

# HARIJAN

Editor : PYARELAL

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TWO ANNAS

## OUT OF THE ASHES

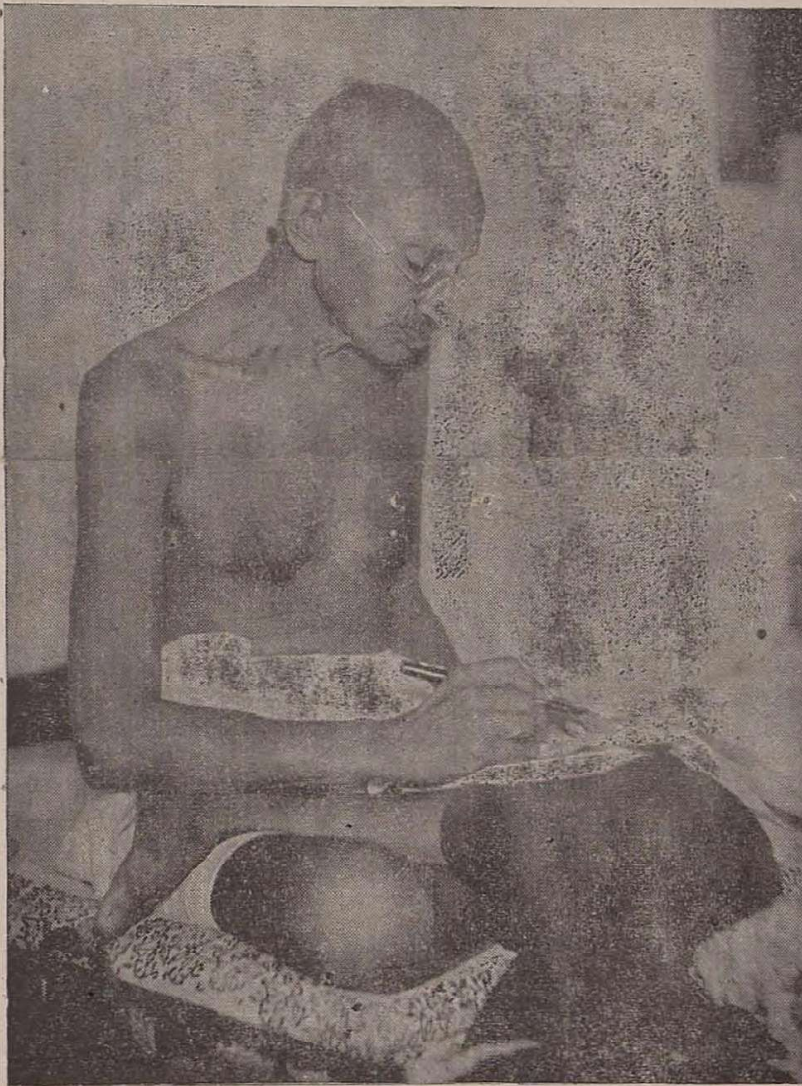
Mahatma Gandhi is no more in flesh and blood to speak to us, to console us, to encourage us, to guide us. But did he not tell us often that the body is mortal and transient, that the *atma* alone is immortal and imperishable? Did he not tell us that God would keep his body so long as He had any use for it? May be that his spirit freed from the limitations of body will work all the more freely and create instruments to complete and fulfil what remains unaccomplished. May be that out of the ashes on the banks of the Jamuna will arise forces that will blow off all the mist and cloud of misunderstanding and distrust and establish the kind of peace and harmony for which he lived and worked and alas! at last fell victim to the assassin's bullet.

Was he not the quintessence and embodiment of all that is noble and magnificent in Hinduism — indeed in humanity? And yet was it not a Hindu hand that aimed the pistol and lodged the bullet in the heart that knew no bounds of race or creed or country? What can be the motive of this crime? Is it to save Hinduism? Is it to serve the Hindu Samaj? Is Hinduism saved that way? Is Hindu Samaj served that way? Search the innumerable

pages of the chequered history of Hinduism and the Hindu Samaj. You will find no other instance of such a foul and treacherous deed. It is an indelible black patch on that history which nothing will wash out.

We are sad. We are stunned. Must we need

be despondent? The body will not be seen. The voice will not be heard. But has he not left us an invaluable heritage? Has he not given us enough of guidance and inspiration to lead us on and to sustain us in our onward march? In the face of this awful tragedy let his clarion call once more rouse us to our sense of duty. He made heroes out of clay. He made consummate use of indifferent instruments in the lifelong struggle he carried on against injustice, against oppression against slavery. India needs the same heroism, the same disregard of dangers, the same recklessness of consequences for establishing righteousness. Gandhiji has given away his life for it. Shall we not follow



Birth : 2-10-1869

BAPU

Death : 30-1-1948

him after death as we did when he was walking on this earth?

This is no time for anger or retaliation. In Gandhiji's teaching there is never any time or room for either. What is needed is a firm determination to eradicate the narrow soul-killing sectarianism



that has made the crime possible, Gandhiji's performances — political, social or economic — always had two facets — the negative and the positive or constructive. Ill will must be destroyed so that good will may take its place. Communal distrust and discord must disappear and harmony and concord should be established. This was his last wish. We must and shall fulfil it.

New Delhi, 3-2-48

RAJENDRAPRASAD

## SACRED MOMENT

### II

Little occasions now and then provided miniature rehearsals and test of faith. Women and even our little boys and girls took pledges that they would shed the fear of death and go unaccompanied to any place on a dark night that they might be ordered to, without a lantern. I sent two little girls from my *badi* to the village adjoining ours. They were given an electric torch which, however, they were not to use unless they really felt afraid. Of course, I sent a friend after them to keep watch unobserved. The path lay through a thick betel-nut garden where even in the daytime the sun seldom penetrated. On the previous day a woman in that village had been so frightened by the shouting of a Muslim procession that she ran to a neighbouring *badi* to seek shelter and at night got high temperature as a result of the fright. The girls visited her and put heart into her so much so that she afterwards accompanied them back to our place at half past ten at night to tell me that she too had taken the pledge to shed fear and would never again behave as she had done on the previous day. She insisted on returning to her *badi* alone and without a lantern unescorted by the girls, whom I had asked to accompany her and she did go alone. One elderly widowed sister of our *badi* who was known as Thakurma caused a sensation even among the Muslims by going alone after dusk to Kafa Toli which was considered to be very unsafe. "But O! she is from Bhatialpur — that explains," they exclaimed as she passed through the village of Karpara — the grim site of the tragedy of Raisaheb Rajendra Lal Chowdhry's family a few months back. "No, no, she is a Nepali," exclaimed some others because of her somewhat Nepalese features. "You will all become Nepalis if you come and stay in our *badi* for a fortnight," she answered back. Since then she is known amongst us as "Nepali Ma". When a couple of months later I was woken up at midnight to go to Gopaire Bag where a *mali's badi* was threatened to be fired by some local bad characters "within an hour's time", I took with me only Thakurma and one of the two girls. About the same time a deputation came one day from the village of Sindurpur where a dacoity had taken place on the previous day. They were afraid to return to their village without an escort, as it was dusk. Two girls offered to accompany them. They did not ask for an escort after that and went back alone.

On another occasion when I went to see a riot leader, who was absconding and spreading terror

in the country-side by organizing gangs from his hiding so that men simply turned pale and trembled at his name, two little girls from the village of Mogarpara walked into his *badi* and stood before us as we were talking. One of them had her maternal uncle murdered by this gang leader during the Gopaire Bag massacre. She had taken the pledge that she would go and tell him to his face that he was free to cut her throat as he had her uncle's, but she was not afraid of him and she would not tremble or run away.

"Do you know where you have come?" I asked them.

"Yes . . . . . 's. *badi*."

"Do you know . . . . .?"

"No."

"Well then, here he is," I said, "pointing to the person sitting next to me. Are you now satisfied that he is just an ordinary human being like you and me and not a monster with a tail and horns?"

They laughed, . . . . . joining.

"And do you know these girls?" I asked . . . . .

"No."

"Well then, one of them," pointing to the elder of the two, "has had her uncle murdered at Gopaire Bag. She has come to tell you that you are free to cut her throat too. But she would neither tremble nor run away."

The little girl nodded her head as I spoke these words and . . . . . laughed an uneasy, dry laugh.

In the month of May there were a series of dacoities by one of the gangs organized by this person. Finally they came to Karatkhil, denuded a deserted *badi* of all the ripe cocoa-nuts on the trees and held a picnic on unripe ones, leaving behind a trenchful of drained *dabs*. Our reply was to organize night watches. I gathered together all the men, women and children of Karatkhil in front of their ruined Thakurghar, where they daily held *Ramadhun kirtan*. "Now tell me how many from among you are prepared to join in the night watch?" Almost all the women raised their hands. Three from among the men abstained. I suggested, and my suggestion was acclaimed with loud laughter, that those who were not prepared or unwilling to join in the night watch be made to take charge of the children and other household duties and free the womenfolk for the night duty.

I then asked the women if they were ready to set out on their night rounds.

"Yes, but in your company," they replied.

"Now, that is not fair," I admonished them. "You said you had faith in God."

"Yes, that we have but we have known you and we have faith that your resourcefulness will find an answer for every emergency. You will not let us perish."

"I now know what sort of faith you have in me from the proof you have just given of your faith in God. I tell you, you are living in a fool's paradise if you think that I shall be able to save your life under any circumstance. Why, I cannot save even my own. The only ingenuity I possess is that I have faith that if death comes in the performance of one's duty, it is the best thing for us. Even that faith has yet to be tested. Now tell me, after what



I have told you — and you must take it to be the literal truth if you have faith in me — how many of you are prepared to come out with me, knowing my limitations?"

In reply, one after another the hands began to drop till only seven remained. "We shall face death in your company," they said. "To tell you the truth," one of them added, "we are not afraid of death but we may be dishonoured." I told them that no one could take away the honour of a woman who was not afraid to die. Purity was a woman's best shield and protection. It should arm her with the strength to go forth and face danger, not cause her to run away from it. In the final analysis it was again a question of a living faith in God, which alone could give one the courage to die without fear, anger or retaliation in one's heart. The argument went home.

I selected one out of the seven and told her to go to the adjoining village alone. "If you are really ready to face death in my company, surely, you should be ready to face the possibility of danger at my order. Take *Ramanama* if fear grips the heart," I suggested.

She hesitated for a moment, then took a deep breath and uttered with a groan two words only, "Hey Bhagwan" (हे भगवान्) and set forth with clenched fists in the darkness and the mud. Her name was K . . . . . One after another the rest of the seven followed suit. Thereafter they regularly joined in the night watch and I do not remember a single occasion when I knocked at the door of any one of them in the small or long hours of the night and they hesitated or failed to respond.

The finale came not long afterwards. One day while K . . . . . was alone in her *supari bagan* (betel-nut garden) answering the call of nature, A . . . . ., a notorious miscreant of the locality who had been prowling about their house for a number of days, came up and stood before her making indecent gestures, whereupon she hastily got up and took shelter in her house, where she narrated the whole story to her father. The matter was reported to me. I sent word to the miscreant, whom I had had to tackle more than once before in connection with some other offences, that unless speedy redress was forthcoming it would be a serious matter. The miscreant thereupon came to me full of apologies and wanted to have a "hearing". I told him that he had done me personally no wrong. If he was sincere in his repentance he ought to give satisfaction to the complainant. Since his was an offence against a woman, he must appear before a *darbar* composed of women and take the verdict at their hands. All would depend upon his making a clean breast of the matter. At the same time the case was reported to the Union Board President's Panchayat. They fixed the hearing for four o'clock in the afternoon. The time for women's *darbar* was 2 p.m. There is a joke amongst us, that clocks in the Noakhali space-time world have only three hours—morning, noon, and evening. So both the appointments were reduced to the common denominator (afternoon) and both the Union Board President's Panchayat and the

Women's Court assembled at 6 p.m. Naturally, men had to wait. The women's court was held first.

It was a great day. For the first time in the history of the locality a miscreant was going to be tried for an offence against a woman by a court composed wholly of women. Coming after the August happenings, it seemed almost incredible. And so, in spite of deep mud, owing to the previous night's heavy rain and inundate *khals* requiring wading through waist-deep water, over one hundred women and girls came from four villages, singing *Ramadhun*. No men were allowed to be present. I and my colleague, and interpreter, were present by grace. In introducing the case I told them that I expected them to be firm and fearless but forgiving. Their object should not be to humiliate or to punish but to reform. The complainant then narrated her experience. Faced by that tribunal and the strong feeling against him, the accused began to waver and quibble. I then left the meeting, leaving him to be tackled by the women, after giving the warning that to excuse himself would be to accuse himself. The women had a very straight talk with him and succeeded in putting the fear of God into him. Within fifteen minutes I was called back and he made a full, clean confession, which was duly recorded on the spot. In his statement he addressed the complainant as "mother", asked her forgiveness and offered to take any punishment that might be given to him.

In view of his past record during and before the riots, some women were inclined to be sceptical about his repentance and wanted an 'exemplary' punishment to be given to him, but they ultimately decided to see the verdict of the Union Board President's Panchayat first.

He was then produced before the Panchayat of local Muslims, including the President of the Union Board. They gave a very severe sentence which, in view of his voluntary confession and surrender, was commuted at my instance into execution of a bond of Rs. 100 for good conduct in future and a public apology to the woman complainant, which was done with due ceremony according to the traditional local custom.

The women were satisfied and almost began to evince a motherly interest in the reform of the accused whom they told that if he asked forgiveness of God from his heart as he had done of them, God would surely help him reform his character and keep on to the right path.

In pointing out the moral of the incident to the women's gathering, I recalled the promise that if they took *Ramanama* from their hearts and not merely from their lips, in future it would not be they who would have to tremble before the *goondas*, it would be the latter who would tremble before them and how it had come true to the extent that they had genuinely taken to that *mantra*. There has been no major incident of this character in our four villages since. Later, as a token of the new spirit and as a symbol of their equality with men, the women and girls adopted coats as the uniform to be worn at all functions.

New Delhi, 12-1-'48

PYARELAL

(Concluded)



## GANDHIJI'S POST-PRAYER SPEECHES

*Birla House, New Delhi, 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 Governments 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 slow. Dictates of humanity brooked no delay.

*Birla House, New Delhi, 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.

*Birla House, New Delhi, 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 Madras 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 is true, we were all labourers. In honest labour lay our salvation and the satisfaction of all vital needs.

### HE LIVES

"When is Gandhiji coming to us?" asked the wife of the Multan Deputy Commissioner whom I met at about 4 p. m. on the 30th ultimo. She and several others had made tender enquiries about his health. His recent fasts and the miracles worked by them at Calcutta and Delhi had touched the heart of Muslims in Pakistan as elsewhere. It was gratifying to see the erstwhile "Enemy No. 1 of Islam", looked upon as the friend of the Muslims both in India and Pakistan. In my mind I rehearse how pleased Bapu would be when he would hear my report. And suddenly at about 6-15 in rushed the Commissioner's wife greatly agitated. "What is the world coming to?" she cried. "I hear Gandhiji has been shot dead." I turned cold and began to shiver. "No, no, it is only a rumour," said someone else. "We shall ring up Delhi and find out the truth." But I was reluctant to wait. True or false, I wanted to get back to Lahore and from there to Delhi as early as possible. The Deputy Commissioner lent us his car and we motored down to Lahore during the night. There was beautiful moonlight and ineffable peace all around as the car sped along the lonely road at top speed. I kept on saying to myself, "No, the rumour must be false. Bapu is not dead. He is alive, he is alive." And from within the heart echoed back, "Bapu is alive," and I felt reassured.

We reached Lahore at 6 a. m. and before long the illusion that I had nursed the whole night fell to pieces. A friend came to sympathize. Little did he realize the agony caused by his words meant to give comfort! A little later Panditji's familiar voice at the radio full of the poignancy of intense grief left no room for hoping against hope. We had been orphaned.

I paced up and down impatiently for the aeroplane that was to take me to Delhi. It was supposed to come at 9 a. m. It came a little after 9-30 a. m. Sorrow was writ large on the face of everyone—Muslim or Hindu—including the aerodrome officials. They were most considerate. They would have willingly sent for a special plane from Peshawar, they said, but that would not save any time. They, however, did everything to expedite the departure of the plane when it arrived and the pilot brought the plane from Lahore to Delhi in about one hour and twenty minutes.

I rushed from the aerodrome to Birla House in a car leaving the luggage to Mr. Cross with whom

Gandhiji had sent me to Bahawalpur. I was still in a semi-dazed condition. Mian Iftikharuddin came with me. "Every one of us is responsible for Gandhiji's murder," he said in the car with tears in his eyes. Had not we all some time or another condoned violence and harboured some tinge of communalism in the secret recesses of our hearts? I began to examine myself. "Some talk irresponsibly, others act," I cogitated within myself. "What the mad man, who had brought Hinduism to shame, had done was only the natural corollary to what almost all of us are some time or other guilty of." And I thought of our women. Even they had not escaped the virus. How was Gandhiji to pull us out of this all engulfing bog? He had fasted. And now had come the climax. He was crucified: and by one of his own children!

We reached Birla House. The car entered by the back door. There was a huge crowd even on that side. I rushed through it like mad, pushing and elbowing my way to the spot where stood the *palaki* ready to start. Someone helped me to climb up. There was the Sardar sitting near the feet of his dead master, sad and serene. He drew me up. There lay our dearest Bapu, face only uncovered, radiating peace in death as in life. I could not see the pallor of death but I fancied I saw on it the same old smile of welcome. Distracted, I involuntarily pressed my face on to his chest expecting the usual affectionate pat on the back and the cheek. Beside me stood Abha and Manu. Someone called out, "Now you must get down." Pandit Nehru helped us all to get down. He stood near the head with his grief-stricken face. The procession started.

We reached the cremation ground, said a short prayer and then they started placing faggots of sandal wood on the dead body. We all made our last *pranam*. My heart cried out, "Bapu, forgive, forgive all our failings, all our faults and failures." I drew away from the funeral platform and sat down. I could see no more. I kept repeating to myself the *Gita* verses:

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तम् हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति ।  
अज्ञानता महिमानं तवेदं मया प्रमादात् प्रणयेन वापि ॥ १ ॥  
यच्चावहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि विहारशय्याऽसनभोजनेषु ।  
अकोऽयवाऽयच्युत तत्समक्षम् तत् क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम् ॥ २ ॥  
पिताऽसि लोकस्य चराचरस्य त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान् ।  
न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभावः ॥ ३ ॥  
तस्मात् प्रणम्य प्रणिवाय कायम् प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीश्वरम् ।  
पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः प्रियः प्रियायाऽहंसि देव सोढुम् ॥ ४ ॥

The crowd pressed in on us. The Sardar pulled Abha and Manu out of the crush somehow. We got into a military truck and saw the flames from a distance.

Sitting at night in front of his portrait, I fell into a muse.

"The light has gone out and there is darkness all around," Pandit Nehru had said in his radio announcement, but had immediately corrected himself by adding, "No, the light shines and will continue to shine thousands of years hence." Bapu



is alive and will live for ever even like Christ and Buddha. They all taught the law of love, but Bapu demonstrated to the world that *ahimsa* is not for the recluse only: it is the law of society.

In the Aga Khan's palace someone once remarked that his followers, the constructive workers as a rule, did not possess that *tejas*, that personality which alone could enable them to carry his message in the living form to the masses. His reply was, "Yes, they do seem rather helpless today, but the fault is mine. In everything they look to me for guidance. I am afraid it cannot be otherwise during my lifetime. But I cherish the hope that they will blossom forth when I am no more and what they have been silently imbibing all along will then bear fruit." After a short silence he added, "Which of Christ's disciples had given proof of great ability during his lifetime? God gave them the strength to propagate Christ's teachings only after he was gone." All these thoughts keep whirling in my mind as I sit before his portrait which rests where he used to sit and work. May God give us the strength to live up to the teachings of the Great Master, at whose feet we had come together and sat due to some *punya* of our previous births. Tears rush to the eyes at the thought that never more shall we hear that loving, soothing voice; never more shall we feel that magic touch of his pat, which always made one feel strong and lightened one's burden, whether physical or mental. But we must force back our tears. We must not allow our emotion to be depleted by them. The agony that we all feel at our loss must be transmuted into action. We followed him with halting footsteps during his lifetime. Let us all pray that we may be able to do so now with firmness and determination. A friend sent me a few impromptu lines of his composition yesterday. From it I cull the following:

"You, he called friends, hold it in heart with dread,  
And you, the stranger who may read these lines,  
His only tools are now your hands and feet,  
Consider what you touch and where you tread!"

Within my heart I hear an echo say, "No, he is not dead. He lives and watches our fumbling efforts with the same, old, sweet, sad smile.

New Delhi, 3-2-'48

S. N.

#### NOTE

I am receiving a large number of letters from readers of the *Harijan* and as there is some confusion with regard to my permanent address, I herewith give it in full:

Ashram

Pashulok,

P. O. Rishikesh, District Dehradun,

U. P.

Correspondents may kindly write to this address in future.

Kisan Ashram is a separate institution in district Saharanpur.

MIRA

## "LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED"

Humanly speaking a tragedy overtook the world when on the 30th January Gandhiji was translated to the bosom of the Father. It is difficult to bring consolation to those still in the flesh as it is hard to realize that the things unseen are more real than the things seen. The words uttered by Jesus two thousand years ago when a similar incident was about to take place ring in our ears. Jesus was crucified by the machinations of the leaders of a section of his own people as he was an unrelenting critic of their ways and customs. The words spoken, when he was about to be tortured to death, have a special significance for us today.

"Peace I leave with you. Let not your heart be troubled. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because, I go unto the Father."

"Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me and I will love him and will manifest myself to him and my Father will love him."

"Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples."

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

"Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me."

"Because, I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy, and your joy no man taketh from you."

"The Comforter whom the Father will send you—the Spirit of Truth—he will guide you into all truth."

"The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me and have believed that I came out from God, I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father."

"Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Gandhiji having shaken off his mortal coil, representing all limitations of time and space, has



now joined the Universal Spirit. May those of us who truly love him be given the grace and strength to follow in the trail blazoned forth by his life and actions.

If we dedicate our lives to the attainment of Gandhiji's ideals we shall have much hard work if peace is to be brought to this world torn by communal dissensions, economic greed, and ambition for power, in an atmosphere surcharged with hatred and suspicion. But nothing is impossible for those who lay their trust in Him who is Almighty. Shall we wipe away our tears and gird our loins and face the task before us with unrelenting faith in God and man to carry on the good work started by our immortal leader — Bapu?

Maganwadi,  
Wardha,  
31-1-'48

J. C. KUMARAPPA

### THE DAY BEFORE

[Shri K. G. Mashruwala received on the 2nd instant a post-card written by Gandhiji himself on the 29th January, that is the day before his death. It refers to a letter written by Shri Mashruwala to one of Gandhiji's assistants to acknowledge receipt of a communication from him. The reply, therefore, by Gandhiji himself has come to him as an agreeable surprise and a precious memento. The following is a free translation of the post-card.

—ED.]

"29-1-'48 N. D.

"My dear Kishorlal,

"I have been devoting today my time after the prayer in writing letters. You did well in sending here the news of the death of Shankaranji's daughter. I have sent him a letter. The report of my going there (i. e. Sevagram) must be regarded still as indefinite. I have suggested that I should stay there from the 3rd to the 12th. If it could be said that I "did" in Delhi, it might not be necessary to be here for keeping my pledge. This depends upon what view my colleagues here take. Perhaps it may be possible to decide tomorrow. The purpose of my visit is to consider whether it is possible to unite together all the separate institutions of the Constructive Programme and to observe the anniversary day of Jnanlal. I have been gaining strength satisfactorily. Both the kidney and the liver got involved this time. According to my view, it showed weakness of faith in *Ramanama*.

"Blessings to both of you."

[Notes:

Shri Shankaranji is a teacher in the Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Sevagram.

The verb "did" is in reference to the pledge "Do or Die", which he took on reaching Delhi.

The other person referred to in "blessings to both" is Shrimati Gomatibehn Mashruwala.]

### GANDHIJI'S DELHI DIARY

The Navajivan Office is shortly publishing *The Delhi Diary* of Gandhiji, containing his prayer speeches during his last stay in Free India's Capital. The book will be issued in three languages: English, Gujarati and Hindustani.

Ahmedabad, 3-2-'48

J. DESAI

### OUR DUTY

Far into the dim distant future as time flies on and centuries merge into millennia the echoes of the supreme sacrifice and Gandhiji will rebound from the ever receding walls of eternity. No one whom history knows was in life so faultless a man. No man could by his death pay homage to nobler principles. We are too close to the mountain to measure its height. Remote posterity will correctly assess the true greatness of the soul which has departed so suddenly from this earth.

A diamond has many facets. So had Gandhiji. But though manifold were his activities for the service of mankind one high purpose inspired them all. That high purpose was to live in tune with the law of humanity: the law of love known as *ahimsa*. Man has to outgrow the instincts and passions of the beast. To the extent he does he is himself. The evolution of man in the moral sphere is alone true evolution. And so Gandhiji moulded himself from hour to hour through sixty long and strenuous years and outgrew the elemental emotions man has inherited from his brute ancestry. He practised and through that practice preached the basic human virtue of love for all that lives.

This is also the fundamental teaching of the Hindu religion in which he was born. Because he dared to live according to this teaching of the Hindu religion, he was assassinated by the hand of a Hindu and in the name of Hindu interests. But the Hindu assassin was really the representative, the instrument of a mental attitude which stood for the negation of the principle for which Gandhiji lived and laboured. It stood for hatred and intolerance. It denied to others the right to hold and propagate a contrary opinion. They could do so only at the peril of life. The appearance of this monster of intolerance is a warning to India. Her future is doomed, her very soul is in danger. Hatred can only breed hatred. It is an unerring boomerang. Hindu society is committing suicide.

Bapu has passed away. And yet even as the pen scribbles this the mind retorts that Bapu can never die. He belongs to the galaxy of the immortals. His living influence will shape the lives of millions and the face of things in India. All who should be have to be true to him. His tasks must be ours: feebly though we may be able to shoulder them. May God give us the faith and the strength to do our duty.

JAIRAMDAS

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