar, Dr. Sushila 361, 386, 389
Negroes 112, 231, 362
Nehru, Pandit see Jawaharlal and Prime Minister
Nehru, Rameshwari 239
Netaji. See Bose, Subhash
Newspapers 73, 105, 146, 208, 219 ff, 282, 344, 362
Noakhali 76, 278, 304, 389
Non-violence 72, 74, 79, 124, 126, 143ff, 234, 246, 252, 272, 288,316, 330, 346, 361, 372 see *ahimsa*
Non-violent defence 145
strength 235
technique 144 ff
N. W. F. P. 7, 39, 82, 201, 212, 321, 356, 385 see Frontier Province

O

Objector 27, 29, 124, 127, 129, 131, 133, 136ff, 151
Occupation of houses etc. 262, 322, 338, 360
Okhla 188, 194
Opportunists 363
Organization, Hindu 274
national 274
political 274ff
religious 275
secular 274
Over-population 135

P

Pakistan Dailies 212
Premier 212
Times 212
Panchayat 285, 288ff, 314
Ghar 288
Raj 70, 90, 210, 261, 271, 315
Pandharpur 142
Pandit, Vijayalakshmi 175
Panipat 154ff, 161, 180, 225ff, 270
Parachinar 385
Parsis 41, 57, 193, 215, 274, 290, 293, 354, 356, 368
Sabha 275
Passive Resistance 94, 251, 280
Patel, Sardar Vallabhbhai 3 ff, 95, 139, 232 see Sardar
Patriotism 372 ff, 391
Peace 248, 267, 278, 297, 305, 326 ff, 353, 367, 386, 390
Committee 360
mission 247 ff, 258
pledge 361, 367
People 228, 243, 251, 284, 346, 355, 365, 377, 387, 392
Persia 326
Pledge 285, 340, 356 ff, 361
Police 21ff, 37, 74, 90, 108, 125, 183, 217, 240, 289, 308, 317, 344, 387
Politics 329, 341, 374
Political ambition 275
education 346
move 352
parties 340
prisoners 112
reforms 371
Prejudices 121ff
anti-Asiatic 177
anti-colour 177

Press 73ff, 88, 102, 110, 132, 162, 175, 221, 347
Prime Minister
of Indian Union 9, 12, 149, 210ff, 228, 362 See Pandit Jawaharlal
of Pakistan 223
Princes 35, 105, 284ff
Prison of Yeravda 148, 350
Profiteering 210, 236
Prohibition 303, 319
Propaganda 224, 232, 236
Protection of lives 248, 263, 268ff, 359
of Muslims 229
Provincialism 372, 379
Punjab 6, 21, 33, 82, 94, 160, 184, 251, 356, 389
East 9, 19, 25, 160, 170, 211, 227, 240, 257, 262, 376
West 8, 25, 39, 138, 187, 207, 247ff, 262, 300, 375
Purana Quila 53, 60
Purification of self 156, 340, 342ff, 347ff, 351, 367, 372ff

Q

Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah 4, 7, 11ff, 24, 50, 132, 158ff, 161, 298, 340
Quran 17, 20, 23, 29, 33, 38, 43, 45, 100, 104, 123, 125, 127, 129ff, 136, 138, 141, 151, 222, 247, 355

R

Raiders in Kashmir 144ff, 283, 385
Railway 120ff, 264, 268
fares 121, 218
transport 382
Rajas 115, 352ff see Princes
Rajendraprasad, Dr. 65, 93, 133, 146ff, 192, 268, 356, 378
Rajkot 158, 220ff
Rajkumari 44, 100, 109, 159 See Amrit Kaur
Rama 114ff, 122, 164ff
dhun 225, 237
nama 42, 92, 169ff, 171
Rajya 61, 71, 98, 164, 228
see Kingdom of God
Rampur (State) 173, 176
Nawabsaheb of 173
Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R. S. S.) 9, 173ff, 220ff, 230, 356ff
Rationing 67, 77, 134ff, 299, 300, 311, 323, 383
Ratlam 116, 364
Ravana 37, 106, 144ff, 164ff, 171
Red tape 135, 178
Redistribution of provinces 378ff
Referendum 364, 374
Refugees 3ff, 11, 25, 34, 52ff, 60, 75, 81ff, 95, 107, 120, 128, 138ff, 149, 159ff, 171, 181, 194, 205ff, 227, 249, 262, 276ff, 298 308, 317ff, 335, 356ff, 367, 390
Rehabilitation 76, 248, 279
Relief 76, 362
Religion 80, 98, 121ff, 131, 146, 168, 193, 215, 221ff, 240, 254, 266, 274, 291, 305, 342, 355, 372
Renovation 215, 250, 285, 352
Representatives 312, 347, 353, 371
Resistance 352, 356
armed 174
see Passive Resistance
Responsible Government 89, 365, 371
Retaliation 63, 88, 108, 114, 238 300, 385

Return to original province 239ff, 263, 300, 305, 356
Reunion of two Dominions 352
of hearts 358, 377
Revenge 32, 88, 108, 114, 355
Revolution 84, 246
Rights 200, 314, 337
elementary 231
fundamental 232
legal 162ff
Riots 232,249,257,266,278, 323, 347,
mongers 248
Rohtak 200, 382
Roman Catholics 195ff
Round Table Conference, Second 350
Roy, Dr. B. C. 42
Roy, Dilip Kumar 121, 125, 127

S

Sabarmati Ashram 71, 97
Sanatana Hindu Dharma 6
Sanatani Hindu 71, 115, 355
Sane Guruji 142
Sanitation 84, 120, 277, 306
Sanity 9, 123, 133, 239, 347, 349, 361
Sapru, Dr. Tej Bahadur 266
Sardar, 24, 71, 105, 119, 210ff, 215ff, 220ff, 225, 229, 244, 250, 261, 314, 321, 330, 335ff, 344ff, 361, 373, 378 see Patel, Sardar Vallabhbhai
Sarojini Naidu 169
Sastriar, Shrinivas 109
Satan, 170ff, 247, 288, 303, 337, 355
Satishbabu (Das Gupta) 76, 192
Satyagraha 58, 80ff, 89, 93ff, 156, 174, 231, 319, 386ff
Scarcity 134ff, 199
Scripts 88, 96ff
Scriptures 130, 204
Services 90, 117ff, 236, 357, 370
Settlement 279, 295, 349
foreign 156ff
Shanti Sena 115
Shaukatullakhan, Dr. 10
Sheikh Abdulla, See Abdulla, Sheikh
Sher-e-Kashmir, see Abdulla, Sheikh
Shriram, Lala 147
Sikh *pantha* 185
Religion 38
Sabha 275
scriptures 151ff
State 91
Sikhism 126, 194, 221, 332
Sind 39, 82, 229, 241, 244, 298, 300, 317, 325, 356
Slaughter
of Calves 192
of Cows 140
of pigs 139
Slavery 229, 252
Smuts, General 231
Socialism 64
Socialists 246, 320, 329
party of 314
Society 209, 286, 362
democratic 381
Somnath Temple 215, 250, 284ff
Spinning 78ff, 153, 237
Starvation 134, 231, 236
State 18, 161, 178, 259, 262ff, 341, 359
democratic 168
patronage 282
savage 103

secular 140, 168, 215, 263
territory 161
theocratic 168
States 58, 105,115,178,259,267, 367
Strike 314, 316, 381
Subhashbabu 372ff see Netaji
Sufferers 136, 138, 149, 205ff, 208
225, 227, 269, 353ff, 367
Suhrawardysaheb 91, 338, 353ff
Sushila Nayyar, Dr. see Nayyar
Swaraj 97 ff, 334, 341

T

Talimi Sangh 236, 245
Tamil Province 379
Tamilians 266, 379
Tarasingh, Master 234
Tax, additional 218
Temple, 98, 125ff, 173, 217, 221,
227, 282, 369
of Pandharpur 142
Tension 274, 387
Territory, foreign 378
Thakur Datt 39
Thakkarbapa 139
Tibbia College 39, 285, 293
Travelling, Ticketless 120
Tolerance 30, 234, 355,365,368,387
Tongues, provincial 379
Traitors 25, 54, 184, 374
Transfer of population 12
of power 377
Transport 179, 242, 268, 311, 381
Member 382
Railway 292
Road 292, 383
Transvaal 273, 306
Treachery 37, 238, 258
Tribal area 385
Tribesmen 131ff, 364
Tri-colour 9
Tulsidas 194, 265
Troops 131, 144, 363ff
of Indian Union 186, 283
see Army
Truman, President 68
Trust 258,337, 346, 360, 374
Trustee 20, 105, 116, 284ff, 298ff
Truth 40ff, 58ff, 124, 134, 222,
224ff, 230, 232, 234, 236, 241,
250, 253ff, 273, 288, 305ff, 347,
355ff, 358, 361, 369, 377
Tapascharya 145

U

Ujjain 364
Unani system 286, 293
Un-Hindu 299
Union 4, 10, 21, 106, 140, 162, 267
Government 163ff
of India 259
Ministers 4
Unit, separate 379
Sovereign 379
United nations 347ff
Security Council 347
Unity 214, 378
U. N. O. 80, 175, 200, 231, 307ff
Untouchables 52
Untouchability 116, 142, 290, 342
Untruth 137, 146, 222, 236
U. P. 88, 247ff, 256, 303
Upanishad 247
Mantra 178
Urdu 88, 95, 104, 195, 265ff
daily 283
magazine 284
script 137
Urs 377

V

Valmiki Colony 3, 17
Vanaspati 179

Vandalism 284
Vedas 43, 193, 234
Vegetable soap 362
Vegetarianism 142ff
Vengeance 108, 183
Viceroy of India 70, 103, 215
see Lord Mountbatten
Vijayalakshmi Pandit 230 see Pandit, Vijayalakshmi
Vikrama Samvat 164, 166
Village 254, 379
autonomy 379
model 290
industries 270ff
Vinoba, Shri 108
Violence 144, 200, 250, 267, 329, 368, 372, 381
Vishnu 299
Vithoba temple of Pandharpur 298ff
Volkurst 387
Volunteers 261, 278
Vows 351, 357

W

Wah Camp 33
War 259, 305, 307ff, 311
holy 294
inter-dominion 304
world 46, 134
Wardha 108ff, 111, 378
Wavel Canteen Camp 6, 305
Weaving 78, 237
West, the 273, 381
medical system of 286, 293
mind of 177
Withdrawal of statement 235, 241, 363ff
Women 239, 342, 375
abducted 286 See abductions
honour of 51
Working Committee of the Congress 38 see Congress
World 252, 280ff, 284, 288, 294, 379, 381, 384
Worship 355
Worshipper 355

Y

Yadavas 271, 368ff
Yagna 390
Yes-man 337, 345ff

Z

Zaffarullasaheb 175
Zaffaralikhan, Maulana 283
Zahid Hussainsaheb 356
Zakir Hussainsaheb, Dr. 5, 254
Zamindars 283
Zend Avasta 33
Zohra 10
Zoroastrianism 194