

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

## CALUMNY ANSWERED

In his latest book, *The Second World War*—Volume IV: *The Hinge of Fate*, Mr Churchill has referred in the following terms to the 21 days' fast undertaken by Gandhiji in the Aga Khan Palace in February 1943:

"While I was myself hard pressed I had to think deeply about the health of another invalid whose bulletins filled the papers.... It was certain however at an early stage that he was being fed with glucose whenever he drank water.... In the end being quite convinced of our obduracy, he abandoned his fast."

We can say from first hand knowledge that at no stage during the fast did Gandhiji take glucose, nor is it a fact that he abandoned the fast.

Two of us, Pyarelal and Sushila Nayar, were with Gandhiji almost throughout the period of his imprisonment. The panel of doctors that looked after him during the fast consisted of two other signatories of this statement, viz. Dr. B. C. Roy and Dr. M. D. D. Gilder; and General (Dr.) Candy, an Englishman who was then Surgeon-General of Bombay, Col. (Dr.) Bhandari, Inspector-General of Prisons, Bombay, and Lt. Col. Baquer Shah, I.M.S., District Medical Officer, Dr. Sushila Nayar, who was sent to the Aga Khan Palace detention camp by the Government of India as a co-detenu and medical attendant was also on this panel.

Gandhiji had taken a solemn promise from Dr. B. C. Roy and Dr. Sushila Nayar that even if he became unconscious, glucose would not be administered to him in any form, under any circumstances, during the period of the fast. On the twelfth day of the fast, his condition became critical and the Government doctors, General Candy and Col. Bhandari, wanted to give him intravenous glucose. We opposed the idea, knowing how strongly Gandhiji would feel against such a procedure. General Candy said that Gandhiji could not be allowed to die, which he must, unless glucose was given to him. On the other hand, we felt that if glucose was forced on him against his expressed wishes, the mental shock might kill him. General Candy went to persuade Gandhiji to take glucose. But Gandhiji calmly refused and showed his readiness to welcome death rather than break his fast. General Candy came out of Gandhiji's room with tears in his eyes. We do not know General Candy's present whereabouts, but we are sure, he would support this statement in every detail.

Gandhiji had a peculiar constitutional inability to drink plain water even normally. It produced nausea. Therefore when undertaking the fast, Gandhiji had made it clear in his letter to the Viceroy that he kept himself free to add juice of citrus fruit as a flavouring to make water

drinkable. Accordingly, on the twelfth day of the fast when a collapse seemed imminent as he could not drink plain water at all, he agreed to a few ounces of the juice of sweet limes being added to it for the next few days of his fast to make it drinkable.

Mr Churchill's second statement that when he was "convinced of our obduracy", "he abandoned the fast" is also contrary to facts. Gandhiji never abandoned the fast. It was continued in terms of his original resolution, which he had conveyed to the Government of India, and was terminated at the end of 21 days as planned from the very beginning.

We are sending a copy of this statement to Mr Churchill with a sincere expression of our hope that, in the interest of truth, he will issue a correction of the statement referred to in the book and incorporate it in the future editions of the book.

(DR.) B. C. ROY,  
M.D. (Cal.), D.Sc. (Cal. & Ail.),  
M.R.C.P. (Lon.), F.R.C.S. (Eng.)  
(DR.) M. D. D. GILDER,  
M.D. (Lon.), F.R.C.S. (Eng.)  
(DR.) SUSHILA NAYAR,  
M.D. (Punjab), Dr. P.H. (J.H.)  
PYARELAL

25th September, 1951

*Note:* The above statement by Dr. B. C. Roy and others has been endorsed by General R. H. Candy from Mortimer, Hampshire (U.K.), in a statement he issued to PTI-Reuter on September 27. General Candy, it may be noted, was the Surgeon-General of Bombay at that time. His statement is given below. —Ed.

## GENERAL CANDY'S TESTIMONY

"I visited Mr Gandhi only twice a day. I am, therefore, unable to substantiate any statements as to what was administered to him.

"From my knowledge of Mr Gandhi, however, I am convinced that he would not willingly have taken glucose or any other form of food.

"About the 12th day of the fast when Mr Gandhi passed through a crisis, I warned him in a private interview that he had 'reached capacity' and should end the fast.

"My words had no effect on him.

"It is a fact that about that time I did invite Dr. Roy and Dr. Gilder to co-operate in giving Mr Gandhi intravenous glucose in the event of his becoming unconscious.

"They refused. Mr Gandhi did not lose consciousness and so the question did not arise.

"The fast was terminated on the 21st day as Mr Gandhi had previously determined."

### MR CHURCHILL AND GANDHI'S FAST

In his latest book, *The Hinge of Fate*, writing about Gandhi's 21 days' fast in the Aga Khan Palace detention camp in February 1943, Mr Churchill says:

"It was certain however at an early stage that he was being fed with glucose whenever he drank water..... In the end, being quite convinced of our obduracy he abandoned his fast."

A joint statement by three of Gandhi's attending doctors and his private secretary refuting Mr Churchill's allegations has already appeared in the Press. And now General Candy, the then Surgeon General, has added his testimony to it. One can only infer that Mr Churchill had been misinformed by the Government of India and the India office or that Mr Churchill's memory has begun to play tricks. It is regrettable that he should have allowed himself to make such statement about a man who is no more in the flesh to refute it.

I was at that time with Gandhi as his co-detentive and medical attendant. Let me share with the public the detailed diary of true facts which I and my brother kept during those days.

On the 8th of August 1942, the All-India Congress Committee passed the famous 'Quit India' resolution and on the 9th morning Gandhi and all the prominent Congress leaders were arrested *en masse*. The Government resorted to extreme violence to suppress the popular upsurge for independence. Here and there there were sporadic cases of violence on the part of the people too. All this oppressed Gandhi. After prolonged correspondence with the Government from behind the bars, he decided to go on a fast. In his first letter mentioning the fast, he wrote to Lord Linlithgow that he could not be a helpless witness of the "leonine violence" of the Government against unarmed people, who had been goaded into madness in some instances. The libellous propaganda against the Congress and Gandhi, let loose by the alien Government, in India and abroad, questioning his non-violence, which was the very breath of his life, made Gandhi feel unhappy. He decided to fast in order to bear witness, by self-suffering, to his innocence and to try to reach the conscience of those in authority, who were persisting in keeping him and his colleagues in prison without trial and without any opportunity to answer the charge levelled against them.

He called the fast a 'capacity fast', his own measure of his capacity to fast being 21 days, provided he could drink enough water. He had a constitutional inability to drink plain water. It gave him nausea. He, therefore, left to himself the option of adding small quantities of juice of sour or sweet limes to the water so as to make it drinkable. Even this he did not allow till nausea became severe and his inability to drink plain water in sufficient quantity produced dangerous haemo-concentration on the twelfth day of his fast. The urine was heavily laden with acetone bodies and there was a ureamic smell in his breath. Dr. K. T. Gajjar, a well-known pathologist of Bombay, was brought by the Government to perform tests for kidney function, etc. The tests were performed by him in the presence of Government representatives and the results were alarming. There was marked acidosis and blood urea had risen to 88 mgms. per 100 c.c. (normal 15-45 mgms. per 100 c.c.). It was clear that unless he could drink more water so that

the kidneys could excrete dilute urine, the result would be fatal.

On February 20, the 11th day of the fast, General Candy, the Surgeon-General of Bombay Presidency (an Englishman) came to see Gandhi. From my diary of that period I take the following:

"General Candy after looking at Gandhi said to Mrs. Naidu (Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, who was in prison with Gandhi), 'What a difference even two years of this man's life would make to India. It is a pity that such a life should be jeopardized....'

"In the course of the medical conference of the attending doctors, the question of administering glucose was brought up by the Government doctors. They had even brought a 50 c.c. syringe for that purpose. Colonel Bhandari, the Inspector-General of Prisons, said that as the official in charge, it was his duty to see that the prisoner did not die. It seemed that in view of Gandhi's condition they had decided to administer intravenous glucose forcibly according to the Jail practice.

"I was alarmed. I whispered to Dr. Gilder, 'Please explain to them that it would be dangerous. The shock might kill him.' Dr. Gilder strongly opposed the proposal. In the meantime, Dr. Bidhan Roy arrived. He too deprecated the idea of giving glucose forcibly or surreptitiously to Gandhi.

"The three of us, Dr. Bidhan Roy, Dr. Gilder and myself decided that if the Government doctors persisted in administering glucose, we would lodge a written protest and ask to be relieved of the responsibility of looking after the patient. Gandhi had taken a solemn promise from us that glucose would not be given to him under any circumstance during the period of the fast.

"The Government doctors left the intravenous transfusion syringe in the custody of Mr Kately, the Superintendent-in-charge of the detention camp. When Gandhi woke up from his doze, the doctors examined him. After the examination was over, General Candy wanted to speak to Gandhi. He appeared agitated. He mumbled out something, which I could not quite catch. I asked him if he wanted to be alone with Gandhi. He nodded a 'yes'. All of us then cleared out of the room.

"After some time General Candy came out of the room from the back door. Dr. Gilder asked him, 'General, what did he say?' Candy replied 'nothing' and walked on. For a moment, Dr. Gilder thought he had perhaps lost his way and called out twice 'This way, General.' Dr. Bidhan Roy was about to go after him. I stopped him. 'You see, he is too moved and wishes to be alone.' General Candy walked straight down to the portico and took at least ten minutes before rejoining the rest of us.

"What happened in the room after we had left was described by Gandhi later: 'Candy was deeply moved. He paced up and down the room. Then came back and sat in the chair by my bed-side; again got up and paced up and down to collect himself. Finally he mustered up strength and said, "As a medical man, I have to tell you that you have reached your capacity." I listened in silence.

"Candy was on the point of breaking down. His eyes were full of tears. I tried to console him: "Why worry? I have completely put myself in His hands. If He wants to take me away, I am ready for it. On the other hand, nothing will happen to me if He wants to take more work out of me."

"Colonel Shah, Dr. Gilder and myself had in the meantime sat down to prepare the draft of a report to the Government. We were half way through when General Candy returned and joined us. We placed our half-finished draft before him. He incorporated

into his report the last two sentences out of it, but with one change. Where we had said 'there are already signs indicating that he may be left with permanent damage to some of his organs', Candy changed it into 'there are already signs indicating permanent damage to some of his organs'."

Afterwards we learnt that General Candy had been officially charged by the Government to appraise Gandhiji of his danger to enable them to technically wash their hands of responsibility.

Colonel Shah came to the Aga Khan palace on the morning of the 21st again. Here I might mention that the so-called palace was an old ramshackle building which leaked when it rained, so that it became difficult to find a dry corner for papers. There was heavy Victorian furniture, which had been removed from the rooms used by us at Gandhiji's instruction. The place had the look and atmosphere of an ordinary prison or detention camp.

The following dialogue that took place between Colonel Shah and myself on the morning of the 21st, is indicative of the deep concern which Gandhiji's condition was causing to all during those fateful days. I again quote from my diary :

"Colonel Shah : 'Candy and I sat up last evening looking at each other's face and wondering what was happening at the Palace. We thought of coming here, but then decided that we would only be disturbing you. At last at 10 o'clock we decided to go to bed to be ready for an emergency call from the Palace.'

"Sushila Nayar : 'Yes, it is anxious time for all of us in attendance. But it is, I suppose, worse for those who are not on the spot.'

"Colonel Shah : 'Yes, you can watch and see what is happening. We know, we would be informed if there is a serious turn, but still the anxiety and suspense are there. Poor Candy is very worried'."

Candy was very worried, indeed, and so were the Government in general. We learnt later that Mr Bristow, a high Government official, was sent by the Government to Poona to fix details about Gandhiji's funeral and posting of military in case of a popular commotion following upon his death, which was gleefully anticipated in the Government House at New Delhi.

The argument was pressed upon Gandhiji that since he had declared his fast to be a 'capacity' fast and since it was clear he could not hold out much longer, he should give it up. He explained that by capacity fast he meant that he had adjudged his capacity to withstand the fast to be 21 days. The resolve once made could not be given up. If he had misjudged, the error must be paid for with his life.

The weakness had increased to such an extent on the 21st (the 12th day of his fast), that he could no longer sit up and lift the glass of water to his lips. We tried to make him take water through a suction tube. But he had not the strength even for that. Water had consequently to be given in small sips by spoon.

At about 4 in the afternoon Gandhiji's condition suddenly took a serious turn. I was alone with him in his room at that time. He tried to sip water through the suction tube but after one or two sips, felt utterly exhausted. All

of a sudden there was a violent attack of retching and he began to throw about his hands and feet in a convulsive manner in great agony. It seemed as if he would faint. I felt the pulse. It was thready and hardly perceptible. My heart sank within me. If only he could take water and retain it he might pull through. Summing up all my courage, I said to him, 'Bapu, has not the time come when you should have water flavoured with the juice of sweet limes?' For a few moments he returned no reply. Then slowly he shook his head and said 'yes'.

I had already called Dr. Gilder. I described to him what had happened and took out two ounces of water mixed with an equal volume of the juice of sweet limes in a measure glass and slowly poured it into Gandhiji's mouth. It had a magical effect. Slowly he opened his eyes.

Just then Kasturba Gandhi came in. She had been fervently praying in another part of the building utterly unconscious of what had happened to Gandhiji.

The doses of flavoured water were repeated at regular intervals. It enabled him to take and retain about 4 lb. of water during the night. That night he slept for five and a half hours.

There were ups and downs even after that. But he refused to cut down the duration of his fast. At one stage distinct signs of water logging were noticeable indicating partial failure of the kidneys. The quantity of fruit juice used for flavouring the water was strictly kept down to the minimum. Its caloric value could not have exceeded 100 in 24 hours. The fast was ended in terms of his resolve after full 21 days.

In a letter forwarding at my request copies of clinical records of the tests made during the fast, Dr. Gajjar writes :

"My records and my findings of the 18th February, 1948, were conclusive enough to show that Mahatmaji was developing acidosis.....The investigations were more than enough to show that he was drawing heavily upon his body tissues.

"In addition, his kidneys were also heavily involved at that stage as evidenced by a marked increase of urea in blood...and creatin. Urine showed a trace of albumin with a few hyaline and Hyalo-granular casts.

"I again repeat that all the above investigations were done in Aga Khan's Palace in the presence of the Surgeon-General Candy and other Officers of the prison."

I cannot help feeling that whoever provided Mr Churchill his brief about Gandhiji's fast, besides stabbing truth has ill-served Mr Churchill. By his matchless physical courage Mr Churchill has achieved a legendary fame. May one expect him to show the moral courage to retract a statement which is contrary to facts and undo the grievous wrong he has allowed himself to do to the memory of one who is no longer alive and who while he lived, in spite of all that he suffered at Mr Churchill's hands, owed him or his country no grudge? He continued to be their friend till the end.

New Delhi, 28-9-'51

S. N.

# HARIJAN

Oct. 6

1951

## FORMS OF THE ONE LORD

(SHRI VINOBA'S TELANGANA TOUR—III)

[Vinoba's post-prayer speech at Hyderabad on the Rama-Navami day, (15-4-'51).]

I was with you here about eight days back and before setting out on a walking tour, which will commence tomorrow from here, I am happy to spend one more evening with you on this holy day of Rama-Navami. It gives me great delight to hold this communion between my soul and yours, in the all-pervading presence of God. The feeling grows in my mind that you are but different forms of the Lord. My heart goes out to meet yours. And I am experiencing the joy that comes out of the meeting of hearts.

### The Gift of Rama-Navami

In a sense, every day that God grants us is holy and auspicious. Yet there are days which get invested with special sanctity because they are associated with holy memories. The Rama-Navami is one of such days, indeed, one observed with great reverence throughout the country. This particular Rama-Navami day has become specially significant for me and I shall long remember it; for today I met our brothers, the Communists, who are in the jail here, and who, though they wish to serve the country like us, have chosen to follow a different course. I am glad that I have had a two hours' very frank and cordial talk with them. Indeed, it has been to me like the *prasad* (food distributed to devotees at the end of prayers) of this great day.

### The Right Outlook

You are aware that I am a *sevak* (worker) of the Sarvodaya Samaj. *Sarvodaya* is for me one of the names of the Lord. *Sarvodaya* connotes interest in and concern for all without exception. Hence, naturally, I feel concerned for our brothers the Communists also. And I would certainly like to convert them if possible to my point of view and win them over to my side. For, God willing, they too can become votaries of *Sarvodaya*. But God's will must prevail. We cannot entertain any conceit on that account; we have, however, some duties to perform. It is my duty, at least I feel that way, that I should hear and try to understand everybody sympathetically, indeed, identify myself with them, if I want to see every one as he sees himself; for to see another from one's own point of view is not to see him at all. A true understanding of the other man consists in seeing him as he sees himself and in trying to know him by identifying oneself with him. That is the way to appreciate the many facets of which a question is necessarily composed. It gives one a thorough, all-sided view of the subject; all other approaches are partial perceptions and therefore not thorough.

I am thus pleased that I had the good luck of meeting them on this auspicious day. Lord Ramachandra is within each of us. He is *antaryamee* (one who pervades our mind and heart). He is everywhere, ever present. He has neither birth nor death; nor is He subject to transformations. He is beyond all forms and mutations, He is also beyond the ken of the mind. All this creation, we call Nature, is His. Sita is His Power, who is always present with Him. We cannot separate Him from His Power. Even as the sun is inseparable from light, the river from water, salt from its taste, a thing from its form, and matter from its properties, even so God is inseparable from His Power. So we say 'Sita-Rama', for Sita accompanies Rama. Maya goes with the Master, and with the Creator the creation, — Nature — which is His work.

### The Stage for His Play

As I said He is beyond birth. People throughout India know and understand this well. And still we stage His birth today in concrete and visible ways. We feel that He is being born today in our hearts, and if we feel that way, be sure that verily for you and me that may well signify the moment of His birth. Generally, whatever we do in life is tainted with egoism; if, however, we do anything which is free from this taint, and free from the contamination of any selfish desire, and which is, therefore, so to say impersonal, because its source lies beyond our little self, that work and that moment betoken His birth. In this spirit today we dramatize the birth of the Lord. Let us do so every day and every moment of our life, that the Lord may take birth within us and be with us at every moment and for ever, so that His will may prevail and all our gross passions might be effaced. Let our heart become a perpetual stage for His play. But owing to our limitations we set apart only one day in a year consecrated to this noble endeavour. With some it is the Rama-Navami day, with others the Krishnashtami day. The point is to choose some particular day when we might try to forget our petty selves.

### Direct Experience

Today when we visited the jail, your Minister, Shri Ramakrishna Rao was also with us. After we were there he said that we should hasten so that we may be back home in good time to celebrate the Rama-Navami, when he would read the *Ramayana*. Now why was this urge to be in time to read the *Ramayana*? Well, this is what makes for the effacement of egoism. That is indeed the purpose behind the celebration of this day: to bring this holy urge to the fore, so that we may learn to let it rule us. The lesson of the birth of the Divine in the inner sanctuary of our heart must be learnt by every one of us. And if the entire community learns to observe the practice on some appointed day, it may well be the beginning of the blissful state when the Divine will be daily and perpetually born in our hearts. Ultimately, we shall be full of Him, for our zeal for the Lord will have

consumed the ego in us. We will cease to live apart from Him. The experience may go further; and we may come to realize that we are only instruments in His hands and He is the real doer. This is no mere speculation; it is an experience well within our reach in our earthly life. This is not like the attainment of heaven, for which we have to wait till after death. It is like the drinking of water followed by immediate quenching of thirst. We have not to wait for the result till some distant point of time after death. It is a matter of immediate and most concrete experience that a man can fully dissolve his ego-sense and be an instrument in the hands of the Lord. Only he must be ready to reduce himself to zero and open himself to the Divine.

#### The Great Legacy

That our ancestors have left us certain days for practising the annihilation of the ego is their greatest legacy to us. They could not have bequeathed a more valuable estate than this. We do know that our forefathers did many great and noble deeds; they left us the rich soil, they made it cultivable and habitable. They planted trees and founded villages and cities where formerly there was no trace of human habitation. They laboured hard and enriched the land and brought to it beauty and prosperity. And they made a gift of this beautiful land, which was their creation, to us. Thus they conferred on us obligations without number. But of all the obligations which they have conferred on us, the greatest is that they have given us these holy days. I wonder, at times, what would have happened to us if we had not had the benefit of these days. So soon as a day of this holy type comes round, our mind detaches itself from the routine course of our surface life and turns inward, and is impelled to contemplate; and we begin to live an inner life, if only for a little while. Days like this bring us this rare help. I feel very much indebted to my ancestors who have given us these days.

And, brothers, it is really a matter of great joy that we are doing some serious thinking today. And what is it that we are thinking? We find that notwithstanding our independence, the conditions in the country have not improved. Vast masses of our countrymen still lie where they were, in misery and poverty. The refugees are still wandering about. Then, there are the Muslims in parts of Hyderabad, and the Harijans everywhere. The women have their own tale of woe to tell. Misery seems to stalk the land in many ways and many forms. None is happy. The peasants, labourers, traders, all are in a bad way. Every one has some trouble or other. One complains that he is poor and goes hungry. Another is sad because nobody loves him. Some think that the rich must necessarily be happy — only those who are poor and have not enough to eat, are unhappy. This is a mistake. The poor are undoubtedly unhappy; but I have known the rich, who are multi-millionaires and who, yet, lament their lot. What is the matter with

them? They say they want peace, and they are unable to get it with all their wealth. And that is true, for how can man, pre-eminently a mental being, get peace from self? Peace can come only when the sub-conscious passions are stilled, when a man has driven out egoism. Every section of our people is sore with distress. In these circumstances, it behoves us to turn our eye inwards, and, for a while, look for the cause of this suffering inside. The pity is that every one looks for both pain and pleasure in the outer world. Let me urge you to look inwards to get at their source. For the pain and pleasure in the outer world have their roots inside. When an enemy gets the better of us in the outer world, the defeat arises from the feeling of hatred in our mind. It is the hatred inside which confronts us in the form of the enemy in the outside world. Should we erase this hatred from the mind, the enemy is bound to disappear. He changes into a friend. The Quran says somewhere that if you substitute love and sympathy in place of malice, you will find immediately that the erstwhile enemies have changed into friends and malice is nowhere to be seen. Buddha was never tired of repeating his famous teaching, 'Hate is never pacified by hate'. Give up hate and take courage — for courage here is a necessary prerequisite — to love the enemy, and you will see before long that the enemy has turned into a friend. The *Upanishads* teach the same thing. So do also Shankaracharya and Krishna. I can recall several names in support of this; for this has been the central teaching of the seers, and God in His infinite mercy has sent down, indeed rained on us innumerable saints. Whenever it was necessary, he never failed to send to us men to proclaim His message to us. There was no time in history, take any country whatever, when these messengers from God did not come to us. They came and taught us to turn our gaze inwards and find the self. But we disregard their teaching and direct all our efforts to the acquisition of worldly knowledge. This knowledge, too, has its place in the scheme of things. For the outside world is also the form of the Lord. And so it is not wrong to acquire worldly lore. But though He is outside, essentially He is within. Therefore try to look within and do it even more intensely on the special days like Rama-Navami, which are particularly dedicated to this purpose.

How shall I describe the greatness of Rama? The name does not refer to any mortal as such; though a great man bearing that name flourished in our history and his fame continues to our day. But King Rama was only a portion of Him, and he embodied the same Being whom we embody. So, this particular name, Rama, which we reverently utter, refers to the Supreme Lord, a manifestation of whose power Rama, the son of Dasharath was, and whose manifestations you and I are. If you think that Rama alone embodied Him, and there was no other manifestation, nor there is any at present, you are wholly

mistaken. You should know that all of us carry Him within us latently and are here in this world, born as men, for the realization of that supreme experience. The truth has been realized everywhere and preached at all times by many; and many, indeed, have been His devotees in India and outside also.

The utterance of this sacred name puts us in mind of His servants, of the devotees who did His will. As I told you Sita is inseparable from Rama; and then one cannot help remembering Lakshman and Bharat and many others.

In your parts too there lived a saint named Ramadas. Shri Sitaram Shastri wants to raise a memorial to him. I supported him; but how are we to raise memorials to saints? There have been innumerable saints in India. Wherever you go, you find that the place has been blessed with the devotees of Rama. Therefore the only real memorial that we can build to perpetuate their memory is that we should, all of us, become *bhaktas*, devotees of Rama. If we do not try to do that, we forfeit our claim to raise a memorial to any of His devotees. The true memorial must consist only in our efforts to be His devoted servants as Ramadas was.

Brothers, I will not detain you any longer. Tomorrow, I am starting on a tour of your part of the province, in Nalgonda and Warangal. People over there are suffering a lot. I am going to be friends with them and help them if I can. We have been meditating on God all this while and we have made good use of this day. I shall only request you to pray to Him ceaselessly, erase all feelings of duality from your mind, and cultivate love and kindness for every one. Forget castes and believe that mankind is one and we are to serve humanity. This is my prayer to you. Let us again remember and recite God's name in the end.

(Translated from Hindi)

#### FIRST THINGS FIRST

(By Vithaldas Bodani)

With the election manifestos and statements of policies of the various political parties, there has been no dearth of 'First Things First' suggestions. Many of them are well meant and well thought out. A question, however, arises: whether these flowery plans, programmes and policies are going to bear fruits.

After a serious consideration of all manifestos published so far, one comes to the conclusion that all of them have ignored, in fact, overruled, the real 'First'. They are the vast and ever-increasing man-power, the appallingly low standard of life of the people at large and the widespread and acute poverty amongst them. Their poverty and unemployment is the Problem Number One. In spite of all its tall claims, even the West has so far failed to solve this problem despite its enormous industrial progress.

This is a huge Herculean task, and I have not the least doubt that the only way for us is the path chalked out by the Father of the Nation, viz. to reinstate the *charkha* and all it stands for in our lives in the shape of moral values. In spite of the lack of apprehension and faith, and even in spite of adverse criticism or

derision, the *charkha* had given us the much-needed unity amongst us at one time, and did also win for us the much-coveted political freedom. And it will be once again the very same *charkha* that will, as certainly as the existence of the solar system, lead us to economic freedom as well, provided we accept it, along with other things, as the unifying force.

It is surprising that all the election manifestos are so silent about it. Perhaps it is so because we have, so to say, mortgaged our commonsense for the alluring and fascinating day-dream of the mechanized civilization ushered in by the industrial revolution.

Let us learn, ere it is too late, the lessons from the experience of the past, from the happenings of the present and also from the vicissitudes of other nations of the world which have been allured by the deceptive supremacy of machine-power over man-power, and resolutely reinstate the *charkha* and all it stands for in our lives. The dream of the millennium of the common people, scattered in groups of hundreds or thousands in the *lakhs* of the villages of politically free India, is bound to remain a Utopia unless we begin at the lowest rung of the ladder, and think first of rehabilitating the poor and the most destitute among the poor.

Rajkot, 20-7-51

(Abridged)

#### TANDON-MASHRUWALA CORRESPONDENCE

New Delhi,  
Sept. 3, 1951

My dear Mashruwalaji,

I have received today your letter of the 1st. I thank you for your having sent to me copies of your articles. I have read them. I had also seen a summary of your statement in the papers. I am enclosing a copy of my statement which I have given to a few papers.

I was surprised to read your articles. I did not know that you were so ignorant about my thoughts and the course of my life. Possibly, you have not read even my Presidential Address at the Nasik Congress. I am at a loss to understand how you have associated orthodox Hinduism with me and raised a discussion about the Arya-samaj in connection with me. I have never been an Arya-samaji, though I have sympathy with some of their good things. I have even recommended Hindu-Muslim inter-marriages. And Hindu-Muslim inter-dining has been common among Congressmen for several years past.

I am sending under separate post Hindi and English copies of my Presidential Address at the Nasik Congress. The latter is a translation of the former. If you will give a little time to read it, you will be acquainted with some of my ideas. I particularly invite your attention to the subjects under the headings "Constitution" and "Hindu-Muslim Question". If you can spare some more time and read "Economic Controls" and the next subject, you will know more of my ideas!

You will see on page 17 towards the lower end of my Presidential Address the same views as I have expressed today in reply to you in connection with 'culture'—though very briefly.

You have made a mention of the Tandon bloc. I do not know what that bloc is, because I have never organized a bloc in the Congress. It is a different matter if some of my colleagues hold the same views and policies as I do. You have also referred to my part in regard to Hindi in the Constituent Assembly with

contempt; and have hinted that there was some bloc of mine at that time. If you had tried to ascertain the facts, you would have seen that when I saw that in my view an injustice was being done, I alone resigned from the Congress before voting against it. For, it was the right course under the rules.

In this way many of your expressions reveal a partiality devoid of truth. If I were to refute here all these points, this letter will be unnecessarily lengthy.

If you yourself cannot introspectively perceive the untruth in your expressions, it will be no use my saying anything about it.

Yours

(Sd.) P. D. TANDON

PS. You will no doubt publish your article in *Harijan*. If you deem proper you may publish your letter to me and this my letter as also my enclosed statement in *Harijan*.

(Translated from Hindi) (Sd.) P. D. TANDON  
(The statement and my reply have been already published in the *Harijan* of 15-9-'51. My letter of the 1st was a brief one enclosing copies of the statements and article. Its publication is not important. The relevant portion of my reply to the above is given below — K. G. M.)

Bajajwadi, Wardha,  
5/6-9-'51

Shradhdeya \* Tandonji,

Now to your letter.

1. I had read the whole of your Nasik speech and I approved some of your views. Your views regarding religion and culture were, as you say in your letter, only briefly touched. Since I had no intimate knowledge of your life and ideas and since those who are regarded to be men of your party seemed to me to hold very much bigoted views, my opinion remained what I have stated in the article. Then I saw in the way in which you and they have presented and propagated your respective views a militant spirit which reminded me of the Arya-samaj spirit. That was the reason of my using that expression. Now that you have cleared up the point about yourself, I am glad to accept it. It would be good if all those who are with you, and still better, if the whole Congress, would make it known that they agree with these views of yours.

2. *Tandon Bloc*: I welcome your clarification of the word *bloc*. Even when I used that expression, I did not suggest an organized group. Even so, it has to be admitted or, say, I at least have the impression that while there is a solid group of Congress workers working for you or under your name, there is not any working for Jawaharlalji. And this does give the appearance of a bloc or group. This might be in spite of your unwillingness; but that is a different matter. However, I accept your clarification so far as you personally are concerned. And yet the reality has to be accepted that there does exist today a group of workers known as Tandon-party people.

3. In the interest of the public, I wish to bring to your attention one more subject. If the views which I have ascribed to you are in fact untrue, I can give them up upon your own assurance, because temperamentally I am trustful. But these doubts are shared by a large section of the people. I have the impression that a large number of people hold the same views about you as I have ascribed to you. The fact that the groups opposed to Congress and attached to communalism, such as the R. S. S. and the Hindu Mahasabha, evinced keen interest in your election and rejoiced over your victory indicates what trends and ideology they take you to represent. What is, then, the source of this confusion, wherein lies the obscurity, that the groups professedly communalist regard you as nearer themselves, and Pandit Nehru farther away? I would very humbly suggest that for

\* Literally, trustworthy, term usually addressed to elders.

your own sake and for the good and the purity of Congress, this point should be made perfectly clear so that communalists either inside or outside the Congress may not labour under the illusion that they can count on your help or that of the Congress in propagating their own ideology or plans.

4. Moreover, the approach towards communal and cultural questions is not the only difference pointed out by me in my article between Nehru and you. There are other points as well. It is the sum total of all these views which I sought to convey by the designation *Tandon bloc* or *Tandon ideology*. It is quite likely that some of these views are not held by you personally, but by your supporters. They are attributed to you because you have not openly disowned them. For instance, I may refer to the views expressed in the two statements of Shri Mishra, or the views of Baba Raghavdas regarding the restoration to the Hindus of the old temples converted into mosques. All these questions assume importance in the Nehru-Tandon controversy.

5. You decided to leave these points out for fear of making the letter long. I would request you to ignore me. Even if you feel that I have formed certain prejudices which are too firmly fixed to be removed, please do not hesitate to make use of my statement and article if they afford an occasion for removing the doubts of several Congressmen, the public, and perhaps Jawaharlalji himself. What can be a greater benefit to the public than that the public, the Congress, Jawaharlalji and you should know one another fully and non-doubtingly? It will do an immense good to all concerned, if you do so in the coming session of the A. I. C. C.

6. I believe that the moment I realize my mistake, and perceive truth, I do not hesitate to own it. Nevertheless, it is possible that I may fail to discriminate between truth and untruth in certain matters. Even so, you should make every effort to dispel the doubts from the minds of the public regardless of me.

Yours

(Sd.) KISHORLAL MASHRUWALA

(Translated from Hindi)

(After the conclusion of the A. I. C. C. meeting, I addressed the following letter to Shri Tandonji).

Bajajwadi, Wardha,  
10-9-'51

Shradhdeya Shri Tandonji,

I received your telegram last night. Thanks.

I think that under the changed circumstances, the publication of the correspondence will be without any purpose. Hence, with your consent, I have withheld its publication.

You have had to pass through considerable mental disquietude during the last few days. Unfortunately, I too became instrumental in it. Ever since Subhas Babu's Presidentship of the Tripura Congress became a failure, and Kripalaniji was obliged to resign his place at Meerut, I have come to the conclusion that an individual not acceptable to the dominant leadership of an organization is never successful as its head. As a matter of fact, the Congress has again and again demonstrated the truth of this proposition ever since the Surat Congress of 1907, when the Presidentship of Shri Rasbihari Ghosh proved a failure. What ideology will ultimately prevail is a secondary question here: the important and decisive factor is— which ideology or individual or group of individuals, is dominant for the time being. Though I knew that you had the support of no less a person than the Sardar himself, I always feared that this arrangement was not going to last.

What more need I add? If I have displeased you in any way, I crave your pardon. There was nothing personal in this. My respect for you has not diminished in any way; rather, it has increased much by the manner in which you upheld the dignity of your office.

Respectfully,

(Sd.) KISHORLAL MASHRUWALA

(Translated from Hindi)

### TANDONJI'S DISPLEASURE

The following report of a speech by Shri Tandonji in a public meeting at Allahabad has appeared in the *Nagpur Times* and other papers.

"Referring to the charges levelled against him, Shri Tandonji regretted that even a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi, Shri Mashruwala, should have issued a Press statement which he said was 'far from truth'. He had not even the courtesy to withdraw his charges after he (Tandonji) had clarified his position. 'Had I been in his position I would have surely expressed regret over such a false statement,' he added."

The reader is aware that as soon as I read Shri Tandonji's statement regarding his views on culture, I immediately published my satisfaction over it, accepted it fully, and desired to be assured that it was accepted by the whole Congress whole-heartedly. (*vide Harijan*, 8-9-'51).

In addition to his statement, there was also some personal correspondence between Shri Tandonji and myself. Shri Tandonji desired me to publish it in *Harijan*. As the A.I.C.C. meeting would have been over by the time the correspondence could be published in *Harijan* and there was no time to be lost, I permitted him to have it published from his end. I also sent copies to Ahmedabad for being published in *Harijan* in the earliest issue thereafter.

In the meanwhile, the A. I. C. C. met and we know its results. Since I had not had the latest newspapers, I enquired of Shri Tandonji if he had published the correspondence and whether he desired me to publish it in *Harijan* in view of the events that had taken place. He replied that the correspondence had not been published by him, that he did not regard its publication necessary any longer, but left the matter to my discretion. I felt that in view of the changed situation, the pursuit of the controversy would not be very useful, and so used my discretion in favour of its non-publication.

But in view of the above report, it is fair to both Shri Tandonji and myself that the correspondence should be placed before the public, even at this stage.

Shri Tandonji charges me with not being what a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi is expected to be. I am extremely sorry to find myself so accused. I have never claimed to have been a worthy associate of that great soul. It was the sheer greatness of Gandhiji that he allowed me to be regarded as his associate and did not discard me very early. But that on other grounds than that of want of humility. In fact it has been my humility, which made him always relent in my favour. I believe I have never been slow in expressing an unreserved apology, even if I had wronged a child, or a man in a very subordinate position. No sense of vanity would stand in my way if an apology is due to a person of Shri Tandonji's position, who is so

much my senior in age and for whom I have always entertained high personal regard.

But I own I did not see any reason for tendering an apology as such. For, as I have said, I am glad to be assured that Tandonji's views on Indian culture are far more advanced than I had imagined. This of course implies that I have corrected my knowledge of him in regard to this, and acknowledge that I was mistaken in regarding him as a representative of the Hindu Culture, whether orthodox or otherwise, in his personal capacity. But at the same time I am constrained to say that if my article "Nehru-Tandon Controversy", is read carefully, the reader will not find a single statement in which I have referred to Tandonji alone. At every place, I have said 'Tandonji and his people' or 'Tandonji and his colleagues'. Moreover, Shri Tandonji's public statement dealt with only one of the points discussed by me in that article. His letter to me explains his position more fully on that ground. It is good and welcome. But the other points need, in my opinion, elucidation. For there does exist in the Congress a group which holds the views designated by me as the Tandon-ideology. All these views may not be in accordance with Tandonji's personal views, and the designation may be a misnomer. But that ideology is there and the upholders of that ideology look to Tandonji and not to Nehru for support. Hence my analysis of the two ideologies within the Congress seems still to hold good. For the rest, let the correspondence speak for itself.

I hope Tandonji will take an objective view of the matter and be pacified. I regret I have caused him much mental agitation and incurred his displeasure.

Wardha, 26-9-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

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