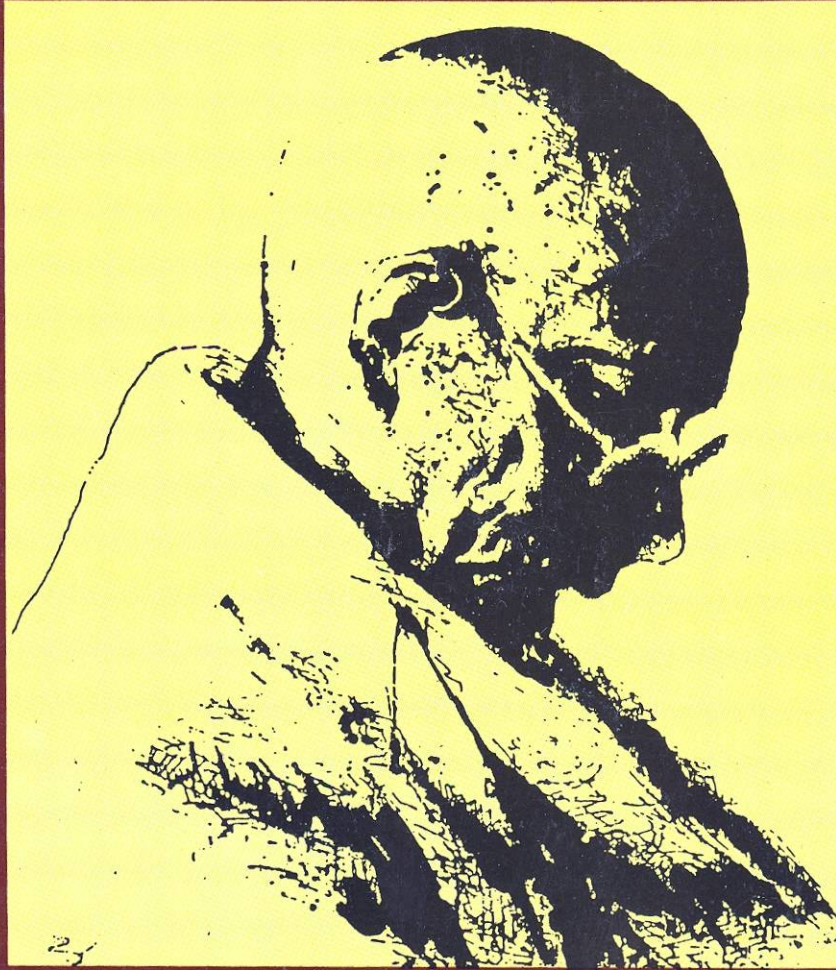


# MAHATMA GANDHI

## LETTERS TO AMERICANS



Compiled and Edited by  
DR. E.S. REDDY

**MAHATMA GANDHI**

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**Dr. E. S. Reddy**

**Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, USA**

**New York**

**1998**

**[And Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai]**

## **PUBLISHER'S NOTE**

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, USA is proud to publish this book containing numerous letters and messages of *Bapu* (as Mahatma was fondly called by Indians) to Americans.

The year 1998 has been declared by the Bhavan as the Year of Non-violence to honour the memory of Mahatma who fell victim to an assassin's bullet fifty years ago on January 30, 1948 in the service of humanity. This book is our humble effort in this direction during this year.

This compilation of Mahatma's writings addressed to Americans may not be complete. There may be Mahatma's other letters to and correspondence with Americans that could not be found or traced. Still it is the first conscientious endeavour by Dr. E.S. Reddy who is dedicated to the Mahatma's ideals and philosophy. His recent book of correspondence between Mahatma and Sarojini Naidu, the poetess and the close associate of Mahatma during India's freedom struggle, has been well received. To understand the Mahatma's philosophy of non-violence, *satyagraha* (insistence on truth) and service to mankind and environment, one should read this book which brings out the message of Mahatma with a deep human touch. It is our hope that this book with the Mahatma's message of harmony of mankind will serve to reconcile the disharmony which characterises much of modern life.

We thank Dr. E.S. Reddy for giving us this opportunity to bring out this publication.

We also profusely thank the former President of India, Mr. R. Venkataraman, the former Cabinet Minister and the Governor of Maharashtra, freedom fighter under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the conscientious statesman of modern India, Mr. C. Subramaniam, and the freedom fighter, Secretary to Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and the Bhavan's Director General, Mr. S. Ramakrishnan for their Foreword, Preface and Observations respectively, since they could find time to write their well-considered views on the book at a very short notice despite their busy schedule.

Our thanks are due to New York Life Insurance Company for their interest in the book and whose generous grant made this publication possible.

Last but not the least, our thanks are also due to Mr. Arun Maheshwari, Vani Prakashan, New Delhi who printed and presented this book in a very short time.

New York  
October 2, 1998

Dr. P. Jayaraman  
Executive Director

## FOREWORD

Gandhiji was not merely the Father of the Indian National Liberation, but the architect of a social revolution achieving in his own lifetime the abolition of millennia-old untouchability, emancipation of women and the spiritual regeneration of India. He combined in him the political insight of Plato, the saintliness of Spinoza and the faith in the masses of Marx. No leader received such a world-wide attention in one's own lifetime as Gandhiji did. The greatest tribute to Gandhiji came from the renowned scientist Albert Einstein, when he said that "generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this, ever in flesh and blood, walked upon this Earth."

Gandhiji's *Satyagraha* in South Africa, and even the Non-co-operation Movement in India, did not receive for several months much publicity abroad, thanks to the rigorous censorship clamped by the British rulers. However, as the Non-co-operation Movement gathered momentum, the world was fascinated by the saint defying the mighty British empire with non-violent resistance. Thereafter numerous journalists from America and other countries came to study the movement and report back home. All sorts of people began writing to Gandhiji seeking from autographs to clarification of his tenet of non-violence and Gandhiji diligently replied to them as he was anxious that the world should realise the significance of the spiritual weapons of truth and non-violence (*Satya* and *Ahimsa*).

Many of these letters had been secured with patient and painstaking effort by the scholar Prof. K. Swaminathan and published in over a hundred volumes of *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. Since Gandhiji wrote most of the letters in his own hand, no copies have been made of them and the world has lost a lot of precious material. To collect them from recipients of letters is an almost impossible task as no record exists of the persons addressed.

Yet Dr. E.S. Reddy has managed to collect as many letters as possible that Gandhiji wrote to the Americans, classify them under useful heads and present the same not only to the American audience but to the world at large. Dr. Reddy is a distinguished international civil servant now retired, who has held the Office of the Assistant Secretary General in the United Nations. He had earned encomiums for the meticulous manner in which he collected and edited the speeches of V. K. Krishna Menon on Kashmir and other issues in the United Nations. He has authored informative books on freedom struggle in South Africa. His present work, namely, *Mahatma Gandhi: Letters to Americans* is an invaluable addition to Gandhian literature and to the history of Indian freedom struggle. Furthermore, the letters afford opportunity for reading and understanding the authentic

clarifications of Gandhiji's somewhat abstruse philosophy of non-violence pitted against Fascist violence and inhumanity in the none too distant past.

For instance, in the letters to missionaries grouped in Section III, there is a letter to Bishop Fisher in which Gandhiji says, "My message to American Christians on world peace and disarmament is not a matter of reciprocity; when real peace and disarmament come, they will be initiated by a strong nation like America, irrespective of the consent and co-operation of other nations." Gandhiji's conception of non-violence (*ahimsa*) was absolutist on the ethical plane. It was a creed, a faith and not mere pragmatic expediency or policy. He wanted strong nations to voluntarily reduce armaments and to set in motion global disarmament.

In early 1947, in reply to the clergyman and pacifist Mr. Muste's letter stating that "if India, after independence, refused to join in the race for national pride and power ... that might well augur the dawning of a new day for mankind," Gandhiji wrote as follows: "I wish too that I could give you the assurance that India, when she has come to her own completely, will not join the race for increase of armament. I can only say that whatever I can do to prevent any such misfortune, will not be left undone." It should, however, be remembered that Gandhiji preached non-violence to the entire world and not to India only. It does not befit nuclear giants to preach non-proliferation to others.

In a letter to the American missionary Mr. Tucker, Gandhiji explained that the dictum "resist not evil" really meant resist not evil with evil but resist evil with good. Gandhiji was echoing Buddha's preaching that hatred does not cease by hatred but only by love.

Gandhiji spiritualised Indian public life. He had acknowledged that the New Testament, particularly Jesus Christ's Sermon that if a man strikes thee on one cheek, turn the other to him and if one takes away thy coat, give him the cloak also, inspired the *Satyagraha* programmes based on non-retaliation.

When the notorious Miss Mayo wrote to Gandhiji to substantiate his statement that the poverty of the Indian masses was growing rather than decreasing, Gandhiji wrote back as follows:

"Is it or is it not true that these (Indian) peasants are living in small holdings and often as serfs of big Zamindars?"

"Is it or is it not true that before the British rule these very people had hand spinning and industry ancillary to agriculture which supplemented the slender income they had from agriculture?"

“Is it or is it not true that while hand spinning had been entirely killed, no other industry has taken its place?”

“If the answer to all these questions be in the affirmative, no matter what statements may be made by anybody, these agriculturists must be poorer than they were before the hand spinning was destroyed...”

There are several gems of thoughts that lie scattered in this volume, thoughts that bear the authentic stamp of Gandhiji himself. I have mentioned a few in order to kindle the appetite of a student of Gandhian thought. I am sure, it will serve as a source book for a scholar.

Among the multitudinous activities of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, the publications (the Book University) take the place of pride. The Bhavan has rendered immense service by undertaking the publication of this volume. Like Rajaji's *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, I trust "*Mahatma Gandhi: Letters to Americans*" will run into several editions.

New Delhi  
August 24, 1998

R. Venkataraman

## PREFACE

We are happy to present to the American public this book – *Mahatma Gandhi: Letters to Americans* - a collection of letters written by Mahatma to kindred souls of the United States.

The Bhavan's family world-wide is greatly indebted to Dr. E. S. Reddy, former Assistant Secretary General of the U.N., who has meticulously compiled and edited the letters covering a period of well-nigh over 30 years (January 4, 1917 to September 16, 1947). Dr. Reddy's is a conscientious job well done.

Much as he wished, the Mahatma could not visit the United States, despite pressing invitations. However, he had a large and growing circle of admirers and friends in that country. Gandhiji attracted world-wide attention, particularly when he launched the famous Dandi Salt Satyagraha in 1930. The *Time* magazine hailed him in 1930 as "The Man of the Year."

The American people came to know much more about the Mahatma through Sir Richard Attenborough's film released in the eighties. Some of us, including Swami Ranganathananda, Senior Monk of the Ramakrishna Order and one of Bhavan's Patron-Saints, Dr. R. R. Diwakar, Chairman of Gandhi Peace Foundation and Chairman of Bhavan's Bangalore Kendra, Shri S. Ramakrishnan, Bhavan's Director General and also General Editor of the Bhavan's Book University, who visited the States then, got the impression that the people there realised that Gandhi had shown the right and sole way for solving international disputes - the peaceful way without resorting to violence and war. Gandhiji was acclaimed as the "Sage of the Scientific Age." There were a few interesting incidents during our tour of the U.S. We were asked by a person whether Attenborough's film truly reflected Gandhiji's life or was it a mixture of fact and fiction. We affirmed that Attenborough's film was faithful to Gandhiji's life and work. The man then exclaimed "Now I believe in Jesus, that such a person could have lived on this earth!"

When, on January 30, 1948, Mahatma Gandhi fell to an assassin's bullet, there was world-wide mourning. The United Nations suspended its session and hoisted the flag half-mast. More than 3,000 condolence messages were received by the Government of India from all over the world. Rich tributes were paid by all the world leaders. The most moving message came from Dr. Albert Einstein, the world famous scientist.



He said, “Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth.”

What was Gandhiji’s message to humanity? When that question was put to him he replied “My Life is My Message.” He practiced what he preached. Complete accord between thought, word and deed was his credo.

Those who want to know more about this great Pathfinder - Gandhi, The Mahatma, I would recommend the following books, namely:

- (a) *My Experiments with Truth*, Gandhiji’s autobiography published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad and the following Bhavan’s publications.
- (b) *Mahatma Gandhi, A Biography*, by Louis Fischer, the famous American author and Journalist;
- (c) *Mahatma and the Poetess*, being correspondence between Gandhiji and Smt. Sarojini Naidu, between 1915 and 1947, compiled and edited by Smt. Mrinalini Sarabhai and Dr. E.S. Reddy, and
- (d) At least 3 of the 24 Pocket Gandhi Series edited by Anand T. Hingorani, which has been commended by Gandhiji himself in the following words: “I like Anand Hingorani’s idea of collecting my writings under suitable heads. The reader will not fail to appreciate the labour he has given...”
  - (i) *God is Truth*
  - (ii) *The Sermon on the Mount*, which together contain the very fundamentals of Gandhiji’s whole life and invested it with an unaffable spiritual aura and
  - (iii) *The Message of Jesus Christ*, whose influence on him, the Mahatma affirmed thus: “The Spirit of the Sermon on the Mount compete almost on equal terms with the *Bhagavad Gita* for the domination of my heart. It is that sermon which has endeared Jesus to me.”

Chennai  
September 6, 1998

C. Subramaniam

## OBSERVATIONS

*Mahatma Gandhi: Letters to Americans* is a prayerful offering of the Bhavan's Book University, through the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, U.S.A.

This is a humble but soulful gift to the people of America and India and the world, in commemoration of three epic events: (i) the 50th year of India's freedom from foreign rule, (ii) the Martyrdom of the Mahatma, and (iii) 60th year of the Bhavan in the service of India's ageless culture, education, art and moral values.

This is an unfading garland of letters written to kindred souls in America, the world's most vibrant and dynamic democracy, by the Father of the Indian Nation, the world's largest democracy. The basic anatomy and ambience of India and America have many similarities. We have many well cherished, shared ideals. No wonder Gandhiji himself adopted as his teachers two of America's angelic souls, Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

This volume represents Gandhiji's correspondence with the 20th Century America where he had the largest number of friends and supporters among all the countries in the West. Much as he wished to and despite many affectionate invitations, he could not visit America, whose soul he appreciated and admired.

Understanding Gandhiji through his correspondence comes closer to having a communion with him. It is a fascinating, inspirational and soul elevating experience. We miss much of real Gandhiji in history books because the historian's main concern is an orderly narration of events and not delineation of characters. History is impersonal whereas correspondence is direct and personal, revealing the innate character of the letter writer.

Gandhiji's letters, written in his effortless and natural style, free from all frills and flourishes, really touch one's heart, because they reflect the life of one who said "My Life is My Message." His life and work are totally transparent.

There is a timelessness about many of Gandhiji's seemingly routine, casual replies. A letter he wrote on May 4, 1925 in reply to a 15-year old American boy's query: "What is your main reason for hatred towards the British?" is worthy of being cited.

Gandhiji's answer is simple and yet contains a profound truth as to why we should live free from hatred in a world reeking with hatred.

He writes: "You seem to have taken it for granted that I hate the British. What makes you think so? I have hundreds of friends among the British people. I cannot love the Musalmans and for that matter the Hindus if I hate the British. But what I do detest is the system of Government that the British have set up in our country. It has almost brought about the economic and moral ruin of the people of India. But just as I love my wife and my children, in spite of their faults which are many, I love also the British in spite of the bad system for which they have made themselves responsible..."

This brings to mind a conversation between Gandhiji and Lord Fenner Brockway who was a senior leader of the British Labour Party. In 1931, Gandhiji visited Great Britain as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress to the Second Round Table Conference convened by the British Government to consider political reforms in India. Lord Fenner Brockway queried, "Gandhiji, Jesus Christ has declared, Love thy Enemies - What is your response to this edict?" At first Gandhiji did not respond, smiled away at the question. When Fenner Brockway persisted, the Mahatma replied: "I have no enemies. Therefore, the question of loving and hating does not at all arise." Fenner Brockway reverentially bowed and said "Gandhiji, you are Christ-like."

During his life span of 79 years (1869-1948) Gandhiji wrote thousands of letters most diligently and promptly, irrespective of the status of the writer right from autograph seekers to religious leaders, Presidents and Prime Ministers.

In the present book, Dr. E. S. Reddy has turned the spotlight on Gandhiji and America by bringing out an admirable and commendable compilation of letters Gandhiji wrote to Americans during a period of three decades, 1917 to 1947. There is also a rare and rich collection of messages he sent to individuals and institutions in America.

It is difficult to resist the temptation to praise the editing competence of Dr. Reddy a former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, who has, besides a comprehensive introduction, provided succinct, fine prefatory elucidation to the reader.

Credit goes to America's Rev. John Haynes Holmes to have perceived and proclaimed the greatness of Gandhiji long before world fame burst on Barrister

M.K. Gandhi. Rev. Holmes in a sermon on April 21, 1921 described Gandhiji as “The greatest man in the world.”

A careful reader of this book of letters will come across many nuggets of wisdom coming from Gandhiji’s rich mine of experience consequent upon his experiments with Truth.

Here is a gem: “Prayer is God’s due, and a discharge of debt is its own satisfaction.” (July 21, 1931, in a letter to Mr. Reese).

On religion: “Mankind has found religion in some shape or other indispensable for its very existence, hence it is fair to presume that mankind will need religion and I cannot conceive the moral growth of mankind without religion.” (March 29, 1933, in his letter to R. F. Piper, Professor of Philosophy in Syracuse University.)

And Gandhiji clarifies in his letter to clergyman S. E. Stokes that religion is “an ever-growing inward response to the highest impulse that man is capable of.” (November 29, 1932).

Well-known is Gandhiji’s child-like toothless smile. In a letter to Miss Nilla Cram Cook, an American girl who came to India in early 1930s and whom Gandhiji tried to redeem from her impulsive wayward and immoral life, Gandhiji wrote (1933): “We have all to aspire after being children. We cannot become children because that is impossible. But we can all become like children. In spite of knowledge gained, we can become simple, guileless, candid and natural like them.” Gandhiji had an infinite capacity to put people at ease and to console aching hearts. When W. B. Starr, a Quaker, apologetically sent him a donation of five dollars towards flood relief in Gujarat in 1928, Gandhiji graciously replied:

“The smallest donation in monetary value is a big thing when it comes from a big heart as I am sure yours has done.”

All would have heard Shakespeare’s famous saying, “Brevity is the soul of wit,” but only a few have been able to follow it as Gandhiji.

He sent the following single sentence message to Rev. Holmes who sought a short message from Gandhiji for publication in the Tolstoy Centenary Number of his publication *Unity*: “Tolstoy’s greatest contribution to life lies, in my opinion, in his ever attempting to reduce to practice his professions without counting the cost.” How well this could be said of Gandhiji, too!

When Rev. Kirby Page, a pacifist, sought a 2,500 words article on Non-violence, Gandhiji wrote on July 15, 1926: "You want 2,500 words from me. I have no time to think out anything so big. You will, therefore, please forgive me for sending you what little I have been able to put together... If I could, I would have condensed it still further." Those who have a penchant for writing needlessly lengthy articles may draw a lesson.

"What message can I send through the pen if I am not sending any through the life I am living?" he wrote to Rev. Dr. Jabez T. Sunderland who asked for Gandhiji's message for the Chicago Conference of World Fellowship of Faiths. Frankness is another of the great qualities of Gandhiji revealed in his letters especially to the missionaries and churchmen.

Here is a golden rule of Gandhiji which he mentions in his letter to a clergyman, Mr. Higginbottom: "My rule always is never to criticise even strangers about anything said or done by them without first verifying facts through them whenever they are within reach." (September 2, 1929). This world will be a much more peaceful place to live if only this advice of Gandhiji is heeded.

He wrote to Mr. Martin C. Miller of Cleveland: "I regard Jesus to have been one of the greatest teachers of the world. I do not believe in his exclusive divinity."

He clarified to W. B. Stover of Illinois: "The acknowledgement of debt which I have so often repeated that I owe to the Sermon on the Mount should not be mistaken to mean acknowledgement of the orthodox interpretation of the Bible or the life of Jesus. I must not sail under false colours."

He was equally frank with Rev. Stanley Jones who wrote to him from Sitapur, U.P. whether Gandhiji would favour the retention of foreign missions when India became free: "If instead of confining themselves purely to humanitarian work such as education, medical services to the poor and the like, they would use these activities of theirs for the purpose of proselytising, I would certainly ask them to withdraw - every nation's religion is good as any other..."

Curiosity and the urge to learn kept Gandhiji going and mentally young. We find him making a request to Mr. William Danforth, head of a company in Missouri which manufactured food products (he had sent to Gandhiji through Mr. B.M. Birla a parcel of food products and a letter): "If it is not a secret, I would like to know how corn flakes are prepared..."

As for Gandhiji's humility, here is a telling example:

When a journalist, Andrew A. Freeman, sought Gandhiji's permission to use his name for the "Gandhi spinning wheel," the reply he sent in 1947 was: "I would say, do not belittle a great thing by mixing it with my name."

Well, discovering Gandhiji through his letters is a great thrill and educative experience. We fervently hope that this book will become a classic.

Mumbai  
August 9, 1998

S. Ramakrishnan

## INTRODUCTION

"I am interested in the United States and in Americans always. There is a special bond of sympathy between us, I believe. The Americans can understand our desire for independence."

- Gandhiji in an interview to the correspondent of the North American Newspaper Alliance, June 4, 1938<sup>1</sup>

GANDHIJI WAS NEVER ABLE to visit the United States of America, but it was a country in which he showed great interest and where he had numerous admirers and friends.

His first known encounter with Americans was within a few days after his arrival in South Africa. He had travelled from Durban to Pretoria in June 1893, in a fateful journey that changed the course of his life and marked the beginning of his active non-violence.<sup>2</sup> He was thrown out of a train in Maritzburg, assaulted by a coachman on the way from Maritzburg to Standerton and denied a room in a hotel in Johannesburg, all because he was not white. He arrived at Pretoria station on a Sunday night, and no one was there to meet him. An African-American saw that he was an utter stranger and offered to find a place for him to stay. He took Gandhiji to Johnston's Family Hotel, owned by an American, Mr. Johnston, who accommodated him for the night.<sup>3</sup>

Gandhiji wrote of this in his autobiography but there is no further mention of any contacts with Americans during the twenty-one years he lived in South Africa.

He knew an American missionary, Robert Shemeld, in Pretoria.<sup>4</sup> During his visit to London in 1909, he met Myron H. Phelps, an American attorney, supporter of the Indian national movement and founder of India House in New York. Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catts, an American suffragist, saw him on her visit to Johannesburg in 1911 and wrote in her diary:

"His eyes lighted with an inner fire and he spoke with such fervour that we recognised that we were in the presence of no ordinary man. Directly he quoted from the Declaration of Independence, from Emerson and Longfellow. Proud, rebellious, humiliated, he may earn his livelihood by law,

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<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, June 5, 1938

<sup>2</sup> Interview to Dr. John R. Mott, 1938, in *Harijan*, December 10, 1938; *Collected Works*, Volume 68, pages 165-73

<sup>3</sup> M.K. Gandhi, *Autobiography*, Part II, Chapter 10

<sup>4</sup> See Section III, below, for letter to Mr. Shemeld

but he dreams of naught but India's independence."<sup>5</sup>

She concluded, however, that Gandhiji was a fanatic and did not publish her impressions until 1922.

Gandhiji's view of the United States was mixed. He wrote with respect about George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, admired the educational work of Booker T. Washington and was reinforced in his views on non-violent resistance by a study of Henry David Thoreau. But he was also aware of the attacks on Indian immigrants in the United States, the lynchings of African-Americans and the worship of "Mammon."

SOON AFTER HIS RETURN TO INDIA in 1915, Gandhiji developed friendship with several American missionaries - notably Fred Fisher, the Methodist Bishop of Calcutta, and Sam Higginbottom, the founder and head of an Agricultural Institute in Allahabad.

Gandhiji was hardly known in the United States until 1920. The *satyagraha* he led in South Africa was not reported in the United States, except for a letter by Myron H. Phelps in the *Springfield Daily Gazette* of August 24, 1909, and two short items in the *Literary Digest* in 1913 and 1914.

British censorship succeeded in preventing any report on the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of April 1919, the nation-wide upsurge against repression and the rise of Gandhiji to national leadership from reaching the United States. The non-cooperation movement, launched by Gandhiji in August 1920, was also not reported for several months. But soon, articles on Gandhiji and the movement began to appear in many newspapers and periodicals. Frazier Hunt, a correspondent of the *Chicago Tribune*, visited India and interviewed Gandhiji in October 1920.<sup>6</sup> The *World*, a New York daily, sent a correspondent to India and published a series of articles by him.

Americans were fascinated by the story of a saint defying a mighty empire and leading millions of people in non-violent resistance.

The Reverend John Haynes Holmes delivered a sermon on April 21, 1921, that Gandhiji was then "the greatest man in the world." Miss Blanche Watson, one of the members of his Community Church, was very active in publicising his work and his ideas, as were Indian exiles in America and their friends. African-American leaders like Dr. W.E.B. DuBois and Marcus Garvey were enthused by

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<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, "Gandhi in South Africa" in *The Woman Citizen*, March 1922. Reproduced in Blanche Watson, *Gandhi and Non-violent Resistance, The Non-Co-operation Movement in India: Gleanings from the American Press*. Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1923.

<sup>6</sup> Frazier Hunt, *The Rising Temper of the East*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1922.



the struggle for freedom in India.

Gandhiji began to receive letters from all over the United States and Americans constantly visited him in his *Ashram*. He said on March 17, 1926: "I have almost daily visits from Americans... from real interest to know my ideas."<sup>7</sup>

His circle of friends steadily increased, as interest in India grew with the advance of the national movement. There were extensive reports in the American press of Gandhiji's march to the sea in 1930 to defy the salt laws, the nation-wide Civil Disobedience which followed and the brutality of the police against peaceful *satyagrahis*. *Time* magazine chose Gandhiji as its "man of the year." The anti-untouchability movement launched by Gandhiji from prison in 1932 also attracted the interest of many Americans.

Gandhiji said at a press conference in 1931 that there were many manifestations of great interest from America in his work in India: "I receive hundreds of letters; they may, of course, be merely pretexts to get my autograph, but the interest is certainly there."<sup>8</sup> He noted in a letter to American friends, sent through the India League of America, on August 3, 1942:

"I have in America perhaps the largest number of friends in the West - not even excepting Great Britain."<sup>9</sup>

He recognised that world opinion was important for the success of the non-violent struggle in India. Through his statements, interviews and letters, he contributed greatly to promoting understanding of that struggle.

Moreover, Gandhiji considered his life as a series of experiments in truth and non-violence. He was convinced that his experiments in India, if successful, would have a message for the world. He welcomed the interest of Americans in his work and was glad to answer their questions.

HE REPLIED DILIGENTLY to all correspondents, usually in his own handwriting, spending much of his precious time every day for this purpose. He wrote from prison when he was permitted by the authorities, and even during his convalescence and fasts. He reproduced extracts from many of the letters in *Young India* and *Harijan*, with his comments.

As Dr. Rajendra Prasad, one of his close associates and later President of India, wrote:

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<sup>7</sup> Interview to Katherine Mayo, *Collected Works*, Volume 30, page 121

<sup>8</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 48, page 7

<sup>9</sup> *Harijan*, August 9, 1942; *Collected Works*, Volume 76, pages 357-59

"There was hardly a letter calling for a considered reply which he did not answer himself... For a great period of his life, he did not take the assistance of any stenographer or typist, and used to write whatever he required in his own hand, and even when such assistance became unavoidable, he continued writing a great deal in his own hand. There were occasions when he became physically unable to write with the fingers of his right hand and, at a late stage in his life, he learnt the art of writing with his left hand..."<sup>10</sup>

Only a fraction of his correspondence is now available, despite all efforts to collect and preserve his papers, partly because he wrote most of his letters by hand and kept no copies. Only occasionally were these letters copied by his secretary, Mahadev Desai, or other members of the *Ashram* into their diaries.

With their sense of economy and attachment to simple living, Gandhiji and his associates made envelopes from incoming letters or used them as writing paper. Gandhiji was, moreover, not interested in preserving letters which merely praised him. No hasty conclusions should, therefore, be drawn from the numbers of his letters to various people.

THIS COMPILATION IS BASED mainly on letters (and telegrams) by Gandhiji reproduced in the hundred volumes of *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, published by the Publications Division of the Government of India between 1958 and 1994. It also includes a number of additional letters which I have found in my research in the libraries and archives in the United States and India. Both the original sources and the references to the *Collected Works* are indicated in the notes.

I have studied all letters received by Gandhiji from Americans, available in the various archives,<sup>11</sup> and indicated the substance of the letters whenever relevant to the letters he wrote. If a letter to which he replied or referred is not summarised, or if a letter he has apparently sent is not reproduced, it is not available in any of the sources I have consulted. I have also referred to numerous sources for biographical information on the recipients of the letters.

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<sup>10</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 1, page vi

<sup>11</sup> Most of the original letters or photocopies are in the following collections:

National Archives of India, New Delhi - the items are indicated by the prefix GN

Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Harijan Ashram, Ahmedabad - the items are indicated with the prefix SN

National Gandhi Memorial Museum, New Delhi

Pyarelal Papers at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

Higginbottom Papers at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

This compilation, I hope, will be useful for a study of Gandhiji's dialogue with America and Americans on his philosophy of truth and non-violence. It should be supplemented, for a fuller picture of the dialogue, by texts of his interviews with Americans and the letters he received from some of his closest American friends.<sup>12</sup>

Many of the correspondents of Gandhiji played a prominent role in social movements in the United States for racial equality, civil liberties and peace. Through them the thought of Gandhiji had a significant impact on American life well before the civil rights movement and the resistance to the Vietnam War.

The impact of Gandhiji on the United States, and the influence of America on him deserve further study. The two existing studies by Seshachari and Sudarshan Kapur, while valuable, cover only a part of the subject.<sup>13</sup>

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF GANDHIJI deals with a great variety of subjects.

Some correspondents merely requested autographs. Others asked for portraits. He had to disappoint several admirers and inform them that he had not given sittings to photographers since 1915 and had not kept a single photograph.

Some sent contributions for his work or books for him to read. Several sought to convince him to become a Christian - one offered to obtain his release from prison on condition he became a Christian evangelist - or sent him their pet formulas for the advancement of India.

Some requested messages or addressed questions to him. One 16-year-old boy from Kansas City asked him to introduce him to a pen pal. A correspondent from Concord, Massachusetts, sought an explanation of the difference between two systems of Hindu philosophy - *Advaitism* and *Dwaitism*. A woman from Texas

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<sup>12</sup> Gandhiji was interviewed by many Americans over the years. The lengthy interviews to Katherine Mayo, Dr. John R. Mott, the African-American delegation and Margaret Sanger, for instance, are most informative about the thought of Gandhiji. But no compilation of his interviews has yet been published.

While letters written by Gandhiji were published in the *Collected Works*, and now in this compilation, the letters received by him can only be found in the archives in India. So far, only the correspondence of Gandhiji and Dr. John Haynes Holmes has been published.

I hope that it will be possible to publish soon the texts of his interviews with Americans and a selection of the letters received by him.

<sup>13</sup> C. Seshachari, *Gandhi and the American Scene: An Intellectual History and Inquiry*. Bombay: Nichiketa Publications Limited, 1969. Sudarshan Kapur, *Raising up a Prophet: The African-American Encounter with Gandhi*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992; paperback edition, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1993.

requested him to resurrect her brother who had recently passed away. Several letters were from people who wished to visit India and stay in his *ashram*.

SOME OF THE CORRESPONDENCE, especially with Dr. John Haynes Holmes, was related to the publication of his autobiography in America. Many letters were in response to invitations to visit America.

Gandhiji began to receive invitations from the United States from 1924 and generally replied that he must succeed in India before going abroad. But enquiries and invitations came from Americans whenever he was reported to be considering travel abroad.

He seriously considered accepting an invitation to the International Congresses of the YMCA and the World Student Christian Federation at Helsingfors in August 1926: many Americans were disappointed when he declined. Gandhiji again considered a visit to Europe, and possibly the United States, in 1928 and 1929, mainly to meet Romain Rolland and other peace workers. But he had to cancel the trip because of the death of Maganlal Gandhi, his closest associate, in 1928 and a request by the Indian National Congress in 1929 that he lead a civil disobedience movement.

He received many invitations from the United States when he agreed to attend the second Round Table Conference in London in 1931, though he indicated several times that he had no plans to go to the United States.<sup>14</sup>

His friends in the United States were divided in their views on the desirability of a visit. John Haynes Holmes, Roger Baldwin, Kirby Page, Harry Ward and Richard Gregg advised him against a visit to the United States at that time. They felt that the United States was not ready to receive his message and that his visit would be exploited by sensation-mongers.

On the other hand, Bishop Fred Fisher favoured an American visit and offered to look after him. Some Indians in the United States campaigned in favour of his visit. Several eminent Americans - such as Ms. Jane Addams, James R. Angel (President of Yale University), Professor John Dewey, Professor Edward R.A. Seligman, Dr. James H. Cousins, Algernon Lee (President of the Rand School of Social Science) and Alfred P. Sloan, Jr. (President of the General Motors Corporation) - urged him to visit the United States.

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<sup>14</sup> For instance, he told the Associated Press of America on April 30, 1931:

"If I go I should like to travel as a private citizen without formal invitation from any individual or society and also not a freak in a museum or object of curiosity in a penny peep show. In any event, I cannot decide definitely to visit America until India has won her battle for freedom which may take a long time." *New York Times*, May 1, 1931.

Gandhiji made no plans for a visit to the United States, and had to return to India soon after the Conference because of the grave situation in the country. No visit to America was contemplated by him since then.

A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE CORRESPONDENCE, however, deals with the philosophy of Gandhiji and its application in practice. It reflects his preoccupation with the needs of the poverty-stricken people of India, his rejection of narrow nationalism, his concern that India should contribute to world peace, and his firm belief that there was no escape for the world "except through the acceptance of non-violence as the predominant and ordinary rule of life." It portrays Gandhiji as a deeply religious, but not sectarian, person who eschewed all hatred and cared for all those who were oppressed. It shows his respect for Americans despite the vicious propaganda against him in the United States and his rejection of aspects of American way of life.

THIS COMPILATION BEGINS with a letter which Gandhiji addressed to President Roosevelt in 1942 seeking his sympathy for India's demand for independence. It was written at a difficult time when Gandhiji's call for an immediate withdrawal of British rule was misrepresented and misunderstood in the United States. The United States Government, regrettably, missed the opportunity to exercise its influence to promote the freedom of India, or even to restrain the British Government from creating a grave crisis by imprisoning Gandhiji and other leaders of the Indian National Congress.

Section II consists of correspondence with two Americans who lived in Gandhiji's *Ashram* and followed its strict discipline - Richard B. Gregg and Nilla Cram Cook.<sup>15</sup> They had extensive correspondence with Gandhiji on many aspects of Gandhi's thought.

Mr. Gregg made a great contribution, after return to the United States, to the propagation of the philosophy and technique of non-violent resistance.

Section III consists of letters to American churchmen and missionaries in India.

Many of these were pacifists and advocates of the social gospel who felt that the churches must uplift and minister to individuals who were victims of social injustice. They saw Gandhiji as a true Christian.

Several friends of Gandhiji - John Haynes Holmes, Kirby Page, Eli Stanley Jones and A.J. Muste, for instance - were members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, "a fellowship that refuses to participate in any war and seeks to demonstrate that love is the effective force for overcoming evil and transforming society into a creative fellowship." The Fellowship, though small, played a significant role in inspiring the non-violent movement for civil rights in the United States.

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<sup>15</sup> Many other Americans stayed in the *Ashram* - e.g. Sherwood Eddy, Louis Fischer, Sam Higginbottom, Eli Stanley Jones, Kirby Page - but only briefly as guests.

Section IV includes letters to all others.

Section V is a collection of messages sent or dictated by Gandhiji at the request of American visitors and correspondents.

I have retained the addresses in the letters, as they were at the time, even in cases where there were errors.

I WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE with gratitude and pleasure the cooperation I received from many friends in collecting and editing these letters.

Amrutbhai Modi, Director of the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya at Harijan Ashram in Ahmedabad, Miss Dina Patel and their colleagues were most gracious in advising and assisting me during my visits to the Ashram to refer to the correspondence of Gandhiji. At the National Gandhi Museum, New Delhi, Dr. Y.P. Anand, the Director, H.S. Mathur, the librarian, and others were most helpful. I must also thank Jitendrabhai Desai, Managing Director of the Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad, for his encouragement.

Dr. Haridev Sharma, Director of Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, has been a guide to me for several years and provided me photocopies of letters from the Pyarelal Collection. I am also grateful to Dr. Sushila Nayyar, sister of Pyarelal, for permitting access to this collection.

At the National Archives of India, New Delhi, Mr. T.V. Haranatha Babu, Deputy Director of Archives, was most cooperative.

In the United States I have frequented the New York Public Library, the Harvard University Library and Yale University Library for research. I received access to the Louis Fischer papers at the New York Public Library and to the papers of Dr. John R. Mott and Miss Katherine Mayo at the Yale University Library. I wish to thank the librarians for their assistance and advice.

Finally, I must thank Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and the Director of its New York Centre, Dr. P. Jayaraman, for their constant encouragement.

New York  
June 1998

E. S. REDDY

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<sup>16</sup> This is not in the printed edition of the book.

<sup>17</sup> This is not in the printed edition of the book.

McConnell, The Right Reverend Francis J.  
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Green, Horace

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<sup>18</sup> This is not in the printed edition of the book.



Grover, Preston  
Hart, David B.  
Hayes, Ed T.  
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Meyer, Alfred C.  
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Murphy, Carl  
Murphy, Edward  
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Perry, Samuel R.  
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Starr, W. B.  
Stimson, H. R.  
*Survey*, Editor of the  
Todd, Albert M.  
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**GLOSSARY**

**NOTES**

## I. LETTER TO PRESIDENT FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT (AND CABLE TO MRS. ROOSEVELT)

**Letter, July 1, 1942**<sup>19</sup>

[Gandhiji addressed this letter to President Roosevelt at a critical time in India.

The British Viceroy of India had declared war in September 1939 without consulting Indian opinion and the arbitrary measures of the bureaucracy during the war had caused great suffering and seething discontent among the people. The Indian National Congress, while refraining from any action to embarrass the Allies, had demanded that Britain grant self-government to India, if the war was for freedom as it claimed, so that India could make its full contribution to the defeat of fascism. It had become clear by 1942 that Britain was unwilling to accede to the Indian demand for self-government and sought to continue imperialist domination. Prime Minister Churchill declared that the third point of the Atlantic Charter concerning self-government did not apply to India and other colonial possessions.

The Japanese advanced swiftly towards India in 1942. The British forces retreated from Singapore, Malaya and Burma without much resistance, leaving Indian troops to their fate. As Gandhiji pointed out to American correspondents:

"Hundreds, if not thousands, [of Indians] on their way from Burma perished without food and drink, and the wretched discrimination stared even these miserable people in the face. One route for the whites, another for the blacks! Provision of food and shelter for the whites, none for the blacks! And discrimination even on their arrival in India!"<sup>20</sup>

British authorities began to contemplate a "scorched earth" policy in India, despite the danger of immense suffering for the Indian people.

Gandhiji became convinced that British rule in India must end forthwith and called on Britain to "quit India" as an essential measure to turn the ill-will of the people into goodwill for the Allies. His views were misrepresented by British propaganda and American opinion became hostile.

He attempted to clarify his position in a number of articles and interviews with American correspondents. He made it clear that he intended to negotiate with the

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<sup>19</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 76, pages 264-65

<sup>20</sup> *Harijan*, June 14, 1942; *Collected Works*, Volume 76, pages 195-96

Government, that Allied troops could remain in India and that he would take no precipitate action to press for the withdrawal of British rule.

At the suggestion of Louis Fischer, an American journalist who had a series of interviews with Gandhiji in June 1942, Gandhiji sent him the following letter to be conveyed to President Roosevelt so that the latter would know of his plans and his readiness to compromise.<sup>21]</sup>

Sevagram, *via* Wardha (India),  
July 1, 1942

Dear friend,

I twice missed coming to your great country. I have the privilege [of] having numerous friends there both known and unknown to me. Many of my countrymen have received and are still receiving higher education in America. I know too that several have taken shelter there. I have profited greatly by the writings of Thoreau and Emerson. I say this to tell you how much I am connected with your country. Of Great Britain I need say nothing beyond mentioning that in spite of my intense dislike of British rule, I have numerous personal friends in England whom I love as dearly as my own people. I had my legal education there. I have therefore nothing but good wishes for your country and Great Britain. You will therefore accept my word that my present proposal, that the British should unreservedly and without reference to the wishes of the people of India immediately withdraw their rule, is prompted by the friendliest intention. I would like to turn into goodwill the ill will which, whatever may be said to the contrary, exists in India towards Great Britain and thus enable the millions of India to play their part in the present war.

My personal position is clear. I hate all war. If, therefore, I could persuade my countrymen, they would make a most effective and decisive contribution in favour of an honourable peace. But I know that all of us have not a living faith in non-violence. Under foreign rule however we can make no effective contribution of any kind in this war, except as helots.

The policy of the Indian National Congress, largely guided by me, has been one of non-embarrassment to Britain, consistently with the honourable working of the Congress, admittedly the largest political organisation of the longest standing in India. The British policy as exposed by the Cripps mission and rejected by almost all parties has opened our eyes and has driven me to the proposal I have made. I hold that the full acceptance of my proposal and that alone can put the Allied cause on an unassailable basis. I venture to think that the Allied declaration that the Allies are fighting to make the world safe for freedom of the individual and for democracy sounds hollow so long as India and, for that matter, Africa are exploited by Great Britain and America has the Negro problem in her own home. But in order to avoid all complications, in my proposal I have confined myself

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<sup>21</sup> Louis Fischer, *A Week with Gandhi* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1942), pages 106, 114

only to India. If India becomes free, the rest must follow, if it does not happen simultaneously.

In order to make my proposal foolproof I have suggested that, if the Allies think it necessary, they may keep their troops, at their own expense in India, not for keeping internal order but for preventing Japanese aggression and defending China. So far as India is concerned, we must become free even as America and Great Britain are. The Allied troops will remain in India during the war under treaty with the free Indian Government that may be formed by the people of India without any outside interference, direct or indirect.

It is on behalf of this proposal that I write this to enlist your active sympathy.

I hope that it would commend itself to you.

Mr. Louis Fischer is carrying this letter to you.

If there is any obscurity in my letter, you have but to send me word and I shall try to clear it.

I hope finally that you will not resent this letter as an intrusion but take it as an approach from a friend and well-wisher of the Allies.

I remain,  
Yours sincerely,  
M.K. GANDHI

[President Roosevelt sent a reply dated 1 August to Gandhiji.<sup>22</sup> Enclosed with it was the text of an address delivered by the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, suggesting that those who did not lend unconditional support to the Allies were unworthy of liberty. The letter showed no understanding of Indian sentiment and the enclosure was, moreover, most unfortunate. It was delayed in the State Department and did not reach Gandhiji who was detained on August 9, 1942. The United States Government was aware that Britain intended to detain him and other leaders, but refrained from any criticism of the arrests or the massive repression that followed.<sup>23</sup>

Washington,  
August 1, 1942

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

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<sup>22</sup> Norman Cousins, ed., *Profiles of Gandhi: America Remembers a World Leader* (Delhi: Indian Book Company, 1969), page 227; and M.S. Venkataramani and B.K. Shrivastava, *Quit India: The American Response to the 1942 Struggle* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1979), page 224.

<sup>23</sup> M.S. Venkataramani, *op. cit.*, page 225

I have received your letter of July 1, 1942, which you have thoughtfully sent me in order that I may better understand your plans, which I well know may have far-reaching effect upon developments important to your country and mine.

I am sure that you will agree that the United States has consistently striven for and supported policies of fair dealing, of fair play, and of all related principles looking towards the creation of harmonious relations between nations. Nevertheless now that war has come as a result of Axis dreams of world conquest, we, together with many other nations, are making a supreme effort to defeat those who would deny forever all hope of freedom throughout the world. I am enclosing a copy of an address of July 23 by the Secretary of State, made with my complete approval, which illustrates the attitude of this Government.

I shall hope that our common interest in democracy and righteousness will enable your countrymen and mine to make common cause against a common enemy.

Very sincerely yours,  
Franklin D. Roosevelt]

**Cable to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, April 16, 1945<sup>24</sup>**

[Gandhiji sent this cable to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt following the death of President Roosevelt on April 12, 1945.]

MRS. ROOSEVELT  
HYDE PARK  
NEW YORK

MY HUMBLE CONDOLENCE AND CONGRATULATIONS. LATTER BECAUSE YOUR ILLUSTRIOUS HUSBAND DIED IN HARNESS AND AFTER WAR HAD REACHED A POINT WHERE ALLIED VICTORY HAD BECOME CERTAIN.<sup>25</sup> HE WAS SPARED HUMILIATING SPECTACLE OF BEING PARTY TO PEACE WHICH THREATENS TO BE PRELUDE TO WAR BLOODIER STILL IF POSSIBLE.

GANDHI

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<sup>24</sup> Pyarelal Papers and *The Hindu*, May 10, 1945; *Collected Works*, Volume 79, page 384

<sup>25</sup> Germany surrendered to the Allies on May 7, 1945, and Japan on 14 August.

## II. LETTERS TO RICHARD B. GREGG AND NILLA CRAM COOK

[The letters of Gandhiji to two Americans, who were inmates of his *ashram* for several months each and followed its discipline, are of special significance in understanding him. With both Mr. Gregg and Miss Cook, Gandhiji had extensive correspondence - dealing with such diverse subjects as non-violence, religion, spinning, village industries, basic education, diet, cooking, gardening, clothes, laundering, scavenging and sanitation. His letters to them show Gandhiji as a man, with all his strengths and weaknesses, and explain the application of his philosophy of truth and non-violence in dealing with political, economic, social and personal problems.

Richard Bartlett Gregg and Nilla Cram Cook were very different in their backgrounds and interests. The former was a professional who was disillusioned with the Western civilisation, studied Gandhiji and went to India to learn more from him. The latter was a young woman - intelligent, creative, Bohemian - for whom the visit to India and Gandhiji was perhaps part of an adventure.

Mr. Gregg arrived in India in the 1920s. The first national mass resistance to British rule under Gandhiji's leadership - the non-cooperation movement - had been suspended and Gandhiji had served a term of imprisonment. After release and recuperation from illness, he was concentrating on promoting spinning, weaving and other village industries as part of the "constructive programme" of the national movement. He gave generously of his time to answer Mr. Gregg's questions and help him to learn about India. Mr. Gregg, for his part, was able advise Gandhiji on several aspects of his constructive programme.

Benefitting from a stay of almost four years in India, including several months in the *Ashram*, Mr. Gregg made a significant contribution in interpreting the thought of Gandhiji to people in the United States of America and thereby inspiring non-violent resistance in that country in later years. *Friends Journal* wrote in its obituary on the death of Mr. Gregg that he was a "quiet radical."

"He did not leave big footprints, or make any big splashes, but he is the real father of the movement toward non-violent resistance in this country."<sup>26</sup>

Miss Cook was in India in the early 1930s when Gandhiji was in prison for leading the Civil Disobedience campaign - the second national mass struggle under his leadership. He was at the time engaged in promoting action to eradicate

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<sup>26</sup> *Friends Journal*, Philadelphia, May 15, 1974



untouchability, including penance by caste Hindus in the form of service to uplift the untouchables.

Miss Cook joined the movement but her way of life led to complications. She tried to atone for her past life by living in poverty and abstinence under the guidance of Gandhiji, who hoped to train her for anti-untouchability work. Gandhiji became a "father and mother" to her. But after a few months she found the pace of *Ashram* life too slow and escaped from it, contributing little but a brief and fascinating episode in his life.]

## GREGG, RICHARD B.

[Richard Bartlett Gregg (1885-1974) - a lawyer, teacher and expert on industrial relations - became thoroughly disgusted with the "satanic civilisation" of the West by the 1920s and felt he could no longer cooperate with it. Attracted by Gandhiji's ideas, he decided to go to India and learn from him.<sup>27</sup>

A graduate of Harvard Law School, he had some teaching experience and worked for three years in a corporate law office in Boston. He moved to the field of industrial relations in 1915 and began to represent employers and trade unions. He represented the Federation of Railway Shop Employees before and after a nation-wide strike in 1921, and assisted the chairman of the union during the strike. He became acquainted with Gandhiji's writings during the strike. He wrote in the *Indian Review* of February 1934:

"At the height of the nation-wide American railway strike of 1921, when feelings were most intense and bitter, I happened by pure chance to pick up in a Chicago bookshop a collection of Mahatma Gandhi's writings and a story of some of his works. His attitude and methods were in such profound and dramatic contrast with what I was in the midst of then and had been seeing at close quarters in American industry for six years that I felt impelled to go and live alongside him and learn more.

"After thinking it over for a year or more, and writing to Gandhi about my wishes, I set sail for India on the last day of 1924. Within a week after arriving in India, I found myself at his school or *Ashram* at Sabarmati... There I stayed for about a month and then for several months visited villages in other provinces and returned again to the *Ashram*. I lived entirely in Indian houses, wore Indian clothes, ate Indian food, read Indian literature, learned as much of the language as I could, and tried to absorb Indian ways... I stayed nearly four years in India, of which about seven months all told I spent at Gandhi's *Ashram*."

Mr. Gregg studied the philosophy of Gandhiji and its application in all aspects of life. He benefited from Gandhiji's explanation of his ideas and experiments in personal discussions and in extensive correspondence. He also worked with several close associates of Gandhiji. With his knowledge of science, education, economics and psychology, he was, in turn, able to advise Gandhiji on several matters.

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<sup>27</sup> Letter from Miss Blanche Watson to Gandhiji, September 6, 1924, SN 10153

Gandhiji quoted from the writings of Mr. Gregg or published extracts from his letters several times in *Young India* and *Harijan*.<sup>28</sup> He wrote in *Young India* of June 9, 1927:<sup>29</sup>

"He [Mr. Gregg] is studying in a very concrete manner and with a passion worthy of a patriotic son of the soil the many questions affecting this land. His studies and experiments in hand-spinning continue unabated. He is experimenting in education of the children of backward classes. He is interested in the welfare of these classes. And in that connection, he is studying the question of agriculture. Having watched the economic and highly hygienic disposal of night-soil at the *Satyagraha Ashram*, Sabarmati, he is now studying that question in a methodical manner."

Gandhiji gave him the name "Govind" and his wife (whom he married in 1929 after return to the United States) "Radha". Govind and Radha visited India for six weeks in March-April 1930, and stayed at the *Ashram* shortly before the Salt *Satyagraha*.

Mr. Gregg was among the first to popularise non-violent resistance in the United States, and his book, *The Power of Non-violence* (1934), was a textbook for resisters in the civil rights and peace movements of the 1960s. In this book he tried to explain non-violent resistance (*satyagraha*) in modern Western concepts and terminology and to show that it could be applied universally. Professor Wittner called him "the leading theorist of non-violent resistance" and explained:

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<sup>28</sup> Please see:

"Indian Textbooks" in *Young India*, September 16, 1926; *Collected Works*, Volume 31, pages 409-10

"What we are Losing" in *Young India*, June 9, 1927; *Collected Works*, Volume 33, pages 461-62

"Non-violence the Only Way" in *Harijan*, December 24, 1938; *Collected Works*, Volume 68, page 238

"Non-violence and *Khadi*" in *Harijan*, June 22, 1940; *Collected Works*, Volume 72, pages 153-54

"A Psychological Explanation" in *Harijan*, November 23, 1947; *Collected Works*, Volume 90, pages 1-3

See also:

"An American on Spiritual Fasts" in *Harijan*, December 8, 1933

"Experiments in *Ahimsa*" in *Harijan*, April 2, 1938

"Pacifism is not Enough" in *Harijan*, June 4, 1938

<sup>29</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 33, page 461

"His pioneering study *The Power of Non-violence* proved immensely influential... The message of the book was revolutionary: non-violent resistance had a political and social significance. Not only was non-violence 'right,' but it 'worked.'"<sup>30</sup>

Mr. Gregg also wrote *Economics of Khaddar* (1928), *The Psychology and Strategy of Gandhi's Non-violent Struggle* (1929 and 1972), *Gandhism and Socialism* (1931), *A Discipline for Non-violence* (1941) and other books and many articles.

He continued to correspond with Gandhiji after return to the United States and to inform Gandhiji of his activities and views. He participated in the World Pacifist meetings in India in December 1949.

He died on January 27, 1974, after long illness.<sup>31</sup>

### **Letter, April 11, 1926<sup>32</sup>**

[Gandhiji's secretary, Mahadev Desai, sent a German book on Tolstoy to Mr. Gregg, who was then teaching at the school of S.E. Stokes at Kotgarh,<sup>33</sup> asking him for a translation. Mr. Gregg wrote to Gandhiji on April 6, 1926, that having been out of touch with German for 23 years, he doubted his capacity to translate it. He informed Gandhiji that he was teaching mathematics and physics, and was starting a garden. He intended to begin cooking his meals.<sup>34</sup>]

*Ashram, Sabarmati,*  
April 11, 1926

My dear Govind,

How funny I received your letter just after I had dictated my note on your article on Machinery. Do not bother about the German book. You may return it. I shall get it translated if need be by someone else. The work you mention is far more important than translating those letters in the midst of difficulties that surround you.

I am glad you are doing gardening and cooking your own meals. When you get a little bit of leisure do give me an idea of the school there. The attendance,

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<sup>30</sup> Lawrence S. Wittner, *Rebels against War: The American Peace Movement, 1933-1983* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), pages 31-32

<sup>31</sup> For biographical information on Mr. Gregg, see obituaries in *Fellowship*, Nyack, April 1974, and *Friends Journal*, Philadelphia, May 15, 1974. Also letter by Mr. Gregg to *The World Tomorrow*, New York, April 5, 1933.

<sup>32</sup> SN 19445; *Collected Works*, Volume 30, page 272

<sup>33</sup> See Section III for information about S.E. Stokes.

<sup>34</sup> SN 10715

capacity of the boys, subjects being taught, etc., and tell me what we should adopt from that school.

I leave for Mussoori on the 22nd instant. Mira is doing wonderfully well. Have you heard that during the *Satyagraha* Week there are five [spinning] wheels going all day and night. It is a stirring sight. The daily output has at least quintupled I think. We shall have the accurate figures next week. Hence during the week Kanti did 4444 turns (equals 5925 yards), that means at least 14 hours work for the boy.

Yours,

Richard B. Gregg, Esq.

[In his "Notes" in *Young India*, Gandhiji quoted extensively from an article on "Morals and Machinery" by Mr. Gregg, published in *The Current Thought* (February 1924). The article referred to the evils of uncontrolled multiplication of machinery, starting with the "enormous concentration of material power and wealth in the hands of the few."<sup>35</sup>]

#### **Letter, May 23, 1926<sup>36</sup>**

[In a letter of 14 May, Mr. Gregg provided information about the school in Kotgarh, and said that V. A. Sundaram (a former inmate of Sabarmati *Ashram*) was teaching there. He suggested that Gandhiji take plenty of warm clothing on his proposed trip to Finland.

He informed Gandhiji that he had been thinking of editing a collection of Gandhiji's articles on *ahimsa*, love and *satyagraha* for publication in the United States. He would send Gandhiji certain difficulties he had with respect to *ahimsa* and hoped that the answers would help convince people in the West of the truth of *ahimsa*.<sup>37</sup>]

The *Ashram*, Sabarmati,  
May 23, 1926

My dear Govind,

I have your deeply interesting letter for which I am thankful. I now understand the school and its purpose. Is it Sundaram of Coimbatore? If so, please congratulate him and also ascertain from him how he managed to gravitate there. He must be there with his wife. If so, what is she doing?

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<sup>35</sup> *Young India*, April 15, 1924; *Collected Works*, Volume 30, pages 290-92

<sup>36</sup> SN 19561; *Collected Works*, Volume 30, pages 472-73

<sup>37</sup> SN 10728

I know that Stokes is doing great and good work and gives his all to it. How I should love to convince him that he does not need Government recognition for his school. There must be some method of enabling the boys to earn their own living without the Government patronage. The path is not easy but it is the only one that he or shall I say we must tread. However I must not criticise. He must work by the light of his own conscience even though to an outsider he may seem to be erring.

If I go to Finland at all, I shall bear in mind all your caution and take with me a wardrobe full of warm clothing and I promise, if I feel the cold so much, to wrap myself out of recognition. If I go to Finland I shall see that all the notes that are taken you receive a copy of. Meanwhile send me all the questions that arose in your mind.

The path of *ahimsa*, I know, is thorny. At every step the thorns prick and sometimes bleed one.

I was out for nearly a week passing a few hours with the Governor at Mahabaleshwar trying to persuade him that the only recommendation that the Royal Commission on Agriculture can make is to popularise the *charkha* and assure the masses that all the yarn that they can spin will be taken up by the Government and woven for the people.

With love to you all including the baby with kisses added for it.

I do not know whether it is he or she.

Yours sincerely,

R. B. Gregg, Esq.  
c/o S.E. Stokes, Esq.  
Kotgarh, Simla Hills

**Letter, July 21, 1926<sup>38</sup>**

The Ashram,  
Sabarmati  
July 21, 1926

My dear Govind,

I have your letter. If I was a believer in miracles, I would say that my not going to Finland was a miracle. I had actually dictated a letter and telegram of final acceptance and the mere accident of my having gone to the "Library" and a flashlight perception altered the whole situation within five minutes.

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<sup>38</sup> SN 19672; *Collected Works*, Volume 31, pages 175-76

I am certainly eager to go to China if I find the way clearly open, but not for the reasons you mention. I do not believe in imported credit and, therefore, I do not think that my way in India will be smoother if the Chinese accepted it; nor am I in any way hopeful of their acceptance. What attracts me to China is identity of status in that both are nations under foreign domination. I came in very intimate contact with the Chinese colony in the Transvaal. And, as a matter of fact, I believe that whilst I would have readily got in Finland intellectual assent to the doctrine of *ahimsa*, I shall find it terribly difficult to secure that assent from the Chinese, whether cultured or uncultured. But that does not worry me as it does not worry me here whether people accept *ahimsa* or not. What I am afraid of about Europe and America is patronage. I entertain no such fear about China. You will detect here in me a subtle pride and, if you do, you will not be far wrong. But there it is.

I think that some friend did send me the book called *The Arm of God*. I do not think I read it carefully. But, since you think so highly about it, I shall ask our librarian to search it out and give it to me.

By all means put into shape your economic arguments about *khaddar* before you write on *ahimsa*. Whenever you send me questions, I shall try to deal with them.

I must not stir out of Sabarmati at the present moment. I am keeping well. I am trying the experiment of living on fruit alone. This is the 9th day. I am not feeling weak. I do not expect to be able to retain my strength indefinitely on fruit alone. I have commenced the experiment to avoid constipation. I am continuing it for pleasure. I should love to drop milk any time. My food just now is grapes and mangoes.

Please tell Sundaram I have got his beautiful weekly gift and tell him not to worry if he miss a week.

With love to you all.

Yours sincerely,

R. B. Gregg, Esq.  
c/o S. E. Stokes, Esq.  
Kotgarh  
Simla Hills

**Letter, October 2, 1926<sup>39</sup>**

The Ashram,

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<sup>39</sup> SN 19712; *Collected Works*, Volume 31, page 469

Sabarmati,  
October 2, 1926

My dear Govind,

I duly received the box containing the golden delicious apples. Please thank Stokes for the parcel of apples. They were certainly delicious to eat. They were not golden to look at. My teeth couldn't work through the apples without stewing them. I ate two. The rest were distributed among patients and persons whom you and Stokes would consider deserving.

I know I owe you a reply to your previous letter. I want to send you a fairly long and full reply. That is why I am taking time. Andrews is off. He was none too well for the voyage, but he is not one to be easily dissuaded. I therefore did not strive with him.

Yours sincerely,

R. B. Gregg, Esq.  
c/o S. E. Stokes, Esq.  
Kotgarh  
Simla Hills

[C.F. Andrews, a friend and associate of Gandhiji, left for South Africa to assist the Indian community in that country in connection with the Round Table Conference of the Governments of South Africa and India. The South African Government had agreed to the conference after protests against drastic measures it proposed to enact against the Indian community.]

**Letter, November 27, 1926<sup>40</sup>**

[Mr. Gregg wrote to Gandhiji that he was preparing a rearrangement of textbooks in mathematics and physics for his pupils "such as would conform to their experience," since most textbooks were written for city-bred children and presupposed familiarity with machinery.

"These children have never seen automobiles, steam engines, electric lights, pumps, water-pipes, or even bullock-carts. So the assumptions, pictures, technical terms and arrangement of the textbooks of physics, and even of mathematics can have no reality and therefore no interest or educational value to them. Gradually, therefore, I am putting together what will be in effect a textbook on science and mathematics for Indian village children."

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<sup>40</sup> SN 12088; *Collected Works*, Volume 32, pages 377-79



Gandhiji quoted from this letter in *Young India* and commented:

"For India a multiplicity of textbooks means deprivation of the vast majority of village children of the means of instruction. Textbooks, therefore, in India must mean, principally and for the lower standards, textbooks for teachers, not for pupils. Indeed, I am not sure that it is not better for the children to have much of the preliminary instruction imparted to them vocally. To impose on children of tender age a knowledge of the alphabet and the ability to read before they can gain general knowledge is to deprive them, whilst they are fresh, of the power of assimilating instruction by word of mouth."<sup>41</sup>

Mr. Gregg wrote to Gandhiji on October 7, 1926, expressing agreement with Gandhiji and elaborating on the matter. The prime need, he said, was instruction of teachers, and most of the instruction of village children must be oral and manual.<sup>42</sup>

Gandhiji wrote a series of articles in *Young India* from October 10, 1926, entitled "Is this Humanity?", in response to a letter from the Ahmedabad Humanitarian League which asked for his views on the killing or castration of rabid dogs. In a letter commenting on the articles, Mr. Gregg discussed duty and responsibility towards one's ward and his assailant. He was not sure that "the duty and responsibility towards one's ward is any greater in God's sight than one's duty towards the moral welfare of the assailant." He informed Gandhiji that he planned to spend the winter in a village in Bihar.<sup>43</sup>]

The Ashram,  
Sabarmati,  
November 27, 1926

I see you are adding to my debt. I already owe you a reply to several questions in your previous letter. And I have now before me another letter with quotations from Thomas Paine. The quotations I hope to use as you suggest. I have not yet gone through them.<sup>44</sup>

The articles on *khaddar* you may use just as you like.

I am glad you have appreciated the articles "Is This Humanity?". I felt that I should make my position clear irrespective of whether it sounded or was in fact

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<sup>41</sup> *Young India*, September 16, 1926; *Collected Works*, Volume 31, pages 409-10

<sup>42</sup> SN 13271

<sup>43</sup> SN 12090. The first two pages of this letter are not available.

<sup>44</sup> The quotations were on the price of freedom and were published by Gandhiji in *Young India*, December 9, 1926.

tenable or not. It is enough that the views expressed therein represent my definite conclusions.

You will notice the flaw in your analogy. You compare duty towards the ward with your duty towards moral welfare of the assailant. Now the moral welfare of the assailant is not at stake when you are defending the ward. It is his physical existence that is at stake. And, if instead of the assailant being a stranger, it was another ward, but stronger than the one then under your protection, you would still have to defend the one under your protection against the other ward who is about to assail the former and whom you have no other means of overcoming. God will judge your duty in accordance with your intentions. Indeed, one may go a step further and assume the one who is to be protected not to be a ward, but an utter stranger who has sought protection. There is a beautiful tale in the *Mahabharata*. A great prince had a pigeon flying to him for protection against a hawk. The hawk feels that the pigeon is his lawful prey duly appointed as such by God. The prince wards him off by saying that whilst pigeons ordinarily were a lawful prey for hawks, he cannot neglect the obvious duty of protecting those who sought his protection and the prince generously offered his own flesh as substitute. This, of course, is the most spiritual method of dealing with the hawk. But where one is too weak to adopt that method, one would be bound to carry out the law of protection by resisting the approach of the hawk by force. And this one would do in accordance with the law of *ahimsa*. I don't know whether I have made my position clear.

I see you are not coming to pass your winter in Sabarmati. I am sorry in two ways. First, because, though I shall be away, the *Ashramites* will miss you. Secondly, because it is the fear of the *Ashram* climate and water that is deterring you. We, diet reformers, should really discover ways of bending climate to our will rather than succumb to it. I know, however, this is counsel of perfection. The step you are taking is prudent and therefore in the circumstances superior to the counsel of perfection which cannot be carried out without taking risk. I shall follow with considerable interest your researches in the tutorial line.

Devdas is quite well and strong. He has gone to nurse Mathuradas at Panchgani. I leave for Wardha on the 2nd December. My love to you and the Stokes and Sundaram and Savitri.

Yours,

R. B. Gregg  
Simla

**Letter, April 26, 1927<sup>45</sup>**

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<sup>45</sup> SN 12571; *Collected Works*, Volume 33, pages 259-62

[Mr. Gregg wrote to Gandhiji on April 17, 1927, advising him to use goat's milk unboiled. Together with nuts and young leaves, he would get all the necessary vitamins. He informed Gandhiji that he had to spend much of the winter in Delhi to get treatment for piles, but could not afford an operation. Referring to Gandhiji's request that he write once a fortnight, he said he did not wish to take too much of Gandhiji's time but would be glad to write provided that Gandhiji did not try to reply to every letter.<sup>46</sup>

He wrote again on April 18, 1927, about his diet and mode of life as requested by Gandhiji. He said he was understanding *ahimsa* better and was convinced of the sound reasons for *ahimsa* between man and man. But on *ahimsa* as between man and animals, insects and plants, he found much difficulty and wished to be enlightened. He argued that enlisting sympathy of intellectually and politically powerful to any great cause proves fatal to the cause.<sup>47</sup>

Gandhiji was then resting at Nandi Hills, near Bangalore, on the advice of doctors.]

Nandi Hills,  
April 26, 1927

My dear Govind,

Do not be alarmed. Though I reply to your letter so promptly, it is not by way of courtesy, but for pleasure; for, I do not yield to you in my zeal for dietetic reform. Only my lot having been during the last 20 years cast in a rigid mould, I have not been able to wriggle out of it in spite of my intense desire to prosecute dietetic research. But now that nature had laid me low, the appetite which was never eradicated, but was only under suppression, has become active and I go for everything in this direction with avidity.

Now to the point. For the last two days I have made one important change prompted by a fellow crank. He suggested my taking the juice of fresh neem leaves by mixing it with milk. He says my case is not one of blood-pressure but of flatulence. Blood-pressure there certainly is; but I am inclined to agree with this friend that blood-pressure is a temporary effect of flatulence which is the root cause, and he thinks I could deal with the latter by taking the juice of neem leaves with my meals. These leaves are bitter. He says they contain the necessary vitamins. I am watching their effect now. Your letter was received yesterday and the change I have made today is to take unboiled milk. This was suggested by some medical friends at Amboli. But I was not responsive. But your letter has evoked the necessary response. My hosts have brought some goats on to this hill and they are milked under supervision. Milk was therefore brought this morning fresh from the udders. It was mixed with neem leaves juice and hot raisin water

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<sup>46</sup> SN 12571

<sup>47</sup> SN 13273

was added to the milk. This in accordance with your letter gives me the vitamins from the milk and in accordance with that friend gives me the vitamins from the neem leaves. I am therefore at the present moment omitting fresh vegetables because I am not yet satisfied that these vegetables are necessary, especially as I am taking those bitter leaves and unboiled milk. At what point are vitamins destroyed when you boil leafy vegetables? What is the virtue of vitamins? What is the quantity of leafy vegetables one should take in order to get the required measure of vitamins? What quantity of unboiled milk will give the vitamins required? Is it true that mere heating the milk does not destroy vitamins? Or they are only destroyed when milk is brought to the boiling point?

I have tried the nuts in the manner you suggest. I had them reduced to butter. The pulp was as fine as butter. I had almonds turned into milk. But I could not cope with it, no matter how far you pulverised the nuts. They must, it appears, pass through the double process of digestion like all non-flesh foods. It is only animal food which does not tax the large intestines. Before nuts, therefore, can attain the digestibility of milk, the first process of digestion must be gone through outside the human system. I was told when I was in London, that melted nuts had that effect. I do not know how far this is true. I want to succeed in non-milk experiment because I am convinced that milk, apart from mother's milk, is not human food, nor is cooking essential. A perfect food therefore for human needs has yet to be found. From the spiritual stand-point, I have a horror of animal milk, and that it is goat's milk I am taking does not lessen the horror. It merely enables me to respect the letter of my vow, though I know that the spirit of it is hardly kept if not already broken.<sup>48</sup> I have reconciled myself to goat's milk under the delusive belief that I must live for my work on the earth in this body and so I cling to it at the expense of my innermost conviction. He, therefore, who can wean me from milk, will be in a way a deliverer. There are spiritual experiences which I know have been interrupted because of my taking milk. When I was living rigidly on sun-baked fruits and sun-baked nuts without using fire and this was for several years - the animal passion was not merely under conscious subjection and control, but it was, so far as my memory serves me, thoroughly absent and I believe that I had almost entirely conquered it. All that has been changed since my return to milk diet. I can no longer claim that immunity. I can only say in all humility that though I am conscious of that passion, I can keep it under subjection and appear before the world a respectable human being from whose lust no woman need fear.

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<sup>48</sup> Gandhiji took a vow in 1912 not to drink milk, partly because of the cruel methods used to milk cows and buffaloes. In January 1919, when he was very ill, he was persuaded by his wife and his doctor to take goat's milk as he had in mind only the milk of cows and buffaloes when he took the vow. He was anxious since then to try to find a substitute for milk. He wrote in his autobiography:

"My intense eagerness to take up the *Satyagraha* fight had created in me a strong desire to live, and so I contented myself with adhering to the letter of my vow only, and sacrificed its spirit... The memory of this action even now rankles in my breast and fills me with remorse, and I am constantly thinking how to give up goat's milk. But I cannot yet free myself from that subtlest of temptations, the desire to serve, which still holds me." (*Autobiography*, Part IV, Chapter XXX, and Part V, Chapter XXIX.)

But it costs me all my strength to keep the brute in me under disciplined subjection and control. I am positive that a full-grown man does not need all that effort to keep his passions under check. On the contrary, the energy that is set free when the passions are kept under control can, if he wishes, be transferred into unconquerable power for the good of mankind. But somehow or other, I fancy that I shall never attain that freedom, that personal *swaraj*, so long as I have to struggle against the effect of the highly exciting unnatural food; whereas nuts are fine muscle builders without being stimulants in the sense in which I have used them. Now you can understand why I reply to your letter so promptly.

It is a great pity that you have not yet got rid of your piles. No mere dietetic change will give you relief. Medicine will be only a palliative. I am making explorations into which I must not enter now, because, I am merely on the threshold of them. I am collecting round me friends who have experimented. I shall give you a report if I see any signs of real success. It hurts me however to think that you did not have an operation for want of means. Dr. Ansari<sup>49</sup> is a first-class surgeon. I could send a note to him if you don't know him. He will, I am sure, gladly perform the operation and put you either in his own house or in some place where you will have to pay nothing. You could also have the operation performed by one of the cleverest of surgeons in India, that is, Dr. Dalal in Bombay. There are not one but more than one hospitals that I know will admit you with greatest pleasure. You may not know that Dr. Dalal operated on me, Devdas, Mrs. Jamnalaji and, last but not the least, Andrews. You have only to let me know what arrangements you would like and they shall be made. Do not hesitate please to write to me of your discoveries about the spinning-wheel and machinery. Of course I am interested in your scholastic researches, and, as a matter of fact, this enforced rest gives me just the time to read letters and to reflect upon topics in which both you and I are interested. From the length of the dictated letter you can infer that I am not badly off though I need to lie on my back as much as possible. There is no difficulty about dictating letters and even sitting up for a time to write as I did yesterday, it being my silence day.

With love to you all,

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

R. B. Gregg, Esq.  
Care of S. E. Stokes, Esq.  
Kotgarh, Simla Hills

**Letter, May 13, 1927**<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Dr. M.A. Ansari, a leading surgeon in Delhi, and a leader of the Indian National Congress

<sup>50</sup> SN 14122; *Collected Works*, Volume 33, pages 317-18

[In a letter of May 2, 1927, Mr. Gregg said he had bought a second-hand typewriter to prepare the booklet on the economics of *khadi* and that he had ordered for Gandhiji a book which gives the latest research on vitamins and their destruction from boiling. He believed that piles could be cured by diet and if that was not successful, he would avail himself of Gandhiji's offer to arrange for an operation in Bombay. He asked for detailed information as to how the "nut butter" did not agree with Gandhiji, so that he could write to an American doctor-dietician for advice. He then explained his ideas for the book on *khadi*.<sup>51</sup>]

Nandi Hills,  
May 13, 1927

My dear Govind,

I have your typed letter. Though typewritten letters are undoubtedly easier to read, I have still a weakness for handwritten letters. This however does not mean that I want you to write to me in your own hand. Your typewritten letters are quite as welcome as the handwritten ones and for the time being I have myself mostly to rely upon shorthand and the typewriter.

I have not yet got the book on vitamins. If you had given me the name of the book and the author, I would have tried to procure it in Bangalore which I am sure has very good bookshops.

I shall look forward to your manuscript on *khadi*. I won't discuss now the theory you have sketched in your letter.

Almonds I treated in two ways. I had them roasted and pounded through a nutmill into pulp and took this in the shape of butter. I had them also soaked overnight in water, the skin was removed and then it was pounded very fine, mixed with water and turned into milk. This milk was warmed and raised to boiling point and then eaten. Even this I could not digest. This was however now nearly eight or nine years ago - after the attack of dysentery. I have not dared to try the experiment again and after taking to goat's milk. But I should gladly make the experiment on my own responsibility if I had no other undertakings and should try it in spite of the other undertakings under skilled supervision.

With love to you all

Yours sincerely,

R. B. Gregg  
Kotgarh

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<sup>51</sup> SN 12574

**Letter, May 27, 1927**<sup>52</sup>

[On May 17, 1927, Mr. Gregg wrote a long letter to Maganlal Gandhi, a nephew and close associate of Gandhiji, about the need for securing greater efficiency in the All India Spinners Association, the *Ashram* etc., by improving the *charkha*, by getting competent spinners, weavers and typists through advertisements, etc.<sup>53</sup>]

Nandi Hills,  
May 27, 1927

My dear Govind,

The occasion for writing this letter is supplied by your capital letter of 17th instant to Maganlal of which he has sent me a copy.

Your suggestions are all perfect, if the premises can be accepted by us. Probably Maganlal has not even thought of what I am about to tell you; though I shouldn't be surprised if he has also thought of the same thing, for I think that he has assimilated the inwardness of the spinning movement. What I want to state is this: the movement is bound to fail if we expect to succeed by adopting the same methods, or very nearly the same methods with necessary adaptations, as the adversary, if such a term can be properly used under a plan of life which admits of no enemies. In my opinion, we have to devise other ways of making the movement a living and universal force at least so far as India is concerned. The adversary believes in the latest appliances and therefore is bound to adopt the methods of those who are adepts in using those appliances; but in the spinning movement, modern appliances are largely discarded and the few that are retained are used in a different way. Typewriters, shorthand assistance and the like are taken in our movement as a temporary measure. Immediately one goes to the villages, these become a hindrance rather than a help. If the movement has to depend upon first-class stenography, it will fail before long. For, it cannot make any headway under those conditions beyond the cities. It cannot succeed even if it has to depend upon the English language for its spread. And so you find that at the *Ashram*, in the Association office and even here we are managing with most indifferent stenography.

Even if we advertised, we shall probably not get the best stenographer, because he will know that there is room only for half a dozen stenographers in the movement, and then we shall have to pay not 100 or 125, which is the most I think that is being paid, but we should have to pay anything between 200 and 400 for getting the assistance such as you have in mind. I should quite agree with you if you argue that even that salary would be economy even if only one man has to be obtained. Experience, however, shows that it is not possible to retain the services of such a man unless you are prepared to allow him to become the master and to

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<sup>52</sup> SN 12574; *Collected Works*, Volume 33, pages 376-80

<sup>53</sup> SN 12574-A

dictate his own terms in every respect. Thus it would be useless to have an able stenographer who has no faith in the movement, who would disdain to wear *khadi* and who would require polished furniture before he will settle down to work. The spinning movement, so far as I can see, will never afford the high wages that are demanded by good men in such a line of business. Do you know that if in *khadi* service we offer high wages even to one man, there is immediately and naturally a ferment throughout the rank and file and they would all begin to compare their low wages to the high wages given even to one single man?

The proper working of the spinning movement is still being evolved. It is in a state of flux, and it will be some time before it can be said to be stabilised. It is a movement which has to grow from within. It is a movement which requires a fair measure of continuous sacrifice from those who have become accustomed to city life. The class of men and women required for the movement have got to be trained and brought up. They cannot therefore be had by advertising. The reason why we have not got efficient stenography is because no endeavour has been made to train stenographers. It is quite possible for instance to make of Chhaganlal, Mahadev, Krishnadas, Pyarelal and many others whom I can name first-class stenographers. But it was considered not worthwhile doing so. It would have been like throwing away a rupee for a pice, and so we are managing with fourth-rate stenographers hoping that if they assimilate the spirit of the movement they will distinguish themselves in the work they have undertaken by coming up to the highest level.

I have entered into this elaborate argument - very badly expressed because it is for the first time that I am reducing to writing this thought about the movement - because I am anxious that you who are saturated with the spirit of the spinning movement should understand all that is at the back of my mind and then give me the benefit of your criticism. If I have not expressed myself clearly, as I am afraid I have not, do not please hesitate to ask me for further explanation and by an interchange of a few letters, probably, I shall be able to express myself more clearly than I have done. But of course apart from what I have said above, there is much to be said for your view.

*Young India* and *Navajivan* are not all I want them to be. There are reasons for it into which however I need not enter just now. Some are avoidable and some are unavoidable. I hope to be able to cope with those that are avoidable.

I got the book on vitamins. I read it through as soon as I got it. It is a good book. But it failed to convince me. The subject of vitamins has still, so far as I can see, to be investigated. The author's statement does not appear to me to be the final word. Their ruling out all the nuts and the pulses in preference to meat foods goes against the grain and is contrary to all I have read in the vegetarian literature. If what the authors have said be the final word about them, it is a severe blow to vegetarianism. But the authors could not possibly have sufficient data about the effect of nuts and pulses to enable them to come to a just decision. Accurate



observation about the efficacy or the inefficacy of vegetable protein foods can only be made on an extensive scale in India, where alone one meets thousands of born vegetarians. Their diet and their habits have to be scientifically observed and analysed before safe deductions can be drawn; and then, too, there are so many disturbing factors. Climate, harmful customs and such like have to be taken into account before using the values of foods taken by them. I am therefore taking all the statements in that book with a great deal of caution.

The late A. F. Hills was President of the Vegetarian Society in London. He was a good man. I do not know the extent of his scientific knowledge. But he indulged in bold speculations about diet. He carried on a series of experiments himself. He wrote a number of articles on what he called "vital food." He divided foods into three or four divisions: one for those whose occupation was predominantly body-labour; another for those whose occupation was predominantly intellectual; third for those whose occupation was predominantly spiritual and the fourth for those who were not in a healthy condition. His reasoning used to appeal to me in those days. I do not know whether it would now if I read all his writings afresh. I followed also keenly the controversy going on in the medical profession in those days about food values, and I know that one army of doctors defended white bread for all they were worth, and another army suggested that white bread was the staff of death and that the brown bread alone was the staff of life. There was even a Bread Reform League with Miss Yates as its energetic Secretary. I used to come in close contact with the lady. But I learnt even then that either side was fanatical, either produced statistics and analysis of various types of bread. No one had sufficient data for its absolute conclusions. For, they could get a large number of men who would for the sake of their observations live purely on brown bread and water or white bread and water.

I remember one example that was given by a doctor. I think it was Dr. Allinson.<sup>54</sup> He said he put one of his dogs upon white bread for one month and it died; and another upon brown bread for one month and it lived. The irresistible inference was that white bread was the staff of death and brown bread was the staff of life. He did not state whether both the dogs were kept under restraint the whole of the time, nor did he state whether both the dogs started with the same stamina. Let me confess that in those days, that is nearly 40 years ago, I sided with Dr. Allinson and I swallowed his testimony about the dogs and used to eat nothing but brown bread, and in the brown bread variety also, largely Allinson's brown bread; because, the worthy doctor took care to emphasise the necessity of taking Allinson's brown bread, for that alone contained the whole wheat-meal ground to the necessary fineness. He was a good man. I read all his writings. Even in 1914, I consulted him when I was suffering from pleurisy when I constantly refused to take even milk. Probably the worthy doctor is still alive. All the same I came to discount, as experience ripened, most of the argument of the type I have mentioned.

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<sup>54</sup> Gandhiji met Dr. Allinson in 1890, and consulted him during his illness in London in 1914.

The upshot of all this is to tell you that I have not made many changes in my food beyond what I reported to you. I still take unboiled milk. I dilute it with water. The milk that comes fresh from the goats is poured over boiling water; that gives the necessary warmth to the milk and addition of water makes it lighter. I am taking yet a little bread or a little *bhakhari* made of home-ground wheat, and I am taking one green vegetable. The authors of the book say that addition of soda destroys the vitamins in the vegetables. But without soda the vegetables refuse to be soft. I have therefore decided to add soda to the vegetable. It is difficult to digest it unless it is thoroughly cooked. Uncooked green cabbage, my system rejects. You will have observed that all the four vitamins are to be found in milk. They are to be found also in the fruits I am taking and therefore I do not lose much by adding soda at the time of cooking cabbage or Indian marrow. There is no difficulty about the cooking of spinach without soda and so whenever I get spinach, soda is not added.

There is no occasion for worry about my health; for, I seem to be getting better though slowly. No food will give me personal satisfaction unless I can revert to fruits and nuts. But it seems to me that I shall have to close this earthly life without getting that personal satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,

[P.S]

Forgive me this very long letter. I did not know it was going to be so long.

**Letter, May 29, 1927<sup>55</sup>**

[The letter from Mr. Gregg, to which reference is made in this letter of Gandhiji, is not available. But Gandhiji published extracts from that letter in *Young India* of June 9, 1927.<sup>56</sup> Mr. Gregg suggested the establishment of an experimental farm using night-soil as fertiliser. He wrote:

"The whole body of sweepers in the entire area from which the collections would be made would need to be carefully organised and gradually trained into the best ways of handling the stuff.

"In a very short time, such a farm would become wonderfully productive in either grain, cattle-fodder, fruit or certain kinds of vegetables... yielding a fair profit for the further development of the scheme or the education and betterment of the whole sweeper community of the city or district."]

Nandi Hills,  
May 29, 1927

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<sup>55</sup> SN 14132; *Collected Works*, Volume 33, pages 396-98

<sup>56</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 33, pages 461-62

My dear Govind,

I have your very important letter. It crossed mine. I cannot appropriate the credit you give me for gentle criticism of your handwriting. What I wanted to say was that although I liked handwritten letters, there was no occasion for you to revert to writing your letters for my sake and that you should continue typewriting as you believe in it, and as I know it does result in economy of time. Nor do I consider your handwriting to be bad. It might be clearer. But fortunately for my friends I have my own writing as the criterion and that being so, I know very few whose writing is worse than mine, and yet because of my dislike of typewriters, if I could possibly write with my own hand, I will inflict that illegible hand in preference to having my letters typed or typing them myself. The reason underlying is this. If I have any concern for my friends, I should endeavour to write a better and more legible hand. Typewriter is a cover for indifference and laziness. Moreover I believe in the dictum - handwriting reveals the writer. Typewriting certainly results in economy of time. But whilst I admit that time is money, I do not admit that money is everything, and therefore I can conceive innumerable occasions when economy of time would be misplaced. And the inroads that the typewriter is making have all but destroyed the magnificent art of calligraphy. I wonder if you have seen old handwritten manuscripts when people used to pour forth their very soul into their work. But I must not stray away from the subject on which I want to write.

Your suggestions about selecting a few untouchable boys and making them ideal farmers does great credit to your heart. But it betrays your ignorance of the situation. Even if half-a-dozen untouchables could be trained as you suggest, that will in no way bring us nearer the solution of the problem of untouchability. To petrify on this matter - Hindu mind will immediately say, we shall touch every untouchable who qualified as these six men have. You perhaps know that there have been many and many pariah saints, but their sainthood has not saved this suppressed class. The orthodox mind again argues the pariah saint becomes so because of his past *karma* and he naturally commands our respect. When the others do likewise, they will also command the same respect. It is this immoral deduction from the theory of *karma* which has got to be combated at every step and the Hindu mind has got to be educated by fierce penance and understanding that the theory of *karma* is not intended to kill all reform and all efforts, but that it is intended for mankind to work out all evil *karma* and he who does not do so is not entitled to belong to the human species. The Hindu mind has therefore to be educated to regard intrinsically as equals the lowest, the fallen and the downtrodden and to give them a helping hand so as to make them level with the rest. And why, apart from the question of untouchability, should not the most promising young men be sent out to become accomplished farmers and try the experiment suggested by you? Surely you do not wish to imply that the touchables in their pride will not care to learn farming with a view to utilising human excreta as manure. If that is your argument, it would be wrong to expect

untouchables to handle work which others would consider as degrading. As you know at the *Ashram* we have untouchable boys. We do not even ask them to do the sanitary work. The initiative is taken by the so-called high-caste men; for, on such points the so-called untouchables would be very touchy. I am having that experience everywhere.

Underlying your suggestion, therefore, is the question not of untouchability but of improved farming methods along simple lines. But I have simply not handled this question energetically because I believe in the doctrine of one thing at a time. There is much scattered work here, so much laziness, so much blind imitation, so little concentration that it is necessary to hammer away at one very simple but fairly universal thing, and if that succeeds, the rest can follow. And agriculture is an industry which can only be improved when it receives state assistance. In an ill-governed country, I think with Thoreau that the citizen who resists the evil government must ignore property rights. And without assurance of settled ownership, it is impossible to do much in the way of agriculture. I do not want to elaborate this thing. I have said sufficient to enable you to fill in the rest. Whilst your suggestion does not seem to me to be feasible so far as the untouchables are concerned and difficult of accomplishment, even as a general scheme, the extract sent by you is valuable and I propose as soon as I find space to reproduce it in *Young India* so that those who are at all inclined in the direction might take the matter up.

I did not get the larger volume about vitamins. What I got was *Food and Health*. But that book also gives enough information about vitamins. Dr. Kellogg's writings I know. I have read his book, and if it has not been lost as many of my books have been, it must be in the *Ashram* library. However, you seem to know him personally, and I shall look forward to what he has to say. Have you put the whole case before him and asked whether he can suggest an effective vegetarian substitute for milk in the case of patients?

Yours sincerely,

R. B. Gregg, Esq.  
Kotgarh  
Simla Hills

**Letter, June 16, 1927<sup>57</sup>**

Kumara Park, Bangalore,  
June 16, 1927

My dear Govind,

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<sup>57</sup> SN 14161; *Collected Works*, Volume 34, pages 13-14

I have your letter. Of course I can agree with every word of what you have said about typewriters and typists. There is nothing inconsistent between your letter and my presentation. I simply told you why there had been seeming indifference about getting the very best typists.

But the advertisement idea does not commend itself to me. We have so many limitations that people who know us will not care to apply, and if strangers in search of employment but not knowing what we are do apply, it would be a waste of time for them and us to trouble them. I am writing this from bitter experience. But I again entirely agree with you that there is certainly within limitations scope for educated Indians to find themselves in *khadi* work. And that process is gradually going on. There is much more that I can write on this subject. But it is unnecessary to tax you on details. I was long with my previous letter because I was anxious to discuss some principles.

I am entirely at one with you that Maganlalji should have all the assistance he needs and that whatever assistance we take should be of the best type available; and if I felt that advertising in the manner you suggest would do it, I should go in for it. And, in any case, Maganlal can certainly advertise. There is no principle at stake, nor is there any question of much expense.

I know that you never implied that there was anything wrong in handling human excreta and I also know that you yourself did the thing yourself in the *Ashram*. What I told you was that the untouchables themselves would feel as I suggested. That would be wrong I know. But I simply mentioned the difficulty. They will take up the kind of work you suggest only after some of us have done, and done it successfully.

I don't know whether it was your prompting or not, but I have got a new edition of Dr. Kellogg's book on diet. It is a big volume and it is lying in front of me. It is enough to make one giddy even to contemplate reading that volume especially when I have mortgaged every available minute for the work I have on hand and which I feel I must do. I shall therefore profit more by the correspondence lessons that you are giving me out of your experience on dieting than by reading the big book.

The new shorthand idea appeals to me. And if someone at the *Ashram* will go in for it, I would not mind spending the money. You will therefore press the suggestion on the people at the *Ashram*.

With love to you all,

Yours,

R. B. Gregg, Esq.

c/o S. E. Stokes, Esq.  
Kotgarh  
Simla Hills

**Letter, August 3, 1927<sup>58</sup>**

[Mr. Gregg wrote to Gandhiji on July 20, 1927, that he had almost finished his booklet on *Khadi* and gave an outline. He said he would send a copy of the manuscript when it was typed. He accepted Gandhiji's offer to arrange an operation for the piles, but could not go down to Bombay before mid-December. He apologised for asking for the operation free of charge; he was taking no salary for teaching and had no other income.<sup>59</sup>]

Kumara Park, Bangalore,  
August 3, 1927

My dear Govind,

I have your letter. I am dictating this during my tour which I am taking in very slow stages without putting any undue strain upon my health which seems to be steadily getting better.

I shall look forward to a typed copy of your work and I shall certainly go through it and let you have my opinion on it and suggestions if there are any to make.

You certainly do not need to explain to me why you could not pay for the proposed operation. I can easily arrange for it. But why do you want to postpone it till December? Is it not better to spare yourself from Kotgarh for a fortnight or so and get the operation done now or as soon as I can get an appointment from Dr. Dalal? I shall write to him after hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, January 28, 1928<sup>60</sup>**

*Satyagraha Ashram,*  
Sabarmati,  
January 28, 1928

My dear Govind,

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<sup>58</sup> SN14208; *Collected Works*, Volume 34, page 25

<sup>59</sup> SN 12610

<sup>60</sup> SN 13056; *Collected Works*, Volume 35, page 502

I am glad you are now in Poona. I hope that your recovery will be rapid. I shall look forward to your coming here as soon as you can. I would like you to dismiss from your mind the idea that you owe anything either to the doctors or to me. After all, we are on this earth to serve one another without expectation of reward.

Please remember me to the Khambhattas, and when you write to me next tell me how Khambhatta is doing.

With love to you all,

Yours sincerely,  
*Bapu*

Richard B. Gregg, Esq.  
c/o F. P. Pocha, Esq.  
8, Napier Road  
Camp, Poona

**Letter, February 12, 1928<sup>61</sup>**

The Ashram,  
Sabarmati,  
February 12, 1928

My dear Govind,

I have your postcard. I am glad you won't have to be in Poona much longer now. I seem to be gaining ground - so the doctors think. Personally I feel I have not lost any. Of course I did lose weight, but then I did so with my eyes open. I could not conduct the difficult experiment of reverting to fruits and nuts without having to lose weight. But I am now conducting it under better auspices and with doctors watching. So this little collapse is perhaps an advantage and it has imposed upon me a rest which perhaps I needed.<sup>62</sup>

I note the correction in the date about the spinning in Sind.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, March 26, 1928<sup>63</sup>**

*Satyagraha Ashram,*

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<sup>61</sup> SN 13071; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 23

<sup>62</sup> Gandhiji fainted on February 5, 1928, while spinning, and doctors advised complete rest.

<sup>63</sup> SN 13128; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, pages 140-41

Sabarmati,  
March 26, 1928

My dear Govind,

I have your chatty letter. I am glad you were able to walk all that distance without any discomfort. I am getting well. I note what you say about the enema. The doctors who guided me in Bangalore insisted upon permanganate, but the solution is very weak. It is just rose colour that is required.

How is Ganesan getting on with your book? When is it likely to be ready?

With love to you all,

Yours sincerely,

[Mr. Gregg's book, *Economics of Khaddar*, was published by Ganesan in Madras in April.]

**Letter, June 15, 1928<sup>64</sup>**

[Mr. Gregg wrote in a letter to Gandhiji on May 28, 1928, that he had finished the book, "an introduction to science for Indian village boys and girls," and would send a copy when it was typed.<sup>65</sup>

In a letter on June 11, 1929, he informed Gandhiji that he had decided to return home to America and gave reasons for his decision. He felt he could do best service both for India and for America if he went back to his own people. He said: "Your message and work brought me here. I have learnt what I came for, and vastly more. It has given me a poise and a sense of inner peace and satisfying purpose and vision which were lacking before... Your friendship and love... has been and is very precious to me."<sup>66</sup>]

*Satyagraha Ashram,*  
Sabarmati,  
June 15, 1928

My dear Govind,

I have your letter. Your argument is convincing. And since the inner voice tells you that in pursuit of the very goal we hold in common your place just now is in America rather than in India, I can have nothing to say. I wish you every success

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<sup>64</sup> SN 13417; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 414

<sup>65</sup> SN 13394

<sup>66</sup> SN 13414



in America. And since I accept your conclusion, I do not need to say anything more.

I hope to be at the *Ashram* throughout the year, except in December. There is just a possibility of my having to go to Burma in October. But if that is so, it would be about the end of that month. You will know in good time if that is to happen. On no account should you go away without our meeting.

I am looking forward to seeing your Science Primer.

I wish I had the time to describe the momentous changes that have been made in the *Ashram*. If I find that there is time I shall describe them to you, otherwise you will see them for yourself in full working order.

I hope you are now perfectly strong and well.

Richard B. Gregg  
Kotgarh, Simla Hills

**Letter, June 27, 1928<sup>67</sup>**

[Mr. Gregg wrote to Gandhiji on 23 June that he planned to leave for America on September 1st. He sent some suggestions concerning the constitution of the *Ashram* as requested by Gandhiji and also some suggestions concerning the *khadi* workers' technical school.<sup>68</sup>]

*Satyagraha Ashram,*  
Sabarmati,  
June 27, 1928

My dear Govind,

I have your letter. I am passing on your letter to Narayandas with reference to your suggestion regarding the constitution [of the *Ashram*] and sending a copy also to Shankerlal.

Mahadev is still bedridden and will have to be so for some time. He has developed shooting pain in the part affected.

I am not likely to leave the *Ashram* at least before October, if then.

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<sup>67</sup> SN 13434; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 468

<sup>68</sup> SN 13434

Yours sincerely,

P.S. I miss an index to your great work [*Economics of Khaddar*]. I wonder if you have the time to compile it. I know I must not inflict this work on you. But unless I ask Varadachari or Mahadev, both of whom are just now overworked, I do not know to whom else I should go. Each time I turn to the book, I miss the index.

**Letter, August 14, 1928**<sup>69</sup>

[ Mr. Gregg wrote to Gandhiji on August 10, 1928, congratulating him on the victory of the struggle of Bardoli peasants.<sup>70</sup> He promised to prepare an index for *Economics of Khaddar*. He asked for advice as regards a publisher for his booklet on science. His own inclination was to send it to Macmillan with certain conditions, such as translation into Indian languages. He had learned that C.F. Andrews had left India and would visit America. He was sorry that he would miss him in America.<sup>71</sup>]

Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati,  
August 14, 1928

My dear Govind,

I have your letter. As soon as I receive the manuscript of your Science notes I shall certainly go through them and then hand them to Kaka for his opinion too.

With reference to the publication, whilst I appreciate your arguments [in favour of giving the booklet to Macmillan & Co.], somehow or other my inner being dislikes the idea. However I shall be able to judge better after I see the notes.

I hope you will not make yourself sick with overwork before you leave for America. I would like you to leave in a perfectly healthy condition.

The index and everything else can wait if you cannot easily find time for them.

I never thought that you did not know that Andrews was in England. He had the intention even whilst he was here of going to America. Of course you will meet him there. He is going there in September.

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<sup>69</sup> SN 13489; *Collected Works*, Volume 37, pages 175-76

<sup>70</sup> Farmers in Bardoli protested against an increase in land tax of more than twenty percent and asked for an impartial tribunal to consider the matter. When the Government refused, they began a no-tax campaign under the guidance of Gandhiji. The Government resorted to arrests, seizure of land and livestock, and other repressive measures, but the farmers stood firm and were supported by public opinion all over the country. The Government was obliged to compromise. On August 6, 1928, it reached an agreement releasing prisoners and restoring property. An inquiry board was appointed and it recommended that the tax increase be reduced to about six percent.

<sup>71</sup> SN 13489

Yes, Bardoli is a great lesson. It has revived faith in non-violent methods and in power of the masses.

My love to the Stokes.

Yours sincerely,

[Mr. Gregg stayed in the *Ashram* for a few days before leaving India on November 7, 1928. During this visit, he gave two lectures to the students of the technical school of the All India Spinners Association.<sup>72</sup>]

**Letter, January 18, 1929<sup>73</sup>**

[Mr. Gregg stayed for some time in Paris with his brother and his family. He arrived in New York on 18 December.

He wrote to Gandhiji from the boat and from Paris. In a letter from Paris on 8 December he said that he had met C.F. Andrews - who had stopped in Paris for a day *en route* from London to Geneva. He wrote about the failure of prohibition in America, and the continuing danger of conflict in Europe.<sup>74</sup>

In a letter on December 17, 1928, he conveyed his tentative plans.<sup>75</sup>]

*Satyagraha Ashram,*  
Sabarmati,  
January 18, 1929

I have been receiving your letters regularly. But I have not hitherto written to you as I was waiting for your reaching New York before I commenced writing. This is to tell you that the preparations are now being made to print your scientific handbook or whatever it should be called. I have not fixed upon the name by which it will be called. I am ashamed to confess to you that I have not yet finished reading the book. But the publication has been decided upon and as it has been decided upon, I am trying to finish reading it quickly.

I am now again trying my milkless experiment, confining myself to almond milk, tomatoes, some other vegetable and bread that has become the principal diet. You will therefore send me all the latest information about diet.

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<sup>72</sup> *Young India*, November 8, 1928; *Collected Works*, Volume 38, page 34

<sup>73</sup> SN 15143; *Collected Works*, Volume 38, pages 367-68

<sup>74</sup> SN 15114

<sup>75</sup> SN 14869

Mirabehn is in Bihar organising self-carding in the Bihar villages.

We have at the *Mandir* at the present moment many European guests. Two Danish sisters have been here for some days now and three friends came today, two men and one woman. Common kitchen is making steady progress.

Yours sincerely,

Richard B. Gregg, Esq.  
40 Old Orchard Road  
Chestnut Hill, Mass.

**Letter, March 9, 1929**<sup>76</sup>

[As at] *Satyagraha Ashram*, Sabarmati,  
March 9, 1929

My dear Govind,

I have been having your letters most regularly and they enable me to understand things better than I should otherwise do. It is such a nice thing that for other and sound reasons I cancelled my intended tour in Europe and America. I do not know that I could have done better even in Europe though the latest from Andrews says that America would have been a misfire and it would have been well if I had gone to Europe. However, I know that it was the wisest thing for me to have cancelled the Western visit. So many things, I fancy, need my presence here. It would be very good if you can find time to abbreviate Krishna Das's book and get MacMillan & Co. to publish your abbreviation.<sup>77</sup>

I am just now in Burma, the place that has a great fascination for me. Its people are so simple, so generous, and yet so basely exploited. It is a great pity they do not effectively resent their exploitation.

*Bapu*

[Mr. Gregg wrote from Virginia to Gandhiji on March 30, 1929. He reported on his activities teaching spinning and carding to high school students in Western Tennessee, about vegetable milk prepared from soya beans, etc. He explained

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<sup>76</sup> GN 4661; *Collected Works*, Volume 40, page 108

<sup>77</sup> *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi: being an inside view of the Indian non-cooperation movement of 1921-22* by Krishnadas (pseudonym of Charuchandra Guha) was published in Madras by Ganesan in 1928. Another edition, abridged and edited by Mr. Gregg, was published by Navajivan Publishing House in Ahmedabad in 1951.

why the prohibition law in the United States had not brought out the desired results.<sup>78]</sup>

**Letter, July 4, 1929<sup>79</sup>**

My dear Govind,

I have not been as regular in writing to you as you have been. *Young India* gives the reason. You are never absent from my thoughts.

I knew of your marriage long before your letter. Andrews wrote a line about it. You give me a beautiful description about it all. I wish you and yours a long and happy life of service. It would be a joy to welcome you, Mrs. Gregg at the *Ashram*. Of course she must see all your Indian associates and Indian haunts.

I did get that book on food. It did not create much impression on me. You must have seen in *Young India* all about my latest experiment.<sup>80</sup> It still continues. But I am unable to report any decisive result yet.

We have just descended from the Almora hills. I combined business with recreation in the coolness of the Himalayan hills. We had a glorious view of the snowy range. It was a dazzling snow-capped amphitheatre in front of us whenever the sky was clear.

I hope you are keeping perfect health now.

With love to you both,

Yours,  
*Bapu*

[Mr. Gregg continued to write frequently about the progress of work on his book on *ahimsa*, his dietary experiments, his efforts to get India and Gandhiji better understood in America, etc. He mailed a copy of his manuscript on *ahimsa* on December 24, 1929.<sup>81</sup> He and his wife visited Gandhiji in March-April 1930.]

**Letter, August 24, 1930**

Y.M. [Yeravda *Mandir*]  
24-8-30

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<sup>78</sup> SN 16257

<sup>79</sup> GN 4664; *Collected Works*, Volume 41, pages 162-63

<sup>80</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 41, pages 34-36

<sup>81</sup> SN 16203, 16263, 16263-A, 16266, 16267, 16268, 16271, 16281

My dear Govind and Radha,

This is just to acknowledge your letter and to tell you that both of you are ever in my thoughts. Kaka Saheb is with me. Both of us are well.

Love from us both.

Yours  
*Bapu*

[Gandhiji sent the above letter from prison, which he called Yeravda *Mandir* (temple). Mr. Gregg cabled Gandhiji on January 29, 1931, after his release from prison, conveying his love.<sup>82</sup>]

**Letter, April 29, 1931**<sup>83</sup>

[As at] Sabarmati,  
April 29, 1931

My dear Govind,

I have your letter and I read your letter to Mira. I quite understand and appreciate all the anxiety shown by you in your letter to her. I do not know that I shall be going to London at all and I shall certainly not go if the way is not clear for me to deliver my message. That it is not likely to be accepted just now I have realised all along. But had the Congress not accepted the offer to discuss terms, the Congress would have put itself in the wrong. As it is we are safe either way. It will be great, good and grand if peace can be made permanent through negotiation. I shall therefore leave no stone unturned to reach that state but it will be equally good and grand if the negotiations proved fruitless. Then India will be put upon her mettle and will have to show her capacity for further suffering. There is no question of my being invited to parties, feted and lionised. I can eat nothing and thank God my loin-cloth will protect me from being exhibited as a specimen in Barnum's show. If therefore I go to London I go for solid business and to drink in the deep affection of chosen friends there. I refuse to speculate. I would go where the light leads me in the fullest faith that all will be well if I follow it.

Do not believe the rumours about my intended visit to America. Much as I should like to visit that great country I know that my time is not yet and I do not want to come as a nine days' wonder.

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<sup>82</sup> SN 16915

<sup>83</sup> GN 4663 and SN 17023; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, pages 52-53

Love to you and Radha.

Yours sincerely,  
*Bapu*

R. B. GREGG, Esq.  
543 Boylston St.  
Boston, Massachusetts

[Mr. Gregg wrote to Pyarelal, secretary to Gandhiji, on July 5, 1931, that what India did during the past year and a half made him realise more fully than before the immense possibility of *satyagraha*. He felt that the spirit of discipline that the Congress and young people showed during the trying period of the truce was praiseworthy. He informed Pyarelal that he had written a number of articles for American journals and spoken on several occasions about the situation in India.<sup>84</sup>]

**Letter, September 29, 1931<sup>85</sup>**

[Mr. Gregg wrote to Gandhiji on July 27, 1931:

"...recently I have wondered whether, after India gets her freedom it might not be a great relief to the peasantry to let them pay their taxes in the form of a percentage of their crops, as was done centuries ago."

He said he had recently spoken to his friend, Professor Harold J. Laski, who had taught at Harvard College. He was now Mr. Justice Sankey's chief secretarial assistant at the first Round Table Conference. Apparently Professor Laski had hypnotised himself into thinking that the financial safeguards there proposed would work out to be entirely in Indian control.

"And now that the Government have put Malaviyaji upon the list of delegates, I think the British Government believe that Malaviyaji has more influence with you than any other Indian who is pliable to them, and so they will work on you through Irwin on one side and Malaviyaji on the other... Those two men, as men, may be wholly sincere but I do not think they know the falsities and horrors of the system they are trying to preserve..."<sup>86</sup>]

88 Knightsbridge,  
London, W.1,

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<sup>84</sup> SN 17314

<sup>85</sup> GN 4665; also SN 17876; *Collected Works*, Volume 48, pages 90-91

<sup>86</sup> SN 17394

September 29, 1931

My dear Govind,

I have your letter of the 27th July last. Of course if I could persuade India to revert to methods of barter, it would be a capital thing, but I do not think I would get any response just now. There are, however, many things possible in that direction and these are being tried.

As I am dictating this letter against time, I am not going into details.

You see I am dictating this in London. I came because I felt that it was a clear call from God, and if I could describe to you in detail how I was led to London, even you would be surprised - how it all happened when it seemed to have utterly broken down. I was packing to go away to the *Ashram* and I packed inside of half-an-hour to entrain by the Special taking me to the ship that brought me here.

You will like to know that I have already seen Prof. Laski; I am in close touch with him.

Don't think that Malaviyaji and Mrs. Naidu have come here over the heads of the Congress. They have come because they have an independent status and they have come with the consent of the Congress. The Congress could have put them on the Deputation, but the decision to make me sole agent of the Congress was arrived at after the fullest consideration and there were so many reasons for that decision that on no account could it be changed.

I have no time to give you an account of the doings here. Most of what is happening you get through the newspapers; the rest you will get from Mahadev or Pyarelal, or Devdas or Mira if she gets the time.

With love to you all,

Yours affectionately,  
*Bapu*

[On October 3, 1931, Mr. Gregg wrote to Gandhiji about British maneuvering with America and France. He conveyed his opinion that the spinning wheel cannot satisfy the requirements of people in the United States.<sup>87</sup>

He wrote on October 16, 1931, urging Gandhiji not to visit America.<sup>88</sup> He sent a telegram on 18 October advising against the visit to America.<sup>89</sup> He wrote another long letter on October 19 giving reasons for his advice.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> SN 17958

<sup>88</sup> SN 18111

<sup>89</sup> SN 18132



Gandhiji wrote him a letter on January 19, 1933. (That is not available).]

**Letter, March 24, 1933<sup>91</sup>**

[Mr. Gregg wrote to Gandhiji on February 14, 1933, that he was able to give up eye glasses several years earlier, after doing exercises prescribed in a book by Dr. William H. Bates. Several of his friends with defective eye sights and his wife had benefitted from the exercises. He said he was sending Gandhiji a simpler book - *Keener Vision without Glasses* by Benjamin Gayelord Hauser, a disciple of Dr. Bates.<sup>92</sup>]

My dear Govind,

I have your letter and I had the book also. I am at the book now. I do want to give a trial to the method, and I would rejoice if I can throw away the spectacles I have used for years. Kakasaheb is here. He never gave the method a real trial, but he may do so now.

I hope you are regularly getting your copy of the *Harijan*. I want you and Radha to read it critically and give me your suggestions.

Yours sincerely,

Sjt. Govind  
543 Boylston St.  
Boston, Mass.

[Mr. Gregg sent a telegram to Gandhiji on May 2, 1933, when Gandhiji had decided to undertake a 21-day fast, conveying his love.]

**Letter, May 17, 1935<sup>93</sup>**

Wardha,  
May 17, 1935

My dear Govind,

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<sup>90</sup> SN 18136

<sup>91</sup> SN 20699; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 178

<sup>92</sup> SN 20247

<sup>93</sup> GN 4666; *Collected Works*, Volume 61, pages 69-70

Of course I know that absence of letters does not mean decrease of love. I know what you are doing to spread the gospel of love. It must tax your energy to the full.

If America will take to an equivalent of *khadi*, it will be a great thing.

Andrews, Pierre Ceresole and Joe Wilkinson, the former's companion, are here just now. Andrews will be in India for some [months]<sup>94</sup> with the Poet [Rabindranath Tagore]. Ceresole leaves for Europe on 23rd.

The Village Industries work is going on.

H. L. Sharma is a nature-cure man. He wants to go to Battle Creek to perfect his knowledge. He wants to use it for purely humanitarian purposes. I am getting a scholarship for him.

If he can earn his board and lodging by part-time work it will be a good thing. Have you any suggestion for him?

Love to you and Radha.

*Bapu*

**Letter, June 8, 1940<sup>95</sup>**

[Mr. Gregg informed Gandhiji, in a letter of April 16, 1940, that he was working on a book on discipline for non-violence and non-violent persuasion and coercion. He sent some suggestions for a possible experiment to prevent mosquitoes from laying eggs in village tanks and wells.]

Sevagram, Wardha,  
June 8, 1940

My dear Govind,

Yours of 16th April. It is also going into *Harijan* with the paragraph cut out as you wanted.<sup>96</sup>

The letter is good. But all depends upon what we can do here.

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<sup>94</sup> The word is very faint in the source.

<sup>95</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 72, page 155

<sup>96</sup> "Non-violence and Khadi" in *Harijan*, June 22, 1940; *Collected Works*, Volume 72, pages 153-54

Though you are doing good work where you are, I expect you and Radha to turn up here one of these days.

Meanwhile my love to you and Radha.

*Bapu*

Richard B. Gregg, Esq.  
Eliat Saint  
South Natick, Mass.

[Mr. Gregg's pamphlet, *A Discipline for Non-violence*, was published by Navajivan Publishing House in 1941, with a foreword by Gandhiji.<sup>97</sup>]

**Letter, January 20, 1945<sup>98</sup>**

Sevagram,  
January 20, 1945

My dear Gregg,

Your letter makes me glad and sad. Glad because of your faith and enthusiasm and sad because of Radha's illness which you say is beyond recall. I am hoping that in this at least you will prove wrong. Nevertheless you and I can say, "His will not ours be done." I believe also that what passes for misfortune is not always really so. Of these things, in spite of scientific advance, we know so little.

When your revised book<sup>99</sup> comes, of course if I do not read it Pyarelal or others will and I shall know.

Love to you both.

*Bapu*

**Letter, April 13, 1947<sup>100</sup>**

On way to Patna, [on] train,  
April 13, 1947

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<sup>97</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 72, pages 153-54

<sup>98</sup> GN 6760; *Collected Works*, Volume 79, page 47

<sup>99</sup> *Economics of Khaddar*. The second edition of the book came out in December 1946.

<sup>100</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 87, page 274

My dear Gregg,

I have your letter. I see that for you there is no bed of roses. It is all thorns. I suppose if we read aright the lesson that a "bed of roses" teaches us, we should do well, for there will be no discontent nor quarrel with anybody. I wish that when this letter reaches you Radha will have made complete recovery. Of course you are coming back to India as soon as both of you are in a position to do so.

Here things are in the melting-pot. Brother is fighting brother when the English protest that they are withdrawing from India in fourteen months' time. I am straining every nerve to prevent this wanton bloodshed. Behind this waste of blood there are unmistakable signs of a sincere desire for peace. The result of this fight between God and Satan is a certainty. Let us all stake everything for the certainty.

Love to both

*Bapu*

[In June 1947, Gandhiji published a letter he received from Mr. Gregg and his comments. It concerned a report that Gandhiji had given up hope of living for 125 years as there was no place for him in India because of the deluge of violence. Gandhiji said that the press report tore the sentences out of their context.<sup>101</sup>]

**Letter, November 11, 1947<sup>102</sup>**

[Mr. Gregg wrote to Gandhiji about a psychological explanation of communal violence in India. The violence was probably not so much because of inter-communal suspicion and hatred as of long pent-up resentments of the masses against their oppression. If the masses could be guided back into their ancient ways of life with the chief emphasis on religion and small organisations such as the *panchayats*, their energy would be turned from violence to peace. Gandhiji published this letter with his comments. He wrote:

"There was no real appreciation of non-violence in the thirty years' struggle against British Raj. Therefore, the peace the masses maintained during that struggle of a generation with exemplary patience, had not come from within. The pent-up fury found an outlet when British Raj was gone. It naturally vented itself in communal violence which was never fully absent and which was kept under suppression by the British bayonet... Failure of my technique of non-violence causes no loss of faith

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<sup>101</sup> *Harijan*, June 29, 1947; *Collected Works*, Volume 88, pages 187-89

<sup>102</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 90, pages 3-4

in non-violence itself. On the contrary, that faith is, if possible, strengthened by the discovery of a possible flaw in the technique."<sup>103]</sup>

November 11, 1947

My dear Govind,

I have your lovely letter which I am reproducing in the columns of *Harijan* with such remarks as occur to me. If I finish my note on it in time, a copy will accompany this letter.

I am glad Radha is "slowly but steadily" improving through vegetarian dietetics. If she recovers completely, I would like you to write out your experience of this experiment for the sake of the general reader of *Harijan*.

By the way, has vegetarianism a real foothold in America or is it merely a fad of cranks like you and me? Have the dietetic reformers found anything which can be described as a complete substitute for milk? I must confess that I have failed miserably in that direction and, in the absence of the discovery of complete substitute, I have come to the conclusion that some form of animal fat and animal protein is necessary for human sustenance in health.

You have yourself written 'Radhabehn' instead of mere 'Radha.' According to Indian custom, between friends 'Radhabehn' is mere 'Radha.' The omission of the suffix *behn*, meaning sister, is a mark of great endearment and intimacy. If you were writing to a casual acquaintance or an utter stranger, then you will naturally mention 'Radha' by her full name 'Radhabehn.' Therefore, I dare not call you 'Govindbhai' and 'Radha' as 'Radhabehn.' *Bhai* means brother, but when *behn* and *bhai* are used as suffixes to a name, they have merely an honorific value.

How are you getting on yourself? Have you lost all the physical weakness which you had developed here? Also tell me, when you write, what you are doing for earning. Or, are you living on past savings when you were practising as a lawyer?

Love to both of you.

*Bapu*

Richard B. Gregg, Esq.  
Fuller Memorial Sanatorium  
South Attleboro, MASS.

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<sup>103</sup> *Harijan*, November 23, 1947; *Collected Works*, Volume 90, pages 1-3

## COOK, NILLA CRAM

[One of the American inmates of Gandhiji's *Ashram* was Nilla Cram Cook (1908?-1982). Her father, George Cram Cook (1873-1924), a playwright, theatre director, linguist and poet, was one of the founders of the Provincetown Players, a prominent experimental theatre group. Her mother, Mollie, was a dancer. Her parents were divorced while she was four and she commuted between her mother on the west coast of the United States and her father on the east coast. She developed an interest in dance and theatre, and in Hinduism, like her father, and studied Sanskrit.

When she was fourteen she went with her father to Greece and was involved in his revival of the Delphic festival, but he passed away in Greece in January 1924. She went to Greece again for the festival in May 1927 and, at the age of eighteen, married Nikos Proestopoulos, a Greek poet who was to become Minister of Education from 1927 to 1932.<sup>104</sup> They had a son, Sirios. In June 1932, she left her husband and went with her four-year-old child to Kashmir where she managed to persuade the priests of the *Sanatana Dharma Sabha* to convert her to Hinduism under the name Nila Nagini (Blue Serpent Goddess). She then spent a winter in Mount Abu as a disciple of Shanti Vijaya, a Jain monk.

After some travel around India, she settled in Bangalore and associated with a group of university students in social and cultural activities. By this time, she had squandered her inheritance, led a Bohemian life and got heavily into debt in India and abroad.

The problem of the eradication of untouchability became a major issue in India in 1932. The British Government announced the "Communal Award" under which the "untouchables" would have separate electorates, despite the warning by Gandhiji that he would resist such a measure as it would divide the Hindus and result in a "perpetual bar sinister" against the untouchables. Gandhiji, who was in jail, began a "fast unto death" on September 20, 1932. He ended the fast six days later when Indian leaders agreed on a number of measures in favour of untouchables and the Award was withdrawn. He began an anti-untouchability campaign, pressing for the admission of untouchables, whom he called "*Harijans*", to all temples and promoting programmes for their advancement. The government allowed him to undertake this work while in jail. A *Harijan Sevak Sangh* (Servants of Untouchables Society) was formed by his followers for this work.

Nagini - she will be referred to here by this name which she used in India -

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<sup>104</sup> *New York Times*, August 31, 1927

together with her group of students, picketed temples which excluded untouchables and organised the cleaning of streets and sewers in Bangalore by upper caste youth, as part of the campaign to help eradicate untouchability. She thereby came to the attention of Gandhiji. She wrote to Gandhiji about her work and, at his invitation, went to see him in prison.

Gandhiji questioned her about reports which had reached him and found that she had "led for years an utterly immoral and extravagant life and has been an utter stranger to truth." She promised to make a public confession and lead a truthful, chaste life - and to that end "retire from all public activity and live a beggar's life in *Harijan* quarters in the poorest possible style, living on charity, unknown to the world."<sup>105</sup>

Gandhiji wrote to her friends to enquire about their relations with her and to persuade them not to interfere with her efforts at purification. He also wrote to Shanti Vijaya who encouraged him to guide Nagini.

She returned to Bangalore and then moved with her son to Chitaldrug where she lived in poverty and wished to undertake sanitation work and other programmes. Going into extremes in penance, she became ill and could not do any constructive work. Gandhiji then asked her to leave Chitaldrug and arranged for her to stay in the *Satyagrahashram* in Ahmedabad.

Gandhiji published her confession and wrote in *Harijan* on May 6, 1933:

"She removed to *Harijan* quarters in Bangalore and, coming under the spell of a vicious man, fell again. She then went to a *Harijan* village near Chitaldrug. She was neglected by the person who took her there. She very nearly collapsed. During this period she was keeping up regular correspondence with me. She saw that it was impossible to serve *Harijans* or to hold herself together without proper guidance. I felt that it was my clear duty to work out the logical extent of the advice I had given and that, if she was to live the life of service to the lowliest, she must go to the *Ashram*, where she had dreamt of going long ago... It is difficult to believe that all her terrible past is dead for ever. But sudden changes have happened in men's lives before. Let us hope that Nagini Devi's will prove to be one more such case."

Gandhiji stressed that *Harijan* work "demands the highest purity and the greatest simplicity on the part of the workers."<sup>106</sup> He undertook a 21-day fast on 8 May as a heart-prayer for the purification of himself and his associates in the *Harijan* cause, including Nagini.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Letter of March 7, 1933, to K. Ramachandra, SN 20481; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 7

<sup>106</sup> *Harijan*, May 6, 1933; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, pages 122-24

<sup>107</sup> *Harijan*, May 6, 1933; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, page 75

Both from Chitaldrug and from the *Ashram*, Nagini wrote to Gandhiji frequently and in detail about her daily activities and problems, and sought his advice on various matters. He tried to guide her through letters and this resulted in extensive correspondence.

Gandhiji believed that Nagini had "great capacity for sacrifice and service"<sup>108</sup> and gave her much attention. But there was little personal contact between them as Gandhiji was in prison until 8 May and again from 31 July to 23 August. He could visit the *Satyagrahashram* only in July when he decided to close it and move the inmates to an *ashram* in Wardha.

Nagini soon lost interest in the pretence of a penitent sinner. She left the Wardha *Ashram* on October 7, 1933, without informing Gandhiji or other inmates, and returned to her former way of life. She and her son were repatriated to the United States in February 1934.

After she left India, she wrote in an article in 1936 that while she ceased to be an ascetic, some of the teachings of Gandhiji had become part of her life. In 1939, she published memoirs of her visit to India.<sup>109</sup>

Her correspondence with Gandhiji and these subsequent writings show that she was talented and creative, but impulsive, unstable and melodramatic. There are many contradictions between her letters and the memoirs she published after return to the United States. Reports about her in the American press are unreliable.

She went to Europe as a correspondent in 1939 and served as a cultural attaché in the American embassy in Teheran from 1941 to 1947. During that time she was also director-general of arts in the Iranian Ministry of Education. She was reported to have formed the first modern opera and ballet company in Iran. She was also reported to have prepared a translation of the Koran.<sup>110</sup>

She visited India again in the 1950s to study Kashmiri poetry and met Mira Behn and other associates of Gandhiji. Mira Behn wrote in her memoirs:

"... there was Nilla, the sprite who had danced in and out of Wardha *Ashram* years ago... Much of her time had been spent in the Middle East, and never had she forgotten *Bapu's* wish that she should work through her art for better and broader understanding between the various world religions and cultures. Just at present, she said, she was devoting herself to translations of Kashmir poetry in which there was a unique blending of Hindu and Moslem thought and mysticism. I began to realise more fully

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<sup>108</sup> Letter to K. Ramaswami, March 18, 1933, SN 20624; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 122

<sup>109</sup> Nilla Cram Cook, "What Religion Means to Me" in *Forum and Century*, New York, October 1936

<sup>110</sup> Nilla Cram Cook, *My Road to India*. New York: Lee Fuhrman, Inc., 1939



now the qualities that *Bapu* had realised so long ago."<sup>111</sup>

Her translations of Kashmiri poems were published in India in 1958.<sup>112</sup> *Garhwali Folk Songs*, translated by her in collaboration with J. P. Uniyal, was published by Garhwal Sahitya Kala Samaj, New Delhi, in 1975.

She died in Austria in 1982.<sup>113]</sup>

### **Letter, January 18, 1933**<sup>114</sup>

[In her first letter to Gandhiji - which she sent on November 18, 1932, through K. Ramachandra, joint secretary of the *Harijan Sevak Sangh* (Anti-Untouchability League) of Mysore State - Nagini informed him that she was prevented from entering the Chamundi temple in Mysore though she had converted to Hinduism, and asked for his advice as to what she should do.<sup>115</sup>

Gandhiji had announced a few days earlier that he would undertake a fast from 2 January if the Guruvayur temple was not opened to *Harijans*. Nagini informed him that she would join in the fast. Gandhiji strongly advised her against a fast, and enquired about her life.

In her reply of 25 November, she said that she had decided, when she was fourteen, to go to India and accept the discipline of Gandhiji's *Ashram*. She learned to spin and weave, and studied the *Upanishads*. The Civil Disobedience Movement, led by Gandhiji in 1930, had a great effect on her. She learned the lesson of non-violence and fasted for 90 days. She was reborn and identified herself with India's rebirth.<sup>116</sup>

She continued with a series of letters about her philosophy and thoughts, and her search for truth. She wrote of *Rajas*, *Tamas* and *Satva* working within her, and of her fighting *Mahabharata* within herself, between truth and untruth.

In January, she started anti-untouchability work in Bangalore, especially cleaning of streets and sewers, with the help of students, including some high caste volunteers.

"... I am cleaning the drains in the slums of Bangalore in an ecstasy and

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<sup>111</sup> *New York Times*, March 12, 1945 and obituary in *ibid.*, October 13, 1982. The translation was apparently never published.

<sup>112</sup> Mira Behn (Madeleine Slade), *The Spirit's Pilgrimage*, (London: Longmans, 1960), page 309

<sup>113</sup> Nilla Cram Cook, *The Way of the Swan: Poems of Kashmir*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1958.

<sup>114</sup> See also: Martin Green, *Gandhi: Voice of a New Age Revolution*, (New York: Continuum, 1993), pages 329-35

<sup>115</sup> SN 18966; *Collected Works*, Volume 53, pages 84-85

<sup>116</sup> SN 19999

joy no other play or work has ever given me. My co-workers every night say they have spent the happiest days of their lives. The flower of the Brahmin youth are joining us.

"... street-cleaning is becoming the fashionable thing and this means the end of untouchability."

She informed Gandhiji of the ambitious plans she had. She was prepared to give her life for the children of the slums. She would stay in Bangalore until the programme was well established and return after attending the proposed World Parliament of Religions in Chicago later that year.

She said that while the campaign was welcomed by a majority of people, there were some mud-slingers. The editor of a local paper had written that the city does not need cleaning up by foreigners and added: "If such a movement were started by Mahatma Gandhi it would be quite another thing." She requested Gandhiji for a few words to the volunteers which she would arrange to be published.<sup>117</sup>

Gandhiji hoped that she would become "an excellent member of the army of *Harijan* servants."<sup>118</sup>]

Yeravda Central Prison,  
18th January, 1933

My dear Nagini,

I have your two interesting and instructive letters. It is very great work you are doing, and if the young men who have responded to your call remain steadfast and do not give in after the first flush of enthusiasm is exhausted, the street-cleaning you are doing must prove infectious and it would be a great advance towards the removal of untouchability. I am therefore surprised that anybody should cavil at the work itself or take exception to the fact that you, who have become an Indian by adoption and by right of love, should have taken the lead, and if anybody thinks that I would not have advised such work if I was out, he is wholly mistaken. I have personally undertaken such work before now, both publicly and privately, and the cleaning of *Harijan* quarters that was done all over India on the 18th ultimo was due to the suggestion made by me and heartily taken up by the Servants of Untouchables Society.<sup>119</sup> You are at liberty to make public

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<sup>117</sup> Seven letters from her before January 18, 1933, are available in the archives of Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya: SN 19999, November 18, 1932; SN 20006, November 25, 1932; SN 20009, December 3, 1932; SN 20010, December 11, 1932; SN 20013, December 23, 1932; SN 19992, January 6, 1932; and SN 20045, January 14, 1933.

<sup>118</sup> Gandhiji's letter of March 9, 1933, to Sir Mirza Ismail, SN 20502; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, pages 27-28

<sup>119</sup> Anti-Untouchability Day was observed all over India on December 18, 1932, on the suggestion of Gandhiji and was organised by the *Harijan Sevak Sangh* (Servants of Untouchables Society).

use of this letter.

I did think from the language of your previous letter that you had fasted all the days that I was fasting. I am glad therefore of the correction you have made.

As you know, I am deeply interested in the question of scientific or (which is the same thing) hygienic and spiritual dietary. Tell me therefore more about your diet. Give me the actual things you take and the quantities, and how far you have been on this diet. As you seem to have read practically everything I have ever written, perhaps you are aware that I have lived on fruits and nuts for over six years, that I have gone without milk for over nine years, and it has been the most disappointing thing for me to have been obliged to take even goat's milk. I know of no one of my acquaintance who has been able to do hard physical work as also hard mental work, as you seem to be doing, merely on fruits and vegetables; that means, no protein, no starch and no fat of any kind. The two letters before me whet my appetite for seeing you face to face and understanding you more than I do. I confess that I am very stupid and I don't and I can't understand people merely through their correspondence. To know them I need to look at them and talk to them, and you have written so much to me about yourself that I do want to know you if I can. But at the same time I don't want you to come here at the sacrifice of the great work you are doing there. You should come only when you can be spared for a few days from your work.

Yours sincerely,

### **Letter, February 12, 1933**<sup>120</sup>

[Nagini sent a letter to Gandhiji on 9 February through Devaka Singh of Allahabad whom she described as "one of the most devoted *Satya Vijayists*." He broke his journey in Poona, on his way to Allahabad, to see Gandhiji and inform him about the work in Bangalore. Nagini said that the street-cleaning work was going ahead and more volunteers were coming forward. Physical culture classes for children in the slums were progressing, and spinning had become infectious. A women's club had been started. All these activities were related. In this letter she addressed Gandhiji as "my revered son."<sup>121</sup>

Soon after he received this letter, Gandhiji was warned by a friend who had just returned from Mysore that his letters were being exploited and that Nagini Devi was a mere adventuress of doubtful character. He became concerned that the *Harijan* work was in danger by her association, if the report was true.<sup>122</sup> He wrote the following urgent letter to Nagini asking her to see him. According to Nagini,

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<sup>120</sup> SN 20041; *Collected Works*, Volume 53, pages 279-80

<sup>121</sup> SN 20186

<sup>122</sup> *Harijan*, May 6, 1933; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, pages 122-24

this was the seventh letter she had received from Gandhiji.<sup>123</sup> The other five letters are not available.]

Yeravda Central Prison,  
February 12, 1933

Dear Nagini,

Kumar Diwakar Singh whom you call Devula gave me your note.

Your way of addressing me as your son is very strange. I lost my mother years ago. I am fast making daughters and sisters. But mother I have not found. Age is no bar. If you can inspire me with mother-worship towards you nothing would please me better. But let me say that your letter before me has filled me with misgivings. It smells of the hysteric. Your judgment of the friend whom you have sent is not confirmed by my talks with him. He seems to me to be a youth of unbalanced mind. He is not likely to do much in Allahabad.

But more serious still is the attack upon your character that came to me yesterday from an unexpected source. The friend who gave me the warning is a man of great worth and has no end to serve by misleading me. He simply warns me against my playing into your hands; of course the friend has no first-hand information.

But it is against my nature to keep such reports from those of whom I have them and in whose welfare I may be interested as I am in yours. Your first letters prepossessed me in your favour and I thought that I could use you for the common service of Truth. The report coupled with your latest letter have created a doubt in my mind. I should hope that it has no solid foundation.

If you have any care for my opinion, you will lay aside all work and without trumpet come to Poona, leave your luggage at the station and come to me any day after 9 a.m. and let me see you face to face and ask you some straight questions.

Yours sincerely,

[Nagini went to Poona and saw Gandhiji in prison on 21 February. She stayed in Poona until 4 March. She told Gandhiji that Sir Mirza Ismail, the *Dewan* (Chief Minister) of Mysore and K. Ramachandra, a former inmate of Gandhiji's *Ashram* who was then Joint Secretary of the Mysore Board of *Harijan Sevak Sangh*, knew her. Gandhiji wrote to them on 24 February for information about her and her work.<sup>124</sup> He also wrote to Muni Shanti Vijaya in Abu, her *Guru*.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Nilla Cram Cook, *My Road to India*, page 336

<sup>124</sup> SN 26353, 26354 and 26440; *Collected Works*, Volume 53, pages 389, 396, 448

But soon after, Nagini made a confession to him. Gandhiji wrote in *Harijan*, May 6, 1933:

"She came promptly in answer to my letter. Her behaviour was strange as she came in. I straightaway told her what I had heard about her character. She repudiated all the charges. I thought there was an end to the matter and began to inquire more about her work. But as the conversations grew, my suspicion was roused and I frankly told her about it. That led to most painful revelations one after another. Her life was one of lewdness, untruth and extravagance. The lewdness did not seem to repel her. She was brought up in a Bohemian family, where the very name Jesus was taboo... She seemed now to realise the amazing contradictions of her life. I put it to her that she was doing an irreparable damage to the faith of her adoption, injuring the *Harijan* cause and corrupting the morals of the youths who had gathered round her. I believe that she saw the force of what I urged. She decided at once to break with the past, run the risk of being prosecuted by her creditors and to live among *Harijans* for their service and bring up her boy for the same work."

She promised to make a public confession, give up the boarding house and governess, and let her son share her penitent life.<sup>126</sup>

While in Poona, she wrote an article on "Scientific Scavenging" at the suggestion of Gandhiji and it was published in *Harijan* on March 25, 1933, and credited to "One Who Knows."]

### **Letter, March 9, 1933**<sup>127</sup>

[Nagini left for Bangalore on 4 March. Before her departure from Poona, she sent a note to Gandhiji that she had refused a money order of 25 rupees sent by a professor in Bangalore in accordance with his advice not to accept anything from those with whom she had some crooked dealings. She signed the note "Your son."<sup>128</sup>

She wrote on 8 March from Bangalore detailing what she had done on return from Poona in pursuance of her promise. She had informed her friends of her new course, burnt all her papers and moved to a temple in the *Harijan* quarters in Bangalore Cantonment. She sent a confession to local papers but that was not

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<sup>125</sup> SN 20450

<sup>126</sup> See also Gandhiji's letter of March 7, 1933 to Ramachandra, SN 20481; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 7. Also his letter of 9 March to Sir Mirza Ismail, SN 20502; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, pages 27-28.

<sup>127</sup> SN 20504; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, pages 26-27

<sup>128</sup> SN 20449

published.<sup>129</sup> Gandhiji sent the following letter to her, through Ramachandra, before he received the letter from Nagini.]

Yeravda Central Prison,  
9th March, 1933.

My dear Nagini,

I had hoped to hear from you today. I had your note scribbled on the back of the telegram that was received by you. You were right in refusing the Rs. 25. I did not like the subscription to your note. "Your son" looks unnatural and theatrical. If the truth has really dawned on you, you must realise the enormity of the past wrong and you ought to shed all hysteria and unnaturalness. You can only become my daughter if you would be good as you have promised to me.

I had letters from Shanti Vijayaji and Sir Mirza. I am therefore writing to Sir Mirza a letter giving him the purport of your confession and your promise, naturally withholding the names you have given me and I am sending a similar letter to Shanti Vijayaji. That is right, is it not? Shanti Vijayaji adds in his letter that he would be delighted if you came under my guidance and I utilised your services.

May God bless you and give you strength to keep your promise.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, March 13, 1933<sup>130</sup>**

Yeravda Central Prison,  
13th March, 1933.

My dear Nagini,

I dictate this letter to save time, and you have nothing to hide from anybody.

I was glad to have your letter though later than I had expected. I wrote to you the other day a letter care of Ramachandra, and I am sending this also under his care till you advise me to the contrary.

I am glad you have moved to *Harijan* quarters and that you were able to fix up everything with the landlady. You should give me your detailed programme from day to day. Avoid all conversation save such as may be absolutely necessary, and you should interest Sirios also in all acts of service. That will be the truest

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<sup>129</sup> SN 20491

<sup>130</sup> SN 20571; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, pages 78-79

education for him if you will let him understand what he is doing and why. You will also naturally give him such literary education that you are capable of giving.

Tell me what food you are getting and how and what arrangements are there for bathing, washing clothes, etc., and whether you are doing the washing yourself. I want you to get cent per cent marks in the test you have put yourself to. We often talk of you and think of you. My prayers are ever with you.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, March 17, 1933**<sup>131</sup>

[Nagini was not allowed by the British military authorities of the Cantonment to stay in the temple and she moved to a *Harijan* village at the edge of Bangalore.

In a letter on 14 March, Nagini informed Gandhiji that she had found a spiritual companion in P.S. Rudramuni, a *Harijan* studying for priesthood, and wished to follow him in his work for his people. He was acting as master of her house.<sup>132</sup>]

Yeravda Central Prison,  
17th March, 1933.

My dear Nagini,

I have your letter. I had intended to write this letter in my own hand, but that could not be done. An unexpected visitor came on the scene and I became helpless.

My spirit hovers about you as a mother's about her lost child. I would love to own you as a child, but I have not got that trust in you yet. It may be no fault of yours, but there it is. You should know the whole of my mind. That is the only way I can guide you and the only way in which I can ever own you as a daughter.

I do feel that you are again in a trap. There is only one spiritual husband, companion and friend to all, both men and women, and that is God, whom I know more fully as Truth. Before God alone there is no sex. He alone is pure spirit. All other marriage, however lofty-minded both parties may be, is more or less carnal. For a person who has dedicated himself or herself to the service of humanity there is no such thing as exclusive relationship.

If, therefore, you will take my word, you will not travel from error to error, as you seem to me to be doing just now. Your promise is to have no exclusive or secret

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<sup>131</sup> SN 20603; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, pages 102-03

<sup>132</sup> SN 20575

or private companionship. You are simply wedded to your work and nothing else.  
You should write regularly.

May Truth, which is God, be your sole guide, friend, companion and rock of ages.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, March 23/24, 1933**<sup>133</sup>

[In a letter on 19 March, Nagini described her efforts to live a penitent life in the *Harijan* locality of Bangalore and requested permission to shift to the village of Rudramuni, stay with his mother and do *Harijan* work. On 20 March she made further confessions about her past life and again asked for permission to leave Bangalore because of her difficulties there. She wrote:

"I had one rupee five annas<sup>134</sup> of yours still with me. I did not think I should use it for food, as a person living on alms would have no money to spend. One morning, however, I looked at it in another light, and decided that you would like to give Sirios some milk and fruits. You could not do so at such a distance, and so I used several annas of the money left from my ticket. Today also I bought some oranges and bread as a gift from you."<sup>135</sup>

She wrote on 21 March that a change of environment was necessary as she was very much known, followed and watched in Bangalore. She added: "... I shall follow through any trials the way you point out. There is no '*guru*' on the face of the earth or in the heavens - nothing for me now but Truth, which is the vast beautiful cosmos."<sup>136</sup>

Gandhiji telegraphed Nagini on 23 March approving her proposal to leave Bangalore.<sup>137</sup>]

March 23/24, 1933

My dear Nagini,

I had your two letters. I like them. The poetic touch about one of them was quite

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<sup>133</sup> SN 20689; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, pages 173-74

<sup>134</sup> Equivalent to about thirty American cents

<sup>135</sup> SN 20640

<sup>136</sup> SN 20654

<sup>137</sup> SN 20696a; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 180



in its place. I hope you got my telegram which I sent immediately after I finished reading your letters approving of the idea of going to a village and living amongst the *Harijans*. If it is well thought out, it is an excellent plan. But there should be no hurry or hysteria about a single step which you may now take. Until Truth has become natural to you, life will certainly appear hard and you will experience what may appear to be disappointments. There is no such thing as disappointment when one is filled with Truth. It then simply shines through one and lights the whole life.

You must tell me more about Rudramuni. There should be no guide for you but God, the Truth. I do not want you to be under any more spells. You may be thankful for such service as is rendered to you and is legitimate for you to accept, and mostly it can only be the food that you may need and the other necessities of life. A servant has no further wants, and especially a servant of *Harijans*. I can imagine nothing nobler or more inspiring than this service. It carries with it complete satisfaction.

You will find a note for Sirios with this. It was good that you made him write those few lines, and it was good that you used the balance of the money left in the way you have described. The description made my eyes wet.

Yours sincerely,

March 24, 1933

PS.

I have your very good letter today. The foregoing was dictated yesterday. May Truth surround you and fill you.

*Bapu*

**Letter, March 24, 1933<sup>138</sup>**

It is not enough that you will strive. It is necessary that you have the strength. Striving is enough for God. But the promise is that real striving generates always enough strength. Therefore I shall judge you in accordance with the actual result you show. Have I made myself clear? You have a fearful struggle in front of you to overcome the wretched past. But if truth really possesses you, there is nothing to fear. Light dispels the deepest darkness. Truth conquers the blackest sin which may be otherwise rendered as untruth. I want you therefore to be on the watch-tower.

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<sup>138</sup> Mahadev Desai's Diary; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 179

**Letter, March 28, 1933**<sup>139</sup>

[Nagini wrote to Gandhiji on 23 March that she had gotten rid of her stupid ideas about spiritual marriage.<sup>140</sup> She wrote on 25 March that she had prepared a statement of confession and sent it to Durgadas, editor of the Associated Press of India, but he had written to her that he would not publish it. She wrote this letter on the back of the letter from Durgadas.<sup>141</sup>

Meanwhile, Gandhiji wrote to her friend, K. Ramaswami:

"The impression left on my mind by long conversations with Nagini Devi is that you and other young men who have come under her influence have not really benefited by it and that you have contributed to your own and her fall... I fear very much that you have taken liberties with her which, as young men of self-restraint, you and your associates should never have taken with a stranger. Nagini Devi tells me that you are talking about spiritual marriages or spiritual friendships bordering on marital relations. This is nothing but playing with fire and an echo of very subtle sensuality. I therefore fervently urge you and the other young men not to play with fire, and not to be instrumental, consciously or unconsciously, in preventing the moral progress of Nagini Devi who has only just begun to perceive the immorality of her past life."<sup>142</sup>

He received two letters in reply, but was not satisfied.<sup>143</sup> He wrote to Mr. Ramaswami again on 28 March.<sup>144</sup>

Yeravda Central Prison,  
28th March, 1933.

My dear Nagini,

I have your letters of 23rd and 24th. I expect that you left for the village on Sunday as you had intended. May Truth take care of you there!

I know from personal experience how difficult it is to wash heavy *khadi* if you do not have plenty of water. Generally washing comes before sewing, but if it is the same cloth that requires washing and sewing, the sewing undoubtedly precedes, because you thereby save time. Washing will tear the cloth more at the point where it requires mending, therefore more time has to be given to sewing if it is

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<sup>139</sup> SN 20733; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, pages 230-32

<sup>140</sup> SN 20686

<sup>141</sup> SN 20776

<sup>142</sup> SN 20624; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, pages 121-22

<sup>143</sup> SN 20735; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 230

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

done after the washing. Your dress itself may require a little alteration when you have got rid of all the ornamental part of it and made it just so as to protect the body and satisfy the surrounding convention. The quantity required is very small, the convention being the convention of the poorest.

I am glad you heard from Sir Todd Hunter.<sup>145</sup>

I am not at all satisfied with Ramaswami's letters. There is still the old infatuation lurking, and as I read them, a disposition to justify the past. I have written to him gently drawing his attention to the inadequacy of his letters. Durgadas's letter I like still less. The mode of address ["My Own"] is unpardonable. He can be no guide, friend and brother to you, who, although on his own showing he knew that you were a fallen woman, did not lift his little finger to save his sister. There is no question of your resuming your correspondence. Your correspondence just now must be with God of Truth and yourself. Nothing should come between you and Him. I come in because I am witness to the promise that you have made to your Maker and because I want to be able to claim you as a permanent co-worker in the service of the *Harijans*, in my opinion the most suppressed in the world, but neither I nor you can render that service unless that direct touch with Truth is completely established and the utmost purity attainable by a human being has become the exclusive passion.

You must beware of cold.

If you can procure whole wheat meal you ought not to take any rice at all. You should learn how to make *chapatis*. It is an incredibly simple performance. Take 4 ounces of clean wheat meal, mix in water and knead it well, roll it on any smooth surface, wooden or stone, with a rolling pin - even a clean ruler will serve the purpose - and roll it slightly thinner than a cardboard piece and bake it on a flat iron disk, turning the sides while it is baked. Out of 4 ounces you can make six of these *chapatis*, 6 inches in diameter. These would be perfectly digestible. I am sure that the lady of the house or hut where you are to stay knows all this simple cookery. Pulses should be avoided altogether. Of tender coconut you may take one whole per day if it is very tender, and of course you use all the water in the coconut also. You ought to procure some fruit and green vegetables, not potatoes and the like, but leaves, marrow, cucumber, pumpkin etc.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, March 29, 1933**<sup>146</sup>

[On 26 March, just before leaving Bangalore for Chitaldrug, Nagini informed

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<sup>145</sup> Sir Charles Todhunter, Private Secretary to the Maharaja of Mysore

<sup>146</sup> SN 27051; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, pages 237-38

Gandhiji that she had had a passionate love affair with Ramaswami, a Brahmin student at the engineering college who had worked with her in the anti-untouchability campaign. She was sorry about his reply to Gandhiji and requested forgiveness to him "as he loved you all his life as his one and only guiding light."<sup>147</sup>]

Yeravda Central Prison,  
29th March, 1933.

My dear Nagini,

I have your letter of 26th instant. You are right. I do want truth and love to peep out of every word I write, and if they do not do so, it is not due to want of effort on my part. You need not therefore be afraid about my consciously rubbing up Ramaswami the wrong way. I wrote to him yesterday expressing about the same sentiments that you have in your letter before me. He sent me two letters in the same cover, both of them were unsatisfactory. I could see that truth had not yet dawned upon him.

You will describe your new situation as fully as you can, your surroundings, the neighbours, the population of the village, the things that can be purchased in the village, its distance from Mysore or Bangalore or any big centre, distance from the nearest railway station, the condition of water supply, the composition of the population and the like. Tell me also whether you can have good milk there. What are the cattle in the village? And if you cannot get good cow's milk, and if there are goats there, you will not hesitate to have goat's milk for Sirios. You should learn to milk goats yourself and have the goat brought before you, so that you are sure of the purity of the milk supplied, and if there are cows there, learn to milk the cows yourself. If you feel weak or if you find that your digestive apparatus does not keep up to mark, I would like you to go back to milk and butter, but not butter so much as milk, and take unfired milk, as you saw me take it. I should then have no anxiety about your health.

Whilst I would like you to live the life of the poorest of *Harijans*, I do not want you to do the impossible, and therefore whatever your health peremptorily demands, you should take if you can get it for the begging. If you cannot, in a perfectly honourable way, God will give you the strength to suffer privation, but even then you will not misfeed yourself. Fasting is better than taking food that you cannot assimilate or that gives you no stamina. A few dry dates or raisins or figs well washed will at a pinch sustain you and even Sirios, but I am sure that if you have living faith in living truth, it will not try you beyond your capacity for endurance.

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>147</sup> SN 20713

**Letter, March 31, 1933**<sup>148</sup>

[Rudramuni missed the train and did not accompany Nagini to Chitaldrug. Nagini wrote to Gandhiji on 28 March that she had travelled in the company of his *guru*, also from Chitaldrug, who made arrangements for her stay in Kalagota, the *Harijan* area of Chitaldrug. She claimed that she was relieved of the spell of Rudramuni whom she would treat as anyone else.<sup>149</sup>]

Yeravda Central Prison,  
31st March, 1933.

My dear Nagini,

Ramachandra tells me how he saw you off for your village and how Rudramuni was too late for the train and how Ramachandra had to advance Rs. 10. Who was to pay the railway fare? Was it Rudramuni? Do tell me all about him, his age, his education, his occupation, and let him write to me.

I am sending you this letter to the address that Ramachandra has given me.

Then Ramachandra says, "To her I particularly said that she must dress very much more modestly than now and live like the village womenfolk do." This is right. You know how best to give effect to it. Of course the idea of modesty differs with different countries and different people, and if we leave our surroundings and adopt others, we have to respond to them when we want to suit ourselves to the surroundings and identify ourselves with the people as you do with the *Harijans*. I know that there is the question of expense involved here. You will tell me all about the proposal frankly and fully. Let me have a copy of the statement that you were to publish.

Then Ramachandra says, "Please be writing to her if possible to keep silence for some hours daily and not to talk much and get worried." This means that you have been talking away and if that is so, again Ramachandra's warning is correct. It would not be a bad thing at all if you actually imposed silence on yourself for a few hours daily and made a conscious attempt not to talk except when it became absolutely necessary. Let your service be your sermon, your talk, your delight.

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>148</sup> SN 20777; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, pages 256-57

<sup>149</sup> SN 20739

**Letter, April 4, 1933**<sup>150</sup>

Yeravda Central Prison,  
4th April, 1933.

My dear Nagini,

I have your two letters. I see that you are still struggling. I do not mind so long as each time you continue to come out unhurt. I hope you got my letter sent to your new address. In that letter I gave you two warnings and I hope that you took them both to heart. Who pays for all your little expenses? For instance, for the stamps and stationery, even an occasional telegram. You cannot give me too many details of your life. Truth peeps out through infinite details but it can be hidden from ourselves as well as from the spectators when a whole picture is presented. That is to say, a generalisation can be made to cover an untruth. It will be true enough when I make a general statement, "I'm all right," but that general statement will cover the untruth, namely, the fact of the bad elbow. That will only come out of a careful cross-examination of me unless I said, "I'm all right, but for a bad elbow." There is a great passage in the most ancient and the simplest and I think the shortest of the *Upanishads*. The translation is "The face of truth is covered with a golden lid," and then the seeker ends with prayer, "O God! remove the lid for me so that I can see truth face to face."<sup>151</sup> You now know what I mean by the golden lid.

I hope you and Sirios are keeping well, both in body and in mind.

Is "Chitaldrug" complete address for you?

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, April 6, 1933**<sup>152</sup>

[Nagini wrote to Gandhiji on 31 March and 2 April about her life in Chitaldrug. She informed him that she was unable to get green vegetables. She had accepted a basket of fruit and nuts from Professor Srinivasa Rao and would request more if needed, unless Gandhiji advised otherwise. She had not kept a copy of her confession and could write to Mr. Durgadas for it. She asked for advice about proper clothing for her. She informed Gandhiji that she had written to the Chitaldrug municipality, on behalf of the *Harijans*, for assistance in the clean-up campaign they were undertaking.<sup>153</sup>]

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<sup>150</sup> SN 20831; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 298

<sup>151</sup> *Ishopanishad*, 15

<sup>152</sup> SN 20849-A; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, pages 317-18

<sup>153</sup> SN 20788 and SN 20809

Yeravda Central Prison,  
6th April, 1933.

My dear Nagini,

I have your letters of 31st March and 2nd April together.

You were quite right in accepting Sreenivasa Rao's gifts and asking him to send you whole wheatmeal and dried fruit. It is a great handicap that you can get no fresh leafy vegetables. But you know that leafy vegetables are grown in no time. I had an English friend living with me in South Africa who grew sufficient cresses in a fortnight's time. You should get some seeds, have just a little plot of land, fence it in, dig it well superficially and beat up the earth well. You can use the manure that the animals around you may give, and sow lettuce seeds, tomatoes and any of the leaves that grow easily there. You should make some explorations also in and about Chitaldrug. I cannot imagine all that place being without leafy vegetables known as *bhaji*. I would ask you not to abstain from milk and butter at least just now. You may take only a little quantity if you like, but I am afraid that you will become weak in due course if you do not take these two things, for you are not having enough fresh fruit nor wheatmeal.

You need not write anything to Durgadas about your statement, but write it out yourself from memory and let me have it.

I understand what you say about pulses for Sirios. As he is very active according to the description you gave me here, perhaps there is no harm if he is given a moderate quantity.

I shall send you the book on village sanitation. I am writing to the *Ashram*, but let me give you the substance of Poore's method. The theory is that 18 inches of the surface of earth is all filled with germs which do the work of scavenging for all the creatures that reside on it. These germs can work on all the filth that the creatures deposit on the surface of the earth from day to day. Poore having known this and having understood the most economical use that the Chinese make of human excreta developed his method and said that all the excreta, both liquid and solid, should be buried not more than 12 or at the outside 18 inches below the surface of the earth. He therefore does not suggest movable latrines nor the ordinary deep-pit latrines. He suggests receiving the excreta in buckets, each person covering the excreta with earth, which is ready in the closet, so that the closet remains clean and sweet-smelling all the time. These buckets are emptied in the squares, dug up and kept ready, not many yards away from the latrine itself, and then the earth, which is heaped up on the edge of the square, is taken up and the excreta covered with it. No more excreta should be heaped upon the deposit just made. Ample earth is thrown on each deposit so that dogs and other animals may not dig out the thing. Inside of a fortnight all that excreta is worked upon by

the germs and turned into fine manure and the ground is ready for cultivation.

We have followed this plan most successfully at the *Ashram* for 17 years, that is, since its inception. The whole of the performance takes no time and there is no smell emitted out of these squares.

I hope you will have no difficulty in following what I have said. This is the cheapest method of dealing with human and other excreta. All the kitchen refuse is also dealt with in the same manner, only this cannot be mixed up with the excreta, because the work of the germs done upon vegetable rubbish is different from the work done upon the excreta. But the process is the same in all other respects. We have found in the *Ashram*, by observation, that wherever we have made use of this excellent manure, our crops have been much richer in quantity and quality.

If you have any difficulty in following this, please ask.

Of course you are right in asking the Municipality to give you all the assistance you need. If they give it, well and good; if they do not, you won't worry or fidget. For the time being, you have your work cut out for you amongst the *Harijans*, and what is more, in mending yourself.

Now about the dress. You need three articles only - a loose vest somewhat after men's shirt with short sleeves reaching up to the elbow only, skirt reaching 2 or 3 inches above the ankles, and a *kuchh* like mine but not so long and smaller in size. If you want to go to the trouble of sewing, you can have something after the style of men's shorts. This makes the simplest dress. The *bawis*, that is, the female mendicants, wear something like this. Your *saris* can be turned into vests or shirts. The skirts you have should serve the purpose, and very probably you have something answering knickers or shorts.

Yours sincerely,

As to your addressing me *Bapu*, you are wrong. You will address me as such when you have confidence in yourself that you will inspire me with trust in you and will never deceive me. I am trying to trust you by signing myself *Bapu*.

**Letter, April 10, 1933**<sup>154</sup>

Yeravda Central Prison,  
10th April, 1933.

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<sup>154</sup> SN 20875; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, pages 365-66



My dear Nagini,

For the last 3 days or four I have not heard from you. I have developed regarding you a mother's anxiety. I am sure it is unnecessary, but when I do not hear from you, I imagine all sorts of things. Could you have fallen ill? Or, could you have fallen from your resolution? You must not therefore fail in writing regularly as you have promised to do.

I hope you got the long letter I sent you on Friday. It contained answers to every one of your questions.

I had a satisfactory letter from Ramaswami in reply to my letter about which I wrote to you. Who is this *guru* of his with whom you are said to be living? How old is he? What languages does he know? Is Chitaldrug his home? How is Rudramuni behaving?

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, April 12, 1933**<sup>155</sup>

[On 7 April, Nagini sent a long letter to Gandhiji. She said she had been suffering from boils and other ailments. She felt weak and did not know whether this was due to her diet. She was losing her temper with Sirios and with people of the village who swarm around the window and push it open, disturbing her privacy. She asked a number of practical questions as regards living at least expense, food, clothing, washing etc.

She wrote about the people in Chitaldrug and neighbouring villages.

She said that she disagreed with Ramachandra as regards modesty in clothing. Rudramuni was very helpful.

She informed Gandhiji that Srinivasa Rao had sent her dried fruit and wrote a letter which was "unpardonably intimate." Mr. Reddy sent some *taklis* and his letter was also intimate. She sent copies of their letters, as well as a letter from Sirios, to Gandhiji.<sup>156</sup>]

Yeravda Central Prison,  
12th April, 1933.

My dear Nagini,

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<sup>155</sup> SN 20910; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 383

<sup>156</sup> SN 20739

After having kept me waiting for four days and holding me in suspense, you have given me a long letter.

I do not like the boil on your left foot and right leg. I hope that you know the simple treatment of boils and that by the time this reaches you, nothing will have been left of them. It is much better to stop all work than to run the risk of dirt getting into them when they appear on inconvenient parts of the body. If you do not know simple treatment of simple diseases, you have got to learn it quickly. Truly, this new life is a new birth for you. May you come safely through it.

As for Srinivasa Rao, I do not know what you mean by giving him another chance. I hope you have written to him strongly about his unwarrantable familiarity. Unless he is truly repentant, nothing whatsoever can be accepted from him, and it would not be proper to accept his mere word in order to enable you to receive a gift from him. It is demoralising to receive gifts from those whom you want to reform or from those with whom you had questionable relationship. Therefore Srinivasa Rao may have all the chances for showing his repentance. Nothing whatsoever should be received from him, or, for that matter from Reddy. The only person whom I regard as quite reliable is Ramachandra. Get everything you need from him and no one else. I shall write to Ramachandra to look to your wants. He told me that in reply to your letter asking for soap, he offered to send you a remittance so as to enable you to buy soap locally. This was meant to save railage for a small parcel. The local purchases you could only do if you knew the bazaar prices or if you had a reliable person who would not cheat you. Somehow or other I do not feel quite safe about Rudramuni. He is for me an unknown quantity. He may be a very good man, only I do not feel quite safe.

This brings me to soap. For cleaning the body, as I told you when you were with me, no soap was required. Clean water and a rough towel is all that is necessary for keeping the body quite fit. For washing the hair there is nothing to approach the soap-nut. It is to be had all over India. A few nuts soaked overnight and then well mashed with hand in the water produces soap suds with which you can clean the hair perfectly. But I have an easier method. You have abandoned everything for the *Harijan* service and for self-purification. Hence, you are, to all intents and purposes, a *sannyasin*. Therefore you have to remove the hair from your head and have a close crop almost amounting to a shave. Mira has that. Tens of thousands of widows have that crop. If you can easily let your hair go, I need not prescribe elaborate things for keeping your hair in a clean condition. I do not want to press for the crop. I do not know what attraction your hair has for you. Much as I would like every girl in the *Ashram* to have her hair cropped, I have been able to persuade only a few. If you have the same partiality for your hair as these *Ashram* girls have, I have nothing to say. But if you would let your hair go as easily as you pare your nails, then I would say: Get hold of the closest barber, get him to wash his hands and his scissors in hot water and get him to take off your hair. If he has not the clippers, then let him do so with the ordinary scissors. It

won't be as close a crop as I would like, but it would be close enough to save you all the anxiety about your hair and it would save you also a great deal of time. If you do not want your hair to be cropped, I must write to you in my next letter what you should do to keep it clean without having to resort to soap. Remember that millions in this country do not know what soap is. Again, in asking you practically to do without soap, I am asking you to do something I have not succeeded in inducing all the *Ashram* people to do.

Now for the washing of the clothes. I wonder if you have enough firewood to heat your water. If you are a bit of an engineer, you can even heat your water by the sun-heat. It requires a metal pot and a bit of piping undoubtedly. An American educational missionary, Sam Higginbottom, is heating his water by the sun-heat in Allahabad. But this is not yet for you. I am simply whetting your appetite for doing simple things in the villages. But if you can heat your water all you need to do is to obtain the crude washing soda. Add that to your water and it becomes as soft as soap water. Soak your clothes in that water while it is boiling and let them lie in that water overnight. Wash them well the next morning and they are free from dirt though not white as snow, because they take somewhat the colouring of the crude soda. But that should not matter and is in keeping with the village life. But the clothes will be as clean as if washed in a first-class hotel in America, and all you want is cleanliness.

The change you have made in your apparel seems to me quite suitable. You have almost anticipated me if the robe is in addition to the skirt I have mentioned in my letter. You are hard on poor Ramachandra. I think that his remark was well meant. Your argument about the women is quite logical, but unfortunately we are not governed by logic. I must not enter into the history of the women whom you see bare-bodied. You will however realise at once that you cannot afford to vie with these sisters. Truth demands that your external appearance should be as near a representation as possible of the internal condition. You cannot afford today to claim unassailable internal innocence. When you have attained it, you won't need to demonstrate it. Do you know the story of Shukdevji and Vyas? If you don't, you must ask me to give it to you some other day.

I am not at all satisfied about your food. The *ragi* bread should go. You must have got whole wheatmeal flour by this time. If you have, you must bake your own *chapati*. If you have not got that, you should live on milk and such dried fruit as you might have. It would keep you in good health and give you the needed energy. Milk for yourself you should beg, if the people will willingly supply to you. Buffalo milk is fairly rich and if you get one pound, it will serve the purpose. Of course Sirius's portion is a first charge. Whatever fruit and vegetables you may get now and again will really be enough to give you the necessary vegetable salts and vitamins. So far as health is concerned, a daily supply of fresh vegetables and fruit is not an absolute necessity, especially when you are living out in the open air and are not called upon to undergo extraordinary physical or mental strain.

You must control your temper, even with reference to Sirios. You should be patient with the people who surround your little cottage and would not let you have even a little bit of privacy when you want to sleep. A little reasoning with them will set them right. Whilst you are still becoming inured to your new life, you should insist on taking an hour's sleep during the middle of the day and giving it to Sirios. It will be good for your body and good for your temper, and if you and Sirios have a close crop, you will use a wet rag for the head, as you saw me use. It cools the head and the whole body instantaneously.

You should have sent me Rudramuni's letter as he wrote it. Let me know him as he is and not as you would have him to appear.

I think I have covered all the points in your letter.

May God the Truth surround you and Sirios with His protecting care. I know that if you will have complete faith in Him, it will be all well with you. Here is a note for Sirios.

Yours sincerely,

Enclosure:

**Letter, to Sirios, April 12, 1933<sup>157</sup>**

My dear Sirios,

I have your lovely letter. You must continue to write to me all (and) tell me more of what you see in and around the village in which you are living. Have you made friends with any of the boys there?

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, April 18, 1933<sup>158</sup>**

[Nagini wrote to Gandhiji on 13 April about her ailments. She could walk only with difficulty because of a boil and she suffered from headache, depression and a broken tooth. She did not have menstruation which was due a week earlier. She complained about the attitude of Rudramuni who was giving orders to his neighbours and not joining in work. The Chitaldrug Municipality was cooperative but she needed a faithful co-worker who could interpret for her. "I am

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<sup>157</sup> SN 20910; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 384

<sup>158</sup> SN 29084; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 439

a creature stranded on a desert island as far as work is concerned." She asked Gandhiji's permission to call Ramaswami or Bala Gangadhar Rao, another student. The *guru* of Ramaswami, she disclosed, was Rudramuni.<sup>159</sup>

In a letter on 15 April, she sent a draft of her statement of confession for publication. As she did not keep a copy of the statement she sent to the Associated Press of India, she rewrote it from memory.<sup>160</sup>

In a third letter on 17 April, she reported that she was still in pain with the boils and the broken tooth. She had cut her own hair though Rudramuni had threatened that he would not see her again if she did. She had no confidence in him and would like to be independent of him. She said she was badly in need of a co-worker, and of some foodstuff and money. She would not accept gifts from Srinivasa Rao, but asked if she could write to Ramachandra for necessities such as food, paper and stamps.<sup>161</sup>

In a further letter on 18 April, she said that the boil on her chin was painful. She was unhappy that she could not go in the sun bareheaded. She asked for advice with regard to her younger brother, who was addicted to drinking and smoking, and intended to come to India.<sup>162</sup>]

My dear Nagini,

I have your letter and I had a letter from Sjt. B.K. Ramachandra Rao,<sup>163</sup> and I came to the conclusion that there was no use your living there. Neither Ramaswami nor Gangadhar can be of any use there. You have broken with the past altogether and I wish you will not recall it on any account whatsoever. If you have not therefore left, I would strongly advise you to leave for Poona at once, and if Rudramuni will not give you enough for bringing yourself and Sirios to Poona, I have asked Sjt. Ramachandra Rao to advance 3rd class fare for you and Sirios. You will telegraph to me and I shall arrange about your lodgings.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, April 21, 1933**<sup>164</sup>

[Nagini arrived in Poona on 22 April. The following letter may have been written on the 21st and delivered on her arrival.]

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<sup>159</sup> SN 20915

<sup>160</sup> SN 20949

<sup>161</sup> SN 20963

<sup>162</sup> SN 20980

<sup>163</sup> A lawyer in Chitaldrug and friend of Ramaswami

<sup>164</sup> SN 21024; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 497

Yeravda Central Prison,  
21st April, 1933.

My dear Nagini,

Sastri has been going to the station every morning since Wednesday and returning disappointed. Such was my anxiety about you. I am glad you have come at last and I hope that you are better. You will go straight to the Servants of India Society's guest house and be there and come at the latest with Sastri, the editor, or `Harijan Sastri' as he is called. If you do not feel hungry, you will not take even milk but simply fruit juice. If you do not feel like taking anything at all, drink only water, and come here and have the fruit juice I may provide for you. You do exactly as you feel before coming to me. It will be best not to take anything beyond fruit and milk. I hope you will be in a fit condition to come to me. If medical assistance is required before then, Sastri will see to its being procured. To Sirios you will give whatever food is available at the Society's place. You will bring him with you when you come. Of course you cannot expose your bare head just now. I think I told you that you will have to tie a wet rag just as I do, and you will find that it is perfectly comfortable.

I got today your letter of 18th instant. The letter of the 17th I have not yet received.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, May 2, 1933**<sup>165</sup>

[Gandhiji arranged for Nagini to stay in the *Satyagrahashram* at Sabarmati and to be trained for *Harijan* work. He wrote to Narandas Gandhi, manager of the *Ashram* on 29 April:

"I am sending Nagini there with great hopes. I have cherished her like a daughter for the last three or four months. I have preserved many of her letters... she has assured me that she does not wish to hide from me a single guilty action or thought of hers, and thereby won my initial confidence. But I can give no guarantee about her future conduct. I am acting on the basis of complete trust in her. Give her suitable work from time to time within her capacity. She has great ability. She is extremely active and wants to do good."<sup>166</sup>

On the same day, he announced his decision to fast for 21 days, commencing on 8 May, for self-purification. It was a heart-prayer for the purification of self and

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<sup>165</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 55, page 95

<sup>166</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 55, page 69

associates, and for greater vigilance and watchfulness in the work of service to *Harijans*.]

May this fast strengthen you. You will entrust to N.[Narandas Gandhi], even an evil thought if it comes to you. But it won't come if you will lose yourself in Him, the Truth and in His work as it may be pointed out to you by N.

[Nagini wrote almost daily about her life in the *Ashram*. She informed Gandhiji on 2 May that her menstruation was overdue and that she might have conceived. She asked if she could see a gynecologist.<sup>167</sup> She wrote on 3 May:

"Beloved Bapuji - the organisation here is magnificent - and everyone so kind-hearted."<sup>168</sup>

She confessed on 5 May that when she met Dr. Hiralal Sharma, the doctor at the *Ashram*, her animal passion was aroused.

She wrote a letter in ink on 7 May - the previous letters were in pencil - and said:

"I know it is not generally correct to use pencil. In your case, I wrote with the freedom I could have had in writing my mother."

She said that pressmen were bothering her as it was reported that her faults were the last straw which led to Gandhiji's fast.<sup>169</sup>

Gandhiji published the "confession" of Nagini, which she sent him on 24 April, in *Harijan* (May 6, 1933), together with his comment. Nagini wrote:

"I want those who are aware of the impure and extravagant way I have lived upto only yesterday to know that I am sincerely striving to begin a new life, and I want the general public to know that as an aspirant to social service I have been a great hypocrite. Please do what you can to make it known that I have not only lived an impure life in the past but that I have been untrustworthy in my worldly dealings and sailed under false appearances.

"After squandering the capital of a small inherited income, I recklessly and needlessly incurred debts. I was not even concerned about the payment of these debts until the implications of the new life I thought I had adopted began to dawn on me about six months ago. Even then, when, in order to discharge the obligation honourably, I had decided to

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<sup>167</sup> SN 21135

<sup>168</sup> SN 21136

<sup>169</sup> SN 21190

earn by my own effort the amount I owed, I continued to incur new debts. Nor did I succeed in purifying my life even when I seemed to be leading a pure life.

"I thought at one time that I would discharge the obligations by writing and lecturing in America. But I saw that that would mean a continuation in another form of an untruthful life. I, therefore, came to the conclusion that, if I were to be true to the new life, I must utterly break with the impure past and hope somewhat to repay at least the moral obligation, by serving the most despised of the community, with which I have thrown in my lot. As you know, I have, therefore, been trying for sometime to live among and serve *Harijans* to the best of my ability. I would gladly have toiled for my creditors as a common labourer if I could have thereby given them any satisfaction. But that could not be. I can only say to them that, if a single rupee comes to me in an honourable manner, it shall go to them. But the only honourable way open to me is to do what penance I can for the past through the silent service of *Harijans*."<sup>170</sup>

Gandhiji wrote to Narandas Gandhi on 8 May:

"Try and understand what is in her heart... But she has little control over her mind. I see that she has had a large share in persuading me to undertake this fast. I did not know this. If there is anything which can give her strength, it will be this fast... According to me, if she is pregnant and if she can accept the prospect calmly, the experience will or can change her life and save her. Shower on her as much love as you can and rear the plant."<sup>171</sup>

**Letter, May 9, 1933**<sup>172</sup>

[Gandhiji commenced his fast on 8 May. The Government released him from prison the same evening and he moved to Lady Thackersay's house, "Purnakuti," in Poona. He wrote the next two letters to Nagini - as well as some others which are not available - during the fast.]

'Parnakuti,'  
Poona,  
May 9, 1933.

My dear Nagini,

I can't put you out of my mind. I do not want to repeat what I have said in my previous letters.

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<sup>170</sup> SN 21219

<sup>171</sup> *Harijan*, May 6, 1933

<sup>172</sup> SN 21257; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, page 164



Dr. Sharma is there. I have asked Narandas not to ask him to treat you at all. If it does become necessary to procure medical advice a doctor will be called in, but you will tell if his presence and sight excite the emotion you describe. If they do I will have to see what can be done. But I am writing to him about this emotion so that he can be on his guard. I hope you do not mind this. I am interpreting you literally. You have not a single thought in your mind which you want to keep not only from me but from the whole world including about whom you may harbour a thought. However distasteful it may be, I know that that is the only way for a truthful person.

Your letter written in ink has arrived. You should treat poor mother at least as well as strangers. But, of course, children sometimes write to their parents with their fingers, using their blood as ink.

God be with you.

Love to you and kisses to Sirios.

*Bapu*

Smt. Nagini Devi  
*Satyagraha Ashram*  
Sabarmati

**Letter, May 10, 1933**<sup>173</sup>

[On 8 May Nagini wrote at length about her thoughts while at work or walking: of David and Solomon; of Pythagoras and Sappho; of Buddha and Krishna; of Nila Naga and her father Kashyapa; of Bacchus; of Mount Kailasa, the Indus, the Nile, etc. etc.<sup>174</sup>]

I see that there is more effort in dictating than in writing. As days proceed I may not be able to write or dictate. Then you will know that my thoughts are speaking to you.

But you must write a detailed letter daily giving your bodily and mental condition, your food and Sirios's food.

I hope you have understood the moral necessity of avoiding abortion.

Have sun-bath daily on the terrace of your sleeping quarters. And there you can take sewing work for the *Ashram*. Also do *takli* spinning.

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<sup>173</sup> GN 82; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, pages 167-68

<sup>174</sup> SN 21241

I wish you will forget Pythagoras, Bacchus and *Mahabharata*. Why should you brood over the past when you have to re-enact the *Mahabharata* at the *Ashram*? Do please fill your mind with the task before you, i.e., to become an ideal member of the *Ashram*, no matter what the others are.

Love to you and Sirios.

*Bapu*

**Letter, June 6, 1933**<sup>175</sup>

[Nagini continued to write regularly to Gandhiji about her work in the *Ashram* - helping in the kitchen, milking the cows, ginning cotton, scavenging, etc. - her study of Hindi and her thoughts, and Sirios. In a letter on 11 May she told Gandhiji that she had never thought of an abortion, but only of medical examination. She saw joy in the *Ashram* routine, but did not believe in organised and compulsory prayer. "I should prefer a circle dance, an ecstatic celebration of the Truth..."<sup>176</sup>]

‘Parnakuti,’  
Poona,  
June 6, 1933.

My dear Nagini,

I was able only yesterday to read your letters which were with Mahadev. Surely there must be some misunderstanding about white flour. There is no white flour used in the *Ashram*. All the flour that is used in the *Ashram* is specially ground and it is always wholemeal. Sometimes it is sifted after it is ground and sometimes it is not. You should, therefore, enquire and then let me know. What I told you about food applies merely not to you, but certainly to all. That all may not follow that dietary is a different question. But in the common kitchen in the *Ashram*, generally that method is followed with more or less the same exactness. It is not possible to do away with rice and *dal* altogether. But every encouragement has been given to those who avoid rice and pulses. I do hope you are finding more and more peace at the *Ashram* and that both you and Sirios are keeping well.

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<sup>175</sup> SN 19091; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, page 184

<sup>176</sup> SN 21277

**Letter, June 9, 1933**<sup>177</sup>

[Nagini made further confessions about her past life in a letter of 5 June.<sup>178</sup> She wrote on 6 June that menstruation had reappeared for a few hours. It had been getting less and less and there was none for two months. "I will be happy and feel triumphant if I can do away with it altogether - that is evidently what is happening." She asked if it was presumptuous of her to sign her name as Nila, the name of a demi-god. Nagini reminded her too much of the *Mahabharata*.<sup>179</sup>]

June 9, 1933

My dear Nila,

You must not expect from me just now any reply to your letters. Strength is not coming to me as rapidly as I had expected. But my expectation had no justification. The regaining of strength is really as rapid as is possible for an old man of 64. When I built my castle of expectation I had forgotten that I was 64 and not 46.

What you say about the monthly business is quite true. But it is not likely to be true of you. To reach the state you have described, you need to attain perfect purity not merely in act but in thought also. Then undoubtedly the sex symptom goes, mere form remains. I do fervently hope that you will soon reach that state, but you have not yet done so. That you can do so, I have not a shadow of doubt. You have in you the making of such a woman. I know your aspirations and I know that you want to be true through and through. You are, so far as I can read your letters, making a Herculean effort. May you succeed soon. Meanwhile, I am not just now building any high hope upon the scarcity of the monthly symptom. I have not, therefore, lost all fear of conception. [If] it is there, I want you not to mind it but to regard it as a blessing of God. Whereas if there is no conception we would regard that too as equally a blessing and a narrow escape. Either way let it serve as a warning, final and unforgettable.

I am glad you like Abbas and Govindji as tutors. I know that they are all very fine workers. They have their hearts in their work. Of course, Lakshmidas you will look up to both as your first teacher and in the place of a parent. He is one of the staunchest of men in the *Ashram*. I want you to pick out all that you may find to be good in the *Ashram* and cling to it.

As to the name, you will see that I have adopted your suggestion. You may ask everybody in the *Ashram* to cut out Devi in any case. And let them address you as Nila or Nagini *behn* just as they wish. But having done this forget all about the name, and its meaning and significance. After all nothing hangs by it. Everything

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<sup>177</sup> SN 19095; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, pages 191-92

<sup>178</sup> SN 21457

<sup>179</sup> SN 21451

is based upon what we think and what we do.

**Letter, June 20, 1933**<sup>180</sup>

[Nagini wrote on 10 June that a boil was hurting much and kept her in bed.<sup>181</sup>]

‘Parnakuti,’  
Poona,  
June 20, 1933.

My dear Nila,

I have kept under my mattress three of your letters among others. But it is only now that I am able to dictate my reply. I take the latest, just handed to me, first. Your letter to the Governor of Madras is being posted today. It might have been worded slightly differently but the change is not important enough to warrant the delay in sending the letter. You need neither worry nor be disgusted with yourself for being late at prayers three or four times in two days. There is such a thing as being disgusted with oneself and yet continuing the wrong. I have seen so many such cases. Therefore, what I suggest to you is to calmly analyse the reason for being late and to avoid it. You have given the reason in these cases yourself for not leaving your work in time for prayer. Therefore you should now be careful and leave the work in time to reach the prayer ground in peace. Constant watch over one's minutes guards one from all such difficulties.

Your long letter of 13th instant is too imaginative and too poetic for me. You have plenty of poetry in you. Your imagination knows no bounds. I want you to transmute these into an inexhaustible power for real service. We have all to aspire after being childlike. We cannot become children because that is impossible. But we can all become like children. In spite of the knowledge gained, we can become simple, guileless, candid and natural like them. Here the word "natural" has a definite meaning. All the virtues that we may prize should not be an artificial growth, possible only in a hothouse, but they must be as natural to us as perhaps mischief is natural to children. We love their mischief because it is so natural to them. The mischief of grown-up ones lies in their being naturally good, restrained, humble and proof against temptation.

I want to warn you against putting the construction you have put upon the scarcity of the monthly flow. My fear is that the decrease is not, in you, a healthy sign. You are not yet free from the sex emotion, and unless you are entirely free from it in thought, word and deed, irregularity or scarcity in your monthly condition must be regarded as a sign of some internal derangement. I am afraid that ordinarily

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<sup>180</sup> SN 19102; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, pages 209-10

<sup>181</sup> SN 21463

speaking, you will take a long time to reach that condition, unless you and I and the *Ashram* are so blessed that you suddenly reach the requisite condition of natural purity that would stop the monthly flow and be a sign of perfect health. When you reach that state you will have no boils, etc., and no other bodily or mental ailment. You will be the happy possessor of the qualities that we pray for every evening at the prayer time. I refer you to the last verses of the second chapter of the *Gita*.

Pray, do not disturb yourself over the milk treatment though I know that 10 lb. of milk is an unnatural diet. As a medicinal treatment it might have great potentialities. These are certainly claimed for it by many people. Dr. Mehta, who is treating me, swears by it. Anyway, for the time being it is suspended, and it may have to be given up altogether. You must trust me to act cautiously and with sufficient restraint. Though slow, my progress is steady. I am just now taking my ordinary quantity of three to four lb. milk a day and a liberal supply of fruit, consisting of oranges, pomegranate juice and grapes. This is meant for both you and Amala<sup>182</sup> who also is disturbed over my diet.

I see that you swear by Kashmir, but let me tell you that it is not the climate that suits every constitution and in any case I cannot go to Kashmir in search of health. I must find my health where my work lies. That is what I did before also and that, too, was after a fast. I happened to be in the *Ashram* and in spite of importunities of friends I would not stir out of the *Ashram*. The same God who saw me through 21 days will see me through this convalescence, if such is His will, and the best thing that you, Amala and others can do to quicken the progress is by discharging your respective duties as fully as is possible for you to do.

In your last letter you had said nothing about your boils and nothing about my suggestion as to the ways and means of restoring Sirios to his normal weight. After all he is not only to reach his normal weight but he is to show an increase in his weight and height, in general development both physical and mental.

I think this answers all your questions.

**Letter, June 30, 1933**<sup>183</sup>

[Gandhiji sent a telegram to Narandas Gandhi on 28 June asking him to consult a doctor about Sirios who was losing weight.<sup>184</sup>]

‘Parnakuti,’  
Poona,

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<sup>182</sup> Margarete Spiegel

<sup>183</sup> SN 19110; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, page 231

<sup>184</sup> SN 21500; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, page 223

June 30, 1933.

Nila,

I have your letters by me. I deal with the last first.

You are going through a terrible but wonderful trial and I hope that God will give you the strength to stand it. If you will but realise that we are an utterly poor family, that we are far away from the ideal of poverty, you will find the burden easy to bear and the illness of Sirios an ordinary occurrence in the lives of poor people. You will have a doctor, not so the *bona fide* poor. They do not even know what a doctor can be. They have the utterly incompetent village physician and they have to be satisfied with what services his often selfish nature would permit him to render. You will, therefore, be quite content with whatever relief can be afforded to Sirios in the *Ashram* itself. You will not compare yourself to some of the pampered *Ashramites* whom your keen faculty for observation could not have missed. But when you have a feeling of irritation over this knowledge and resentment that neither you nor Sirios can be pampered, recall the fact that one whom you have adopted as your father is the first among the pampered *Ashramites* and if you are prepared to suffer my being pampered, then you will find it easy to tolerate the pampering of others and then, perhaps, you will find why they are pampered, if they are pampered, and then you will make the further discovery that compared to yet others you yourself might also be ranked amongst the pampered for there are degrees in pampering. Anyway, I want you to be happy, calm, and contented in the face of Sirios' illness and your own boils.

You and I sail in the same boat in the distrust of doctors, but that distrust has to have its recognised limitations and must be based upon enlightenment. You are wholly unjust to the doctors who are attending upon me. They have been most careful, conscientious and helpful. They have not stopped oranges as you imagine. What they have said is according to the latest natural healing methods. They know that I am not likely to accept any of their nostrums and therefore they are making an honest effort to suit my peculiarities. I can describe to you what they have prescribed, what exactly I am doing and perhaps you will feel that they have said or done nothing that should offend against the laws of natural healing. The use that I want to make of doctor's presence at the *Ashram* for Sirios, is to know exactly what is wrong with Sirios and why he has lost weight. The doctor there would not easily prescribe any medicine but he will give general guidance for which you and I and the *Ashram* as a whole must be thankful. Then we may or may not accept his advice. But nonetheless it is necessary to have a proper diagnosis of the boy's illness.

As for your boils, you are quite right in giving up even milk for the time being. Take plenty of juicy fruit, hot water and lemon and salt or hot water, lemon and *goor* or honey. If it is *goor*, the water should be strained. The best thing is to dissolve it in cold water and then put the strained *goor* water on the stove.

It is as well that you have recalled some of the instances of your violent nature. I had detected it and therefore your letter has caused me no surprise, but you are now to get rid of that violence by making a brave effort. Nor must you wreak it on Sirios and don't insist upon Sirios eating this thing or that thing. After all he has got to like the things he eats, and remember that we are all largely a mixture of our parents. You may not, therefore, resent Sirios being a second edition of yourself in many respects.

Tell me whether Sirios has made friends with anybody else in the *Ashram*, whether amongst grown-up people or children.

Now for the dogs. You are quite right we ought to be able to find a solution. The European countries have found it by killing the dogs beyond their wants. India would not tolerate that solution and yet has not found an ideal solution in terms of *ahimsa*. The society for the care of animals takes charge of stray dogs, etc. Unfortunately, these societies are not well-organised. However, the *Ashram* is in touch with one such society and very often there is a clearance. Ask Narandas how it is that dogs have not been cleared by the society.

**Letter, July 4, 1933**<sup>185</sup>

‘Parnakuti,’  
Poona,  
July 4, 1933.

I hope Sirios has not typhoid. There is no reason for him to have that. But it does seem to me that the food you gave him should not have been given, and I am not quite sure that Lakshmidas wanted him to have all the food you have described. It is always best to treat every fever as incipient typhoid. In other words the main treatment for all fevers is the same, namely, nothing but fruit juices and boiled water, and, after the fever is gone, diluted milk, that is, milk to which water is added before it is boiled. If you are quite composed and clear in your mind, I do not want any change for Sirios. He will come through all right in the *Ashram* if he gets proper nursing and a typhoid patient needs nothing more than most careful nursing and fruit juices, principally orange juice and, under certain circumstances, diluted milk. Do not be obstinate about medical assistance. The doctors who come to the *Ashram* are very fine men. They know the *Ashram* dislike for too much medicine. If you can possibly do, it would be much better for you to detach yourself from personal affection and treat Sirios as an *Ashram* child whom you have been set to nurse. But I know that this is a condition which cannot be forced and if it does not come to you, you will not hesitate to say so plainly. Not everyone in the *Ashram* has that detachment. Perhaps no one has, but much is expected of you. What is more, you have set before yourself nothing short of the

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<sup>185</sup> SN 19116; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, page 246

highest ideal, and I want you to realise it. May be the illness of Sirios is one of the many ordeals you have to pass through. May God be your guide, strength and shield.

**Letter, July 5, 1933<sup>186</sup>**

[Nagini wrote on 3 July that she fully agreed with his "two beautiful letters." She disliked doctors. She did not need to consult a doctor regarding the loss of weight of Sirios. She knew from previous experience that it was because he was not able to stand the summer heat in the plains. And he also had fever. He would need to be acclimatised to tropical conditions gradually. She asked for a train ticket to the Himalayas. She complained again about dogs in the *Ashram*, one of which chased a little girl and had her dress in its teeth.<sup>187</sup>]

July 5, 1933

Nagini,

I have your long letter. It does not appeal to me. You are again dominated by emotion. The golden lid hides the truth. If you will dispossess yourself of Sirios, you must possess all the children of the world. Your world just now is the *Ashram*. If all the children had come from the hills, as poor people's do very often, they flourish in the best manner they can on the plains. It is altogether wrong to think that by suitable changes even little children cannot accommodate themselves to the varying climatic conditions. I do not deny the possibility of Sirios responding to the hills. But your *tapasya* lies in remaining where you are and risking his life. That is the price that faith has to pay. It is no faith that demands complete insurance against risk. Sirios will be all right if you will cease to worry about him and will simply do the nursing.

If my argument or opinion does not appeal to you, you will not hesitate to tell me so. I do not want you to feel helpless or under any sort of compulsion. I want you to feel freer than you ever were. The only thing that binds you to me and the *Ashram* is love and acceptance of the common ideal. I guide you so long as you have confidence in my judgment. I have played sufficiently with the lives of the dearest ones on more occasions than one. But if you are to do likewise, you should do so [only] if you feel the truth of it. You must act out of strength, never out of helplessness. Therefore, you will not hesitate to tell me truly what you feel. I am hoping however that Sirios has no fever and that he is out of all immediate danger. For his rash he needs a wet-sheet pack.

Love.

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<sup>186</sup> SN 19117; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, page 249

<sup>187</sup> SN 21507



*Bapu*

**Telegram, July 6, 1933**<sup>188</sup>

[Nagini wrote again on 5 July that Sirios continued to get fever every afternoon. She was waiting for a telegram from Gandhiji, and Sirios was also thrilled with the thought of the Himalayas.<sup>189</sup>]

NAGINI DEVI

SATYAGRAHASHRAM, SABARMATI

YOUR LETTER. HOPE SIRIOS BETTER. AM CONVINCED YOU SHOULD NOT GO ALMORA. LOVE.

*BAPU*

[In July 1933, Gandhiji decided to close the *Satyagrahashram* at Sabarmati by 1 August. He arranged for the inmates of the *Ashram*, including Nagini, to be transferred to the Wardha *Ashram*. Sirios was admitted to Sharda Mandir, an Indian school in Ahmedabad.

Gandhiji was again in prison from 1 to 23 August, and then stayed in Poona until 16 September to recover from a one-week fast in prison. He wrote to Jamnalal Bajaj, his associate in Wardha, on 30 August that Nagini "seems to have become a little unsettled."<sup>190</sup> And soon after: "Nagini is off the rails again. I can see signs of her unsettled mind in her letters. Till now she was all for Hinduism, and now it is Christianity. That also will be good if she is serious about it. But it doesn't seem to me that she is. Her imagination tosses her from one thing to another."<sup>191</sup>

After he went to Wardha on 23 September, he was able to give much attention to her. But she disappeared from the *Ashram* on 7 October.

On 17 October, Gandhiji issued a statement to the press in which he said:

"I regret to have to inform the public that Shrimati Nila Nagini disappeared suddenly from the Wardha *Ashram* about ten days ago. She had of late become more than usually unbalanced. All the affection that parents, brothers or sisters could show was shown to her, but evidently her fearful past proved too strong for her. It is likely that now she is again

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<sup>188</sup> SN 21508; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, page 250.

<sup>189</sup> SN 21507-A

<sup>190</sup> GN 2923; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, page 383

<sup>191</sup> GN 2924; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, page 401

leading the old thoughtless, untruthful and unclean life.

"I give this information to warn young men against tempting her, or being tempted by her. I would like those who may come in contact with her not to give any financial aid. She is hardly responsible for her actions, and it would be a deliverance for her, if some philanthropic institution would take charge of her. If she sees this notice, I would have her to recall all the promises she made to herself and to me, and in humility to ask God to exorcise the devil that has possessed her. She knows that if she asks truly, her prayer will not go in vain."<sup>192</sup>

He wrote in a letter to Thakkar Bapa, his associate in anti-untouchability work, on 19 October:

"...What should I write about Nagini? I have done my best for her. I think she did try honestly to restrain her passions. But she slipped during her attempts and ultimately ran away. If she drowns herself, I would neither be surprised nor sorry. If she is alive, I would not give up hopes for her improvement. I do not at all repent having readmitted her. It was my duty to do so. She was basking in affection not only here but at Sabarmati also. She used to write to me that she never experienced such affection even from her parents. All were content with whatever little restraint she voluntarily accepted. How can one be changed so suddenly, who remained unbridled for several years?"<sup>193</sup>

And on 25 October:

"From your letter about Nagini, I suspect that you think that I don't want to do anything with her, but that is not the case. I am anxious to have her. But she is so unhinged that she might not come at all."<sup>194</sup>

Gandhiji came to know soon after that after a short stay in Delhi where she met Thakkar Bapa, she went to Brindavan where she wished to visit temples. He sent a telegram on 28 October to Adwait Kumar Goswami in Brindavan to take her to temples if she wished.<sup>195</sup> Thakkar Bapa went to Brindavan in search of her. Gandhiji wrote to him:

"Other friends have roundly blamed me for going out of my way to help her. You, on the contrary, seem to have got annoyed by my apparent indifference on this occasion. I bow to you in reverence a thousand times. Where my love has failed, may yours succeed in melting her heart."<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, October 8, 1933; *Collected Works*, Volume 56, page 102

<sup>193</sup> GN 1133; *Collected Works*, Volume 56, page 106

<sup>194</sup> GN 1130; *Collected Works*, Volume 56, page 138

<sup>195</sup> GN 806; *Collected Works*, Volume 56, page 151

<sup>196</sup> GN 1132; *Collected Works*, Volume 56, page 149

Nagini again went to Delhi on 28 November and was reported to have said: "I don't care what others say. I want speed. I want to fly. I want to attend orchestra dances."<sup>197</sup>

While she abandoned the *Ashram* life and sought to realise her "new dreams," she had pleasant memories of her last days in the *Ashram*. She wrote in 1939 that in the role of Gandhiji's daughter, she had "straightened out an uncompleted relationship with her father." Gandhiji turned out to be "a true mother and father combined."

"I was so happy I began to dance... All day long I smiled and sang... Greater happiness on earth could never be reached. I walked around intoxicated."

Gandhiji, she said, asked her to get to work on her new dances and told her: "When you're true to yourself, then you'll be true to me. There is no other way."

But the *Ashram* was no place to work on dances. She remembered that Gandhiji had told the inmates of the *Ashram*: "I haven't put a fence around the *Ashram*. Any girl who likes can run away with a Romeo, any girl who has reached her majority." She had then left a note for him, "Have gone to find Romeo," and walked out of the *Ashram*.<sup>198</sup>

Early in December, she went to Calcutta where the British authorities treated her as a vagrant and placed her in an Anglican convent. They brought Sirios from Ahmedabad and repatriated them to the United States on February 11, 1934.]

**Letter, January 21, 1941**<sup>199</sup>

Sevagram, *via* Wardha,  
January 21, 1941

Chi. Nila,

I do hope you received my letter in reply to yours some days ago. Now I have another from you through Mr. Whittamore. He is a most lovable man. We all had

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<sup>197</sup> Associated Press despatch in *New York Times*, November 29, 1933.

She was reported to have driven from Muttra in an automobile taken on approval which she overturned seven miles from New Delhi after accelerating speed to seventy miles an hour. She suffered bruises.

<sup>198</sup> Nilla Cram Cook, *My Road to India*, pages 411-14

<sup>199</sup> GN 1218; *Collected Works*, Volume 73, page 291

a very profitable time with him.

You are doing good work there. Do ask Sirios to write to me. Where do you propose to put him?

You will be welcome whenever you can come.

Love.

Bapu

### III. LETTERS TO CHURCHMEN AND MISSIONARIES

[Much of Gandhiji's correspondence was with members of the clergy in the United States and American missionaries in India.

Pacifists, Christian Socialists and other advocates of "social gospel" were attracted to Gandhiji because of his success in persuading millions of people in India to embrace non-violence in their struggle for political freedom and social reform. Though the United States had a long tradition of non-violent action, the pacifists were a small minority. They were conscious of their ineffectiveness during the First World War; Gandhiji's success in India was a great encouragement to them.

Several leaders of the YMCA and the ecumenical movement sought Gandhiji's views and his friendship, recognising his great influence on Indian opinion, and his respect for all religions.

American missionaries in India were bound by the "missionary pledge" that their missions had signed to obtain permission from the British Government to operate in India. Most of them kept aloof from India's struggle for freedom under the leadership of Gandhiji. But some missionaries were inspired by him and demonstrated sympathy for the independence movement, defying threats and expulsions by the authorities. They contributed to the dissemination of the philosophy of non-violent resistance in the United States.

Though their number was small, these progressive churchmen played a significant role in movements in the United States for civil liberties, abolition of racism, opposition to militarism, and protection of the environment. They were also active in promoting sympathy in America for the Indian national movement.]

#### ATKINSON, DR. HENRY A.

**Letter, June 8, 1927<sup>200</sup>**

[Dr. Henry Avery Atkinson (1877-1960), a minister of the Congregational Church, was General Secretary of the Church Peace Union from 1918 to 1955. He sent a letter to Gandhiji on September 5, 1926, through Dr. K.T. Paul, general secretary of YMCA in India, whom he met at a conference in Berne. The Church Peace Union, he said, proposed the holding of a Universal Religious Peace Conference in 1930. It intended to organise a consultation of leaders of various

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<sup>200</sup> SN 12515; *Collected Works*, Volume 33, pages 452-53

religions in 1927 to discuss the proposal. He requested the opinion of Gandhiji on this matter.<sup>201]</sup>

As at *Satyagraha Ashram*,  
Sabarmati (India),  
June 8, 1927

Dear friend,

Mr. K.T. Paul was able only yesterday to hand me personally your letter of 5th September last. He told me that you were likely to visit India during the cold weather this year. If so, I might have the pleasure of being able to discuss your proposal more fully when we meet. At present I shall only say that the idea of a religious conference somehow or other does not appeal to me as religious enough. I say this in all humility.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Henry A. Atkinson  
70, Fifth Avenue  
New York

[Dr. Atkinson met Gandhiji in 1928 to consult on the conference. Gandhiji, who did not consider conferences useful in promoting peace, did not encourage him.<sup>202]</sup>

### CARTER, E. C.

#### **Letter, July 29, 1926<sup>203</sup>**

[In a letter to Gandhiji on June 23, 1926, Mr. Carter, an official of the YMCA who had worked in India for twelve years, expressed his disappointment that Gandhiji would not be attending the World YMCA Conference in Helsingfors. He introduced Miss Nellie Lee Holt - of Stephen's College, Columbia, Missouri - who would be visiting India in December or January "with the primary object of spending two or three weeks in sitting at your feet." She and the President of the College, Mr. Wood, believed that "you stand out as one whose vision and ideals if transplanted to Missouri would help in the enrichment and fulfilment of life."<sup>204]</sup>

The *Ashram*, Sabarmati,  
July 29, 1926

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<sup>201</sup> SN 12536

<sup>202</sup> Gandhiji's letters to A.A. Paul and P.A. Wadia, *Collected Works*, Volume 38, pages 380-81

<sup>203</sup> SN 10792; *Collected Works*, Volume 31, page 227

<sup>204</sup> SN 10774

Dear friend,

I have your letter of the 23rd June last. I know that my inability to visit Helsingfors was a severe disappointment to many friends. It was not less to me. But somehow or other the inner voice within me told me I must not go.

When Miss Nellie Lee Holt comes to India, I shall be delighted to meet her. If she comes during the year there is no difficulty because I do not propose to move out of Sabarmati till the 20th December next and, if the simple life at the *Ashram* is not too trying for her, she will of course stay at the *Ashram*. If she wishes she may make use of the *Ashram* address for receiving all her letters.

Yours sincerely,

E.C. Carter, Esq.,  
129 East 52nd Street  
New York

[Miss Holt and her mother visited Gandhiji at *Satyagrahashram*. Miss Holt wrote an article about the visit in the *New York Times Magazine*, March 11, 1928.]

### **EDDY, THE REVEREND DR. SHERWOOD**

[Dr. Eddy (1871-1963), a YMCA official for many years and author of about 40 books - including *India Awakening* and *The Challenge of the East* (1931) - had worked in India for fifteen years from 1896, and frequently visited India since then. In 1929, he stayed in Gandhiji's *Ashram* for three days, and carried messages between the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, and Gandhiji. A prominent pacifist between the world wars, he moved to the "just war" position during the Second World War and supported the Allies.<sup>205</sup>]

**Letter, August 18, 1934<sup>206</sup>**

Dear Mr. Eddy,

I hope this will be in your hands in due time. If you have to go away without our meeting, I shall be very sorry indeed. During convalescence after the recent fast medical friends would not hear of my leaving Wardha quite so soon, and I do not feel like overriding their advice. If, therefore, we do not meet, you will please put down on paper as much as you can of what you intended to say to me. I know

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<sup>205</sup> For biographical information, see Sherwood Eddy, *Eighty Adventurous Years: An Autobiography*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955.

<sup>206</sup> Pyarelal papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 58, page 320

what a poor substitute it would be for a heart-to-heart conversation. But a letter from you will have its own value for me.

I hope you had a good voyage, and that the same good fortune will accompany you during the balance of your journey.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Sherwood Eddy  
Bombay

**Letter, March 6, 1941**<sup>207</sup>

[Miss Muriel Lester and Dr. John Haynes Holmes wrote to Gandhiji that Dr. Eddy had apparently misquoted him in the book *I Saw God Do It* (1940). He had written that Gandhiji was not an absolute pacifist and recognised that a modern State cannot be maintained without a police force and an army. "When the writer asked him personally how a divided Indian army could be commanded by a Moslem, a Hindu or Sikh, he told me they could first ask an American or some foreign neutral to lead their army. But Gandhi pacifists and Indian nationalists would defend their country... by the full force of their army." Gandhiji wrote in *Harijan* denying ever making such a statement and suggested that Dr. Eddy correct himself.<sup>208</sup>]

Sevagram,  
March 6, 1941

Dear Dr. Eddy,

I thank you for your kind letter. It would be well if you make a general statement.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

Sherwood Eddy  
52 Vanderbilt Avenue  
New York City

**FANGMEIER, ROBERT A.**

[Mr. Fangmeier was a member of the Disciples of Christ.]

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<sup>207</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 73, page 360

<sup>208</sup> *Harijan*, July 28, 1940; *Collected Works*, Volume 72, pages 282-83



**Letter, February 20, 1947<sup>209</sup>**

[Gandhiji was at that time touring Noakhali District in Bengal to stop violence between Hindus and Muslims.]

Kazhirkhil  
Ramganj P.S.  
Noakhali Dist.,  
February 20, 1947

Dear friend,

I have your letter through Dr. Stanley Jones. Please do not ask me for any article at the present moment. Whilst I am shouldering the present burden I have neither the time nor the inclination to go outside the present task. Remuneration would have been no consideration for I never write for remuneration.

Yours sincerely,

Robert A. Fangmeier, Esq.  
1236, 11th Street, N.W.  
Washington 1, D.C.

**FISHER, THE RIGHT REVEREND F.B. (AND MRS. FISHER)**

[Frederick Bohn Fisher (1882-1938) was a missionary in India from 1904 and Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Calcutta from 1920. He returned to the United States in 1930 and became Bishop of Ann Arbor, Michigan. He was the author of several books including *India's Silent Revolution* (New York, 1919) and *That Strange Little Brown Man Gandhi* (New York, 1932) which was banned by the British authorities in India.

He first met Gandhiji in 1917 and they became life-long friends.

Bishop Fisher visited South Africa in 1925 and his report on the plight of Indians in that country was highly appreciated by Gandhiji.

His wife, Mrs. Welthy Honsinger Fisher, visited India in 1947 and met Gandhiji. Returning to India in 1952, she established the Literacy Village near Lucknow.]

**Letter, February 11, 1926<sup>210</sup>**

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<sup>209</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 94, page 372

Ashram, Sabarmati,  
February 11, 1926

Dear friend,

I was delighted to receive your letter just before your departure for America where I hope you and Mrs. Fisher will have a good time.

I have no doubt that whatever the present result of the South African struggle, the seed sown by you and now being watered by Mr. [C.F.] Andrews will bear ample fruit in its own time. I cannot be dislodged from my faith in the ultimate triumph of truth which to my mind is the only thing that counts. The downs of life on the way to it will have been all forgotten when we have attained the summit.

Mrs. Fisher asked me for a message. I can only repeat what I have been saying to so many American friends who have been calling on me, namely, what is required most is serious and careful study of the Indian movement. What I see happening in America is distressful, either an exaggerated view of the movement or a belittling of it. Both are like distortions. I regard the movement to be one of permanent interest and fraught with very important consequences. It therefore needs a diligent study, not a mere superficial newspaper glance. May your visit to America then result in the more accurate estimate of the movement in India.

Whenever you can come to the *Ashram*, you know you are sure of a welcome.

Yours sincerely,

Bishop Fisher  
150 Fifth Avenue,  
New York City

**Letter, October 26, 1928<sup>211</sup>**

[Bishop Fisher wrote in a letter to Gandhiji from Hingham, Massachusetts, on September 7, 1928: "*Mother India* has created a terrible sensation in America. It has been difficult to know just how to meet the situation... There is now coming off from the press a book by Gertrude Marvin Williams called *Understanding India*, which I believe will help in many ways to correct the wrong impressions which Miss Mayo has given..." He recommended that Gandhiji convey his opinion of the book to the author and perhaps review it in *Young India*.<sup>212</sup> Miss Williams had assisted Bishop Fisher in writing his book, *India's Silent*

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<sup>210</sup> SN 14095; *Collected Works*, Volume 30, page 8

<sup>211</sup> SN 13509; *Collected Works*, Volume 37, page 398

<sup>212</sup> SN 13509. Please see also Section IV, "Ashbrook, Miss Harriet".

*Revolution.*]

Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati,  
October 26, 1928

Dear friend,

I had your letter from Hingham. I have got the book also, called *Understanding India*. I do not know when I shall get the time but as soon as I do, I shall read Mrs. Williams's book.

I reciprocate the hope that we shall meet one another some time next year.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. F. B. Fisher  
Methodist Episcopal Church,  
3 Middleton Street,  
Calcutta

**Letter, August 12, 1929<sup>213</sup>**

[This is an appreciation of C.F. Andrews, a friend of Gandhiji and India. He had taken a special interest in investigating and publicising the conditions of Indians abroad and in assisting them in their struggles for their rights.]

Sabarmati,  
August 12, 1929

Dear friend,

What I think of Andrews is that India has no servant more devoted, more sincere and more hard-working than *Deenabandhu* Andrews. He is truly what the Fiji Indians, I think, called him, *Deenabandhu*, friend of the lowly.

Yours,

**Letter, October 3, 1929<sup>214</sup>**

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<sup>213</sup> SN 32577/113; *Collected Works*, Volume 92, page 57

<sup>214</sup> SN 15602; *Collected Works*, Volume 41, page 503

[Bishop Fisher wrote to Gandhiji on September 25, 1929, that the Golden Rule Foundation of New York, which was interested in child welfare, had requested him to forward to Gandhiji a letter requesting information concerning specific ways in which American philanthropists might assist in meeting the economic limitations which surround Indian children. (The Golden Rule Foundation was the successor to the Near East Relief Association, which had donated millions of dollars after the First World War for relief in Mesopotamia, Palestine and Turkey.) He asked for Gandhiji's recommendation so that he could second it.<sup>215</sup>]

Camp Azamgarh,  
October 3, 1929

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter of the 25th ultimo. In the papers forwarded to me from Sabarmati I do not find the letter from the Golden Rule Foundation of New York referred to by you. But I can guess the purport of that letter from your letter. As I am dictating this, one thing does occur to me, namely, the scarcity of milk for Indian children. What American friends may do in giving constructive help is not to send doles of charity but to send expert knowledge in dairying, experts who are not exploiters in the disguise of philanthropists but true philanthropists who will give knowledge for the sake of giving it and who will study the condition of India's cattle and show us the way of improving our cattle breed and the supply of milk from the existing cattle. This idea, if it is entertained in a proper spirit, can be considerably amplified.

Yours sincerely,

Frederick B. Fisher, Esq.  
Bishop's Residence  
Methodist Episcopal Church  
3 Middleton Street, Calcutta

**Letter, September 29, 1931<sup>216</sup>**

[Bishop Fisher sent a telegram on September 23, 1931, to Gandhiji, then in London, requesting him to send a "strong message to American Christians on world peace and disarmament." <sup>217</sup>]

88 Knightsbridge,

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<sup>215</sup> SN 15601

<sup>216</sup> SN 17872 and facsimile of letter in *That Strange Little Brown Man - Gandhi; Collected Works*, Volume 48, pages 85-86

<sup>217</sup> SN 17872

London, W.1,  
September 29, 1931

Dear friend,

I was deeply touched by your prayerful greetings. My message to American Christians on World Peace and Disarmament is that Peace and Disarmament are not a matter of reciprocity. When real Peace and Disarmament come, they will be initiated by a strong nation like America - irrespective of the consent and co-operation of other nations.

An individual or a nation must have faith in oneself and in the protective power of God to find peace in the midst of strife, and to shed all arms by reason of feeling the loving power of God and His protective shield, and I hold such peace to be impossible so long as strong nations do not consider it to be sinful to exploit weak nations.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

The Right Reverend Bishop Fisher  
*c/o Christian Herald*  
New York

**Letter, November 11, 1931<sup>218</sup>**

[Bishop Fisher wrote to Gandhiji on October 1, 1931, enquiring whether he planned to visit the United States after the Round Table Conference in London.

"If so, I want to be of every possible service to you. It would be a pleasure to meet you and to even travel with you, doing everything in my power, just as Andrews has so often done, to guarantee comfort and protection."<sup>219</sup>

He sent a cable on 9 October expressing the hope that Gandhiji would visit America. "Our country needs you dear friend please come."<sup>220</sup> And another telegram on 11 October:

"Please come to America as my guest graciously permitting me to assume full financial responsibility for your trip leaving absolute freedom to choose your own programme of travel and work. Mrs. Fisher or I will accompany you on tour if desired to protect from inconvenience and lovingly try to surround you with

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<sup>218</sup> SN 18282; *Collected Works*, Volume 48, pages 283-84

<sup>219</sup> SN 17923

<sup>220</sup> SN 18029

*ashram* spirit. America needs you and will receive your message seriously. Five hundred Christian ministers at international convention of Disciples of Christ yesterday voted sincere welcome and assurance of spiritual co-operation."<sup>221</sup>

Dr. John Haynes Holmes and several other friends had advised Gandhiji not to undertake the visit at that time. Bishop Fisher wrote a long letter to Gandhiji answering their concerns and explaining the nature of his invitation.

"I want again to assure you of my deep prayers and my abiding interest in the ideals you represent. Your life has made a profound impression upon mine and I shall always look to you as my rare, spiritual guide and friend. I hope even yet that you may decide to come to America... I would then attempt to secure the co-operation of men like Holmes, Atkinson and others... Circumstances might alter their attitude because their hearts are deeply devoted to you and to your ideals."<sup>222]</sup>

88 Knightsbridge,  
London, W.1,  
November 11, 1931

Dear friend,

I have been receiving your very warm letters. I have time just to say this.

With reference to the American visit, my own instinct was that the time had not arrived to visit America. That instinct still abides. I had made up my mind when the visit was first talked about that I would do as Dr. Haynes<sup>223</sup> advised me. This was about 3 years ago or more when the visit was first talked about.

As you know we have since met. He was in London just waiting for me, and I have told him that I would be guided entirely by him in connection with the pressing invitations that I received from America on my landing here.

Dr. Holmes and several other friends are decidedly of the opinion that it would be a mistake for me to go to America. Your decision therefore has come upon me as a surprise. You are just as dear a friend to me as Dr. Holmes; I shall therefore look forward to the result of your conversations with him. You know Richard Gregg too. He also supports Dr. Holmes and enforces the opinion by adding the winter will not be the proper season for me to visit America.

Yours sincerely,

The Right Reverend Bishop Fisher  
The First Methodist Episcopal Church

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<sup>221</sup> SN 18059

<sup>222</sup> SN 18158

<sup>223</sup> Dr. John Haynes Holmes

Ann Arbor, Michigan

**Message, November 17, 1931**<sup>224</sup>

[This message was conveyed by telephone from London to Bishop Fisher, who was in Chicago.]

My friends in India, members of the Working Committee of the Congress, have cabled me to return to India, immediately the conference is over; so I must not go to America. It seems that there is still a long time before I could give any message to America. Perhaps God thinks that, though I would like to meet friends, I have no reason to go to America.

**Letter, to Mrs. Fisher, December 28, 1941**<sup>225</sup>

[Mrs. Fisher wrote to Gandhiji requesting a few words to be included in a biography of Bishop Fisher.<sup>226</sup>]

Bardoli,  
December 28, 1941

Dear sister,

I have yours of October 17th received yesterday.

To send you season's greetings is a mockery when hatred reigns supreme and God of Love and Truth is disowned.

Here are a few lines for your book.

"I had the privilege of coming in close contact with the late Bishop Fisher. He seemed to me to be one among the few Christians who walked in the fear of the Lord and therefore feared no man."

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

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<sup>224</sup> *Bombay Chronicle*, November 19, 1931; *Collected Works*, Volume 48, page 303

<sup>225</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 75, page 186

<sup>226</sup> Welthy Honsinger Fisher, *Frederick Bohn Fisher, World Citizen*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944.

**GEHMAN, THE REVEREND GILBERT T.<sup>227</sup>**

[Mr. Gehman (1898-1932), pastor at Cookman Methodist Episcopal Church in Columbia, Pennsylvania, preached a sermon on the life of Gandhiji at a Sunday evening service on November 15, 1931. At that time, he wrote a letter to Gandhiji, then in London attending the Round Table Conference, expressing appreciation for Gandhiji's non-violent way of life.<sup>228</sup>]

**Postcard, December 17, 1931<sup>229</sup>**

Port Said  
December 17, 1931

Dear friend,

I must thank you for your letter of 15<sup>th</sup> November last. I am glad that your congregation appreciates the non-violent means we are adopting to regain our lost liberty.

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

Rev. Gilbert T. Gehman  
Parsonage  
625 Chestnut Street  
Columbia, PA

**GOHEEN, J.L.**

[John Lawrence Goheen (1883?-1948) was a missionary in India.]

**Letter, November 18, 1934<sup>230</sup>**

November 18, 1934

Dear friend,

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<sup>227</sup> The postcard to Mr. Gehman is not in the printed edition of the book.

<sup>228</sup> *Mennonite Life*, June 1983

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 59, page 369



I thank you for your letter. I have now received the parcel of eggs for which I thank you. Though you have sent me no bill for the eggs, I shall thank you to tell me at what price they are sold. I shall send the container back as soon as possible.

I have your second letter. Please give my regards to your pupils who, I hope, will be discharged as competent workers. If you will render me a regular bill, I should like you to send me eighteen eggs per week till further instructions. You can make the commencement on the receipt of this.

Yours sincerely,

J.L. Goheen, Esq.  
Sangli Industrial and Agricultural School  
American Presbyterian Mission  
Sangli (M.S.M.Rly)

### **GREENWAY, THE REVEREND CORNELIUS**

**Letter, February 21, 1926<sup>231</sup>**

[The Unitarian Church in Taunton, Massachusetts, sent greetings to Gandhiji in 1925 and received a reply. The Reverend Cornelius Greenway (1898-1968), pastor of the church, wrote to Gandhiji on January 6, 1926, that he wished to send some money to be used by him for sick and poor people in India, and asked for the address to which it should be sent. Describing himself as a "friend and admirer," he also requested a signed photograph for his personal library.<sup>232</sup>]

*Ashram, Sabarmati,*  
(India)  
February 21, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your letter. What I have given you at the top is my permanent address and remittance you may send to that address will be duly received.

I appreciate your prayers and good wishes of all of which this country stands badly in need.

I do not keep any photograph of mine nor have I given a sitting for years. All the

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<sup>231</sup> SN 14114; *Collected Works*, Volume 30, pages 39-40

<sup>232</sup> SN 12421

photographs therefore that you see are snapshots. I wish therefore you will not want one.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. Cornelius Greenway  
409, Cohamvet St.  
Taunton, MASS

[The Reverend Greenway wrote another letter to Gandhiji on September 17, 1931, from the All Souls Universalist Church in Brooklyn, NY, where he had moved. He had sent in July 1931 another donation of \$25, collected from friends interested in Gandhiji's work. He congratulated Gandhiji on the spiritual quality of his broadcast from London, and said: "We need it desperately for we sing songs of peace and prepare for war." He continued: "When the War broke out in 1917 I was a student and enlisted. Twice was I wounded, once 5 machine gun bullets. I know what War is like and with God's help I hope ever to remain strong enough to denounce War and to further the cause of Peace."<sup>233</sup>]

#### **HIGGINBOTTOM, SAM (AND MRS. HIGGINBOTTOM)**

[Mr. Higginbottom (1874-1958) was an American Presbyterian missionary in India from 1903 to 1945. He established the Allahabad Agricultural Institute in 1918. He and his wife, Jane, developed the Naini Leper Asylum in Allahabad as a model colony. He was also President of the Allahabad Christian College for many years. He was the author of *Gospel and the Plow* (1921), *What Does Jesus Expect of the Church* (1941) and *Sam Higginbottom, farmer: an Autobiography* (1949).

Gandhiji first met him at the lecture series held on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the Benares Hindu University in February 1916 and was impressed by his lecture. They became friends and soon entered into correspondence about the means to deal with poverty in India. Although they disagreed as to whether agriculture or village industries should be given priority, they were both deeply interested in the problem of poverty. Gandhiji visited the Agricultural Institute and the leper home on November 15, 1929. Dr. Higginbottom, in turn, visited Gandhiji's *Ashram* and inspected the soil in its fields. Gandhiji sought his advice on several occasions.

Mr. Higginbottom was a member of the Board of Advisers of the All India Village Industries Association, set up by Gandhiji in 1934.<sup>234</sup>]

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<sup>233</sup> SN 17772

<sup>234</sup> For biographical information, see his autobiography, and Garry R. Hess, *Sam Higginbottom of Allahabad: Pioneer of Point Four in India* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1967).

**Letter, January 4, 1917**<sup>235</sup>

Ahmedabad,  
January 4, 1917

Dear Mr. Higginbottom,

I have just returned to find the book so kindly sent by you. I thank you for it. Can you now pay the promised visit to the *Ashram*? If you can come, will you address a public meeting?

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

**Letter, January 16, 1917**<sup>236</sup>

Ahmedabad,  
January 16, 1917

Dear Mr. Higginbottom,

You will see from the enclosed what fate befell my poor post card. Since writing the post-card, I have read the book. It was a perfect treat for me. It has enabled me almost to take a definite step in matters educational. You will hear about it probably very soon and perhaps give me the benefit of your advice.

Hoping you will be able at an early date to visit the *Ashram*,

I am,  
Yours truly,  
M. K. Gandhi

[Mr. Higginbottom wrote to Gandhiji on January 21, 1917, that he would visit the *Ashram* and stay there for a day.<sup>237</sup>]

**Letter, March 2, 1925**<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Higginbottom Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 91, page 108

<sup>236</sup> GN 8933; *Collected Works*, Volume 13, page 330

<sup>237</sup> SN 6338

<sup>238</sup> Higginbottom Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 91, page 292

As at Sabarmati,  
March 2, 1925

Dear friend,

I have your letter for which many thanks. I shall certainly call at your farm when I come to Allahabad. At the present moment I must not especially pay a visit there. I have not a day to spare. Have you seen my condensation of your evidence in Y.I.?<sup>239</sup> Did you receive my note from the Yeravda prison?

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

**Letter, December 17, 1926**<sup>240</sup>

As at the *Ashram*,  
Sabarmati  
December 17, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your letter. It is evident that thoughts produce effects, perhaps, more powerful than the spoken word; for, if you have thought so much of me, for which many thanks, I have thought none the less of you and I have spoken to so many about you and your acts.

I do not think there is any chance of my passing through Allahabad in the near future and I have in front of me a prolonged tour. But I am likely to be at the *Ashram* at the end of February when, if you could come over and pass a day or two, we could have a quiet time together and you could see the *Ashram* activities and also give us the benefit of your valuable advice in the agricultural work we are doing.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

Sam Higginbottom, Esq.  
Allahabad Agricultural Institute  
Allahabad

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<sup>239</sup> Gandhiji published extracts from his evidence before the Taxation Enquiry Committee in *Young India* of February 26, 1925.

<sup>240</sup> GN 8935; *Collected Works*, Volume 32, pages 436-37

**Telegram, February 18, 1927<sup>241</sup>**

[Mr. Higginbottom wrote on February 11, 1927, asking for a date when he could have a few hours of quiet talk with Gandhiji.

"The reason I am asking for an interview is that I would like to discuss with you some of the rural problems and see if we can find any solution for them. It does not seem right to me that so many people in India should be so miserably, wretchedly poor and remain so. I believe that God has placed good men and women in the world and that they prove they are good by helping the helpless and the poor and the needy. I am not interested in discussing religious questions as such, believing as I do that the most religious life is the one that does most for God and for humanity in setting the captive free from the chains with which custom and despotism have bound him."<sup>242]</sup>

AHMEDNAGAR,  
FEBRUARY 18, 1927

TO  
ALAGIN  
NAINI

YOUR LETTER. COULD YOU COME SABARMATI NINTH TENTH  
TWELFTH OR THIRTEENTH MARCH STAYING WITH ME AT LEAST  
TWENTYFOUR HOURS.

GANDHI

[Mr. Higginbottom wrote to Gandhiji on 21 January that he would arrive at the *Ashram* on 11 March. He sent two telegrams and wrote a letter in March, asking for a new date, as he could not visit the *Ashram* on 11 March because of illness.<sup>243]</sup>

**Letter, March 14, 1927<sup>244</sup>**

Dear friend,

I had your wires to which I sent a reply at Lyallpur. I then received another wire today. I am helpless. I must keep an appointment which involves thousands of poor men and women. I could have intercepted you on the way but I thought that

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<sup>241</sup> Higginbottom Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 91, page 412

<sup>242</sup> SN 11776

<sup>243</sup> SN 12569

<sup>244</sup> Higginbottom Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 91, pages 413-14

you should see the *Ashram* before seeing me. Pray make yourself at home at the *Ashram* and examine everything critically and have a heart-to-heart chat with my co-workers. You can then meet me near Bardoli at the Conference I am taking in on the 16th<sup>245</sup> or at Bardoli itself on the 17th. You can reach it *via* Surat. Mr. Banker will telegraph your wishes and I shall arrange for a friend to meet you at Surat and he will bring you to me wherever I may be on the Tapti Valley Railway.

I am sorry for all the trouble you are being put to. But my programme is so rigid that I dare not interfere with it.

I hope you are strong and fit and that you will have no inconvenience at the *Ashram*.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

[Mr. Higginbottom wrote in his autobiography that he had visited Gandhiji in his *ashram* in March 1927 and saw "the beginning of his cottage industry, gardens and trenching of night soil, which he had taken over from us."<sup>246</sup>]

**Letter, May 29, 1927<sup>247</sup>**

[Gandhiji fell ill at the end of March and went to Nandi Hills, near Bangalore, for rest on the advice of doctors.]

Kumara Park,  
Bangalore,  
May 29, 1927

Dear friend,

A correspondent in Mysore has sent me the following which is being distributed fairly liberally. Before I say anything about the writing, will you kindly tell me whether you are correctly reported and whether the extracts reproduced do you full justice?

I had your letter of kind enquiry for which I thank you. I am making steady progress. I am likely to be in these parts yet for a while. It will therefore be better to send your answer directly to the address noted at the top.

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>245</sup> The Rani Paraj Conference at Khanpur on March 16, 1927

<sup>246</sup> *Sam Higginbottom, Farmer*, page 177

<sup>247</sup> SN 14134; *Collected Works*, Volume 33, page 399

Dr. Sam Higginbottom  
Agricultural Institute  
Allahabad

[Mr. Higginbottom replied on 4 June that his article, in which he had attributed Indian poverty to three causes, had been mutilated by the New York editor.<sup>248</sup>]

**Letter, June 11, 1927**<sup>249</sup>

Kumara Park, Bangalore,  
June 11, 1927

Dear friend,

I thank you for your prompt reply.

In the circumstances mentioned by you, I will not make any use of the publication referred to in my previous letter.

Whilst I agree with you that all religious doctrine has an economic aspect and that economic law is as much God's law as religious law, I profoundly differ from your application of the doctrine. It can easily be shown that transmigration has nothing to do with poverty. The present system of caste has certainly something to do with it. The treatment of women again can be shown to have no connection with poverty. But if you can spare the time, I would certainly value an article or two from your pen giving your views about caste and their treatment and your argument in proof of your belief that the three things mentioned by you are "in combination, the primary and fundamental causes of India's poverty." If you think that there is room for correcting your opinion about the fundamental causes of India's poverty we may discuss the causes through private correspondence. I know you to be a well-wisher of the country and a searcher after truth. I know also that you have great capacity for serving India. I am therefore most anxious to take all the advantage I can of your love of the country and your great knowledge in the interest of a cause which is common to us both. I am therefore anxious that so far as it is possible, there should be agreement between us about the fundamental cause of the great and growing poverty of India.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, March 28, 1928**<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> SN 12915

<sup>249</sup> SN 12915; *Collected Works*, Volume 33, page 467

<sup>250</sup> SN13137; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 151

The Ashram,  
Sabarmati  
March 28, 1928

Dear friend,

When I had the pleasure of being shown over your farm on the banks of the Jumna, I remember having seen a contrivance whereby you heated your water by the sun heat. Will you please tell me whether it was merely the tank put on your building and exposed to the full sun or whether you concentrated by some mechanical contrivance the rays of the sun on to the tank?

Yours sincerely,

Sam Higginbottom, Esq.  
Agricultural Institute  
Allahabad

**Letter to Mrs. Higginbottom, April 7, 1928<sup>251</sup>**

The Ashram,  
Sabarmati,  
April 7, 1928

Dear friend,

It was good of you so promptly to reply to the enquiry addressed to your husband. Please send my regards when you write to him.

Nothing is yet certain about my proposed visit to Europe. But even if I go to Europe I hardly think I shall be able to combine both Europe and America during the few months alone which I can allow myself.

Yours sincerely,

[Mr. Higginbottom received Gandhiji's letter in the United States and replied on May 2, 1928:

"I bought for a few rupees some second-hand iron pipe coil from an ice factory, placed them on the roof where the sun could shine on them, painted them black to absorb the heat. The pipes are connected to two iron tanks or water barrels: one gets the cold water and one stores the hot

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<sup>251</sup> SN 13171; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 202



water."<sup>252]</sup>

**Letter, September 2, 1929<sup>253</sup>**

[A student of Mr. Higginbottom wrote to Gandhiji on August 16, 1929, that Mr. Higginbottom had said that though Gandhiji deprecated untouchability, he had turned away a *Harijan* girl who was a member of his household instead of improving her. He asked Gandhiji if that was true.<sup>254</sup>

Gandhiji sent the student's letter to Mr. Higginbottom and gave the facts about the "sweet and naughty" *Harijan* girl, Lakshmi, who lived as his own daughter but often went to her natural parents, Dudabhai and Danibehn, former inmates of the *Ashram*. Mr. Higginbottom apologised to Gandhiji, as he had done to the class, for the misstatement. He said:

"Your kind letter has showed me where my mistake was. One of your colleagues mentioned to me the fact that the girl having been naughty had been sent away. He did not explain what you do, that she was in the habit of going and returning to her natural parents.

"I note you say there is no corporal punishment or compulsion at the *Ashram*. I wish I could see it that way, but all my experience is that for the sake of the child some restraining discipline is necessary."

Then he quoted the Bible, twelfth chapter of Hebrews, that the Lord chastens whom he loves.<sup>255]</sup>

Sabarmati,  
September 2, 1929

Dear friend,

Your frank and free letter does my soul good. But I had expected nothing less from you. My rule always is never to criticise even strangers about anything said or done by them without first verifying facts through them whenever they are within reach.

As for the girl she is the most difficult problem we have. The attention of our best men and women is given to her. We are trying the method of no corporal punishment regarding her, though the temptation is often great. But we have not lost hope. I have personally tested the method for over 20 years with growing

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<sup>252</sup> SN 12972

<sup>253</sup> Kusumbehn Desai's Diary, SN 32577/147; *Collected Works*, Volume 92, page 73

<sup>254</sup> SN 15469

<sup>255</sup> SN 15243

confidence. Of course it does not apply to infants though even in their case, punishment is rare.

Don't you think the quotation from *Hebrews* is irrelevant? May we copy God Who is infallible in His judgements and Who creates if He also destroys?

Yours, etc.

**Letter, March 21, 1934**<sup>256</sup>

[A large area of Bihar was devastated by an earthquake on January 15, 1934, and thousands of people were killed. Gandhiji toured the province in March to promote relief. He was accompanied by Rajendra Prasad, the Congress leader in Bihar. While in the area, he received a letter from Mr. Higginbottom offering the assistance of his Institute in relief operations. Mr. Higginbottom visited the area after receiving this reply from Gandhiji. Twenty students from the Institute and several teachers volunteered to work in relief projects in the summer.]

Patna,  
March 21, 1934

Dear friend,

Your letter has given me great joy. I take you at your word. Come, see the afflicted area and tell us:

- (1) how best and cheaply we can clear our choked wells;
- (2) how we can house the homeless;
- (3) how drain water-logged areas;
- (4) how remove the sand which covers our fair fields.

These are but samples of the work in front of us. Of course the Government and the people are working in unison. But you know my regard for your expert knowledge. Even if you do not show us anything new, I personally will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have seen the area. If you come please let the Central Relief Office, Patna, know in time. Someone will meet you at the station and arrange a tour programme of five days after your reaching here.

I leave tomorrow morning with Rajendrababu to visit balance of the area yet unseen by me. But you may come independently of me. You will cross me at

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<sup>256</sup> GN 8936; *Collected Works*, Volume 57, page 205

some point. I return to Patna on 4th proximo evening and leave for Purnea and thence for Assam on 7th proximo.

My regards to you and Mrs. Higginbottom.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

Prof. Sam Higginbottom  
Agricultural Institute  
Allahabad

**Letter, November 11, 1934**<sup>257</sup>

[This letter concerns the All India Village Industries Association which was formed on December 15, 1934.]

November 11, 1934

Dear friend,

I do appreciate your letter of the 8th instant just received. Do please send me all your suggestions. You would have seen the brief statement I had issued. Nevertheless I send you a copy for ready reference. It represents an outline of my mind's working. I do not propose to tour in connection with the work, at least not at the present moment. I am holding informal discussions with friends interested in the project, and I have Prof. [J.C.] Kumarappa with me just now. I would love to meet you in the course of the month after a preliminary exchange of views by correspondence. That will enable us to save our time at the time of discussion.

I am sure you realise one fundamental fact. What applies to America and England does not necessarily apply to India. India has in her teeming millions so many superfluous days that she does not need to free the energy of her sons for superior or more remunerative work through highly developed machinery. In her 350 million children she has so many living ready-made machines, and if she can utilise their labour, half of which is running to waste, the double starvation of the body and the mind will cease. That is the problem that faced me when I returned to India in 1915, and has haunted me ever since.

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>257</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 59, page 324

Prof. Sam Higginbottom  
Allahabad Christian College  
Agricultural Institute,  
Allahabad

**Letter, November 26, 1936**<sup>258</sup>

Segaon, Wardha,  
November 26, 1936

Dear friend,

Just as it was a farm manager's turn to pass a few months at your institute and pick up such knowledge as he could, it is now *Shri* Mirabai Slade's<sup>259</sup> desire to have her turn, if you will let her come. Our village work whets the appetite for knowledge required for the service. Mirabai is a lover of cattle as also farming. She has a natural aptitude for such work. She is anxious to come as quickly as she can if you can take her. Of course she will pay the necessary charges. The question of housing her may be a difficulty. If she has a room in a professor's house, she will be satisfied.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

**Letter, November 15, 1941**<sup>260</sup>

Dear Professor,

I am in need. I want a good, sound man who can guide *Seth* Jamnalal [Bajaj] in the matter of cows and dairying. He must be an expert. *Sethji* has taken up cow-protection as his life's mission. He has need of an adviser to guide him. I have advised him to correspond with you in such matters and assured him that you will give him guidance.

I need, too, one who can be director of an agricultural and dairying institute. He can get a good salary. If you have one in view, will you please put me in touch with him?

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<sup>258</sup> GN 8937; *Collected Works*, Volume 64, page 77

<sup>259</sup> Mirabehn (Miss Madeleine Slade), an associate of Gandhiji

<sup>260</sup> GN 8938; *Collected Works*, Volume 75, page 99

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

Prof. Sam Higginbottom  
Agricultural Institute  
Naini, Allahabad

**Letter, February 17, 1942**<sup>261</sup>

[Jamnalal Bajaj, a businessman and disciple of Gandhiji, died in Wardha on February 11, 1942. He had been the leader of the *Goseva Sangh* (Cow Protection Society).]

February 17, 1942

I thank you for your letter of sympathy. I know that the *Sangh* can rely upon your full co-operation. I have a meeting at Wardha on the 20th instant to consider the ways and means of continuing *Sheth* Jamnalal's work.

**Letter to Mrs. Higginbottom, October 23, 1944**<sup>262</sup>

Dear sister,

I have your very kind letter. I have very few English-knowing girls. I would like you to be able to give me a fairly full course to village-minded Hindi-knowing girls for village maternity work. Must it take four years? I confess I am in the dark and so are my medical friends, not having worked in the villages. You won't think in terms of America. How can the village midwife be trained in the first principles?

My loving regards to both of you.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

Mrs. Sam Higginbottom  
Home-Making Dept.  
Allahabad Agriculture Institute  
Allahabad

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<sup>261</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 75, page 329

<sup>262</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 78, page 225

## HOLMES, THE REVEREND DR. JOHN HAYNES

[Dr. Holmes (1879-1964), clergyman, author, editor and leader of movements for peace, racial equality and civil liberties, was one of the earliest admirers and consistent supporters of Gandhiji in the United States. In a sermon on April 20, 1921, he called Gandhiji the "greatest man in the world." "When I think of Gandhi," he said, "I think of Jesus Christ." He devoted several sermons to Gandhiji and India's struggle for freedom. In his autobiography he wrote: "... this great Indian saint and seer was one of the supreme spiritual geniuses of history."<sup>263</sup>

Gandhiji, in turn, had great respect for Reverend Holmes. As a token of his appreciation, he sent to Dr. Holmes in 1923, through Ms. Jane Addams, a Gandhi cap made out of cotton cloth spun by his own hands.<sup>264</sup>

Dr. Holmes first met Gandhiji in London in September 1931. Later, in 1947, he visited India as the Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Visiting Professor and met Gandhiji again.

Dr. Holmes and Gandhiji had an extensive correspondence. They were both admirers of Tolstoy and friends of Romain Rolland.

A graduate of Harvard Divinity School, Dr. Holmes was a Unitarian Minister in Dorchester and New York from 1907 to 1921 when he founded the non-denominational Community Church in New York. He was Minister of that Church from 1921 to 1949 when he retired.

He was a founder and vice-president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He was a leader of the Anti-Militarist Committee, formed in New York in 1915, which was succeeded by the American Union against Militarism in 1916. He was a founder and later Chairman of the Board of Directors of the American Civil Liberties Union. He was one of the founders of the War Resisters League in 1923.

Dr. Holmes was editor-in-chief of *Unity*, a weekly, and author of many books, including *My Gandhi* (1953) and *I Speak for Myself* (1959), as well as numerous articles and sermons.<sup>265</sup>]

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<sup>263</sup> *I Speak for Myself* (1959), page 279

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, page 254

<sup>265</sup> See also:

S.P.K. Gupta, *Apostle John and Gandhi: The Mission of John Haynes Holmes for Mahatma Gandhi in the United States of America*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1988.

John Haynes Holmes, *My Gandhi*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953.

**Letter, April 6, 1926<sup>266</sup>**

[The earliest available correspondence between Dr. Holmes and Gandhiji is mainly concerned with arrangements for the publication of Gandhiji's autobiography - entitled *My Experiments with Truth* - which began to appear in *Young India* from December 3, 1925. Immediately after seeing the first instalment on January 6, 1926, Dr. Holmes rushed a letter and a telegram to Gandhiji requesting permission to publish it in *Unity*. He received permission and began serialising it from 1 April. Meanwhile, he received a request from Macmillan for a "refusal" on the rights to the publication of the autobiography in book form in America and Great Britain. He wrote to Gandhiji on February 16, 1926, recommending Macmillan and offering to act as an intermediary.<sup>267</sup>]

Ashram, Sabarmati,  
April 6, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your letter of the 16th February last. I did not understand from your cable that you intended it to be exclusively for *Unity*. This idea of exclusion regarding one's writings is new in my life. Your cable about Macmillan Company's offer set me thinking and I felt that it might be as well to let them have the exclusive right of publishing the *Autobiography* in book form if the terms were satisfactory. I should simply put the whole of the proceeds for the development of *khaddar*.

When the time comes for publishing the chapters in book form, it may be syndicated as you suggest but before they are published in book form, the chapters will have to undergo a slight revision which is already being done and if the negotiations with Macmillan Company bear fruit, you will have the revised copy.

Yours sincerely,

John Haynes Holmes, Esq.  
12 Park Avenue  
34th Street, New York City

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Haridas T. Muzumdar, *The Enduring Greatness of Gandhi: an American estimate, being the sermons of John Haynes Holmes and Donald S. Harrington*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1982.

<sup>266</sup> SN 32319; *Collected Works*, Volume 91, pages 358-59

<sup>267</sup> Most of the available letters from Dr. Holmes to Gandhiji may be found in S.P.K. Gupta, *op. cit.*

**Letter, May 28, 1926**<sup>268</sup>

[Dr. Holmes wrote to Gandhiji on 14 April offering to act as his representative, carry out any instructions and protect Gandhiji's interests in negotiations with publishers.]

The *Ashram*, Sabarmati,  
May 28, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your kind letter of the 14th April last. I am surprised at your not receiving my cable which I sent you on the 16th February last giving you an affirmative reply. I have not assigned copyright to anybody as yet because I have been in correspondence with you and because you cabled to me that you were in correspondence with the Macmillans. If the English-speaking public outside India is sufficiently interested in these chapters I do not mind selling the copyright though I have never done it before. The idea of making anything out of my writings has been always repugnant to me. But your cable tempted me and I felt that there might be no harm in my getting money for the copyright and using it for the *charkha* propaganda or the uplift of the suppressed classes. And I felt that if the chapters were published by a house of known standing the message contained in the chapters might reach a wider public. You may please therefore continue your negotiations whether for copyright in America or for both America and Europe. I have several letters from German and other friends for copyright in their respective states but to all I have sent a reply saying that they should wait.

Meanwhile as I am receiving repeated applications for back numbers of *Young India* containing the chapters, I am arranging to issue the first part in book form so as to satisfy this demand.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. John Haynes Holmes  
The Community Church  
12 Park Avenue  
New York City

**Letter, July 9, 1926**<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> SN 32220; *Collected Works*, Volume 91, page 369

<sup>269</sup> SN 32224; *Collected Works*, Volume 91, page 376



[Dr. Holmes contacted Macmillan Company and on 13 May sent their offer to Gandhiji, advising acceptance. They offered an advance of \$500, 10 percent on the first 2,500 copies, 12.5 percent on the next 2,500 and 15 percent thereafter.]

The *Ashram*, Sabarmati,  
July 9, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your letter with a copy of the terms from the Macmillan Company. The offer seems to me to be incomplete. Will you please secure answers to the following questions?

1. The publishers want the right to publish the English edition only and that in America?
2. The first part is being published presently in India in book form. The Macmillan Company, I imagine, will publish after the autobiography is complete or do they want [to] publish in parts?
3. They do not want to control the translation rights?
4. How will they fix the price?
5. What is the method of determining the sales?
6. How will the payment be made on the sale?

Yours sincerely,

Reverend Holmes  
New York City

**Letter, September 21, 1926<sup>270</sup>**

[Dr. Holmes obtained from Macmillan the information requested by Gandhiji and sent it to him on 18 August. Their offer was for the rights to the English-speaking world, for the publication of the complete autobiography in book form.]

The *Ashram*, Sabarmati,  
September 21, 1926

Dear friend,

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<sup>270</sup> SN 32229; *Collected Works*, Volume 91, pages 388-89

I have your letter together with the original terms from the Macmillan Company. There is only one exception that I feel should be made to clause 1. Cession of the rights to the English-speaking world should not include India. My desire is to let the English-knowing public in India have the cheapest possible edition and I think too that the Indian edition should be published in India. The circulation of the Indian edition can be easily restricted to India.

I suppose the Macmillan Company know that I propose publishing parts in book form now as each part is completed from time to time. This would remain unaffected by the proposed contract. It is open to them if they wish to publish the book in parts, in which case circulation of parts outside India can be stopped.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. John Haynes Holmes  
12 Park Avenue  
New York City

**Letter, December 9, 1926**<sup>271</sup>

[Dr. Holmes wrote to Gandhiji on 25 October that Macmillan had agreed to the exception proposed by Gandhiji. He enclosed a contract for signature.]

As at the *Ashram*, Sabarmati,  
December 9, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your letter enclosing the draft agreement prepared by the Company. You will see that I have made 3 additions, all of which are, in my opinion, necessary. I have signed the agreement before two witnesses and initialled the additions whether made by me or the Company.

The two parts I contemplate publishing as soon as possible. It is open to the Macmillan Company to publish the volumes as they get completed. But if they do not feel inclined to do so, they must not mind the sale of Indian edition outside India. Hence the inscription of the addition to clause 12.<sup>272</sup>

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>271</sup> SN 32231; *Collected Works*, Volume 91, page 402

<sup>272</sup> The addition read: "The author reserves the right to publish a cheap edition of the said work for sale in India, it being provided, however, that the sale of the said edition shall be restricted to India, after the time the company's copyright edition is available for sale."

Dr. John Haynes Holmes  
12 Park Avenue  
New York City

**Letter, May 8, 1927<sup>273</sup>**

[Macmillan accepted the additions made by Gandhiji, on the understanding that Gandhiji would confine the circulation of the Indian printings as closely as possible to India. Dr. Holmes sent the completed contract to Gandhiji on January 26, 1927. In a further letter on 4 April, he said that Macmillan were satisfied with the arrangements. "If orders come to you there is no reason why they should not be filled, but Macmillan assumes that you will make no efforts to obtain orders outside of India." He enquired how much longer the autobiography might run in *Young India*.]

The Ashram,  
Sabarmati  
May 8, 1927

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter of the 4th April last.

When the interim volume is published, I shall see that no efforts are made to obtain orders outside of India.

I am unable to tell you when the Autobiography will be finished. I have to write from day to day. I have mapped out no fixed plan. I write every week as the past events develop in my mind on the day allotted for writing the weekly chapter. I am now dealing with events of 1903-04 and I have to cover the stormy period in South Africa extending to the middle of 1914 and the equally stormy 12 years of India. If therefore there is really any demand for these chapters in America or Europe, it will be advisable to publish them in volumes as they are being published here. If the Macmillan Company do not propose to publish the Autobiography in instalments, it will be impossible to prevent sales outside India assuming of course there is a natural as distinguished from stimulated desire in the West for reading these chapters.

Yours sincerely,

M.K. Gandhi

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<sup>273</sup> SN13971; *Collected Works*, Volume 33, pages 299-300

Rev. John Haynes Holmes  
12, Park Avenue and 34th Street  
New York City

**Letter, March 10, 1928**<sup>274</sup>

[Dr. Holmes wrote to Gandhiji in September 1927 expressing sympathy over the floods in Gujarat and informing him that, together with Professor Harry Ward, he had appealed for contributions to what they called the "Gandhi Relief Fund." He sent at least \$735 in instalments as contributions came in. In a letter of February 8, 1928, he wrote that he was watching the developments in India and that newspaper despatches seemed to indicate a momentous revival of the nationalist movement.]

The Ashram,  
Sabarmati,  
March 10, 1928

Dear friend,

I have again to acknowledge with thanks a further contribution of 10 dollars for the relief fund. All these amounts have been passed on to the Secretary of the Relief Fund Committee. But I hope that you have adopted some means of conveying to the donors my sincere thanks for their generosity.

About the general situation here, I would warn you against going by newspaper reports. Whilst there is the bitterest resentment over the Commission camouflage,<sup>275</sup> we are not yet organised enough to offer effective non-violent resistance though I have faith enough that resistance is inevitable and is coming some day not very far.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. John Haynes Holmes  
12 Park Avenue and 34th Street  
New York City

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<sup>274</sup> SN 15181; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 97

<sup>275</sup> In 1928, the British Government appointed the Simon Commission to investigate conditions in India and make recommendations on the desirability of establishing the principle of "responsible government". This was resented by the Indian national movement as Britain did not accede to the demand for dominion status and the Commission included no representative Indians. The Commission was boycotted and there were massive protest demonstrations in all the cities visited by the Commission.

**Letter, April 20, 1928<sup>276</sup>**

[In a letter of March 15, 1928, Reverend Holmes requested a message from Gandhiji for a special issue of *Unity*, in celebration of the centenary of the birth of Tolstoy, to be published on 1 September. He wrote:

"I have come always to associate you two men together as the supreme exemplars in our time of the true religion of the spirit. I feel, therefore, that the special issue of *Unity* in commemoration of Tolstoy Centenary would be incomplete if it did not contain a tribute from your pen...

"I do not want in any way to burden you. Any word from you, however brief, will be welcome. A single sentence in tribute to Tolstoy over your name will outweigh all the tributes of other men."]

The Ashram,  
Sabarmati  
April 20, 1928

Dear friend,

I have your letter. I cannot resist you, but I take you at your word. I send you a single sentence as follows:

Tolstoy's greatest contribution to life lies, in my opinion, in his ever attempting to reduce to practice his professions without counting the cost.

Thanks for your inquiry about my health. I appear to be keeping well at the present moment.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, September 7, 1928<sup>277</sup>**

Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati,  
September 7, 1928

Dear friend,

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<sup>276</sup> SN 14287; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 245

<sup>277</sup> SN 14769; *Collected Works*, Volume 37, page 237

Mr. [C.F.] Andrews is abridging *My Experiments with Truth* for an English firm. I have not interfered with his work thinking that it does not in any way affect the Macmillan Company. But on re-reading the agreement between the Macmillan Company and me, I find there is just a possibility that the Company may think that any publication of an abridgement will interfere with the contract. If so, please let me know. Personally I feel that the contract is of no value to the Macmillan Company seeing that the chapters are still running on and are likely so to do for many more months. If the Company desires it, I am quite willing to cancel the agreement. I am not at all anxious to make money from the publication of the chapters in book form. But I would like not to interfere with interim abridgements, etc., being published. If the Macmillan Company will at once publish the chapters in several volumes, they may then control abridgements or selections; but if they will not publish them in volumes, nor cancel the agreement, they should not mind abridgements being published in England or elsewhere outside India till the whole thing is ready for delivery into their hands.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

Rev. John Haynes Holmes  
12 Park Avenue,  
New York City

[Dr. Holmes discussed the matter with Macmillan and wrote to Gandhiji on October 22, 1928, that Macmillan was unwilling to have Mr. Andrews publish a proposed abridgement through an English publisher and regarded that as a violation of contract. He added:

"I think the solution is to be found in the fact that, as I have been informed, Mr. Andrews is coming to this country early in the New Year... May I suggest to you, and if you approve, suggest to Mr. Andrews that he postpone all negotiations incident to the preparation and publication of his book until he arrives in this country, and then that he take up the matter direct with the Macmillan Company? I feel certain that a satisfactory arrangement can be worked out..."]

**Letter, December 7, 1928<sup>278</sup>**

*Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati,*  
December 7, 1928

Dear friend,

I have your letter as also copy of the Macmillan Company's. I must confess that I

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<sup>278</sup> SN 15122; *Collected Works*, Volume 38, page 178

do not like the tone of their letter. But I suppose they cannot look at this transaction in any other light but that of a business job, whereas I think I have told you I have never entered into any business transactions about my writings. Nor did I enter into this transaction from any pecuniary motive.

Mr. Andrews is in direct correspondence with you and between you two you may do what you can with the Macmillan Company.

The Macmillan Company are mistaken in thinking that the autobiographical articles will be handed to them in a compressed form. When the chapters come to an end, they will be handed to them just as they are. For I should not have the leisure to compress them, and even if I tried, I should not know how to do so for the Western reader.

I am forwarding a copy of your letter to Mr. Andrews.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. John Haynes Holmes  
12 Park Avenue,  
New York City

**Cable, March 1930<sup>279</sup>**

[When the Indian National Congress decided on a struggle with complete independence as the goal, and Gandhiji led the Salt March and the Civil Disobedience Movement, Dr. Holmes and other friends of India intensified their activities in support of Indian freedom. A public meeting was held in the Community Church on October 20, 1929, and Dr. Holmes wrote to Gandhiji on behalf of the meeting:

"... We regard the nationalist movement of India as embodied in the National Congress as the greatest movement of our time, and pray for its success by the noble processes of counsel and wisdom unstained by bloodshed and unmarred by violence...

"You, Sir, are leading not merely India but the world and therefore do we pledge to you in firm allegiance our affection and support."

Dr. Holmes informed Gandhiji by cable on March 6, 1930, that serious damage was being done to the Indian cause by Sailendranath Ghose - who claimed to be representative of the Indian Congress, agent of Gandhiji, etc. - by his wild statements like announcing Indian resolve for military resistance and

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<sup>279</sup> SN 16637; *Collected Works*, Volume 43, pages 24-25

arming million nationalists. This was increasingly alienating sympathies of millions of people. He respectfully urged Congress immediately to disavow Ghose's representative character to prevent further injury.<sup>280</sup>]

NOBODY HAS AUTHORITY REPRESENT ME AMERICA. MOVEMENT ABSOLUTELY PEACEFUL. CONGRESS POLICY OF NON-VIOLENCE REMAINS UNCHANGED. IN EVENT MASS RESPONSE DIFFICULT SAY HOW THINGS WILL SHAPE BUT THOUSANDS BENT ON KEEPING PEACE UNDER GRAVEST PROVOCATION. NO ONE EVEN WHISPERS ABOUT MILITARY RESISTANCE. NO ONE ARMING NATIONALISTS. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE UNDER STRICTEST RESTRICTIONS BEING STARTED ON 12TH.

GANDHI

[The American branch of the Indian National Congress was disaffiliated by the All India Congress Committee in March 1930.]

**Letter, February 23, 1931**<sup>281</sup>

[When Gandhiji was arrested on May 5, 1930, Dr. Holmes collected signatures of over a hundred American clergymen to a letter to the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, urging him to seek an amicable settlement with him.

A Round Table Conference convened by the British Government in London to discuss future political status of India adjourned on January 19, 1931, as it could achieve no progress without the participation of the Congress and Gandhiji. Dr. Holmes wrote to Gandhiji that this was a tribute to his leadership, and informed him that the first anniversary of the Indian Independence Day - January 26, 1931 - was observed in New York, Philadelphia and Washington. Gandhiji was released from prison on that day. He began negotiations with the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, in Delhi on 17 February.]

Camp 1 Daryaganj,  
Delhi,  
February 23, 1931

Dear friend,

As I am now at least temporarily out of jail, I have an opportunity of writing to you more fully than I could from Yeravda. I have followed with gratefulness all the efforts that you have been good enough to make on behalf of India. I feel

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<sup>280</sup> Mr. Ghose was arrested in the United States during the First World War for revolutionary activities for Indian freedom. He organised the Friends of Freedom for India and the American branch of the Indian National Congress. He returned to India in December 1936 after an exile of twenty years.

<sup>281</sup> SN 16943; *Collected Works*, Volume 45, pages 222-23



more and more convinced that if India comes to her own, it will be perhaps the largest contribution to the world peace which we are all praying for. It is too early to give you any idea of the negotiations that are now going on. All I can say is that I am leaving no stone unturned to attain peace with honour. But in the last resort peace or war is the same thing for the *satyagrahi*. He strives always for peace and has to hold himself in readiness for war. In either case he follows the path that truth dictates to him.

I hope you got over all your illness in quick time and that this letter will find you fully restored to health.

Yours sincerely,

J.H. Holmes, Esq.  
The Community Church of New York  
12 Park Avenue, New York City

**Letter, July 30, 1931**<sup>282</sup>

[The talks with the Viceroy in Delhi resulted in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of March 5, 1931. The Congress agreed to participate in a second Round Table Conference in September, with Gandhiji as its sole representative.

Dr. Holmes sent an article to the *Bombay Chronicle* - "Will Gandhiji Compromise?" - with a copy to Gandhiji, refuting fears that he might compromise at the conference on the Congress goal of complete independence.]

As at Sabarmati,  
July 30, 1931

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter and your article. I hope to make use of your article in *Young India*.

There is no certainty about my going to London as yet. There are difficulties which may prove insuperable. I feel that I must not leave India unless some glaring breaches of the Settlement [Gandhi-Irwin Pact] are repaired. I am straining every nerve to avoid a conflict, but the result is in God's hands. But if I do succeed in going to London we must meet.

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>282</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 92, page 273

M.K. Gandhi

[P.S.]

Since signing this I have seen your article printed in the *Chronicle*. I have read it too. It will be unnecessary for me to reproduce it in *Young India*. And in any case it is too personal for reproduction.

Rev. Dr. John Haynes Holmes  
Christal, Hospiz  
Mittelstrasse 5-6  
Berlin N.W. 7 (Germany)

**Letter, November 11, 1931**<sup>283</sup>

[Dr. Holmes was in Europe when he learned that Gandhiji would be visiting London to attend the Second Round Table Conference. He rushed to London and joined the welcoming party which received Gandhiji on arrival at Folkestone by Channel steamer on September 12, 1931. He met Gandhiji several times in the next few days before returning to the United States.

Gandhiji received many invitations to visit the United States after the conclusion of the Conference. Dr. Holmes consulted several friends and wrote to Gandhiji advising him against a visit to the United States at that time.]

88 Knightsbridge,  
London, W.1,  
November 11, 1931

Dear friend,

You have been most diligent in writing to me and to Mahadev and encouraging others to write to me about the much-talked-of visit of mine to America. I do not know, however, whether it was at all necessary for you to take all this trouble either for yourself or others. I never entertained the slightest doubt about the wisdom of your judgment, and I have been absolutely clear in my statements to every Pressman that I would not go to America until you had decided to bring me out there. Having made up my mind to trust your judgment, was I not right in telling all and sundry that you were the keeper of my conscience in this matter?

Of course, it has thrown a little more responsibility upon you, but your shoulders are broad enough to bear it and I am saved a lot of worry in arguing with importunate friends and reporters.

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<sup>283</sup> SN 18283; *Collected Works*, Volume 48, pages 281-82

I met Mr. Bomanji<sup>284</sup> fairly often during the few days that he was here. He is now on his way to India.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, September 10, 1932<sup>285</sup>**

[No settlement was reached at the second Round Table Conference which ended on December 1, 1931. Gandhiji was arrested on January 4, 1932, soon after his return to India. The following letter was sent by Gandhiji from Yeravda Central Prison.]

Y.C.P.,  
September 10, 1932

Dear friend,

Just one line to thank you for your kind letter of 7th August. I have not received Bishop Fisher's book<sup>286</sup> yet. As you know Sardar Vallabhbhai [Patel] and Mahadev Desai are with me. We are turning the time at our disposal to good account. We are just now concentrating upon drawing from the quality of cotton at our disposal as fine a thread as possible. The experiment is deeply interesting and even exciting if there can be excitement about such a humdrum process as hand-spinning. For us it is a demand of Indian humanity.

With kindest regards from us all.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

**Letter, December 21, 1934<sup>287</sup>**

[On November 1, 1934, Dr. Holmes sent a lengthy letter to Gandhiji. He informed Gandhiji of the visit of Mirabeau, an associate of Gandhiji, to the United States and the wonderful impression she made on audiences at her meetings. "She has a marvellous power to convey the inner spirit of her life and vision to those whom

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<sup>284</sup> S.R. Bomanji, owner of *Bombay Chronicle* and friend of Gandhiji, was returning from the United States

<sup>285</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 92, page 347

<sup>286</sup> Frederick B. Fisher, *That Strange Little Brown Man - Gandhi*. New York: Ray Long and Richard R. Smith, 1932.

<sup>287</sup> *The Diary of Mahadev Desai; Collected Works*, Volume 60, page 18

she addresses... I have never in my life seen audiences more profoundly moved."

He conveyed his view that the conditions were now appropriate for a visit by Gandhiji to the United States. "...I feel that it is true now, as it was not in 1931, that the American people are prepared to sit at your feet and learn of your spirit now."]

I have your very kind and full letter. Yes, Mirabehn did extraordinarily well both in Great Britain and America. Truth gives a power that nothing else can. And Mira wanted to express through her speech nothing but what she believed to be the whole truth. She will certainly come to you whenever she feels the call.

As for me I have no call at all. I feel that my work lies here and I can best speak to the world through my work in India.

**Letter, March 7, 1935<sup>288</sup>**

[Dr. Holmes wrote to Gandhiji on January 25, 1935:

"You may remember that two years ago my church conferred upon you our so-called Community Church Medal for outstanding service in the higher religious interests of mankind. I have been holding this Medal all this time feeling that it was not safe to try to send it to you. I have now come to feel however that the way is now open and I shall therefore be sending it to you..."

The Community Church had awarded its medal to Gandhiji on April 24, 1932, when he was in prison. It was received on his behalf by Haridas T. Muzumdar.<sup>289</sup>]

Wardha,  
March 7, 1935

Dear Dr. Holmes,

I have your letter of 25th January last redirected from Delhi by Devdas. I know you have been regularly receiving a diary of events from here. Therefore I need say nothing about them. I do remember a reference to your Church having conferred upon me the Community Church Medal. You may send it to my address at Wardha duly registered and I shall get it.

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<sup>288</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 93, page 9

<sup>289</sup> *Addresses at the Presentation of the Community Church Medal to Mahatma Gandhi* (The Community Pulpit Series No. 18). New York: Community Church, 1932.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

Dr. Holmes  
N.Y.

**Letter, July 27, 1935**<sup>290</sup>

Wardha,  
July 27, 1935

Dear friend,

This will introduce to you *Shri* H.L. Sharma who is an utter stranger to America. He is going there in order to gain further knowledge of natural treatment of diseases. Dr. Kellogg's Battle Creek Sanatorium has attracted his attention. I now learn from Dr. Kellogg's representative that he has stopped taking in pupils. I can think of no better guide for *Shri* Sharma than your good self. He wants to live there as a very poor man. He is hard working. If he can work for his studies and food, he would like it and so would I. If he cannot, he is assisted by a friend who will defray his expenses. Please give him such help as is in your power to give him. I am not giving *Shri* Sharma any further introductions, not even to Haridas [Muzumdar]. Whatever you may think necessary in this direction, you will please do. I know you do not mind my putting you to this trouble. It will interest you to know that *Shri* Sharma is pursuing this study purely to serve diseased humanity.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

**Letter, January 18, 1939**<sup>291</sup>

[The *New York Times* had published an AP despatch from India in December 1938 under the headline "Gandhi would back war to end Nazi persecution." It quoted him as writing in the *Harijan*: "If ever there could be a justifiable war in the name of humanity, a war against Germany - to prevent the persecution of a whole race - would be justified." It omitted the rest of the quotation: "But I do not believe in any war..."<sup>292</sup> Dr. Holmes sent a clipping to Gandhiji.]

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<sup>290</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 61, page 288

<sup>291</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 93, page 234

<sup>292</sup> The quotation is from an article entitled "The Jews" in *Harijan*, November 20, 1938; *Collected Works*, Volume 68, pages 137-41.

Bardoli,  
January 18, 1939

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter and the newspaper cutting. The heading is a misrepresentation of the purpose of my article. This is clear even from the cabled summary. But when you read the original you will discover what a cruel misrepresentation it is.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

Minister John Haynes Holmes  
New York City

[Dr. Holmes replied to Gandhiji on February 14, 1939, that the *New York Times* was responsible for the inaccurate heading and the omission of one or two sentences from the original statement in the Associated Press despatch. He had been in correspondence with the editor of the *New York Times* and the editor at the New York office of the Associated Press, and believed that this sort of thing would not happen again.]

**Letter, July 6, 1944**<sup>293</sup>

[Dr. Holmes sent condolences to Gandhiji on the death of Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi in prison on February 22, 1944. Gandhiji was released from prison in May 1944 when he fell ill.]

As at Sevagram, via Wardha,  
July 6, 1944

Dear friend,

I was much touched by your letter of 10th May last.

Dissolution of my wife's body has enriched my life. For, I remember only her great merits. Her limitations were reduced to ashes with the body.

As for me, I am making slow but steady progress.

We are all passing through anxious times. Sympathy of friends like you sustains me in my struggle against forces of evil.

Mirabehn has gone to the Himalayas for health's sake.

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<sup>293</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 77, page 355

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

Dr. John Haynes Holmes  
10 Park Avenue  
New York, 16, N.Y.

**Letter, June 23, 1945<sup>294</sup>**

[Gandhiji was on his way to Simla for a conference of leaders of political parties with the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, to discuss the formation of a National Government.]

As at Sevagram, *via* Wardha,  
On the train,  
June 23, 1945

Dear friend,

I am writing this whilst I am silent. This is being written on the train taking me to Simla. In answer to your affectionate letter of 23rd April I can only say I am pouring my whole soul into the attempt to express truth and non-violence in fighting the battle for the independence of India's vast, dumb and starved masses.

This will be typed for your easy reading.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

Rev. John Haynes Holmes  
10 Park Avenue  
New York 16, N.Y.

**Letter (by Rajkumari Amrit Kaur on behalf of Gandhiji), June 27, 1946<sup>295</sup>**

[Devdas Gandhi, son of Gandhiji, visited the United States in 1946 and met Dr. Holmes on 24 May. Dr. Holmes sent a letter through him conveying his love and

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<sup>294</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 80, page 362

<sup>295</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 94, pages 280-81

best wishes.<sup>296]</sup>

Reading Road, New Delhi,  
June 27, 1946

Dear friend,

Your letter of 5-6-46 arrived here on the 22nd. Gandhiji is so very overburdened that he literally does not get time to look at his post. I read out your kind thoughts to him day before yesterday and he has asked me to acknowledge your letter with thanks. You will understand that he is too busy to write himself.

The three months since the British Cabinet Mission came out have been long and anxious. It is with sorrow that Gandhi has had to admit - as you may have seen in the press - that his mind is clouded with doubt. Where there was light there is darkness at the moment. Things have not gone as we hoped they would. Circumstances have tipped the balance on, as we think, the wrong side. However, as Gandhiji says, if we have the requisite faith and our own actions are motivated by pure impulses, we must believe that whatever happens is for our ultimate good.

It was good to hear of Devdas's valuable work from you. He ought soon to be out here again.

Gandhiji is amazingly well. Louis Fischer who sees him after four long and difficult years finds him better than in 1942.

Yours sincerely  
A.K.

The Rev. John Haynes Holmes  
10 Park Avenue  
New York 16, N.Y.

**Letter, October 16, 1946<sup>297</sup>**

New Delhi,  
October 16, 1946

Dear Mr. Holmes,

Your kind letter of 27-9-1946 and the little book came into my hands only

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<sup>296</sup> Pyarelal Papers, file 4(12)

<sup>297</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 85, page 467



yesterday. His goods had to follow Devdas. He could not carry them in his `plane'.

I am glad Devdas made it a point to see you, no matter how busy he was.

The book I am keeping on my desk, in the fond hope that I shall snatch a few minutes to drink in the wisdom it contains.

The rest you get from the papers.

Yours,  
M.K. Gandhi

**Letter, February 5, 1947<sup>298</sup>**

[The Watumull Foundation in the United States extended an invitation to Dr. Holmes to lecture at several universities in India as Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Visiting Professor.]

February 5, 1947

Dear Dr. Holmes,

You have given me not only exciting but welcome news. The news appears to be almost too good to be true and I am not going to believe it in its entirety unless you are physically in India.

Of course we shall, as we must, meet, no matter in what part of India I happen to be at the time. My pilgrimage is the longest part of my life. I am only hoping and praying that God will give me the strength to go through the fire. "Do or die" was the motto given in 1942. It is the motto, having given it then, I must endeavour to live it myself.

I am glad you are to come *via* London and that for many reasons, besides seeing Lord Pethick-Lawrence. Many things will have happened here between now and October.

I have no doubt about your ability to do full justice to the challenge that has come your way.

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<sup>298</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 86, pages 430-31. Dr. Holmes, in a reply in April, quoted the words in the second sentence of the second paragraph as "the toughest part of my life". Pyarelal papers, file 4 (13).

**Letter, June 4, 1947<sup>299</sup>**

New Delhi,  
June 4, 1947

Dear Dr. Holmes,

This will be presented to you by Dr. B.C. Roy, one of our foremost physicians. Any country would be proud of him. I am sure that he needs no introduction from me. But he insisted. Hence this note. I know you will do all you can to bring him before America.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

**Letter, August 29, 1947<sup>300</sup>**

Calcutta.  
August 29, 1947

Dear Dr. Holmes,

Many thanks for yours of 11th instant.

I am forwarding your letter with enclosures to Punditji. It is a sad story.

We are all looking forward to your arrival.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

Kennebunk Beach  
Maine  
New York

**Letter, September 16, 1947<sup>301</sup>**

["Mr. Ordning's invitation", referred to in this letter, probably concerns an advisory

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<sup>299</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 88, page 68

<sup>300</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 89, page 107

<sup>301</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 89, page 191

body for the United Nations Appeal for Children, set up by Dr. Aake Ording of Norway.<sup>302]</sup>

New Delhi,  
September 16, 1947

Dear Dr. Holmes,

Devdas has handed me your kind letter.

I do not remember having received Mr. Ording's invitation. In any event I should be at sea serving on the committee. My way seems to be different. We must discuss this when we meet and if you and I find the time for it.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

[Dr. Holmes arrived in India in October 1947 and met Gandhiji in New Delhi.]

#### **HUME, THE REVEREND DR. R. A.**

[Dr. Hume was born in Bombay and returned to India in 1875 as a missionary in Ahmednagar. He became a friend of Gandhiji. He retired in 1926 and left for the United States. When Gandhiji heard that he had passed away on June 24, 1929, he wrote: "... I have pleasant recollections of the deceased friend. He carried on an extensive correspondence with me both whilst he was here and after he had gone to America. I recognised in his letters his warm-hearted affection for India."<sup>303]</sup>

**Letter, February 13, 1926<sup>304</sup>**

Ashram, Sabarmati,  
February 13, 1926

Dear friend,

I was delighted to receive your letter. I do have a vivid recollection of our meeting at the Prevention of Beggary Committee. You have certainly deserved the rest you are giving yourself by going to America. May you have nice time of it there.

I do not believe in Jesus Christ as the only son of God or God Incarnate but I entertain great regard for HIM as a teacher of men. I have derived much comfort

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<sup>302</sup> S.P.K. Gupta, *op. cit.*, pages 326-27

<sup>303</sup> *Young India*, July 18, 1929; *Collected Works*, Volume 41, page 191

<sup>304</sup> SN 14100; *Collected Works*, Volume 30, page 12

and happiness from a contemplation of His life and teachings as summarised in the Sermon on the Mount.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. R. A. Hume  
American Marathi Mission  
Wai  
Satara District

### **JONES, THE REVEREND DR. ELI STANLEY**

[Dr. Jones (1884-1973), a missionary in India for 36 years, set up the *Sat Tal Ashram* at Sitapur, United Provinces. The inmates lived simply, wearing Indian dress and eating Indian food so that Indian Christians were not alienated from Indian culture. A friend and admirer of Gandhiji, he met Gandhiji many times and stayed in the *Ashram* at Sabarmati for ten days. He wrote that Gandhiji "taught me more of the spirit of Christ than perhaps any other man in East or West."<sup>305</sup>

He was not allowed to visit India during the Second World War because of his support for Indian independence. After the end of the war, he spent six months a year in India.

He was a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and helped popularise Gandhiji and non-violence in the United States. He was the author of several books, including *The Christ of the Indian Road* (1925), *Mahatma Gandhi, an Interpretation* (1948) and *Gandhi Lives* (1948). Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., acknowledged that *Mahatma Gandhi, an Interpretation* was the first book from which he had learned about "the method and spirit of non-violence."]

### **Letter, April 24, 1926<sup>306</sup>**

[Dr. Jones requested Gandhiji to send a message for his paper, *Fellowship of the Friends of Jesus*.]

*Ashram, Sabarmati*  
April 24, 1926

Dear friend,

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<sup>305</sup> E. Stanley Jones, *Mahatma Gandhi, an Interpretation* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), page 8

<sup>306</sup> SN 19497; *Collected Works*, Volume 30, page 353

I have your letter and one copy, not two, of your paper.

Is it a weekly or a monthly? I do not find the information in the copy before me. I shall send you something as soon as I have a little leisure but after I have heard from you in reply to this.

I was going to Mussoorie but the friends who were interested in sending me there have relaxed the pressure and let me stay at the *Ashram*. I shall await your arrival at the *Ashram* and look forward to your stay in our midst, be it ever so short. Did you not tell me you had lived at the *Ashram* before for a day or two? If, for any reason whatsoever, I am away from the *Ashram* in July, I hope you will still come. There is just a slight probability of my going to Finland for the World Students' Conference. I say only a slight probability because the matter has not progressed beyond the conversational stage.

Yours sincerely,

E. Stanley Jones, Esq.  
Sitapur, U.P.

**Letter, July 23, 1926<sup>307</sup>**

[Dr. Jones wrote to Gandhiji on July 20, 1926, thanking him "for the beautiful days you gave me at the *Ashram*." He said: "I am sure that it has been a great preparation for me in my work in India."

He sent Gandhiji some notes on his stay at the *Ashram* and informed him that he had ordered *Science of Power* by Benjamin Kidd for Gandhiji.<sup>308]</sup>

The *Ashram*,  
Sabarmati  
July 23, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your letter with your interesting notes for which I thank you. We were all so happy to have you in our midst. I only wish you could have stayed longer with us. Then, perhaps, you would have toned down some of the remarks you have made about the *Ashram* and revised your criticism about its becoming self-supporting. To make it self-supporting is not our aim so long as we undertake public education in the matter of the spinning-wheel, untouchability, etc.

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<sup>307</sup> SN 19673; *Collected Works*, Volume 31, page 190

<sup>308</sup> SN 10968

The suggestion to build a pigeon loft was made by another friend also. We did not take it up because it was suggested that it would simply attract more pigeons without relieving us of their presence in the roof of our cottages. Have you tried the thing yourself with success?

I shall endeavour to go through the *Science of Power* which you have so kindly ordered for me.

I have developed the greatest disinclination for writing anything whatsoever. If I could suspend the papers I am editing, I would even do that. But it is a self-imposed task which I dare not shirk. You will, therefore, excuse me at least for the present if I do not write for the *Fellowship of the Friends of Jesus*.

Yours sincerely,

E. Stanley Jones, Esq.  
Sitapur, U.P.

**Letter, April 26, 1931**<sup>309</sup>

[The open letter of the Reverend Jones, to which reference is made in this letter, concerns the press report of an interview by Gandhiji in Delhi on March 21, 1931. He was reported to have said in answer to a question as to whether he would favour the retention of foreign missionaries when India secured self-government:

"If instead of confining themselves purely to humanitarian work and material service to the poor, they do proselytising by means of medical aid, education, etc., then I would certainly ask them to withdraw. Every nation's religion is good as any other. Certainly India's religions are adequate for her people. We need no converting spiritually."<sup>310</sup>

Gandhiji wrote in *Young India* (April 23, 1931) that he was misquoted and that he could have said:

"If instead of confining themselves purely to humanitarian work such as education, medical services to the poor and the like, they would use these activities of theirs for the purpose of proselytising, I would certainly like them to withdraw. Every nation considers its own faith to be as good as that of any other. Certainly the great faiths held by the people of India are adequate for her people. India stands in no need of conversion from one faith to another."

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<sup>309</sup> SN 17015; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, page 45

<sup>310</sup> *The Hindu*, March 22, 1931; *Collected Works*, Volume 45, page 320

He explained:

"Let me now amplify the bald statement. I hold that proselytising under the cloak of humanitarian work is, to say the least, unhealthy. It is most certainly resented by the people here. Religion after all is a deeply personal matter, it touches the heart. Why should I change my religion because a doctor who professes Christianity as his religion has cured me of some disease or why should the doctor expect or suggest such a change whilst I am under his influence? Is not medical relief its own reward and satisfaction? Or why should I whilst I am in a missionary educational institution have Christian teaching thrust upon me? In my opinion these practices are not uplifting and give rise to suspicion if not secret hostility. The methods of conversion must be like Caesar's wife above suspicion...

"I am, then, not against conversion. But I am against the modern methods of it."<sup>311</sup>]

Bardoli,  
April 26, 1931

Dear friend,

Your open letter has come upon me as a shock, the more so as you yourself distrusted the report and have suffered yourself from misreporting. If you had just dropped a line before writing your long open letter how much precious time, that for you and me belongs to God, would have been saved? As it is, in the language of the *Gita*, you have been guilty of theft and, in the bargain have done a wrong to a friend.

It will please you to know that three unknown friends have been more cautious. They have written to me to enquire whether the report correctly sets forth my view. Next time you see something about me which may appear to you to misrepresent me as you have known me, may I ask you to refer to me before you pen another open or private letter? Lastly, if you have loved me before, as I know you have, I hope that after reading my article in *Young India* on the subject matter of your open letter, you will feel that you have no cause to change your attitude. And why will you not love me even though I may err in your estimation? Or must love require a consideration?

Yours sincerely,

Rev. E. Stanley Jones  
Sat Tal *Ashram*

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<sup>311</sup> *Young India*, April 23, 1931; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, pages 27-29

Sat Tal (Dt. Naini Tal)

**Letter, December 4, 1946**<sup>312</sup>

As from Sevagram  
Via Wardha (India),  
Camp: Srirampur,  
East Bengal,  
December 4, 1946

Dear Dr. Jones,

Dr. Nelson<sup>313</sup> was with me yesterday with Mrs. Alexander and we immediately became as old friends. He gave me your letter which I had not read when I made myself at home with him. The reason for my not reading your letter there and then was that he was in the company of several friends and I was about to go to the prayer meeting in which he took keen interest and wanted to read from a Pelican book in his possession, "Our God, our help in ages past" which I readily let him do, and at the close of the prayer the few words that I said to the audience consisted of a free rendering of the hymn he read but could not or would not sing. I have invited him to drop in again when he wished, to which he said he would do in a few days time.

Yours sincerely

M.K.G.

Rev. Dr. E. Stanley Jones  
150 Fifth Avenue  
New York City

**Letter, April 19, 1947**<sup>314</sup>

[Dr. Jones wrote on April 15, 1947, that he had visited Sabarmati. He recalled that when Gandhiji went on the Salt March in 1930, he had vowed not to return to the Sabarmati *Ashram* until freedom was won. Dr. Jones imagined a triumphal return by Gandhiji soon. While he was not enamoured of pagentry, he thought that it

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<sup>312</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 94, page 313

<sup>313</sup> Dr. William Stuart Nelson, Dean and Vice-President of Howard University, Washington, DC, and editor of *Journal of Religious Thought*. He was in India for relief work in Noakhali on behalf of the Friends Service Unit.

<sup>314</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 94, page 395



could be used to impress upon the world that a non-violent struggle had won. He asked if there was a possibility of Gandhiji returning to Sabarmati.<sup>315</sup> Gandhiji was then in Bihar trying to stop violence between Hindus and Muslims.]

Patna,  
April 19, 1947

Dear Dr. Jones,

I got your letter this morning and am so glad to learn that you were able to visit Sabarmati and renew your recollections. I remember well how you missed looking glass in the room that was allotted to you, and how philosophically you took the absence of the article considered so useful in the West.

When the British troops, that powerful emblem of British rule, is removed from India that very fact will be a triumph, besides which every other pageant that can be conceived, must fade into insignificance.

I have no notion when I shall be able to leave my present haunt. I fully appreciate your prayerful sympathy in the task before me.

Please pass on my love to Mrs. Stanley Jones whenever you write to her. I don't know whether she is in India at present or whether she is in U.S.A. Please tell her that I remember the promise I hastily and lightly made to her that I will, when I got the necessary leisure, write out a dialogue for the use of children in the many schools she was conducting. I never got the leisure. But what is more true is that the task was much more difficult than I had imagined and to this day I do not know how I could deal with the delicate subject of the evil habits of children.<sup>316</sup>

Yours sincerely

M.K. Gandhi

**JONES, RUFUS M.<sup>317</sup>**

[Rufus Matthew Jones (1863-1948) - Quaker historian and philosopher, professor, editor and prolific writer – was active in the international efforts of several Quaker and other organisations. He accepted an invitation by the YMCA in China in 1926 to give a series of lectures and decided to use the opportunity to visit

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<sup>315</sup> Pyarelal Papers, file 4 (13)

<sup>316</sup> The reference may be to a request by Mrs. Jones in 1926 that he write a booklet in simple language preaching the necessity of celibacy in school life since the evil of sodomy and self-abuse existed among many students. (SN 13270)

<sup>317</sup> These postcards to Mr. Jones are not in the printed edition of the book.

Japan and India as well. He wrote to Gandhiji on April 20, 1926, with a letter of introduction by the Reverend John Haynes Holmes, expressing a desire to see him. He wrote:

“... I am not coming as a tourist nor out of curiosity. I am coming as a friend and as one who will be greatly helped by a contact with you at this crucial time when our main business is building a real spiritual civilisation.”<sup>318</sup>

Mr. Jones met Gandhiji on December 1, 1926 at *Satyagrahashram*, Sabarmati.<sup>319]</sup>

**Postcard, May 28, 1926<sup>320</sup>**

The Ashram,  
Sabarmati,  
May 28, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your letter enclosing Dr. Holmes' letter. I shall be pleased to meet you whenever you come. However busy I may be, I know that I am by no means so much rushed as people in America are. I have therefore always time to meet friends like you.

Yours sincerely  
(sd.) M.K. Gandhi

Prof. Rufus M. Jones, Esq. of Haverford College,  
c/o D.Z. Yui Esq.,  
20, Museum Road,  
Shanghai  
(China)

**Postcard, October 29, 1926<sup>321</sup>**

Sabarmati  
near Ahmedabad  
October 29, 1926

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<sup>318</sup> SN12460

<sup>319</sup> David McFadden, “The ‘Gandhi Diary’ of Rufus Jones” in G. Simon Harak, S.J. *Nonviolence for the Third Millennium: It Legacy and Future*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000.

<sup>320</sup> The Quaker Collection, Haverford College Library

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

Dear friend

I have your letter of 30:9:26. I shall be delighted to meet you whenever you come. I am at the *Ashram* Sabarmati till 2<sup>nd</sup> December next and Wardha near Nagpur till 20<sup>th</sup> December.

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

Rufus M. Jones Esq.  
c/o J. H. Granelly Esq. (?)  
Museum House  
Egmore  
Madras

#### **KEITHAHN, THE REVEREND R.R.**

[Ralph Richard Keithahn (1898- ) from Fairmont, Minnesota, was a missionary and social worker in India from 1925. He became a supporter of the Indian national movement and an admirer of Gandhiji. The British authorities threatened in 1930 to deport him for wearing *khadi* and he was forced by his mission to resign from his position as principal of a training college. In the 1940s, he severed his connection with the American Madura Mission, dressed in Indian clothes and worked in the villages. He also worked with the student movement. He was externed from Mysore State in August 1944 and the Indian Government issued deportation orders in September. He later lived in Gandhigram near Madura.<sup>322</sup>]

**Letter, July 7, 1944<sup>323</sup>**

Panchgani,  
July 7, 1944

Dear friend,

I hope you will have a successful gathering. Twenty real votaries of Truth and Love are equal to or rather more than a match for a number of indifferent persons raised to Nth power.

Love.

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<sup>322</sup> For further biographical information, see Ralph Richard Keithahn, *Pilgrimage in India; an autobiographical fragment*. Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1973.

<sup>323</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 77, page 357

*Bapu*

Rev. R.R. Keithahn  
156 Banvarghatti  
Bangalore City

**MCCLELLAND, D.F.**

**Letter, August 3, 1928**<sup>324</sup>

[Mr. McClelland, General Secretary of YMCA in Madras, in a letter of July 23, 1928, recalled that he had spoken to Gandhiji earlier about American immigration laws which excluded Indians and about an appeal which was being made to the American Congress and people for an amendment of the laws. He sent a copy of the appeal sponsored by the Commission on International Justice and Goodwill of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, and a digest of letters received in reply. Dr. Sidney Gulick, the Secretary of the Commission, had asked Mr. McClelland for a judgment, after careful investigation, as to whether the sore point lay in the race discrimination feature or in the fact of exclusion. McClelland requested Gandhiji's opinion on this matter as that would be of great value.<sup>325326</sup>]

*Swaraj Ashram,*  
Bardoli,  
August 3, 1928

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter and the enclosure. You will excuse me for the delay in replying - I was so busy.

Dr. Gullick's question is very relevant. My own opinion is that it is not the "open door" that is wanted but really courteous treatment, not a mere declaration. And if it is really courteous treatment that is really to be accorded, it is not difficult to find a legal formula wherewith an "Asiatic Invasion," as unrestricted immigration of the Asiatics is called, can be effectively checked while no Indian, whose competition need never be feared, would be excluded, or, admitted only after undergoing humiliating and discriminative treatment.

I need not now answer the question as to whether hundred Indians a year or more

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<sup>324</sup> SN 13894; *Collected Works*, Volume 37, pages 120-21

<sup>325</sup> SN 13485

<sup>326</sup> The United States enacted a law in 1917 which prohibited immigration from India. Another immigration act passed in 1924 made Indians ineligible for immigration into the United States and for acquiring United States citizenship.

or less will answer the purpose. The number counts for nothing, the manner means everything.

Yours sincerely,

D.F. McClelland, Esq.  
Young Men's Christian Association,  
Esplanade,  
Madras

**MCCONNELL, THE RIGHT REVEREND FRANCIS J.**

[Mr. McConnell (1871-1953), Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church (1912-1944), was national chairman of the World Fellowship of Faiths. He sent an invitation to Gandhiji to attend a World Parliament of Religions which the Fellowship planned to organise.<sup>327</sup>

Bishop McConnell, who was active on many social issues, was a friend of India and became a member of the India League of America.]

**Cable, June 29, 1933**<sup>328</sup>

BISHOP MCCONNELL  
HOTEL MORRISON, CHICAGO

THANKS. REGRET INABILITY ATTEND

GANDHI

**MOTT, THE REVEREND DR. JOHN RALEIGH**

[Dr. Mott (1865-1955) was general secretary and later chairman of the World Student Christian Federation (1895-1928); and Chairman of the International Missionary Council (1928-1946). He was also a leader of the World YMCA for many years. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1948 and became honorary President of the World Council of Churches in 1948.

He had three extensive discussions with Gandhiji in 1929, 1936 and 1938, the last

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<sup>327</sup> See Section IV, "Weller, Charles Frederick".

<sup>328</sup> SN 21504; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, page 225

when he visited India to preside over the International Missionary Conference in  
Tambaram.<sup>329]</sup>

**Letter, November 20, 1934<sup>330</sup>**

Segaon, Wardha  
November 20, 1934

Dear friend,

I was delighted to have your letter. It was a pleasure to me to renew our  
acquaintance and to have the discussion. Pray thank Mrs. Mott for the two packets  
of maple sugar.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

Dr. John R. Mott  
Nagpur

**Letter, December 5, 1938<sup>331</sup>**

Segaon, Wardha,  
5 December 1938

Dear friend,

I thank you for your affectionate letter. If God wills it, your hope will be fulfilled.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, October 1, 1947<sup>332</sup>**

N. Delhi  
October 1, 1947

Dear Dr. Mott,

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<sup>329</sup> Reports of the interviews are reproduced in *Collected Works*, Volume 40, pages 57-61; Volume 64, pages 33-41; and Volume 68, pages 165-73.

<sup>330</sup> John R. Mott collection, Divinity Library, Yale University, and Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 64, page 57. The date may have been incorrectly written as 1934, instead of 1936.

<sup>331</sup> John R. Mott collection, Divinity Library, Yale University

<sup>332</sup> John R. Mott collection, Divinity Library, Yale University; *Collected Works*, Volume 89, page 266

I got the 6th volume of your speeches and your letter yesterday for which many thanks.

I often wonder if we all don't speak and write much and do little.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

### MUSTE, A. J.

[Mr. Abraham Johannes Muste (1885-1967), a clergyman, labour leader, editor and social reformer, was for many years the leading proponent of non-violent action for peace and racial equality in the United States. He was executive director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (1940-53), national chairman of the Committee for Non-violent Action and co-chairman of the World Peace Brigade. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was reported to have said: "Without Muste, the American Negro might never have caught the meaning of Non-violence."<sup>333</sup>

Mr. Muste participated in the World Pacifist Meetings in India in 1949. He was the author of many books and pamphlets, including *Gandhi and the H-Bomb: How Non-violence can Take the Place of War* (1950).]

### Letter, February 28, 1947<sup>334</sup>

[Mr. Muste apparently sent a letter, dated September 27, 1946, through Miss Muriel Lester, a British friend of Gandhiji. In that letter, he extended birthday greetings to Gandhiji on behalf of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. As bitter conflicts marked the relationship between the leading nations and the United States was playing a leading part in an atomic armaments race, he said, the Fellowship was striving to build a movement for the abolition of armaments. Multitudes looked to Gandhiji for help and inspiration in this crisis and the Fellowship hoped that his life may be spared for many years. If India after independence refused to join in the race for national pride and power, he added, that might well augur the dawning of a new day for mankind.<sup>335</sup>]

Kazirkhil  
Ramganj P.S.

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<sup>333</sup> Charles DeBenedetti, ed., *Peace Heroes in Twentieth-Century America* (1986), page 165.

Nat Hentoff quotes Dr. King as telling him that "unequivocally, the emphasis on non-violent direct action in the civil rights movement is due more to A. J. than anyone else in the country." Nat Hentoff, "The Power of Non-violence" in *The Village Voice*, New York, February 3, 1998.

<sup>334</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 94, page 384

<sup>335</sup> Pyarelal Papers, file 4(12)

Noakhali Dist.,  
February 28, 1947

Dear friend,

Muriel Lester has sent me your letter of the 27th September last which has remained on my file for some time. She has also given me a brief description of your selfless labours. How I wish I could send you some useful suggestions by way of help in what you very rightly term as crisis! The aftermath of the last war is in reality much worse than the war itself if only because its bloodiness is so hidden from view that man deceives himself into the belief that he is at last safer than when the war was on.

I wish too that I could give you the assurance that India, when she has come to her own completely, will not join the race for the increase of armaments. I can only say that whatever I can do to prevent any such misfortune will not be left undone.

Yours sincerely  
M. K. Gandhi

[Dr. Muste wrote to Gandhiji on June 30, 1947, that his message was circulated to the entire membership of the Fellowship and that its National Council had decided to send its greetings and good wishes to him.<sup>336</sup>]

### **PAGE, THE REVEREND KIRBY**

[Mr. Page (1890-1957) was a prominent pacifist and exponent of the social gospel, and a prolific speaker and writer. He worked for the YMCA and served as personal secretary to Sherwood Eddy for a few years. From 1926 to 1934, he was editor of *World Tomorrow*, a Christian pacifist monthly published in New York. He wrote more than 40 books and numerous articles.

In 1925, Gandhiji received from an American friend a pamphlet by Mr. Page, *War: Its Causes, Consequences and Cure* (New York, 1923). He reproduced it in 21 instalments in *Young India* between November 26, 1925, and May 6, 1926.

Mr. and Mrs. Page visited India with Dr. and Mrs. Sherwood Eddy in 1929 and met Gandhiji. Mr. Page published his impressions in a booklet entitled, *Is Mahatma Gandhi the Greatest Man of the Age?* He wrote later in his autobiography: "Long since that question mark has been erased from my mind." He wrote another pamphlet in 1930, *Mahatma Gandhi and his Significance: a*

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<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*



*biographical interpretation and an analysis of the political situation in India.*<sup>337]</sup>

**Letter, July 15, 1926**<sup>338</sup>

[Mr. Page wrote to Gandhiji on May 5, 1926, requesting an article on non-violence for *World Tomorrow*.<sup>339</sup> Gandhiji sent a cable on 9 June and an article on non-violence on 15 July.]

The Ashram,  
Sabarmati  
July 15, 1926

Dear friend,

With reference to your letter of the 5th May and in continuation of my cable dated 9th June, I send you now my article on non-violence.

You want 2,500 words from me. I have no time to think out anything so big. You will therefore please forgive me for sending you what little I have been able to put together. But, as I am sending you my contribution fairly in advance of the time given by you, I hope you will not be inconvenienced by the shortness of my article. Even as it is, what I have given you does not satisfy me. If I could, I would condense it still further.

Yours sincerely,

Kirby Page, Esq.  
Editor of the "  
World Tomorrow"  
347 Madison Avenue  
New York

**Letter, September 14, 1928**<sup>340</sup>

[On August 1, 1928, Mr. Page sent an English translation of an open letter addressed to Gandhiji by the Reverend Barthelemy de Ligt, a Dutch pacifist, and

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<sup>337</sup> For biographical information on Mr. Page, see:

Harold E. Fey, ed., *Kirby Page, Social Evangelist: The Autobiography of a 20th Century Prophet of Peace*. Nyack, New York: Fellowship Press, 1975.

Charles Chatfield and Charles DeBenedetti, eds., *Kirby Page and the Social Gospel: an Anthology*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976

<sup>338</sup> SN 10781; *Collected Works*, Volume 31, page 143

<sup>339</sup> SN 10748

<sup>340</sup> SN 14368; *Collected Works*, Volume 37, page 276

requested Gandhiji's comments for publication in *World Tomorrow*.<sup>341</sup> In that letter, Mr. de Ligt had criticised Gandhiji's participation in the Anglo-Boer War and the First World War, and invited him to explain his action in the light of *ahimsa*. Gandhiji had already received a copy of the letter from Mr. de Ligt and had replied to it in an article entitled "My Attitude towards War" in *Young India*, September 13, 1928.<sup>342]</sup>

Satyagraha Ashram,  
Sabarmati,  
September 14, 1928

Dear friend,

I have your letter with a translation copy of Rev. B. de Ligt's open letter. The writer sent it himself two weeks before your letter was received. He also wanted me to send my reply for his journal. But I thought that I would reach a wider circle of readers, that is, those who are in the habit of reading my writings, if I attempted a brief reply in the pages of *Young India*. This, therefore, I have done. It was the best I could do in the time at my disposal. You may of course copy it for your paper. I send you a marked copy of *Young India* containing my reply.

Yours sincerely,

Kirby Page, Esq.  
"The World Tomorrow"  
52 Vanderbilt Avenue,  
New York City

**Letter, May 19, 1931**<sup>343</sup>

[In 1931, when Gandhiji agreed to attend the Second Round Table Conference in London, he received several invitations from the United States and it was rumoured that he would visit the United States after the Conference. Reverend Page and several others sent a joint cable advising him against a visit to the United States at that time.]

As at Sabarmati,  
May 19, 1931

Dear friend,

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<sup>341</sup> SN 14367

<sup>342</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 37, pages 269-71

<sup>343</sup> SN 17099; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, page 179

I thank you for your letter. I deeply appreciated the cable sent by you and other friends. Without the cable too I had no intention of going to America just yet. But of course your cable and the letters since received have shown that my disinclination was well-grounded.

Yours sincerely,

Kirby Page, Esq.  
New York

**Letter, October 17, 1937**<sup>344</sup>

Segaon, Wardha, C.P.,  
October 17, 1937

Dear friend,

I am glad you are liberally taking passages from C.F. Andrews's pen in your anthology of devotional literature.<sup>345</sup> For Charlie Andrews is a man of prayer and deep faith. He is a Christian to the marrow, but his Christ is not the Jesus Christ of a narrow sect. His Christ is the Anointed of humanity. He sees Him in Ramakrishna, Chaitanya and many other teachers whom I can name, and who are of other faiths. We in India, who know him, call him *Deenabandhu*, friend of the afflicted. Our friendship is of long standing; we are like blood-brothers. There are no secrets between us. Charlie is as simple as a child, forgiving and generous to a fault. He is loving and lovable like a woman who is purity personified. In jest I call him half woman and half man - but I mean it.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

Kirby Page, Esq.  
La Habra  
California

[Reverend Page wrote in his autobiography: "One of my prized possessions is a letter from Gandhi in his own handwriting in which he expresses his affection and admiration for his English friend who had become a true son of India."<sup>346</sup>]

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<sup>344</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 66, pages 250-51

<sup>345</sup> Kirby Page, *Religious Resources for Personal Living and Social Action*. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1939.

<sup>346</sup> Fey, *op. cit.* p. 47

## REESE, JOHN HUGH

**Letter, July 21, 1931**<sup>347</sup>

[Reporting this letter in *The Christian Century* (November 11, 1931), Mr. Reese wrote:

"When any man's religious faith has gained the attention and respect of the whole world, it becomes a matter of interest as to how he came by that faith. Was it by an instant conversion or by a gradual growth? I determined to put the question squarely to Mahatma Gandhi, and see what his answer would be.

"Does one who has progressed so far in controlling his desires pass beyond temptation? Or does temptation persist? And if it does, by what means is it overcome? That, likewise, I asked India's great apostle of 'soul-force.'

"The accounts of Gandhi's activities are filled with mention of seasons of prayer. Evidently, prayer lies at the very foundation of his experience. But why does he pray? What answer has he been conscious of receiving? What does prayer mean to him?

"These were the questions that I asked Gandhi. In due course I received in reply the letter that is quoted here. It was written at Simla on July 21 of the present year, as the Mahatma was completing his preparations to represent the Indian National Congress at the London Round Table Conference."]

Simla,  
July 21, 1931

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter of 30th May last. Here are my answers:

1. I came by my faith through self-denial. I saw that the measure of my peace was the measure of my self-denial. But I could not sustain my self-denial without a living faith in the Unseen.
2. Yes, indeed, I am painfully conscious of temptation, which my faith

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<sup>347</sup> *The Christian Century*, Chicago, November 11, 1931

alone overcomes.

3. I have never looked for any greater reward for my prayers than mere inward satisfaction. Prayer is God's due, and a discharge of debt is its own satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

### **SHEMELD, ROBERT**

**Letter, October 24, 1926**<sup>348</sup>

[Mr. Shemeld and his wife knew Gandhiji in the 1890s in Pretoria where they were living as missionaries. Mr. Shemeld wrote in a letter to Gandhiji on September 14, 1926:

"Your frequent visits in our humble missionary home at Pretoria was a pleasure still green in our memory, although thirty years have passed since we last met you. It was indeed a grief to us when we heard of your prison sentence and ill health, resulting from your righteous stand for India and like many others, Mrs. Shemeld and myself prayed Almighty God to not only spare your life, but to grant you the desires of your heart in the freedom of India..."

He enclosed a petition which he had printed in Pretoria in 1900, during the Anglo-Boer War, "in an endeavour to prevent further bloodshed, but which was not favoured by many except missionaries."<sup>349</sup>

The *Ashram*, Sabarmati,  
October 24, 1926

Dear Mr. Shemeld,

Your letter was an agreeable surprise. You remind me of happy communions of 30 years ago. I have a vivid recollection of your face and Mrs. Shemeld's.

I do not need to tell you anything about my life here as it has become an open book. I have looked at your War Manifesto. Quite like you. Please remember me to Mrs. Shemeld.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Shemeld, Esq.

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<sup>348</sup> SN 10832; *Collected Works*, Volume 31, page 525

<sup>349</sup> SN 10810

308, The Atherton  
2112 F Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.

[Mr. Shemeld wrote again to Gandhiji on December 12, 1929, conveying New Year greetings.<sup>350</sup>]

### **STOKES, JR., SAMUEL E. (SATYANAND)**

[Mr. Stokes (1882-1946), of Philadelphia, arrived in India in 1904 as a missionary and social worker. Settling near Kotgarh, Simla, he began to live a simple life as an Indian and married an Indian Christian in 1912. After the First World War, he led a successful campaign against *begar* (forced labour).

He was shocked by the repression against Indian nationalists after the World War - especially the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. He joined the Indian National Congress and was elected a member of the All India Congress Committee. He met Gandhiji in 1921 and supported his leadership of the non-cooperation movement, despite some differences of opinion.

Mr. Stokes was jailed for six months in 1921. After release, he set up and administered a school at Kotgarh, and worked for the upliftment of the hill tribes. He was instrumental in developing apple cultivation in the area.

He and his family converted to Hinduism in 1932 and he adopted the name "Satyanand". He felt that as a Hindu he could better deliver the message of Jesus to the Hindus.

He was a close friend of C.F. Andrews and of Richard B. Gregg who taught in his school. Gandhiji often referred to Mr. Stokes as an exemplary missionary.

He died in Kotgarh in 1946.<sup>351</sup>]

#### **Letter, March 1, 1924<sup>352</sup>**

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<sup>350</sup> SN 16348

<sup>351</sup> For further biographical information, see

K.J. Clymer, "Samuel Evans Stokes, Mahatma Gandhi and Indian Nationalism" in *Pacific Historical Review*, Berkeley, February 1990, pages 51-71

William W. Emilsen, *Violence and Atonement: The Missionary Experiences of Mohandas Gandhi, Samuel Stokes and Verrier Elwin in India before 1935*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1994.

Satyanand Stokes, *National Self-Realisation and Other Essays*. New Delhi: Rubicon Publishing House, 1977

<sup>352</sup> Satyanand Stokes, *op. cit.*, pages 179-80

[After the suspension of the non-co-operation movement, and while Gandhiji was in prison, there was a serious difference of opinion within the Indian National Congress - between the "Swarajists" who favoured participating in elections and entering the Legislative Councils, and the "no changers" who wished to continue non-co-operation with the Government and its councils. Mr. Stokes wrote and circulated two memoranda advocating Council entry.<sup>353</sup>

Gandhiji was released from prison in 1924. In several letters between February 10 and March 7, 1924, while Gandhiji was convalescing, Mr. Stokes invited him to rest in his home in Kotgarh. He offered to send his memoranda to Gandhiji only if he was strong enough and wished to deal with the controversy. After receiving a request from Gandhiji, he sent the memoranda by registered post on March 8, 1924.<sup>354</sup>]

Sassoon Hospital,  
Poona,  
March 1, 1924

Dear friend,

Your welcome letter is before me. Instead of tiring it soothes. I endorse your reasoning regarding family considerations. Apart, however, from those considerations, the body as a vehicle for the upliftment of the soul within needs care such as would keep it in good order and condition. In my opinion, it has to be sacrificed without the slightest hesitation when it obstructs the progress of the soul.

You were in no way bound to take the jail food provided for Indian prisoners in general. In spite of your having Indianised yourself you cannot all of a sudden make radical changes in your food and expect the body to respond.

I agree too with your decision to finish your writing before taking up any public work. Do please send me copies of your two memoranda. It is my duty before coming to a final decision to understand thoroughly the viewpoint of those who advocated council-entry. I would therefore like to possess both the copies.

If at any time I could go over to the north for rest, it would be a privilege to me to regard your house as my own and place myself under your and Mrs. Stokes' care and attention. You may not know that Andrews has come again to me, sent by the poet. He is not to leave me again till I am completely restored. I know that I should send you and Mrs. Stokes his love although he does not know that I have a

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<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 131-178

<sup>354</sup> SN 8315, 8371-A, 8386, and 8458

letter from you and that I am writing to you. When I see him this evening I am going to show your letter to him.

With love to you and Mrs. Stokes,

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

**Letter, March 15, 1924**<sup>355</sup>

Post Andheri,  
March 15, 1924

Dear friend,

I have your letter of the 7th instant.

As you must have seen from the papers, I have now removed to a seaside place. It is a beautiful retreat where we are accommodated. It faces the sea and we constantly hear the music of the waves. Somehow or other I feel that I must express as early as possible my opinion about the Council-entry, etc. I think I have sufficient energy to do the mental work required for the purpose. I have already undertaken to see Hakimji [Hakim Ajmalkhan] and other friends. I am avoiding as much physical exertion as possible, and I do not think that the amount of mental work I am doing just now will do me harm.

An unknown friend wrote to me that you had asked him to send me some hill honey, and he kindly sent me 5 lbs. It was very good indeed. I understood subsequently that Mohanlal Pandya had written to you for hill honey for me. I know that you have been exceedingly kind to me. He ought not to have troubled you. I was then getting good honey from Mahabaleshwar. During my illness I have been so overwhelmed with kindness from those whom I knew and those whom I had never the pleasure of knowing that I feel it was almost worth having that illness.

With love from both of us to both of you,

Yours ever,

S. E. Stokes, Esq.  
Harmony Hall  
Kotgarh

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<sup>355</sup> SN 8497; *Collected Works*, Volume 23, page 250. According to *National Self-Realisation and other Essays*, by Mr. Stokes, the date of this letter was 11 March.



Simla Hills

**Letter, March 19, 1924**<sup>356</sup>

Post Andheri,  
March 19, 1924

Dear friend,

I got the registered packet on Sunday, and yesterday being my first Monday of silence after admission to the Sassoon Hospital, I was able to read both the papers. The written memorandum I am sending up as desired by you. I found both to be useful and instructive as giving me the mentality of one of whose impartiality I am certain and whose opinions I value. If I could but accept your premises and your view of non-co-operation, there is not much with which I should disagree. I entirely endorse your opinion that, if there is any Council-entry at all, it should not be for mere obstruction. On the contrary, we should take advantage of everything good that may be offered by the Government measures and endeavour to do our best to correct the evil in them. Accepting your reasoning, I would also endorse your view that the embargo upon lawyers and law-courts should also be lifted.

But I think that, perhaps, there is a fundamental difference between us as to the interpretation and implications of non-violent non-co-operation and, therefore, what appeared to you to be a dismal outlook on your coming out of prison would not have set me thinking of other means of getting rid of the paralysis which you felt and saw had overcome all Congress activities. I would have regarded it as a necessary stage in the evolution of the public life of the country. It would have been for me a rare opportunity and still rarer privilege for redoubling my efforts and testing my faith in the programme.

You have cited your own personal experiences and naturally concluded that there was something wrong about the programme in that the work that was patiently built by you and your co-workers had been almost undone in a moment. But there is a saying among lawyers that hard cases make bad law. Properly applied, it is a sound truth. Paraphrased in religious terms, it means that because, under some exceptional circumstances, departure from religious truth may appear to be advantageous, it furnishes no ground for losing faith in the truth. In your own case I would have reasoned to myself: This undoing of the work must be regarded as the people's sacrifice in order to get the real thing.

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<sup>356</sup> SN 8527; *Collected Works*, Volume 23, pages 276-79. According to *National Self-Realisation and Other Essays*, by Mr. Stokes, this letter was dated 18 March.

And what is that real thing? For the common masses to rid themselves of the fetish of power. For ages they have been taught to look to a Government to do everything for them, to protect them. The Government, instead of being regarded as an instrument in their hands for their advantage, is looked up to as something beyond and apart from them which, like a deity, whether benignant or malignant, has got to be propitiated. Non-co-operation as conceived by me is ceasing to co-operate with that idea of Government and teaching the people to feel that the Government is their creation and not they creatures of the Government. I should not therefore wonder that many of the so-called advantages that we have hitherto enjoyed through the instrumentality of such a Government have to be sacrificed. If the non-co-operation was not non-violent, we would seek, as all nations in history have sought, to beat Governments with their own weapons, that is, force of arms. In such a fight it would be folly not to make use of the whole of the Government machinery. People in a violent struggle do not expect to sacrifice though they are prepared for it and, if they have at their disposal arms superior to those possessed by the Government, beat it down without any sacrifice. But in a non-violent struggle resort to arms is eschewed, and sacrifice for the moment is a necessity of the case. In practice, too, in our own struggle, ever since the September of 1920, we have been sacrificing. Lawyers, school-masters, school-boys, merchants, every class of people who have realised the implications of non-violent non-co-operation, have sacrificed to the measure of their ability and understanding. I know men who have lost money because they would not go to a court of law. I know cases in which the Government officials have chuckled with pride and pleasure that men who before used to gain advantages through their instrumentality were losing, but those who lost with a full knowledge of the struggle counted their loss as gain. It is my firm conviction that you cannot enter the Councils at the present moment with the present system and the administrators with their present mentality without participating in violence of an extremely bad type which is the basis of the Government of India.

Take again the history of the other Governments of the world. By way of illustration I cite the Egyptian Government. They are in a fair way to attaining to what they want. They have resorted to ordinary means hitherto adopted. The Egyptians are trained for the use of arms. It was open to them to take part in the Councils and all administrative machinery because they were able and willing to vindicate their position by force of arms. In India we have a state of things, so far as I am aware, without a parallel in the world. The people as a mass are neither willing nor able to take up arms. If you go to the Councils and are defeated in your purpose by the Government, you must be prepared for raising a rebellion. It cannot be successfully raised in India. Nor are the present Councillors men who can give that training to the people. My endeavour was and is to find a substitute for ordinary rebellion, and that is civil disobedience. The Councils are no training-ground even for the Councillors for civil disobedience. They believe in the "tooth for tooth" law. The sophistry, evasion and even fraud of the Government benches are returned in coin. Their manifest purpose is to embarrass the Government. Their appeal is to fear. The non-co-operator's manifest purpose

is never to embarrass, and his appeal must always be to the heart, therefore, to love and trust.

You evidently seem to think that mystical and religious non-co-operation can run side by side with the purely political non-co-operation of the Councils. I hold that the two are mutually destructive, and my faith in religious non-co-operation is so immutable that, if I find that it would not answer the needs of India and that the masses would not respond to it, I should be content to be alone and rely upon its ultimate invincibility to convert even the masses. Indeed, I see no escape for this world except through the acceptance of non-violence as the predominant and ordinary rule of life. The present society is ultimately based upon force. That is violence. My endeavour is no less than to get rid of this worship of force, and my conviction is that, if any country is ready for assimilating the doctrine in its entirety in a large and workable measure, it is India. And having that conviction, I have no other remedy for the needs of our country.

I think I have already said more than I wished to. It is possible to amplify what I have said, but I have no doubt that you will yourself dot the i's and cross the t's. I am almost impatient to express my opinion upon the Council-entry and kindred matters, the more so after reading your memorandum, but I am under promise to Motilalji, Hakimji and other friends not to give public expression to my views till I have met them again and discussed the whole thing. When I am free to say all that I have in view on this question and if you have time to spare from your writings, you will see the development of the outline I have sketched above.

Yours sincerely,

S. E. Stokes, Esq.  
Kotgarh  
Simla Hills

[Mr. Stokes wrote a lengthy letter to Gandhiji on March 25, 1924, explaining his position:

"I am still convinced that some such general programme as I outlined would make for moral strength and character among the downtrodden masses, and lay the foundations of capacity to work together and trust each other. At the same time I am as convinced that if all the stress is laid on the work of a few in the Councils, and if it is not universally recognised as the far less important part of the struggle of the whole nation, it will be useless and the *Swarajya* it might achieve useless - even dangerous...

"I have been trying to show that, to me, it is not the actual form of the expression of our non-co-operation which would determine whether it is non-violent or not; but the spirit in which the people learn to carry it out...

"And yet, Mahatmaji, I have not written this with even the thought of trying to influence you... In whatever I do not agree with you, I believe you will be patient with me, and I trust that you know how profoundly I am convinced of the greatness of the work you have to do..."<sup>357]</sup>

**Fragment of letter, November 25, 1932**<sup>358</sup>

What a joy it would be when people realise that religion consists not in outward ceremonial but an ever-growing inward response to the highest impulses that man is capable of.

**Letter, June 8, 1939**<sup>359</sup>

[Mr. Stokes wrote to Gandhiji on March 31, 1939, that he had been very much of an invalid since his operation in Vienna and did not write often. But he felt that another war was coming and he wished to convey his opinion on what India's attitude should be.

Individuals may have different concepts of their duty. For some, *ahimsa* meant complete physical non-violence on all occasions. For others, the duty was to fight under certain circumstances, as stated in *Gita*, but without hatred and anger. For the rank and file, *ahimsa* had not yet become a reality in either of these senses. But there was a duty of the nation as a whole and the Indian National Congress should give a lead.

The war would not be between one side which is just and other which was not, but a struggle of great powers for the retention or redivision of countries which by any moral criterion belong to none of them. There could be no solution save in ending imperialism. He felt that India would help achieve this objective by siding with the dying British imperialism.<sup>360]</sup>

Segaon, Wardha,  
June 8, 1939

My dear Satyanand,

Pyarelal has preserved many letters for me to read when I can. I can just now find yours of 31st March in this bundle. I have devoured its contents with avidity simply because it is your letter.

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<sup>357</sup> SN 8581

<sup>358</sup> *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Volume II; *Collected Works*, Volume 52, page 61

<sup>359</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 69, pages 331-32

<sup>360</sup> Stokes, *op. cit.*, pages 250-58

I never knew that you had gone to Vienna. What was the operation for? Was it not successful? I have never appreciated the homage paid to the Vienna surgeons. However this is all by the way. I do hope your incapacity is not permanent.

As to the great question raised by you, my reading of *Gita* and interpretation of *ahimsa* is different from yours. I do not believe that killing in war can ever be done without anger or zest. As I believe in unadulterated *ahimsa* I am groping as to India's duty. I am shirking the national solution. I discuss without coming to a decision. My own individual conduct is determined. But I quite agree with you that national can be exactly the opposite. My present mood is to ask the Working Committee to decide for itself. It was not without cause that God prompted me to cease even to remain a four-anna member of the Congress. Hence there is no moral obligation on me to give an opinion. At the same time if I felt the call, I should not hesitate to announce my opinion. As it is I am praying for light.

How is Mrs. Stokes? What are the children doing? How long were you away?...

**Letter, December 15, 1939<sup>361</sup>**

[When the war broke out on September 1, 1939, the Government of India promptly declared war against Germany. The Indian National Congress opposed the dragging of India into the war without consulting the people. It adopted a resolution calling on Britain to define the objectives, especially as regards the subordinated peoples of the empire, and India in particular.

Satyanand wrote a letter to Gandhiji on December 6, 1939, that he supported the attitude and action of the Congress, but was unable to go along with certain other aspects. There was a tendency to treat the question as if it were merely one of "helping" Britain, implying that prevention of a victory by the Germans was a matter primarily of concern to the British. He felt that India should side with Britain and its allies not because of their "deservingness." A victory by Germany would mean a new lease of life to imperialism, a far more sinister domination of non-European peoples with the philosophy of superior race and the greatest catastrophe for the world.<sup>362</sup> Gandhiji's reply was also published in *Harijan*.<sup>363</sup>]

Segaon, Wardha,  
15 December 1939

My dear Satyanand,

It was a perfect pleasure to hear from you. For though we correspond but rarely you are never out of my mind and often a subject of conversation.

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<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 282-84

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 279-82

<sup>363</sup> *Harijan*, December 23, 1939; *Collected Works*, Volume 71, pages 36-38

I cling to an old superstition, if it may be so called. When in doubt on a matter involving no immorality either way, I toss and actually read in it divine guidance. I have no other scientific basis. To attribute residuary powers to God is a scientific mode in my opinion. In this crisis too, I have resorted to a kind of toss.

If I had my way, you know what would have happened. That was not to be. The Congress way was not only not immoral; for it, it was the only moral way. Hence I kept myself with the Congress.

My object was and still is to push forth the non-violent way as it was in my own proposal. The Congress made room for the interpretation you have put upon it. But I do not regard it as a condition. It is a toss. If the British intention is pure, says the Congress, we plunge.

The way to test the intention is to know the British mind about India. If it is pure, then it is clear that God wants the Congress to throw its whole weight on the side of Britain, so that ultimately the victory may go not to the strongest arms but to the strongest cause. What you want is already at Britain's disposal. She draws men and money without let or hindrance. Unless violence breaks out, she will continue to get these. The Congress won't tolerate violence, let us assume. Then Britain has nothing to fear from the Congress in the violent way. And I hold that considered from the non-violent standpoint, which in my opinion is the only point worth considering, it would be immoral for the Congress to give her moral support to Britain unless the latter's moral position is made clear.

I do not lay down the law as you do about Nazism. Germans are as much human beings as you and I are. Nazism like other "isms" is a toy of today. It will share the same fate as the other "isms."

I fancy I see the distinction between you and me. You, as a Westerner, cannot subordinate reason to faith. I, as an Indian, cannot subordinate faith to reason even if I will. You tempt the Lord God with your reason; I won't. As the *Gita* says, God is the fifth or the unknown, deciding factor.

In spite of our intellectual differences our hearts have always been and will be one.

With love to you all,

*Bapu*

**STOVER, W. B.**

**Letter, June 16, 1927**<sup>364</sup>

[William Brenner Stover (1866-1930), a missionary of the Church of the Brethren in Gujarat, India, until 1920, wrote to Gandhiji on May 2, 1927:

"You are working for the larger good; you have taken the Lord Christ for your Leader and Guide...

"I suggest that instead of the *charkha* every day, you set the example and put the challenge to all of educated India, to choose out someone of illiterate India, and spend a half hour a day in teaching this illiterate person. I would also suggest that the teacher and the one taught be of different castes. This idea carried to any great extent throughout the land would bring about almost a revolution in the thinking of the people..."

He continued:

"Japan has attained the highest literacy. Would India take a suggestion from Japan? It would be *educate*, I think."<sup>365</sup>]

*Ashram, Sabarmati,*  
June 16, 1927

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter. Your suggestion is undoubtedly interesting. But I do not understand why you fall foul of the *charkha* which the millions can easily take up; whereas your suggestion requires technical knowledge and character at its back. Your friends of the West have made a god of literacy. I wonder what Jesus, whom you call the "Lord Christ", would say if he came in flesh and saw the people of the West crazy over a knowledge of letters, wealth and passing the best part of their time and life in seeking happiness from the external. Supposing that every person of education gave mechanically half an hour to teaching every untouchable, of what avail will it be to him or to the untouchables? And why are you so much enamoured of the material progress of Japan? I do not know whether the material has gone side by side with the moral progress. I have no wish to judge the Japanese. I have not even the data for doing so even if I wished. But neither literacy nor wealth without the moral backing has any attraction for me. And do you know why I swear by the *charkha*? I do so because not merely the untouchables but millions of other people in India are starving because they have no work and because now they have even become too lazy to work. I am therefore presenting the *charkha* to the starving millions as there is no other simple productive work which can be presented to the millions; and I present it to the

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<sup>364</sup> SN 12521; *Collected Works*, Volume 34, pages 9-10

<sup>365</sup> SN 12495

educated and the well-to-do people of India as an example for the rest.

I have the highest regard for my missionary friends, and that very regard makes me warn them in season and out of season against misinterpreting the message of the Bible. You tell me, "you have taken the Lord Christ for your leader and guide. There is none better." You do not mind my correcting you. I regard Jesus as a human being like the rest of the teachers of the world. As such He was undoubtedly great. But I do not by any means regard him to have been the very best. The acknowledgment of the debt which I have so often repeated that I owe to the Sermon on the Mount should not be mistaken to mean an acknowledgment of the orthodox interpretation of the Bible, or the life of Jesus. I must not sail under false colours.

Your letter is sincere and I felt that I could not better reciprocate your sincerity than by putting before you frankly my position.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

W.B. Stover, Esq.  
Mount Morris, Illinois

### **SUNDERLAND, THE REVEREND DR. JABEZ T.**

[Dr. Sunderland (1842-1936), a Unitarian, first visited India in 1895-96 and later spent several years in the country. After return to the United States, he was an active advocate of freedom for India. He worked with Lala Lajpat Rai, the Indian nationalist leader, when he was in exile in America. He was President of the India Information Bureau of America and later of the India Society of America, and editor of *Young India*, New York. He was the author of many books and pamphlets, including *India, America and World Brotherhood* (1924), and *India in Bondage, Her Right to Freedom and a Place among Nations* (1928). He wrote in the introduction to the latter: "For more than forty years I have been a constant student of India's great religions, her extensive literature, her philosophies, her remarkable art, her long history, and above all, her pressing and vital present-day social and political problems..."

He wrote to Gandhiji on April 11, 1927, that he was writing a book on India's case for freedom and self-rule, setting forth the Indian political situation as Indians see and feel it, and requested a few words from him to commend the book.<sup>366</sup> Gandhiji replied on 11 May that if he was well enough, he would be glad to look through an advance copy of the book and write a few words. When the manuscript was completed, Dr. Sunderland sent it to Ramananda Chatterjee,

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<sup>366</sup> SN 12488



editor of *Modern Review*, Calcutta, for the publication of an Indian edition, and requested him to send a copy to Gandhiji.<sup>367</sup>

The book soon went into a second edition and was then proscribed by the Indian Government in June 1928. Ramananda Chatterjee was arrested, charged with sedition and fined. Gandhiji strongly condemned the action.<sup>368</sup>

For a brief biography of Dr. Sunderland, please see *Modern Review*, Calcutta, October 1936.]

**Letter, August 10, 1929**<sup>369</sup>

Sabarmati,  
August 10, 1929

Dear friend,

You will please excuse me for my not having written to you earlier about your book. The fact is my time is so mapped out that outside my daily routine there is hardly a minute left. And but for the prosecution of Ramanand Babu I would probably not have been able to read your book even now. Having studied it I can bear testimony to your great industry and greater love for India. I flatter myself with the belief that I have an unusual capacity for discriminating between solid writing and venomous. Though your love for India has prompted you to say harsh things of British Rule and British method, I have detected in your work no venom. The prosecution in regard to your book only confirms your indictment of the system.

Wishing you many years of active service of humanity,

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, July 3, 1933**<sup>370</sup>

[Dr. Sunderland wrote to Gandhiji on June 24, 1933, recommending a message to the World Fellowship of Faiths for their conference in Chicago.<sup>371</sup>]

Dear friend,

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<sup>367</sup> SN 4277. The American edition was published by Lewis Copeland Company, New York, in 1929.

<sup>368</sup> *Young India*, June 6 and August 15, 1929; *Collected Works*, Volume 41, pages 17-19, 287

<sup>369</sup> Kusumbehn Desai's Diary, SN 32577/105; *Collected Works*, Volume 92, page 54

<sup>370</sup> Charles Frederick Weller, ed., *World Fellowship: Addresses and Messages by Leading Spokesmen of all Faiths, Races and Countries* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1935), page 13

<sup>371</sup> SN 21497

I have your affectionate letter of the 24th June. What message can I send through the pen if I am not sending any through the life I am living? Let me for the present try to live the life as it may please God. When He wants me to send a written message He will tell me.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

**TUCKER, THE REVEREND BOYD W.**

[Mr. Tucker, an American missionary and friend of Bishop Fisher, was Principal of Collins High School, Calcutta, and later taught at Santiniketan. He carried on frequent correspondence with Gandhiji.]

**Letter, February 24, 1928**<sup>372</sup>

The Ashram,  
Sabarmati  
February 24, 1928

My dear friend,

I have your very delightful letter which I deeply appreciate. I must not however accept your advice. "Resist not evil" with me has never meant passive resistance. The word "passive resistance" I have described as a misnomer for the resistance which I have known and offered. The paraphrase of "resist not evil" means resist not evil with evil, and therefore necessarily means resist evil with good. And, if at the present moment, I do not seem to be actively resisting evil, it is a mere appearance. For, if you are a constant reader of *Bhagavad Gita*, you will recall the passage, "He who sees action in inaction and inaction in action sees truly." Or is there not the corresponding English saying "He also serves who waits and prays" or something like that? Anyway such is absolutely my position today. If I could see my way clear leading to boycott movement, do not imagine for one moment that I would sit still for a single moment. But the way is not clear. It may clear any day. I want a living faith on the part of known workers in the boycott as I have prescribed from time to time in the pages of *Young India*. I am positive that no other boycott can possibly succeed, as I am equally positive that this boycott must succeed if there is enough work behind it. Huge demonstrations that have been taking place in Calcutta are good in their way, but not good enough for me. There is no reality behind them. They have their use too, but they cannot enthuse me as an active soldier.

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<sup>372</sup> SN 13084; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 48

I hope I am clear. If not, do please tackle me again. I am anxious for you to understand me and my movement through and through.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. Boyd W. Tucker  
Collins High School  
140 Dharamtala Street  
Calcutta

**Letter, March 12, 1928**<sup>373</sup>

*Satyagraha Ashram*  
Sabarmati  
March 12, 1928

My dear friend,

I like the manner in which you are combating my views. I discovered the difference between us even in Orissa. For me, there is no difference between the individual and the social position. At the same time there is ample room for the compromise of the nature suggested by you, for the simple reason that I ever compromise my own ideals even in individual conduct not because I wish to but because the compromise was inevitable. And so in social and political matters I have never exacted complete fulfilment of the ideal in which I have believed. But there are always times when one has to say thus far and no further, and, each time the dividing line has to be determined on merits. Generally speaking where the sum total of a movement has been evil, I have held non-co-operation to be the only remedy and where the sum total has been for the good of humanity, I have held co-operation on the basis of compromise to be the most desirable thing. If I seem to be holding myself aloof from some of the political movements just now, it is because I believe their tendency to be not for the promotion of *swaraj* but rather its retarding. It may be that I have erred in my judgment. If so, it is but human and I have never claimed to be infallible. You will see this point somewhat developed in a recent autobiographical chapter dealing with my participation in the late War. Tell me now if I have answered your question, even if I have not solved the puzzle.

Andrews is here and will be for a few days longer. How nice it would be if you could come and pass a few days of quiet with me so that we could discuss the important problems you have been raising in your letters. This is however not to say that you may not discuss them through correspondence. Please do, so long as it is necessary.

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<sup>373</sup> SN 3104; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 102

Yours sincerely,

B. W. Tucker  
Calcutta

**Letter, July 4, 1928**<sup>374</sup>

[Reverend Tucker wrote in a letter of June 28, 1928, that he had been ashamed of the critical attitude he took in some of his previous letters. He then informed Gandhiji that the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling had conveyed to him, on behalf of the Government, that his attendance at political meetings was a violation of the undertaking by the Board of Foreign Missions in America that its missionaries would loyally co-operate with the Government. The first meeting he was accused of attending was not a political meeting but dealt with social evils; but the Government considered that all such subjects have political implications. The Deputy Commissioner hinted that if he did not cease attending such meetings, the Government would stop its grant to his school and complain against him to the Board.

Mr. Tucker said he had written to the Board and to Bishop Fisher that if they insisted on conforming to the demand of the Government, he had no honourable course to take except to resign as a missionary. He continued:

"I have no desire to engage in politics... but I am vitally interested in the life of India, and want to identify myself as far as possible with her limitations and sufferings... I pray God that I may be privileged to remain in India where I most prefer to live and work. I cannot ask you to do anything about this matter... but I give you the liberty to use what I have written in any way that you see fit. I should be very pleased to receive advice from you as to what course you think one ought to pursue under the circumstances."

As regards the proposed visit of Gandhiji to the West, he wrote: "...I am not sorry that you have delayed your going. I agree with your plan not to deliver public lectures but to meet selected individuals and groups... You are well aware that the vast majority are unprepared to receive your message as yet, but you will find that even in America there are many who are attempting to find the way which you have found and in which you are leading."<sup>375</sup>]

*Satyagraha Ashram,*  
Sabarmati

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<sup>374</sup> SN 13451; *Collected Works*, Volume 37, pages 17-18

<sup>375</sup> SN 13440

July 4, 1928

Dear friend,

I have your letter. Surely there was nothing in your previous letters to be ashamed of. Though I could not accept your judgment, I certainly appreciate the affection underlying your criticism. The attitude that you have taken up with the Deputy Commissioner appears to me to be correct. Indeed the conduct of foreign missions in India does not in any way appeal to me. It is more expedient and mundane than correct and religious. How can a religious body accept the terms that have been imposed upon foreign missions? The English missionary effort is frankly political. It is in alliance with the Government and takes its code of conduct generally from the Government. Such at any rate is my reading. I expect that one of the reasons which determined Andrews in giving up the Cambridge Mission was its over-secularity.<sup>376</sup> But here too I write under correction. My own judgment is wholly independent of Andrews's attitude. The present crisis that has overtaken you, I, therefore, regard as a blessing in disguise. And if you have the conviction and the strength, you will sever your connection once for all. And, in my opinion, you will be all the fitter for becoming a messenger of Truth.

I understand what you say about my proposed visit to the West. If the external circumstances are favourable and if I keep good health, I hope to go next year.

Yours sincerely,

Reverend B. W. Tucker  
"The Manse"  
Darjeeling

### **Letter, September 1, 1928**

[Reverend Tucker wrote on August 15, 1928: "There is one question that was raised at the Council of the International Fellowship held at Sabarmati last January, about which I would appreciate some further explanation from you. It is in regard to your statement that people belonging to a certain religious group or holding certain religious views, ought not to even remotely desire that others should accept their viewpoint. I may not have quoted you correctly; as I remember it, your statement may have been even stronger than that..."<sup>377</sup> That

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<sup>376</sup> C.F. Andrews ceased to be a missionary and a clergyman of the Church of England in 1914.

<sup>377</sup> For a report of Gandhiji's talk at the Council, see *Collected Works*, Volume 35, pages 461-64. The International Fellowship was established in Madras in 1923, under the leadership of A.A. Paul, to bring together groups of Hindus, Muslims, Christians and members of other religious groups for prayer and discussion of problems facing the country.

statement, Mr. Tucker said, had greatly disturbed liberal Christians.<sup>378</sup>

He also expressed happiness at the victory of Bardoli satyagraha.<sup>379</sup>]

*Satyagraha Ashram*  
Sabarmati  
September 1, 1928

My dear Boyd,

Your letter has been on my file for some days.

I think you have stated my position fairly correctly except that the way in which you have put it may cause a misunderstanding. I did not say that I would not desire that others should accept my viewpoint. But I did say that I would not desire that others should accept my religion. Evidently you have used the word viewpoint as synonymous with religion. I do not. Whilst I would not press my religion upon others, I would press my viewpoint upon others, as every one of us must. Religion is a matter of feeling or the heart and, therefore, not a matter for argument, and I would hold everybody's feeling as dear as my own, because I expect him to do so with reference to my feeling. Viewpoint is a matter of reasoning, the mind, the intellect. It may shift from time to time without touching the heart. Change of religion is a change of status. Change of viewpoint is an accident often due to external causes. My feeling about the existence of God cannot be easily altered. My viewpoint regarding the connotation of the term may vary from time to time and expand with expansion of my reason. Religion is beyond explanation and it seems to me to be impertinent for anyone to touch another's religion. A viewpoint must always be capable of explanation. I have entered upon this distinction because it enables me to explain my position about religion more clearly than by any other means. I do not want you to become a Hindu. But I do want you to become a better Christian by assimilating all that may be good in Hinduism and that you may not find in same measure or at all in the Christian teaching. I can't explain why I delight in calling myself and remaining a Hindu, but my remaining does not prevent me from assimilating all that is good and noble in Christianity, Islam and other faiths of the world.

I wonder if I have explained my position to your satisfaction. If not please ask.

All you say about Bardoli is quite true.

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<sup>378</sup> SN 13491

<sup>379</sup> Peasants in Bardoli launched a no-tax campaign, under the guidance of Gandhiji, in protest against an excessive increase in the land tax. When intimidation and repression failed, the Government agreed on August 6, 1928, to appoint an inquiry committee, as demanded by the peasants. It recommended a sharp reduction in the tax increase.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. B. W. Tucker  
Principal  
Collins High School  
140 Dharmtala Street  
Calcutta

**Letter, May 5, 1931**<sup>380</sup>

[Under the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, signed in March 1931, the Indian National Congress agreed to participate in the second Round Table Conference in London to discuss the future political status of India. It decided at a session in Karachi on 2 April that Gandhiji would be its sole representative at the Conference. Gandhiji soon received invitations from the United States and press reports indicated that he would visit the United States after the Conference. Mr. Tucker, who attended the Karachi session, offered to accompany Gandhiji to London as his secretary.]

Borsad,  
May 5, 1931

My dear Boyd,

I was delighted to have your letter and to find that you were having a little respite from the heat of India's plains. Of course there is no truth in the rumoured visit to America. But as soon as the rumour went abroad, I got a peremptory cablegram signed by Mr. Page, Dr. Sherwood Eddy, Rev. Holmes, Dr. Ward and others warning me against going to America. They say emphatically that I would be exploited if I went there and that I would serve the cause better from a distance than by appearing in the midst of the people of America. All this, mind you, in the cablegram. And by this mail I have received a letter from an unknown American friend who, whilst appreciating my work and message, pleads with me not to go to America. I do feel exactly like these friends. Therefore even if I went to London and could spare a few weeks I should not care to go in the teeth of these warnings from friends whose opinion I respect. Would not yours coincide with theirs after further reflection?

Now about London. There is no probability of my going there so long as the Hindu-Muslim problem remains unsolved. Even if I went there, whilst I should value your society, I do not know of the use I could make of your services. Andrews is already there and as you know he will take possession of me body and soul. I have a letter from him in which he takes my London visit for granted, has

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<sup>380</sup> SN 17031; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, pages 87-88

appointed himself as my *chaprasi*, tells me where I should stay. There is again Henry Polak who was in my office in South Africa for years. Then there is Muriel Lester. Therefore if you went with me to London you would not go as Secretary. Then I must not forget Mira. She will of course be with me. But of course everything is premature. I felt that you should know all about the appointments should the visit come forth. I was glad you were with me in Karachi. I was only sorry that I was not able to have long chats with you. That you continually lost your things was certainly bad but that would be no disqualification for taking you with me. I could have much better use for you than to make you keeper of my belongings.

Boyd Tucker, Esq.  
C/o Postmaster  
Srinagar (Kashmir)

**Letter, May 19, 1931**<sup>381</sup>

[Mr. Tucker wrote to Gandhiji explaining his desire to accompany him to London, and sent some comments on missionary enterprise. He wrote:

"I am in full agreement with you in your protest against the methods employed by Christian missions in their efforts to gain proselytes through education, medical services and the like...

"This Government [of India] has demanded that the non-British missionary not only remain neutral in such vital matters as the economic and political evils of this country, but has compelled him to give a pledge, which the Government has interpreted to mean that the missionary shall actively support the Government... It is a standing indictment of the alliance of Christian missions in India with the world's greatest collective evil, imperialism, that they have acquiesced in this arrangement."]

As at Sabarmati,  
May 19, 1931

My dear Boyd,

I have your letter. I understand more fully the reason for your wanting to accompany me to London should I go there. At the present moment however there is neither any prospect of going to London nor to America, to America much less. I shall certainly publish your letter regarding missionary enterprise.<sup>382</sup>

Boyd Tucker, Esq.  
c/o Postmaster

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<sup>381</sup> SN 17100; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, page 179

<sup>382</sup> *Young India*, May 28, 1931; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, pages 237-39



Srinagar (Kashmir)

**Letter, August 19, 1931**<sup>383</sup>

Ahmedabad  
August 19, 1931

My dear Boyd,

I purposely refrained from writing to you in answer to your letter as I was waiting to know what was to happen. Now of course you know the result. But supposing all the negotiations that are going on materialise and that ultimately I am obliged to go, I should still feel that you should not go as one of the companions. But several would be travelling on their own and you may also do likewise. What I feel is that I should be going just as I am. I do not know whether you appreciate the force of my going in that absolutely detached condition. This may either come from arrogance or from utter trustfulness in God. I am certain that it is the latter with me. The more I think of the tremendous difficulties ahead and my own very limited powers, the clearer my helplessness becomes to me. I therefore say to myself "I will rely only upon God and no one else, nothing else." But He chooses many instruments for His purpose and if He wants to use them He will also see that they are there ready to be used.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. Boyd Tucker  
Santiniketan  
Birbhum

**Letter, March 4, 1933**<sup>384</sup>

[Mr. Tucker wrote to Gandhiji on February 21, 1933, that the temple-entry programme (to secure admission of *Harijans* into temples) ran counter to his fundamental religious conceptions. He wished to present his difficulties to Gandhiji.

"My reading of the history of religion is that every great religious advance has been away from organised and formal religion. The great religious truths which the prophets of religion have apprehended and proclaimed have always been lost when their disciples have tried to localise them in priestcraft and temples. Truth is too universal to be confined and made

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<sup>383</sup> SN 17514; *Collected Works*, Volume 47, page 315

<sup>384</sup> SN 20454; *Collected Works*, Volume 53, page 465-66

sectarian. Therefore I consider temples, mosques and churches to be a prostitution of religion...

"Therefore I can see no advantage in gaining permission for *Harijans* to enter the temples."

He believed that *Gurudev* Rabindranath Tagore agreed with him.<sup>385</sup>]

My dear Boyd,

I have your long and good letter but none too long to mar my pleasure. You were quite right in writing the letter. The best appreciation I could show was to publish the relevant parts of it and to offer my own criticism. I had prepared the article for this week's issue of the *Harijan*, but it had to stand aside for matters more urgent. I hope however it will go in next week. I shall send you a proof copy and as I have said there all I had to in connection with your letter I will not repeat the argument just now.

The reference to *Gurudev* I have not given in the *Harijan*. I know he has been specially tender towards me of late. Perhaps Truth suffers through his reticence if he has absolutely strong and confirmed views on the question as your letter would suggest he has. I should hold it to be a great tragedy if through the tenderness of friends, untruth had crept into my life or had passed current among the people. If what I hold is truth, it must stand the light of fiercest criticism even of friends who have hitherto worked with me. I have no end to serve but that of Truth. If my defeat means victory of Truth, I would count that defeat itself as victory. I do not regard my judgements as infallible and even though I may be right in 99 cases out of 100, I do not want to trade upon it and assume or expect other people to assume that the 100th judgement is also right. I have for that reason called *Gurudev* the great sentinel, and I have always appreciated his warnings even when I have not been able to depart from my course by reason of his warnings. They have put me on my mettle and made the people think and choose. It is not good for individuals or nations to be under the hypnotic influence of any single person. It is a golden cover that hides the face of Truth.

You may, if you like, read this to *Gurudev*, and if he is clear in his mind, after reading the article that you will see in a few days, that he has no doubt in his mind that I am in error, let him issue his warning by way either of a public statement or a letter addressed to me for publication. But if he has any doubt I want the benefit of that doubt, because I do not want the people to be confused. As it is, on this temple-entry question I do not hold the field undisputed. They have all kinds of arguments put before them for examination. I do not want *Gurudev's* to be one of this crowd of arguments against the simple issue. His must be an overpowering

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<sup>385</sup> SN 20308

deliverance standing by itself in its strength and originality.

I am personally not quite sure that *Gurudev* agrees with you in your attitude, for Santiniketan has its own temple or church or *mandir*, whatever you like to call it. Where two or three people gather together in a particular place in the name of God to offer worship, it becomes a temple. In Santiniketan we have a humble but beautiful building where prayers are offered, incenses burnt and sermons given. In Sabarmati we have no building, no walls, but the cardinal points are the walls, the sky is the roof and mother earth is the floor; nevertheless, the spot that has been selected for the morning and the evening prayers has all the essentials of a temple. But in accordance with your letter even that bare ground is a prostitution of religion. Surely, *Gurudev* will not agree with you in this attitude if I have understood it correctly.

With love from us,

Yours sincerely,

[Gandhiji published Mr. Tucker's letter and his comments in *Harijan* of 11 March. He wrote:

"I know of no religion or sect that has done or is doing without its house of God, variously described as a temple, mosque, church, synagogue or *agiari*.<sup>386</sup> Nor is it certain that any of the great reformers including Jesus destroyed or discarded temples altogether. All of them sought to banish corruption from temples as well as from society. Some of them, if not all, appear to have preached from temples. I have ceased to visit temples for years, but I do not regard myself on that account as a better person than before."<sup>387</sup>]

### **Letter, March 23, 1933<sup>388</sup>**

[Mr. Tucker wrote on March 18, 1933:

"My indictment of temples, churches and mosques as being a 'prostitution of religion' does not imply that there is an utter absence of essential good both in priesthood and temples... I myself have received great uplift of soul in visiting certain cathedrals...

"I appreciate that the throwing open of the temples to the *Harijans* is a moral and spiritual necessity for the caste Hindus... What I do regret is that

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<sup>386</sup> Parsi fire-temple

<sup>387</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 54, pages 49-51

<sup>388</sup> SN 20684; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 170

you should have seemed to lay such stress upon the temple as an essential part of Hinduism."<sup>389</sup>]

My dear Boyd,

You can never tire my patience, for I value the interest you are taking in everything I say or write or do. I know also that you do not argue in any spirit of controversy. I see your difficulty. You take or seem to take only one view of things. I have a profound faith in the Jain doctrine of *Anekantvad*. It is the many-sidedness as opposed to one-sidedness. To illustrate this celebrated doctrine we have a well-known story of "the elephant and seven blind men," all of whom described the same creature in seven different ways, and the poet ends by saying "they were all true and they were all false," and we may add "God alone is true, no one and nothing else is or can be wholly true."

Holding this view I can appreciate and defend your attitude, but I can also defend my own. If the world will be influenced by my attitude on the question of temple-entry, not in its own way but in my way, I have no fear about its moral safety.

You will be pleased to know that I have an energetic letter from a Maharashtrian, completely defending your position and wholly dissenting from my reply. You must have seen *Gurudev's* splendid letter on the question. It came to me when the ensuing *Harijan* was filled up. I hope therefore to publish it next week.<sup>390</sup> I believe that he has sent it to me for publication. But you may enquire. If he does not desire publication, I will naturally withhold it, but in that case, please telegraph at once. I hope he is doing well. With love and respects from us all to him.

Yours sincerely,

[Mr. Tucker wrote to Gandhiji on May 5, 1933, on the eve of a 21-day fast for self-purification undertaken by Gandhiji in connection with the *Harijan* movement: "Our prayers shall be with you during these days." On May 10, 1933, Ramchandra Shastri wrote to Mr. Tucker conveying Gandhiji's appreciation of the message. Mr. Tucker wrote in another letter of May 19, 1933:

"I am indeed fortunate in that I have never had to fight against any race or class prejudice so that technically speaking I have been free from the sin of untouchability. But as I have been searching my heart in these days, I have come to realise that in my most intimate friendships whether with Indians or Europeans, I have only sought for fellowship with those who are intellectually and spiritually inspiring... There has been too much of the sentimental in my sympathy for the oppressed and the under-

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<sup>389</sup> SN 20622

<sup>390</sup> See "This Fight Is Necessary" in *Harijan*, April 1, 1933; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, pages 266-67.

privileged. I have been content to accept a standard of living which has isolated me from the most intimate fellowship with the poor and the ignorant. Therefore your fast is as much for my impurity as for that of any orthodox Hindu. I am seeking for inner guidance as to a way of life which will purify me from all selfishness in my human relationships, and am grateful to you and to God for your having undertaken this fast on my behalf as well as on behalf of others. "<sup>391]</sup>

### WANLESS, DR. SIR WILLIAM JAMES

**Letter, June 2, 1931**<sup>392</sup>

[Dr. Wanless (1865-1933), born in Canada, was a Presbyterian medical missionary in India for many years. He established a medical school and a leper asylum in Miraj. He examined Gandhiji in March 1927 when he suddenly fell ill during a tour and advised rest. He retired to the United States in 1928, the year in which he was knighted.]

As at Sabarmati,  
June 2, 1931

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter. Whilst I have a very vivid recollection of your personal services to me I have long ceased even to think of rewarding such services materially. I have rendered myself practically incapable of rendering such services. The only service therefore I have for years rendered for them has been heartfelt thanks, and heartfelt thanks of a poor man like me take the shape of blessings. I must confess that I have been the recipient of personal kindnesses from many quarters. Just imagine what would be my state and the state of rich men whom I only know in public life if I were to ask them for donations for the enterprises of my benefactors. You will therefore please excuse me for my inability to respond to your desire.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Sir W.J. Wanless  
1016 Matilija Road  
Glendale, California

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<sup>391</sup> SN 21321

<sup>392</sup> SN 17188; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, page 278

## WARD, THE REVEREND DR. HARRY FREDERICK

**Letter, June 8, 1927**<sup>393</sup>

[Dr. Ward (1873-1966), a Methodist Minister, was Professor of Christian Ethics at the Union Theological Seminary, New York, from 1918 to 1966. An advocate of the "social gospel," he was active in many social movements concerned with peace, civil liberties and racial equality. He visited India in 1924 and met Gandhiji soon after his fast.

He wrote to Gandhiji on March 11, 1927, when he heard that Gandhiji would attend a conference in Peking, and enclosed his articles on the situation in China. He also enquired if Gandhiji had received a book sent by him, *Non-violent Coercion* by Case.<sup>394</sup> He added: "The spiritual temperature of this country is very low; we are too prosperous, too proud, and too self-righteous. In this situation it is a source of strength to those who seek the way of life to feel the touch of your spirit in some line of the news or in memory."<sup>395</sup>]

As at the *Ashram*, Sabarmati,  
June 8, 1927

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter of the 11th March last. I have your articles which I shall go through as soon as I can. As you may have known I had a collapse two months ago during my tour and I am now convalescent.

The Chinese visit has been indefinitely postponed.

I have no recollection of the book on *Non-violent Coercion* having been received by me from you. Had the receipt come to my knowledge, I should have acknowledged it. But it is likely that it was received and not brought to my notice, if at the time I was travelling. I shall now enquire; but in any case, you need not trouble to send me another copy because that book was sent to me, I cannot recall by whom, two years ago, and I read it with interest.

Please remember me to Mrs. Ward.

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>393</sup> SN 12516; *Collected Works*, Volume 33, page 453

<sup>394</sup> Clarence Marsh Case, *Non-violent Coercion: A Study in Methods of Social Pressure*. New York and London: The Century Co., 1923.

<sup>395</sup> SN 12482

Harry F. Ward  
Union Theological Seminary  
Broadway at 120th Street  
New York

#### IV. OTHER LETTERS

[Gandhiji received letters from people of various persuasions and interests from all over the United States. Some were prominent in American life. Others were "common" people and children for whom biographical information is not available in published sources.

Gandhiji tried to send considered replies to all letters, usually in his own handwriting. Though only a fraction of his letters are available, they reflect his humility and compassion, and give his views on many matters of public or personal interest.]

#### ADDAMS, MS. JANE<sup>396</sup>

[Ms. Addams (1860-1935) – social worker and pacifist, founder of Hull House (a settlement house in Chicago) and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 – visited Satyagrahashram in Sabarmati in 1923 but could not meet Gandhiji as he was in prison. Ms. Addams and Gandhiji had high regard for each other. The following letter was sent by Gandhiji from Yeravda Prison.]

**Letter, October 7, 1932<sup>397</sup>**

Dear sister:

My inner being tells me that spiritual unity can only be attained by resisting with our whole soul the modern false life.

Your servant  
M.K. Gandhi

#### AMERICAN, AN

**Letter, April 4, 1932<sup>398</sup>**

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<sup>396</sup> This letter to Ms. Addams is not in the printed edition of the book.

<sup>397</sup> Jane Addams papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection

<sup>398</sup> *The Diary of Mahadev Desai; Collected Works*, Volume 49, page 267



[The following letter was in reply to an American who offered to obtain Gandhiji's release from prison "on condition that he devoted himself entirely to propagating the teaching of Christ."]

I thank you for your letter. My answer to your first question is that I would not like anybody to get me out, and certainly not on any condition. I cannot give up, for any consideration whatsoever, what I regard as my life's mission.

**Letter, April 4, 1932<sup>399</sup>**

[This letter was to an American, formerly an atheist who became a follower of Christian Science. He asked for Gandhiji's views on Christian Science.]

I have met many Christian Science friends. Some of these have sent me Mrs. Eddy's works. I was never able to read them through. I did however glance through them. They did not produce the impression the friends who sent them to me had expected. I have learnt from childhood, and experience has confirmed the soundness of the teaching, that spiritual gifts should not be used for the purpose of healing bodily ailments. I do however believe in abstention from use of drugs and the like. But this is purely on physical, hygienic grounds. I do also believe in utter reliance upon God, but then not in the hope that He will heal me, but in order to submit entirely to His will, and to share the fate of millions who even though they wished to, can have no scientific medical help. I am sorry to say, however, that I am not always able to carry out my belief into practice. It is my constant endeavour to do so. But I find it very difficult, being in the midst of temptation, to enforce my belief in full.

**Letter, July 7, 1932<sup>400</sup>**

[This letter was to an American who wished to stay in Gandhiji's *Ashram*.]

Dear friend,

I was touched by your letter. If you can possibly stand the climate of this country and the strenuous life of the *Ashram*, I would be delighted to have you as a member. There is no fee to be paid and you will not be called upon to pay for your board and lodging, so long as you can share the common meal. But the life is hard and incredibly simple. All the inmates are expected to labour in the field and the factory for a certain number of hours daily. All work, including scavenging, is done by the inmates. The dress we wear is also very simple and is all handspun and hand-woven, and sewn at the *Ashram*. If, therefore you feel inclined to venture out, whilst you are welcome, I would warn you against coming unless you

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<sup>399</sup> *The Diary of Mahadev Desai; Collected Works*, Volume 49, page 267

<sup>400</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 50, page 163

have enough funds to take you back to America in the event of the climate or the institution not being agreeable to you. In spite of this letter [if] you desire to come to India and join the *Ashram*, I would like you to see Mr. Richard Gregg, who has lived at the *Ashram* for a long time and knows all about it, and you will not think of coming unless he gives you encouragement. His address is: Richard Hurst Hill, Esq., Spl. Asstt. to the President, Howard University, Washington, U.S.A.<sup>401</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

### AMERICAN CONSUL GENERAL, CALCUTTA

#### Letter, August 10, 1928<sup>402</sup>

[Robert Frazer, Jr., the American Consul General in Calcutta, wrote to Gandhiji on August 2, 1931:

"I beg to inform you that a telegram was lately addressed to the President of the United States of America by Estelle Cooper Gandhi, reading as follows:

‘Mahatma Gandhi has informed me to inform you Nazimova<sup>403</sup> has left him no alternative but to declare boycott on all American goods and call general strike on all American plantations which employ darker-skinned people. Boycott lifted only when Nazimova deported and Katherine Mayo presented for criminal libel here.’

"I would be greatly obliged if you would inform me who Estelle Cooper Gandhi is and whether the above telegram was sent with your knowledge and approval. I would also be pleased to receive any comment that you may care to make in regard to this matter."<sup>404</sup>

After receiving the following reply, the Consul General sent a letter thanking Gandhiji.<sup>405</sup>

Bardoli,  
August 10, 1928

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<sup>401</sup> The name in this address is an error. It should be Richard B. Gregg (not Richard Hurst Hill): he was for some time special assistant to the President of Howard University.

<sup>402</sup> SN 13487; *Collected Works*, Volume 37, page 149

<sup>403</sup> Mme. Alla Nazimova had played the title role in Rabindranath Tagore's play "*Chitra*" in New York in 1916.

<sup>404</sup> SN 13487

<sup>405</sup> SN 13490

I have your letter. Dr. Bidhan Roy wrote to me about its subject-matter and I trust you have had a reply.

The whole story is a fabrication from start to finish. I know nothing of the parties mentioned therein.

Yours sincerely,

### AMERICAN WOMAN, AN

**Letter, November 24, 1932**<sup>406</sup>

I am not enamoured of the idea of using divine healing for the purpose of proving the existence of divinity or efficiency of prayer. If Jesus came back to us, it is difficult to know what he would say to some of the uses that are being made of his powers of healing and other miracles attributed to him.

### AMERICAN YOUTH, AN

**Message, October 4, 1932**<sup>407</sup>

[This message, sent with an autograph, was to a young American suffering from tuberculosis. His mother had written to Gandhiji that she was helpless and that her son was paying for his treatment by selling autographs of important people.]

May you recover soon.

### ANDREASEN, P.J.

**Letter, March 2, 1933**<sup>408</sup>

[Mr. Andreasen, a missionary in India for many years, sent to Gandhiji, then in Yeravda jail, a book, *The Secret of the Universe* by President Nathan Wood of Gordon College, Boston. In a letter of January 29, 1933, he wrote that it had a definite message to enable Gandhiji to appreciate the large section of evangelical Christians whom he appeared to have failed to understand.<sup>409</sup>]

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<sup>406</sup> *The Diary of Mahadev Desai; Collected Works*, Volume 52, page 56

<sup>407</sup> *The Diary of Mahadev Desai; Collected Works*, Volume 51, page 188

<sup>408</sup> SN 20437; *Collected Works*, Volume 53, page 446

<sup>409</sup> SN 20139

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter and a copy of *The Secret of the Universe*.

Though you have asked me to acknowledge your letter only after I have read the book, I do not want you to be in suspense, because I am so preoccupied with the work on hand that I have no notion when I shall be able to reach the book.

Yours sincerely,

P.J. Andreasen, Esq.  
30 Evans Way  
Boston, Mass.

**ARMSTRONG, MRS. ROBERT, AND MRS. PAUL R. HOWARD**

**Letter, July 9, 1926<sup>410</sup>**

[Mrs. Armstrong and Mrs. Howard, members of the missionary society of the Presbyterian Church, wrote in a letter of February 20, 1926, to Gandhiji: "... our attention was called to the fact that you have read the New Testament twice, and now believe that Jesus Christ was a very good man only. Since we believe that you consider truthfulness as a necessary characteristic of a good man, we wish to call your attention to the fact that Christ said 'I and my Father are one' (John, 10:30) and He told the Samaritan woman at the well that He was the looked-for Messiah (John, 4:25,26). So it seems to us that unless you want an untruthful person for an example, you must either accept Him for what He claimed to be or throw Him out entirely as an untruthful impostor." They stated that they were praying daily, asking God to reveal Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the World, to him until they read in the papers or heard from him that he had found "Him who is life eternal."<sup>411</sup>]

The Ashram,  
Sabarmati,  
July 9, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your letter. Truth is not so simple as it appears to you. You know the story of the elephant and seven blind men who actually touched him. They all touched him at different parts. Their descriptions therefore differed from one another.

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<sup>410</sup> SN 10779; *Collected Works*, Volume 31, page 111

<sup>411</sup> SN 10743

They were all true from their own points of view and yet each appeared to be untrue from the points of view of the rest. The truth was beyond all the seven. We are all, you will perhaps agree, in the position of these seven sincere observers. And we are blind as they are blind. We must therefore be content with believing the truth as it appears to us. The authenticity and the interpretation of the Biblical record is a thing you will not want me to discuss.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Robt. Armstrong  
Mrs. Paul R. Howard  
2293 E Prospect 5  
Kewanee, Illinois

### ASHBROOK, MISS HARRIETTE

**Letter, October 26, 1928**<sup>412</sup>

[Miss Ashbrook of Coward-McCann, publishers in New York, wrote to Gandhiji on September 6, 1928, that they were publishing *Understanding India* by Gertrude Marvin Williams. Mrs. Williams, who attended the Belgaum session of the Indian National Congress (1924) where she was introduced to Gandhiji, tried to give "a truthful, unbiased picture of India." Miss Ashbrook requested a statement about the book from Gandhiji as that would "help greatly in bringing the book to the attention of intelligent, thinking people."<sup>413</sup>]

*Satyagraha Ashram*, Sabarmati,  
October 26, 1928

Dear friend,

I have your letter for which I thank you. I have also the book by Mrs. Williams. As soon as I can get the time, I shall read the book and let you have my opinion. But I am so overwhelmed with work that I do not know when I shall get the time to read the book.

Yours sincerely,

Harriet Ashbrook  
Coward McCann,  
425 Fourth Avenue,  
New York

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<sup>412</sup> SN 14390; *Collected Works*, Volume 37, page 398

<sup>413</sup> SN 14389. See also Section III, "Fisher, Frederick B., Letter, October 26, 1928."

**BAUER, MISS BARBARA**

**Letter, July 13, 1928**<sup>414</sup>

[Miss Bauer wrote, in a letter dated May 24, 1928: "My request to you is this: To resurrect my dear brother who recently passed away... I know you can accomplish it in a Master's way... I know you are endowed with these Divine Powers..."<sup>415</sup> In another letter she offered to bear all costs of journey if bodily presence was essential.<sup>416</sup>]

*Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati,*  
July 13, 1928

Dear friend,

I have your letter. I don't know how the story about miraculous powers possessed by me has got abroad. I can only tell you that I am but an ordinary mortal susceptible to the same weakness, influences and the rest as every other human being and that I possess no extraordinary powers.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Barbara Bauer  
Big Spring, Texas

**BLUME, MISS JULIET E.**

**Letter, September 29, 1931**<sup>417</sup>

[In a letter on September 13, 1931, Miss Blume, a student of international relations at Barnard College, Columbia University, New York, and business manager of *The Barnard Bulletin*, posed two questions to Gandhiji, who was then in London. She quoted Lord Balfour's definition of Dominion Status and asked Gandhiji to give his own definition of the concept. She said that the *New York Times* had quoted him as saying that "three hundred and sixty million people without liberty cannot remain in the leashes of non-violence forever" and asked: "But is not all possibility of violence excluded by the fact that both England and India are members of the League of Nations, and thus all problems would necessarily be solved by arbitration?"<sup>418</sup>]

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<sup>414</sup> SN 14349; *Collected Works*, Volume 37, page 48

<sup>415</sup> SN 14314

<sup>416</sup> SN 14314

<sup>417</sup> SN 17878; *Collected Works*, Volume 48, pages 91-92

<sup>418</sup> SN 17711

88 Knightsbridge,  
London, W.  
September 29, 1931

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter of the 13th inst. I think the meaning of Dominion Status you have quoted is admirable. What, however, the Indian National Congress is aiming at, is a Partnership or Alliance. Dominions are generally English speaking peoples, or they are otherwise called "daughter nations." India is in that sense an alien nation, therefore she can only be legitimately a partner or an ally.

The statement attributed to me and quoted by you is the opposite of what I have repeated from thousands of platforms. Non-violence is an absolute creed. I could not therefore have said anything that could detract in any way from the value of that creed. Violence is excluded by the Congress voluntarily, because the Congress has come to the conclusion that it is the right thing, but the mere fact of England and India being members of the League of Nations surely does not exclude the possibility of violence if either nation is minded to offer violence - England in order to retain her hold on India, and India in order to get out of that hold. Even as it is, today India is only nominally a member of the League; she is not a member in her own right, but she is a member under English patronage and at the will of Great Britain.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Juliet E. Blume  
771 West End Avenue  
New York

### **BORSCH, LUDWIG**

**Letter, February 27, 1947<sup>419</sup>**

[Mr. Borsch, a student at Pratt Institute in New York, wrote on February 11, 1947, that he wished to visit India "to find and learn about those things, which in the material-minded West one regarded with a sort of pitying contempt." He also sought Gandhiji's advice on diet.<sup>420</sup>]

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<sup>419</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 94, pages 380-81

<sup>420</sup> Pyarelal Papers, file 4(131)

Kazirkhil  
Ramganj P.S.  
Noakhali Dist.,  
February 27, 1947

Dear friend,

I have your letter of the 11th ultimo. Distance lends enchantment to the scene. I would, therefore, warn you against visiting India for the enrichment of your life. Life, as it is found in India, is wholly different from the life described in the best books on ancient wisdom in the East. I wish I could give you definite guidance on the selection of your diet. We in India, not excluding myself, have learnt much from English and American literature on the diet question. The ordinary Indian diet is unbalanced and is heavily spiced. Therefore, I would advise you to consult the many American and English text-books written on vegetarianism and more especially on the kind of diet. You will gain much more than I could give from this literature if you used discretion.

Ludwig Borsch, Esq.  
66 Tenimore Street  
Brooklyn  
New York

### **BORSODI, RALPH**

**Letter, (after April 14), 1931**<sup>421</sup>

[Mr. Borsodi (1888- ), author of several books, founded the "School of Living" - a non-violent community which encouraged "decentralised living" - at Suffern, NY. He wrote to Gandhiji on April 14, 1931, that he had followed "with special interest the gallant struggle you have been making against some of the follies of industrialism." He sent his latest book, *This Ugly Civilisation*, to Gandhiji and said: "I believe that there are some ideas in my latest book - which is a criticism of this industrialised civilisation of ours - which may be of interest and perhaps of help to you... It would make me very happy to have you read it. In any event, I wish you would look over the several references made to you, which you will find paged in the index."<sup>422</sup> The date of Gandhiji's reply is not available.]

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter. I have not yet received your book, *This Ugly Civilisation*. When I do, I shall try to look into it.

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<sup>421</sup> SN 17005; *Collected Works*, Volume 45, page 421

<sup>422</sup> SN 17005



Yours sincerely,

**BOWMAN, HARRY**

**Letter, April 27, 1933**<sup>423</sup>

[In a letter dated March 12, 1933, Mr. Bowman expressed his admiration for the work of Gandhiji. He said he had just read Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*, and asked Gandhiji to advise him "if Miss Mayo sticks to *truth* in this deplorable book or is she only after publicity money..."<sup>424</sup>]

April 27, 1933

Dear friend,

I thank you for your long letter.

I had one visit from Miss Mayo when she was in India. I have read her book and I wrote also a review on it which at that time had attracted considerable attention. It is my firm conviction that the book is filled with half-truths, innuendoes and deductions drawn from stray facts as if they represented a universal situation.

Yours sincerely,

Harry Bowman, Esq.  
Beatrice, Nebraska

**BRANN, EARNEST A.**

**Letter, April 27, 1940**<sup>425</sup>

Sevagram,  
Wardha,  
April 27, 1940

Dear friend,

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<sup>423</sup> SN 19055; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, page 42

<sup>424</sup> SN 19009

<sup>425</sup> GN 10536; *Collected Works*, Volume 72, page 25

I have your letter. I am myself groping in the dark and making an experiment in the direction mentioned by you. If it succeeds it will present the world with an infallible peace plan.

Yours sincerely  
M. K. Gandhi

Earnest A. Brann, Esq.  
5532 Kenwood Avenue  
Chicago

**BRAUN, MRS. JOSEPH A.**

**Letter, March 21, 1928**<sup>426</sup>

[A reading club in Detroit, Michigan, collected some money to be given as a remuneration to Mr. Sharman, who gave a lecture and suggested material to counteract the effect of Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*. Mr. Sharman declined to take the money and the club sent it to Gandhiji.<sup>427</sup>]

*Satyagraha Ashram,*  
Sabarmati,  
March 21, 1928

Dear friend,

It was thoughtful of you and the members of your club to send me through Mrs. Sharman a cheque for Rs. 70. I value the gift for the heart that prompted it. I am utilising the same for supplying the needs of one who had devoted himself to propagate the message of the spinning wheel.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Joseph A. Braun  
RFD 3  
Birmingham  
Michigan

**CAMPBELL, FRED E.**

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<sup>426</sup> SN 14268; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 131

<sup>427</sup> SN 14238

**Letter, July 28, 1925<sup>428</sup>**

[Mr. Campbell, who described himself as a young boy of 15 from Kansas, wrote on May 4, 1925:

"A few days ago I heard a sermon in one of our Christian churches in which the minister gave a vivid account of your fasting in order to stop the hard feeling between the Mohammedans and the Hindus... the man said that you were the foremost example of Christ today, although you are not a Christian. After hearing this, I determined to read more about you. In this I read of your troubles with the British. What is your main reason for hatred towards them? Is it a commercial matter? If you could find time to answer this, I would be more than pleased. I am thanking you in advance."<sup>429</sup>]

148, Russa Road,  
Calcutta,  
July 28, 1925

My dear young friend,

I like your frank and sincere letter for which I thank you.

You seem to have taken it for granted that I hate the British. What makes you think so? I have hundreds of friends among the British people. I cannot love the Mussalmans and for that matter the Hindus if I hate the British. My love is not an exclusive affair. If I hate the British today, I would have to hate the ohammedans tomorrow and the Hindus the day after. But what I do detest is the system of government that the British have set up in my country. It has almost brought about the economic and moral ruin of the people of India. But just as I love my wife and my children, in spite of their faults which are many, I love also the British in spite of the bad system for which they have unfortunately made themselves responsible. That love which is blind is no love, that love which shuts its eyes to the faults of loved ones is partial and even dangerous. You must write again if this letter does not satisfy you.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

**Letter, April 23, 1926<sup>430</sup>**

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<sup>428</sup> SN 10547; *Collected Works*, Volume 27, pages 432-33

<sup>429</sup> SN 10540

<sup>430</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 30, pages 343-44

[Mr. Campbell wrote again on March 16, 1926, requesting Gandhiji to put him in touch with a 16-year-old pen pal.<sup>431</sup>]

Ashram, Sabarmati,  
April 23, 1926

My dear young friend,

I have your letter. Much as I would like to accommodate you, you have asked me to do the impossible. I cannot get a sixteen year lad to write to you in English for the simple reason that his mother tongue would be an Indian language. Spanish is out of the question. No doubt there are some Anglicised Indian families where English is taught from infancy. But in order to get one such boy I shall have to hawk your letter about from place to place which I am sure you would not want or expect from me to do. But if you want to open correspondence with a grown-up person who can write with the freshness of youth, I might succeed.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Fred Campbell, Esq.  
7701 Main St.  
Kansas City, MO.

[Not discouraged, the young man wrote again on May 31, 1926: "Nothing could be more acceptable to me than your offer to start a correspondence with me yourself." And he went on to describe his school life.<sup>432</sup>]

### CHERRINGTON, DR. BEN M.

**Letter, June 22, 1928**<sup>433</sup>

[Dr. Ben Mark Cherrington (1885-1980) was national secretary of the YMCA from 1919 to 1926 and assisted the Reverend Sherwood Eddy in organising European seminars. In 1926 he became the Executive Secretary of the newly-established Foundation for the Advancement of the Social Sciences at the University of Denver, and wrote to Gandhiji, among others, on March 15, 1928, seeking advice on how the foundation could be of greatest use to the world. He enclosed several questions (the enclosure is not available).<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>431</sup> SN 12444

<sup>432</sup> SN 10758

<sup>433</sup> SN 14262 and 14335; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 452

<sup>434</sup> SN 14261

Dr. Cherrington was Executive Secretary of the Foundation from 1926 to 1951; Chancellor of the University of Denver, 1943-46; and director of the Regional Office of the Institute for International Education, 1951-69. He served in the State Department in 1938-39 and 1946.<sup>435]</sup>

*Satyagraha Ashram,*  
Sabarmati  
June 22, 1928

Dear friend,

I have your letter. You altogether overrate my ability to help you. I however try to answer your questions to the best of my ability.

Yours sincerely,

Ben M. Cherrington, Esq.  
Executive Secretary  
University of Denver  
Denver, Colorado

[Enclosure]

I have never had occasion to study the history of the foundations in the West. My knowledge of them being too cursory to be of any value.

1. In my judgment, the growing need of the times however is restoring to the things of the heart, that is, moral well-being, its true place in life. Social science, according to my view, should therefore be approached from that moral standpoint. No tinkering will answer the purpose. Your foundation, therefore, if it is to be true to itself, should be utilised for subverting the system under which the extraordinary accumulation of riches has been possible in America. It would seem then that if you adopt my suggestion, it becomes for the most part independent of monetary help.

2. In view of my answer to the first question, I need hardly answer the second. But I would say independently of the first that the organisation of the foundation round industrial, racial and international relationships would be any day preferable to the traditional academic departments. If the view underlying my answer to the first question is accepted, you will have to do original research work.

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<sup>435</sup> Warren F. Kuehl, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Internationalists*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983.

3. In view of the foregoing the answer to this is unnecessary. It would certainly be wise to have all nations, races and classes represented. If you can take care of the youth, the citizens will right themselves.

4. I should lock up in fairly commodious but not too comfortable rooms a few professors and students and insist upon their finding a way out of the present intolerable position, if you hold with me that the present is an intolerable position.

5. I am unable to answer this.

6. The idea is good. Perhaps the most effective way of securing the proper type or exchange of visiting members would be to send out a representative to the countries from which you may want such members so that he may come in direct touch with the living institutions of the country or countries in question.

### CLOSE, UPTON

**Letter, May 2, 1931**<sup>436</sup>

[Mr. Close (1894-1960) - pseudonym of Josef Washington Hall of New York - was a journalist and radio commentator. He wrote several books and articles on Asia, including *The Revolt of Asia* (1920). He met Gandhiji in London on October 20, 1931.<sup>437</sup>]

[As At] Sabarmati,  
May 2, 1931

Dear friend,

I have your two letters, the last one dated 8th April. My visit to America must still remain a rumour and your anticipation of what is likely to happen if I come to America makes me still more nervous. At the present moment therefore I must not think of even tentatively discussing arrangements about an event which is not likely to happen in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Upton Close, Esq.  
New York City

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<sup>436</sup> SN 17048; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, page 71

<sup>437</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 48, pages 459-60

**CURTERI, F. J.**

**Letter, November 20, 1944**<sup>438</sup>

Sevagram, India  
November 20, 1944

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter and the interesting enclosures.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

F.J. Curteri, Esq.  
425, 112 West Doran  
Grendaec 3, California

**DANFORTH, WILLIAM H.**

**Letter, August 24, 1928**<sup>439</sup>

[Mr. Danforth (1870-1955) was head of the Ralston Purina Company, Missouri, which manufactured animal feed and other food products. He and his wife, together with two friends, met Gandhiji in Colombo on November 22, 1927. He wrote an account of the interview in a letter to his colleagues in America, later published in a book.<sup>440</sup>]

*Satyagraha Ashram*, Sabarmati,  
August 24, 1928

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter as also for the parcel of your food products sent through Mr. B. N. Birla. He sent me also a copy of the book you have written on your Indian experience.

As my menu is limited and as I do not eat things of whose composition I have no knowledge, I have not been able to try any of the delicacies you have kindly sent

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<sup>438</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 78, page 322

<sup>439</sup> SN 14384; *Collected Works*, Volume 37, pages 201-02

<sup>440</sup> William H. Danforth, *Random Ramblings in India: Letters Written to the Purina Family*, (Privately printed, 1928), pages 130-32

me. But I have distributed your biscuits amongst the *Ashram* inmates. If it is not a secret, I would like to know how the corn flakes are prepared and whether anything beyond wheat is used in preparing the flakes. Is it not the same thing as the wheat flakes prepared at Dr. Kellogg's Battle Creek Sanatorium?

Yours sincerely,

**DENNISON, JOS E.**

**Letter, March 26, 1926<sup>441</sup>**

[Mr. Dennison wrote to Gandhiji on February 17, 1926, that at the Library of the Boys' Work Association, they had been hanging autographed photographs of great men and that they would appreciate a photograph of Gandhiji.<sup>442</sup>]

*Ashram*, Sabarmati,  
March 26, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your letter. I regret to have to inform you that I do not keep any photograph of myself. And for many years now I have not even given a sitting to a photographer. There are however photographs sold in the bazaar. They are all snapshots. In my opinion they are all caricatures.

Yours sincerely,

Jos. E. Dennison, Esq.  
Director  
Two Rivers Boys' Work Association  
H.P. Hamilton School  
Two Rivers, Wisconsin

**DOUBLEDAY DORAN CO.**

**Cable, April 1928<sup>443</sup>**

[Doubleday, publishers in New York, sent a cable on April 21, 1928, seeking Gandhiji's permission to publish an American edition of his autobiography. He

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<sup>441</sup> SN 12430; *Collected Works*, Volume 30, page 177

<sup>442</sup> SN 12430

<sup>443</sup> SN 14745; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 248



had, however, already authorised the Reverend John Haynes Holmes to make arrangements for publication and had given the rights to Macmillan.]

CONSULT REVEREND HOLMES "UNITY" AND MACMILLAN  
PUBLISHER WHO HOLDS RIGHTS PUBLICATION ENTIRE BOOK

### DUBOIS, DR. W.E.B.

[Dr. DuBois, the great African-American intellectual and leader of the African-American struggle for equality and of the Pan-African movement, was an admirer of Gandhiji and supported India's struggle for independence. He was for many years editor of *The Crisis*, organ of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.]

#### Letter, May 1, 1929<sup>444</sup>

[In 1929, Dr. DuBois met C.F. Andrews, an associate of Gandhiji, and at his suggestion, wrote to Gandhiji for an article. Gandhiji sent a message which was published in *The Crisis*. For the text of the message sent with the following letter, please see Section V, "A message to the American Negro, May 1, 1929."]

As at the *Ashram*,  
May 1, 1929

Dear friend,

I was delighted to receive your letter with a footnote by Mr. Andrews. It is useless for me even to attempt to send you an article for your magazine. I therefore send you herewith a little love message.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

### EHRlich, Dr. HARRY J.

#### Letter, March 24, 1933<sup>445</sup>

Dear friend,

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<sup>444</sup> Herbert Aptheker, ed., *The Correspondence of W.E.B. DuBois* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), Volume I, page 403

<sup>445</sup> SN 20700; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 177

I thank you for your letter. The name of one book is *Keener Vision Without Glasses* by Benjamin Gayelord Hauser, and the address is Tempo Books Inc., 580, Fifth Avenue, New York.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Harry J. Ehrlich  
84 Church St.  
New Brunswick, N.J.

**FIELD, CHARLES S.**

**Letter, June 3, 1931<sup>446</sup>**

As at Sabarmati,  
June 3, 1931

Dear friend,

I appreciate your letter and I would have made your acquaintance had I gone to America. But as you must have observed, it was a baseless rumour which created the hope and in some minds possibly also the fear that I might visit America.

Yours sincerely,

Charles S. Field, Esq.  
Dallas, Texas

**FREEMAN, ANDREW A.**

**Letter, May 6, 1947<sup>447</sup>**

[Mr. Freeman, a journalist, was in Delhi in 1946 and attended spinning classes started by Gandhiji. In an interview with Gandhiji at that time, he said:

"I propose to interpret the *charkha* to Americans as a 'thinking machine'. I found while I was attending my spinning class that if I was alone with it, it made me think. If only Americans could get down to spin, they might be able

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<sup>446</sup> SN 17193; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, page 289

<sup>447</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 95, pages 134-35

to do some thinking for which otherwise they get no time. It might make them forget the atom bomb."<sup>448</sup>

After return to the United States, he sought Gandhiji's permission to use his name for the Gandhi Spinning Society of the United States and for the "Gandhi Spinning-Wheel" to be manufactured in the United States.<sup>449]</sup>

Valmiki Mandir,  
Reading Road,  
New Delhi  
May 6, 1947

Dear Freeman,

I had your letter of the 28th April. I hope there are no ill effects left of the operation you had gone through. Is it not a mad idea to start a spinning society in America? Mad or wise, why do you want to connect my name with it? Hand-spinning has its own special universal function.

If I were you I would not mix up teachings with hand-spinning.

Your third object is to cultivate a friendly understanding between Americans and Indians. I claim that understanding not only with Indians but with the whole world is implied in voluntary spinning. And, if America is really interested in the hand-spinning-wheel it can beat all its previous records for inventive genius.

Therefore I would say do not belittle a great thing by mixing it up with my name.

In your exposition you will have a perfect right to use my name freely and say quite correctly that you owe your enthusiasm for hand-spinning to mine in the same connection in India. And, of course, I shall welcome all the hand-spun yarn that you can send to India. Only let me present you with a joke that will lie behind your sending a parcel of hand-spun yarn all the way to India for weaving. The postal charges for sending hand-spun yarn from America would be perhaps 50 times the value of the cotton used in hand-spinning. But America being a mammon-worshipping country you can afford such expensive jokes.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. GANDHI

Andrew A. Freeman, Esq.  
325 West 57th Street  
New York 19, New York

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<sup>448</sup> Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1958), Volume II, page 799

<sup>449</sup> Pyarelal Papers, file 4 (125)

## GARVEY, MISS AMY JACQUES

**Postcard, May 12, 1926**<sup>450</sup>

[Miss Garvey, daughter of Marcus Garvey, the African-American leader of Caribbean origin, sent a book, *Brief in the Case of United States vs. Marcus Garvey* to Gandhiji on March 28, 1925. In 1926, she sent two of her books to Gandhiji, and wrote after receiving an acknowledgment: "Of the many acknowledgements of the books received, I cherish most the one from M.K. Gandhi, the Mahatma of India, dated May 12, 1926, from 'The Ashram, Sabarmati, India.' He addressed me as 'Dear Friend.'"<sup>451</sup>]

The Ashram  
Sabarmati,  
12-5-1926

Dear friend,

I had the 2nd volume of the *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey or Africa for Africans* for which I thank you.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

Amy Jacques Garvey  
P.O. Box No. 22, Station E  
New York City

## GLOGAN, MISS GERTRUDE

**Letter, November 14, 1926**<sup>452</sup>

[Miss Glogan, a student at Barnard College, Columbia University, New York, wrote to Gandhiji on October 15, 1926, that world peace had become an obsession with her and that she was convinced of the nefarious sin of racialism. She continued:

"I know too well that I need spiritual guidance; nor can those around me live without it. It takes a man of your great insight to furnish it.

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<sup>450</sup> Copy at National Gandhi Museum, New Delhi; *Collected Works*, Volume 95, page 53

<sup>451</sup> Amy Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism* (New York: Octagon Books, 1986), page 168

<sup>452</sup> SN 19737; *Collected Works*, Volume 32, page 44

"For the sake of those in America who feel a need for you, come, oh Mahatma, and you will be assured of a sincere welcome."<sup>453]</sup>

November 14, 1926

Dear friend,

I like your earnest letter. When, if ever, God wants me to go to America, He will open the way for me and guide my steps.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Gertrude Glogan  
Barnard College  
New York

### **GOLDSTEIN, HOWARD**

**Letter, June 4, 1945**<sup>454</sup>

[Mr. Goldstein, Joe Goodman and Otto Grimm, believers in non-violence, sent a cable on May 18, 1945, that though Gandhiji could not attend the San Francisco Conference of the United Nations in June as a delegate, his presence in the United States at that time would exert a tremendous influence on the peoples of the world. They invited him to the conscientious objectors camp, administered by the American Friends Service Committee, in the mountains near Glendora, California.<sup>455</sup> This reply was sent by Pyarelal, secretary of Gandhiji, on his behalf.]

Camp: "Dilkhush,"  
Panchgani, India,  
June 4, 1945

Dear friends,

Gandhiji has your cable.

He appreciates your desire to have him in America. But you have seen how he could not come. He could not force himself on the Committee. He has not much faith in the value of more verbal talks. He is trying to forge the message of non-violence through his work in India. If he shows visible success here the world

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<sup>453</sup> SN 10830

<sup>454</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 94, page 208

<sup>455</sup> Pyarelal Papers, file 4 (11)

will get the message it needs. Therefore the conscientious objectors who are going to meet near Glendora would do well to closely study what he has been saying and doing in India. Particularly, they should study his writings preceding and after the 8th August 1942 Resolution of the Congress. They reflect the working of a non-violent mind in the face of the greatest crisis in the world's history.

Yours sincerely,  
Pyarelal

Messrs. Howard Goldstein,  
Joe Goodman and Otto Grimm  
Conscientious Objectors' Camp  
Near Glendora  
California (USA)

### **GREEN, HORACE**

#### **Letter, May 12, 1926<sup>456</sup>**

[Mr. Green (1885-1943), author and President of Duffield & Company, publishers, wrote to Gandhiji on April 13, 1926, referring to a cable he sent earlier and enquiring if he would permit them the privilege of reading his autobiography with a view to book publication in America. He said that Dr. John Haynes Holmes was a friend of his family and could inform him of the standing of the company.<sup>457</sup>]

The *Ashram*, Sabarmati,  
May 12, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your letter of the 13 April last. I believe I had a prepaid cable from Paris to which I sent a reply. I cannot recall any prepaid cable from you from New York.

I would have gladly lent you a copy of my autobiography if I had it. But chapters are written from week to week. What has been written has already been published. If you do not subscribe to *Young India* you can get a loan of it from Dr. Holmes.

What should be done when the whole of the autobiography is written for its publication in book form has not yet been decided. Dr. Holmes, I understand, is in correspondence with the Macmillans.

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<sup>456</sup> SN 32239; *Collected Works*, Volume 91, pages 366-67

<sup>457</sup> SN 32238. See Section III, "Holmes, The Reverend Dr. John", Letter, April 6, 1926.

Yours sincerely,

Horace Green, Esq.  
President  
Duffield & Company  
211 East 19th Street  
New York

**GROVER, PRESTON**

**Note, June 23, 1945**<sup>458</sup>

[Mr. Grover, correspondent of the Associated Press of America, who was travelling on the same train to Simla as Gandhiji, sent him a note: "Would not it be wise for you to go into the cooler Congress car for the afternoon, so you could stretch yourself a while? You have not had any sleep for 24 hours. It is not going to help much if you arrive at Simla tired out from the interruptions in your sleep at wayside stations. As we would say in America, 'Give yourself a break'." <sup>459</sup>]

On the train,  
June 23, 1945

My dear Grover,

Many thanks for your considerate note. But let me melt myself in this natural heat. As sure as fate, this heat will be followed by refreshing coolness which I shall enjoy. Let me feel just a touch of real India.

Yours,  
M. K. Gandhi

**Letter, August 24, 1945**<sup>460</sup>

[Mr. Grover apparently sent a telegram enquiring about Gandhiji's talks with the Viceroy.]

Dear Grover,

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<sup>458</sup> Pyarelal Papers, and *The Hindu*, July 1, 1945; *Collected Works*, Volume 80, page 363

<sup>459</sup> Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi - The Last Phase*, Volume I, Book 1, page 125

<sup>460</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 81, page 163

You will pardon me for keeping your wire unanswered so long. You should blame my hesitation and preoccupation for the delay.

I know the answer but I cannot give it just now at least. The world is not in a hurry to know my views. I therefore return your prepaid slip to enable you to collect the unused deposit.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

**Letter, October 26, 1945<sup>461</sup>**

Nature Cure Clinic,  
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,  
October 26, 1945

My dear Grover,

I kept your letter with me thinking what I should do. The more I think the more I feel that I must not speak on the atomic bomb. I must act if I can. Therefore, if you are a journalist of the right type, you will help me to observe silence on such matters.

Thank you for your enquiry about my health which is as good as it can be.

Yours sincerely,

Preston Grover, Esq.  
Associated Press of America  
Bombay

**Letter, November 4, 1945<sup>462</sup>**

Nature Cure Clinic,  
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,  
November 4, 1945

Dear Grover,

The Press man in you speaks again. I entirely agree with you that my statement, whether it grips or not, has undoubtedly a world of meaning in it. You shall have

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<sup>461</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 81, page 420

<sup>462</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 82, pages 21-22



it some time for yourself, even if not for the Press. I am quite clear in my mind that neither the public nor the Press are eagerly awaiting for my speech or my action. Therefore, let me take my time, untrammelled by outside considerations.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

Preston Grover, Esq.  
Associated Press of America  
Times of India Bldg.  
Bombay

**Telegram, February 12, 1946**<sup>463</sup>

SEVAGRAM

PRESTON GROVER  
"TIMES OF INDIA" BUILDING  
BOMBAY

DAYS HERE FILLED WITH MEETINGS. LEAVING FOR BOMBAY  
SEVENTEENTH *EN ROUTE* POONA.

GANDHI

**HART, DAVID B.**

**Letter, September 21, 1934**<sup>464</sup>

Dear friend,

I have your letter of 26th July last. The Indian movement stands for complete independence. That does not exclude an honourable partnership on absolutely equal terms. But there can be no association with imperialist exploitation of India or any other country. Naturally you have heard the opinion that India could not be left on its own. Imperialism has always justified itself in that manner. I believe in the maxim that no greater evil can befall a country than that it should lose its independence.

The caste system, as it exists at present, is certainly the bane of Hindu life. Its rigour is unmitigated by the British rule. On the contrary it gains force because of

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<sup>463</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 83, page 122

<sup>464</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 59, page 45

the so-called neutrality necessarily observed by the ruling power for the sake of itself. The great movement of removal of untouchability is an attack on the evil underlying the caste system.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

David B. Hart, Esq.  
Pipestone, Minnesota

**HAYES, ED T.**

**Letter, February 28, 1947<sup>465</sup>**

[Mr. Hayes, a theological student at the Southern Methodist University in Texas and an admirer of Gandhiji, requested Gandhiji, in a letter of January 16, 1947, to send him, or refer him to, a scientific or spiritual treatise on fasting.<sup>466</sup>]

Kazirkhil,  
Ramganj P.S.,  
Noakhali Dist.,  
February 28, 1947

Dear friend,

I have your letter of the 16th ultimo. I do not know that I can send you anything useful beyond saying that you should glean my writings on fasting in the columns of *Young India* later transformed into *Harijan*. Mr. Richard Gregg (The Putney School, Putney, Vermont, USA) might be able to help you in getting hold of copies of this weekly.

Yours sincerely

Ed. T. Hayes, Esq.  
7622 Robin Road  
Dallas 9, Texas

**HAYES, ROLAND**

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<sup>465</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 94, pages 384-85

<sup>466</sup> Pyarelal Papers, file 4 (131)

**Letter, March 5, 1928**<sup>467</sup>

[Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, who introduced Mr. Hayes, was an Indian poet, writer and artiste. Mr. Hayes (1887-1976) - an African-American whose parents had been slaves - was a prominent singer who performed in concerts in the United States and several European countries.]

March 5, 1928

Dear friend,

Mr. H. Chattopadhyaya writes to me saying that you are likely to visit India in the near future. If you do and if you visit Gujarat, please regard this little *Ashram* as your home.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Roland Hayes  
c/o The American Express Co.  
Paris

**HEEGSTRA, H. WALTER**

[Mr. Heegstra, a businessman, visited Gandhiji in India and later wrote to him.]

**Letter, April 5, 1924**<sup>468</sup>

Post Andheri,  
April 5, 1924

Dear Mr. Heegstra,

I thank you for your letter.

This is my reply to the first question: My platform is India. My goal is to attain self-government for India. The means adopted to attain the end are Non-violence and Truth. Therefore, Indian self-government not only means no menace to the world, but will be of the greatest benefit to humanity if she attains her end through those means and those means alone. The spinning-wheel is the external symbol of internal reform, and its universal re-adoption in India ensures her economic salvation and frees millions of Indian peasants from growing pauperism.

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<sup>467</sup> SN 14253; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 131

<sup>468</sup> SN 8662; *Collected Works*, Volume 23, pages 361-62

My message to the businessmen of America is: Understand the inner meaning of the message of the spinning-wheel and you will probably find the solution for the World Peace which I know so many Americans sincerely desire.

I am sorry I have to disappoint you about my portrait because, as I told you, I do not possess a single portrait or print.

I thank you for the book you have sent me, and in accordance with your suggestion, I am keeping it.

Pray give my regards to Mrs. Heegstra and accept same for yourself.

Yours sincerely,

H. Walter Heegstra, Esq.  
Shepherd's Hotel  
Cairo (Egypt)

### HOLBY, HORACE

**Letter, October 26, 1928**<sup>469</sup>

[Mr. Holby, managing editor of *World Unity*, New York, proposed, in a letter to Gandhiji on October 20, 1928, an exchange with *Young India*.<sup>470</sup>]

*Satyagraha Ashram*, Sabarmati,  
October 26, 1928

Dear friend,

I have your letter sending me the magazine *World Unity*.

I have instructed the Manager to put you on the exchange list.

You are certainly at liberty to copy whatever you like from *Young India*, and if I find something in your magazine I might consider to be of value for the readers of *Young India*, I shall take the copy with due acknowledgment.

Yours sincerely,

Horace Holby, Esq.

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<sup>469</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 37, page 399

<sup>470</sup> SN 14397

Editor, "World Unity"  
4 East 12th Street,  
New York

**HOUGH, ELEANOR M.**

**Letter, October 12, 1929**<sup>471</sup>

[Miss Hough, in a letter to Gandhiji on August 20, 1929, requested his endorsement of a study she planned to do in India on "The Relation of the Co-operative Movement to Indian Nationalism," as her doctoral dissertation at George Washington University. She wished to apply for a scholarship on the basis of his endorsement.<sup>472</sup>]

Camp Hardoi,  
October 12, 1929

Dear friend,

I have your letter. You will please excuse me for my inability to send you the introduction you want.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Eleanor M. Hough  
2115 F Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.

[Miss Hough's study, *Co-operative Movement in India*, was published in 1932.]

**HUJER, DR. KAREL**

[Dr. Hujer, a Czech astronomer interested in the study of astronomy of ancient civilisations, was in India in 1935 and had stayed for two days in Gandhiji's *Ashram* near Delhi. He left Czechoslovakia before Nazi occupation and settled in the United States. He became a professor at the University of Chattanooga, Tennessee. He was an organiser of the World Pacifist Meetings in India in December 1949.]

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<sup>471</sup> SN 15661; *Collected Works*, Volume 41, page 552

<sup>472</sup> SN 15660

**Letter, May 1947**<sup>473</sup>

[Dr. Hujer wrote to Gandhiji: "I think of you in prayer... I see the only hope of light for our Western civilisation in your radiant and friendly guidance and wisdom."]

I am the same as when you saw me except that my faith burns, if possible, brighter than before.

### **HULL, MISS HANNAH CLOTHIER**

**Letter, December 9, 1926**<sup>474</sup>

[Miss Hull (1872-1958), national chairman of the United States section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, wrote to Gandhiji on November 6, 1926:

"I am writing for the United States Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to tell you how warmly our organisation would welcome a visit from you to our United States. We consider that your message for Peace and Goodwill is a message for people everywhere and that delivered personally would be a great help to the whole movement."<sup>475</sup>]

As at the *Ashram*,  
Sabarmati,  
December 9, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your kind letter. Yours is the fourth invitation I have received to visit America. Somehow or other, I do not think [feel?] as yet the call within. If I am to be guided by the mere desire, I should straight away respond to your invitation. But something within me tells me that I could not deliver my message more effectively by going to America than by living it myself here, however inadequately it may be.

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>473</sup> *Harijan*, June 8, 1947; also Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi - The Last Phase*, Volume II, page 202; *Collected Works*, Volume 85, page 22

<sup>474</sup> SN 19764; *Collected Works*, Volume 32, pages 413-14

<sup>475</sup> SN 10837

Hannah Clothier Hull  
National Chairman  
504, Walnut Lane  
Swarthmore, Penna

[Miss Hull sent a telegram in January 1930 - when the Indian National Congress first observed the Independence Day - which read: "United States Women's International League expresses sympathy India's aspirations self-government and earnestly hopes it may be secured by triumphantly practising your policy non-violence."<sup>476</sup>]

**JAMES, E. H.**

**Letter, May 12, 1926**<sup>477</sup>

[Mr. James sent Gandhiji a book he had helped to write and asked Gandhiji, in a letter of March 1, 1926, to explain the difference between "*Advaitism*" and "*Dwaitism*" to which reference had been made in *Young India*.<sup>478</sup>]

The Ashram, Sabarmati,  
May 12, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your letter. It is difficult for me at the present moment to find time to read literature with which friends overwhelm me.

You ask me to differentiate between *Advaitism* and *Dwaitism*. The former derived evidence from God who alone exists and therefore, contemplates identity between God and His creation. The latter attempts to show that the two can be never one.

Yours sincerely,

E.H. James, Esq.  
Concord, MASS

**KELLY, MRS. ALICE MCKAY**

**Letter, March 5, 1926**<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>476</sup> SN 12742

<sup>477</sup> SN 12434; *Collected Works*, Volume 30, page 437

<sup>478</sup> SN 12434

<sup>479</sup> SN 12427; *Collected Works*, Volume 30, page 78

[Mrs. Kelly of New York City, a broadcaster and lecturer, and auditor of the League of American Pen Women, Washington, DC, met Gandhiji on a tour of Asia and wrote to him from Singapore on February 11, 1926, that "the all too brief visit to you is the one unforgettable memory I am carrying away with me, and I must thank you from my heart for giving me a veritable inspiration." She requested a message from him for her colleagues in the League and for her broadcasts, and added: "How I wish that you might feel it possible for you to come to our country, but of course you know best."<sup>480</sup>]

*Ashram*, Sabarmati.

March 5, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your good letter. Please tell the members of the League the best way of helping India is to engage in an accurate study of the Indian problem not from newspapers nor after the newspaper style but as diligent students from original sources with patient and prayerful effort.

Regarding your wish that I should visit America, I assure you I am equally eager but I must wait for the definite guidance of the inner voice.

In your previous letter you have asked me for a signed photograph. Did you know that I don't possess a single print of myself? I had not given a sitting for the last ten years and even when I used to give sittings I never got my own portraits. I am sorry therefore that I have to disappoint you.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Alice McKay Kelly  
1200, Madison Avenue  
New York City

[Mrs. Kelly wrote to Gandhiji again on January 20, 1928, about the response to the "unspeakable" book by Katherine Mayo, *Mother India*, and her own lectures on India before women's clubs.<sup>481</sup>]

## KERLIN, GILBERT

**Letter, August 21, 1931**<sup>482</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> SN 12427

<sup>481</sup> SN 14231

<sup>482</sup> SN 17556; *Collected Works*, Volume 47, page 338



Ahmedabad  
August 21, 1931

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter of 16th July.

The only ability that a people, in my opinion, requires to govern itself is to resist alien encroachment. This does not necessarily mean good or pure government.

I cannot think just now of any book to recommend to you.

Yours sincerely,

Gilbert Kerlin, Esq.  
Cambridge, Mass.

#### KOHOSOFF, MATHEW

**Letter, August 15, 1931**<sup>483</sup>

Ahmedabad,  
August 15, 1931

Dear friend,

I thank you for the gift of *Midstream* by Helen Keller. Though I have not been able to go through the whole of the volume a glance through its pages shows that it is a remarkable story.

Yours sincerely,

Mathew Kohosoff, Esq.  
574 West 192nd Street  
New York

#### KONRAD, JOSEPH AND HELEN

**Letter, March 17, 1933**<sup>484</sup>

[The Konrads wrote to Gandhiji on January 21, 1933, expressing admiration for him as one of God's noble men and informing him that they prayed that the Lord

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<sup>483</sup> SN 17471; *Collected Works*, Volume 47, page 295

<sup>484</sup> SN 20601; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 101

may lead him in the fold of the Church. They sent him a book with a request that he read it daily to get acquainted with the Christian doctrine. Life, being God's gift, they said, should not be parted with through fasting.<sup>485</sup> They wrote again on 16 April, expressing joy at receiving his reply from prison, reproduced below, and said they would never cease "to pray for you, that on the Day of Resurrection you shall rise gloriously, Christ-like, Whom you followed in His footsteps..."<sup>486</sup>]

Dear friends,

I thank you for your letter and the book accompanying it.

You will be glad to hear that I had already read it and that was with much interest and profit. This was years ago.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Joseph & Helen Konrad  
158 Harrison Street  
Passaic, N.J.

### **KREBS, MISS FLORENCE K.**

**Letter, June 17, 1928**<sup>487</sup>

[Miss Krebs, an American traveller who studied Eastern religions and wrote articles for magazines, wrote to Gandhiji from Srinagar on May 21, 1928, requesting a meeting with him. She said she desired close co-operation between the oldest (Indian) and the youngest (American) civilisations.<sup>488</sup>]

*Satyagraha Ashram,*  
Sabarmati,  
June 17, 1928

Dear friend,

I have your letter. I shall be pleased to see you whenever you can come to the *Ashram*. I am not likely to leave the *Ashram* during the year. And when you come, you will of course stay at the *Ashram*, if you can manage with very simple vegetarian fare and comparatively simple life.

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<sup>485</sup> SN 20068

<sup>486</sup> SN 19025

<sup>487</sup> SN 13422; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 425

<sup>488</sup> SN 13390

Yours sincerely,

Florence K. Krebs  
Care Post Master  
Srinagar  
Kashmir

### LAW, GORDON

[Mr. Law was a YMCA official in India for a few years and, with his wife Myrtle, met Gandhiji in Lahore in 1920. They presented Gandhiji with a copy of James Moffatt's translation of the New Testament and a book on children by an American author. They became admirers of Gandhiji and wrote an article, "Gandhi in Jail."<sup>489</sup>

After returning to the United States, Mr. Law became Boys' Work Secretary of the YMCA at Newburgh, NY. He set up a Gandhi Club for boys at the YMCA.]

#### Letter, April 5, 1924<sup>490</sup>

[Mr. Law wrote to Gandhiji on February 27, 1924, recalling their meeting, and conveying a request of the Gandhi Club for a message.<sup>491</sup> Please see "Edward Murphy" below.]

Post Andheri,  
April 5, 1924

Dear Mr. Gordon Law,

I thank you for your letter of the 27th February.

I remember our meeting and also your having given me Moffatt's translation of the New Testament.

I have sent a reply to the Gandhi Club also.<sup>492</sup>

I thank you for your good wishes.

I am sending you a copy of *Young India*, the first number after resumption of my editorship, and I am asking the Management to send a copy regularly to you.

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<sup>489</sup> *Outlook*, New York, April 19, 1922

<sup>490</sup> SN 8672; *Collected Works*, Volume 23, page 368

<sup>491</sup> SN 8381-A

<sup>492</sup> See letter to Edward Murphy, April 5, 1924, below.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

Gordon Law, Esq., M.B.E.  
The Gandhi Club  
Young Men's Christian Association  
Newburgh  
New York

**Letter, December 9, 1926**<sup>493</sup>

[In 1926, Gandhiji came under criticism for reading the New Testament to 4students at the Gujarat National College at their request. He wrote in *Young India*:

"I hold that it is the duty of every cultured man or woman to read sympathetically the scriptures of the world. If we are to respect others' religions as we would have them respect our own, a friendly study of the world's religions is a sacred duty. For myself, I regard my study of and reverence for the Bible, the Koran, and the other scriptures to be wholly consistent with my claim to be a staunch *sanatani* Hindu. My respectful study of other religions has not abated my reverence for or my faith in the Hindu scriptures. They have broadened my view of life. They have enabled me to understand more clearly many an obscure passage in the Hindu scriptures."<sup>494</sup>

Mr. Law wrote to Gandhiji on November 5, 1926: "It is an excellent idea for the boys and young men of one country to know something regarding the religion of other lands." He requested Gandhiji to advise him of the best portions of Hindu scriptures which would appeal to boys.

He also requested a signed photograph, and said:

"We want to have it framed and hung in our Boys Rooms here. Do you know that one of our Boys Clubs studied your life... that was their `course' during an entire year.

"And if you would send a short message to our boys or the boys of America... that would be a splendid and generous thing..."<sup>495</sup>]

As at the *Ashram*,  
Sabarmati,

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<sup>493</sup> SN 19756; *Collected Works*, Volume 32, pages 409-10

<sup>494</sup> *Young India*, September 2, 1926; *Collected Works*, Volume 31, pages 350-51

<sup>495</sup> SN 10836

December 9, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your letter for which I thank you. The books that I can recommend regarding Hinduism are Sir Edwin Arnold's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* called the *Song Celestial*, his *Light of Asia*, Max Muller's *India: What It Can Teach Us*, Dutt's abridged *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* in verses. There are several other books but I think that these give one a fair idea of Hindu thought.

Do you know that since 1915 I have discontinued giving sittings to photographers? I have not one single copy of my own photograph. Those that are on sale at stationery shops and elsewhere are all snapshots. If you want me to get hold of one of these which friends tell me hardly represent me, I shall buy a copy and gladly sign it. But I would far rather like that the boys thought more of what I stand for than what my exterior is like. But I do not wish to dogmatise. They shall make their own choice or you for them.

Here is my message to your boys: Above all think, speak and do the truth at any cost, with special emphasis on any.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Law, Esq.  
Boys Secretary  
Young Men's Christian Association  
Newburgh, New York

**LEE, THOMAS B.**

**Letter, June 7, 1931<sup>496</sup>**

As at Sabarmati,  
June 7, 1931

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter. As a matter of fact I have got ample Christian Science literature with me. You will not mind my saying that somehow or other the message of Christian Science does not appeal to me. I met so many Christian scientists in South Africa. Their conversations also failed to convince me. And why do you say that the discovery that there is really no life or sensation in the body is the most important discovery of any kind that has ever been made? As a matter of fact the statement is not a complete proposition. By the body is evidently meant body without life. And surely medicine teaches us that body without life is without sensation and every Hindu child is taught that from

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<sup>496</sup> SN 17248; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, page 347

childhood. But I must not enter into a discussion. I felt that your long letter was entitled to a reasoned reply from me.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

Thomas B. Lee, Esq.  
Sterling Radio Co.  
Kansas City, Mo.

### LODGE, J. FRIEND

**Letter, June 15, 1927**<sup>497</sup>

[Mr. Lodge, in a letter of May 3, 1927, requested an autograph of Gandhiji and a portrait which he proposed to present to his pastor.<sup>498</sup>]

Kumara Park, Bangalore,  
June 15, 1927

Dear friend,

I have your letter for which I thank you. I send you the autograph herewith. The name of the photographer is Mahulikar, Ritchie Road, Ahmedabad.

Yours sincerely,

J. Friend Lodge, Esq.  
"Sunset"  
Bustleton  
Phila.

### MACBEAN, MISS EMILIA

**Letter, June 13, 1931**<sup>499</sup>

[Miss MacBean mistook Gandhiji for Virchand Gandhi who had visited the United States.]

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<sup>497</sup> SN 12520; *Collected Works*, Volume 33, page 478

<sup>498</sup> SN 12496

<sup>499</sup> SN 17272; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, page 368

As at Sabarmati,  
June 13, 1931

Dear Madam,

I have your letter for which I thank you. You are giving me credit of which I am wholly undeserving. You are thinking of another Mr. Gandhi my name-sake but in no way related to me. He and I were however friends and lived together for some time. You will be sorry to hear that he died many years ago, leaving an only son. It was he who visited America and made many friends. I have never had the privilege of visiting your continent.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Emelia MacBean  
c/o Mrs. MacBean  
Prairie Avenue  
Chicago

**MAYO, MISS KATHERINE**

[Miss Mayo (1867-1940), an American writer, had a long interview with Gandhiji on March 17, 1926.<sup>500</sup>]

**Letter, March 4, 1926<sup>501</sup>**

*Ashram*, Sabarmati,  
March 4, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your letter of the 28th ultimo enclosing a letter from the Bishop of Calcutta.

17th March will be a suitable day for me to receive you at 4 P.M. at the above address. The *Ashram* is about four miles from Ahmedabad. Most of the *Gadiwalas* at the Station know the place.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

Miss Katherine Mayo

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<sup>500</sup> SN 12445; *Collected Works*, Volume 30, pages 119-24

<sup>501</sup> Katherine Mayo Papers, Yale University Library

c/o Thomas Cook & Sons,  
Bombay

**Letter, March 1926**<sup>502</sup>

[In a letter from Bombay before leaving India, Miss Mayo expressed appreciation for the offer of Gandhiji's secretary to fill any gaps in her notes of the interview and said she would send them as soon as they were typed. She asked for references to Gandhiji's statement that according to Sir W.W. Hunter and others, the poverty of the masses of India was growing rather than decreasing.<sup>503</sup>]

*Ashram, Sabarmati,*  
March 26, 1926

Dear friend,

I was glad to receive your letter before you left and gladder still to see that you propose to... the whole matter. Verify for yourself the statement I made and then come to a judgment. That is precisely what I want American friends to do. To take nothing for granted, challenge every statement whether it comes from Indian source or European source and whether they are anti-Indian or pro-Indian, then come to a deliberate conclusion and act upon it.

I send you herewith the quotations from the books whose names you will find at the end of the quotations. If you still have any difficulty in getting hold of the books from which the quotations have been taken, do please let me know. I would want to add also that the statement about poverty of India does not rest merely upon the testimony of the late Sir William Wilson Hunter but it has been confirmed by subsequent observations made both by Indians and Europeans. If you want this information also substantiated by me, I shall be pleased to send you proofs. I also suggest to you a method that even a man in the street may adopt for verification.

1. Is it or is it not true that nearly 80 per cent of the population of India is agricultural and living in remote villages scattered over an area of 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad?
2. Is it or is it not true that these peasants are living in small holdings and often as serfs of big *zamindars*?
3. Is it or is it not true that the vast majority of them have at least four idle months in the year?

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<sup>502</sup> SN 12451; *Collected Works*, Volume 30, pages 178-79

<sup>503</sup> SN 12452



4. Is it or is it not true that before the British rule these very people had hand-spinning and industry ancillary to agriculture which supplemented the slender income they had from agriculture?

5. Is it or is it not true that whilst hand-spinning has been entirely killed no other industry has taken its place?

If the answer to all these questions be in the affirmative, no matter what statements might be made by anybody, these agriculturists must be poorer than they were before hand-spinning was destroyed. There are many other causes for the growing poverty of the masses but those that are implied in the questions are, I think, enough for the ordinary inquirer. I have suggested this line of enquiry to you so as to enable you to test the tragic truth of India's growing poverty in many ways.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, April 9, 1926**<sup>504</sup>

[Miss Mayo wrote a letter on 24 March - on the boat from Bombay to London - enclosing a copy of her notes of the interview and requesting amplification or correction.]

*Ashram, Sabarmati,*  
April 9, 1926

Dear friend,

I hope you received my previous letter in reply to your enquiry about the sources of my information on poverty of India.

I have now your second letter enclosing copy of your notes. I have tried to fill in the gaps left by you. I have been obliged to do the same somewhat hurriedly but I hope it will answer the purpose.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Katherine Mayo  
Bedford Hills  
New York

**Letter, September 13, 1927**<sup>505</sup>

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<sup>504</sup> SN 12462; *Collected Works*, Volume 30, page 261

<sup>505</sup> Katherine Mayo Papers, Yale University Library

[Miss Mayo subsequently published *Mother India* (1927), a sensational book designed to create contempt for India and justify the continuation of British rule. Gandhiji, in a review, called it "Drain Inspector's Report."<sup>506</sup>]

As at Sabarmati  
On tour,  
September 13, 1927

Dear friend,

It was through Mr. Karl Placht that I received sometime ago a copy of your book, *Mother India* which he sent me with your permission. I really get little time to read any literature but as your book attracted much attention here and gave rise to very bitter and angry comment, and as many correspondents drew my attention to the fact that you had made copious references to my writings and urged me to give my opinion upon your book, I made time to read it through. I am sorry to have to inform you that the book did not leave on my mind at all a nice impression. I have asked the publishers of *Young India* to send you a copy of my review of your book. If you think that I have done any injustice to you and if you care to draw my attention to it I shall feel thankful to you. As I have not your address by me on my tour I am taking the liberty of sending this to you through Mr. Karl Placht.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

### MCKENNER, LAWRENCE

**Letter, August 24, 1945<sup>507</sup>**

Sevagram,  
Wardha (India),  
August 24, 1945

Dear friend,

"*The Kingdom of God is Within You*" is all-sufficient. Follow it out in action and you need nothing else. But if you will read anything of Hinduism, read Swami Vivekanand's works to be had there.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

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<sup>506</sup> *Young India*, September 15, 1927; *Collected Works*, Volume 34, pages 539-47

<sup>507</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 81, page 162

Lawrence Mckenner Jr.  
2132 High St.  
Oakland 1, California

**MEYER, ALFRED C.**

**Letter, March 15, 1924**<sup>508</sup>

Post Andheri,  
March 15, 1924

Dear friend,

I have your letter of 2-2-1924.

There is at present a firm of booksellers in Madras known as S. Ganesan who sell a collection of most of articles in a weekly called *Young India* and edited by me. It will give you all the information that you are likely to desire.

Yours sincerely,

Alfred C. Meyer, Esq.  
181, Vine Avenue  
Highland Park  
Illinois

[Mr. Meyer wrote again to Gandhiji on September 2, 1924, expressing pleasure at his release from prison and requesting him to recommend authoritative literature on non-co-operation.<sup>509</sup>]

**MILLER, MARTIN C.**

**Letter, May 2, 1931**<sup>510</sup>

[As At] Sabarmati,  
May 2, 1931

Dear friend,

I have your letter for which I thank you. In reply to your question I can say that I have profited much by a prayerful reading of the Sermon on the Mount. I regard

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<sup>508</sup> SN 8496; *Collected Works*, Volume 23, page 249

<sup>509</sup> SN 10145

<sup>510</sup> SN 17047; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, page 71

Jesus to have been one of the greatest teachers of the world. I do not believe in his exclusive divinity.

Yours sincerely,

Martin C. Miller, Esq.  
The Cleveland Graphite Bronze Co.  
Cleveland

**MILLS, JAMES A.H.**

**Telegram, December 27, 1931<sup>511</sup>**

[Mr. Mills of the Associated Press sent a telegram from London requesting Gandhiji's views on the Italo-Abyssinian problem and the means to reach a peaceful solution. He also asked if the report that Gandhiji had appealed for funds for the Abyssinian Red Cross was correct.]

I NEVER APPEALED FOR FUNDS FOR ABYSSINIAN RED CROSS OR OTHERWISE IN SAME CONNECTION. I DO NOT FEEL COMPETENT TO EXPRESS OPINION ON PROBLEM OR SUGGEST MEANS REACHING PEACEFUL SOLUTION. CAN ONLY PRAY AND HOPE FOR PEACE.

GANDHI

**Letter, January 26, 1939<sup>512</sup>**

[This letter was sent on behalf of Gandhiji by Pyarelal, his secretary.]

Maganwadi,  
Wardha (C.P.),  
Bardoli,  
January 26, 1939

Dear Mills,

Gandhiji has your letter of 18th inst.

Since you disown all responsibility for what appeared in the Press there is nothing more to be said about it, though he is still unable to understand how such a

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<sup>511</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 92, page 289

<sup>512</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 93, page 235

wholesale misrepresentation of what you reported could take place. He is sorry he has not that cutting with him to send to you but surely, you will be able to procure it for yourself and have a look at it. Anyway, Gandhiji desires me to say that if he is pure he will outlive all propaganda that ignorance or malice may set foot against him.

Yours sincerely,  
Pyarelal

James A. H. Mills, Esq.  
Associated Press of America  
Djibuti

**MOFFETT, FRANK W.**

**Letter, October 21, 1945<sup>513</sup>**

As at Sevagram  
Camp: Nature Cure Clinic  
Poona  
October 21, 1945

Dear friend,

I have your letter. I have no title such as 'Honourable' or any other. I thank you for the peanut formulae.

Regarding the publication of *My Experiments with Truth* you can charge more than 5%, rising up to 10% if it becomes necessary. I hope, however, that the proposed publication will not cause any loss.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

Frank W. Moffett, Esq.  
707 Browder Street  
Dallas,  
Texas

**MORSELOW, CHARLIE E.**

**Letter, April 6, 1928<sup>514</sup>**

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<sup>513</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 94, pages 224-25

<sup>514</sup> SN 14282; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 199

The Ashram,  
Sabarmati,  
April 6, 1928

Dear friend,

I have your letter. I do not perform any miracles nor do I believe in miracles. I would advise you to be content with what God gives you bearing in mind that there are many who are in a worse plight than you are. And, after all, physical blindness is not half as bad as moral blindness. And, whilst we have no positive control over physical infirmities, we have over the moral infirmities. If, therefore, there is any such thing as miracle, it should be attempted after one's moral welfare.

Yours sincerely,

Charlie U. Morselow Esq.  
P.O. Box 123, Waterloo  
New York

### MURPHY, CARL

**Letter, May 7, 1934**<sup>515</sup>

[Mr. Murphy (1889-1967), President of Afro-American Newspapers, Inc., publishers of the *Baltimore Afro-American*, wrote to Gandhiji that the book *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas* by C.F. Andrews, published in the United States, gave the impression that Gandhiji approved certain anti-social practices in Western civilisation, particularly the prohibition of inter-dining and inter-marriage of coloured and white people. Mr. Murphy also asked Gandhiji if he had refused to visit the United States because of the colour bar.<sup>516</sup>]

As at Wardha,  
India (C.P.)  
7th May, 1934

Dear friend,

I fear that either Rev. Andrews has misunderstood me or you have misread his writing. Caste as a trade guild has not been a harmful institution in India. Caste as an offspring of untouchability is a most harmful institution. Either it has to go or Hinduism has to die.

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<sup>515</sup> *Baltimore Afro-American*, February 7, 1948

<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.*

But I have said that inter-dining and inter-marrying are not necessary factors in the removal of untouchability. Inter-dining means much more than sharing a restaurant or hotel in common with others. Inter-dining that I have in mind means entry into one's kitchen. That undoubtedly is a matter of individual choice. Prohibition against other people eating in public restaurants and hotels and prohibition of marriage between coloured people and white people I hold to be a negation of civilisation.

It is wrong to say that I have refused to visit the United States because of the colour bar.

I hope that I have answered all the questions you have raised.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

Carl Murphy Esq.,  
President,  
The Afro-American Co.  
628 N. Street,  
Baltimore

### MURPHY, EDWARD

**Letter, April 5, 1924**<sup>517</sup>

[Mr. Murphy, Secretary of a Gandhi Club, a boys' club at the YMCA, in Newburgh, NY, wrote to Gandhiji on February 27, 1924: "Since the club bears your name, its object is to study, discuss and read of your life and works. We find the study of your life very interesting." He requested a message.<sup>518</sup>

The Club was founded by Gordon Law who had met Gandhiji in India.<sup>519</sup>]

Post Andheri,  
April 5, 1924

My dear friend,

I thank for your letter of good wishes.

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<sup>517</sup> SN 8673; *Collected Works*, Volume 23, page 367

<sup>518</sup> SN 8381

<sup>519</sup> See "Law, Gordon" above.

You ask for a word from me. Here it is: There is no search greater than that of Truth. The only means of finding it out is through non-violence in its extreme form. It is because we have ignored it that we seek to impose by force what we consider is truth upon others.

Your sincere friend,

Edward Murphy, Esq.  
Secretary, The Gandhi Club  
Young Men's Christian Association  
Newburgh  
New York

### NEIL, JUDGE HENRY

[Judge Henry Neil ( -1939) of Chicago, became known as the Father of the Mothers' Pensions Legislation because of his successful advocacy of the pensions so that widows would be enabled to care for their children at home. He founded the Centenarian Club, a non-profit, humanitarian association.]

#### **Letter, December 11, 1927<sup>520</sup>**

[Judge Neil wrote from Berlin on October 8, 1927, that he was writing an article about the effects of the teachings of Jesus on modern life and would like to receive from Gandhiji a statement on the effects on the people of India. He also asked for information about the care of Eurasian children in India when they were deserted by their fathers.

He wrote another letter on 16 October that he wished to publish an article about care given to dependent children in India. Lord Lytton had told him that Gandhiji had not given much attention to this subject, but he could not believe that. He enclosed an article which described the conditions under British rule, and requested comments on that article. He also requested information on Gandhiji's teachings as to the care that a nation should give to its children.<sup>521</sup>]

As at the *Ashram*,  
Sabarmati,  
December 11, 1927

Dear friend,

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<sup>520</sup> SN 12545; *Collected Works*, Volume 35, page 374

<sup>521</sup> SN 12545



I have your kind letter and enclosures. I do not feel that I can really write anything that would suit you. You will therefore excuse me for not complying with your request.

So far as the question of child welfare is concerned, it is quite true to say that in the sense Lord Lytton means I have not interested myself in the problem, but in a sense, which I consider higher and which takes in not a few thousand children but millions of children, I am continually occupied in attending to their welfare. For, the hand-spinning movement is designed to affect the starving millions of this land including little children. And if I succeed, I know that the child welfare of the type known to you and Lord Lytton is assured.

With reference to the printed sheet by you, it is difficult to reply to it because the writer has seen the same thing from a different angle of vision. I have no desire therefore to enter upon a criticism of the writing which in accordance with your wish I return herewith.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, February 22, 1928<sup>522</sup>**

[Judge Neil wrote again from Berlin on January 3, 1928, thanking Gandhiji for his "splendid letter." He enclosed a copy of his article on "Gandhi and Starving Millions in India" in which he highly praised Gandhiji. He then made a request: "Please tell me the condition of the poor children of India, under their non-Christian religions, and under British rule. Then in contrast please tell me what you think would be the condition of these children if Jesus was in full control of India and the people followed His teachings."<sup>523</sup>]

The *Ashram*,  
Sabarmati,  
February 22, 1928

Dear friend,

I have your letter.

Under British rule, millions of children are starving for want of nourishing food and they are shivering in winter for want of sufficient clothing. And this I say not of the cities of India, which contain but a microscopic minority of the population of India, but I say this without fear of contradiction about the seven hundred

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<sup>522</sup> SN 14248; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 40

<sup>523</sup> SN 14224

thousand villages of the country scattered over a surface 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad.

I suppose your first question 'under non-Christian religions' is included in the second. But, if your first question relates to India before British rule, I can only give you my inference that the little ones were infinitely happier than they are now under British rule.

Your third question is difficult to answer. Which Jesus have you in mind? The Jesus of history? Not being a critical student of history, I do not know the Jesus of history. Do you mean the Jesus whom Christian England and Christian Europe represent? If so, your question is, it seems to me, already answered. If you mean the mystical Jesus of Sermon on the Mount who has still to be found, I suppose the condition of India's children will be a trifle better than it is now when men conform to the precept of Love.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

Judge Henry Neil, Esq.  
c/o American Express Co.  
Rue Scribe  
Paris, France

**Letter, May 14, 1931**<sup>524</sup>

[Judge Neil wrote from the United States on April 7, 1931: "I would like to be of service to your campaign for freedom. Especially if you should come here."<sup>525</sup>]

May 14, 1931

Dear friend,

I have your characteristic letter. Only I am not going to America in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter, August 19, 1931**<sup>526</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> SN 17072; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, page 148

<sup>525</sup> SN 17072

<sup>526</sup> SN 17515; *Collected Works*, Volume 47, pages 315-16

Ahmedabad  
August 19, 1931

Dear friend,

I have your letter.<sup>527</sup>

You evidently seem to imagine that I have an unlimited purse. The fact is that I have not even a farthing I can call my own. I have certainly control over some funds but they are all earmarked. If, therefore, I undertook to do anything in connection with your proposal I should have to beg, but you would not expect me to add to the number of begging bowls I carry with me. They are already far too many and perhaps embarrassing for the donors.

Yours sincerely,

Henry Neil, Esq.  
East Aurora,  
New York

*NORTH AMERICAN NEWS ALLIANCE*

**Cable, February 10, 1926**<sup>528</sup>

[James Wharton of NANA in Paris sent Gandhiji a cable on February 10, 1926, asking if he would write memoirs for American newspaper publication and, if so, how many words and at what price.<sup>529</sup>]

REGRET NO TIME FOR WRITING. HAVE NEVER WRITTEN FOR MONEY

GANDHI

**OSOFSKEY, MORRIS**

**Letter, December 19, 1931**<sup>530</sup>

[Gandhiji was then on his way back from Europe to India.]

S.S. Pilsna,

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<sup>527</sup> This letter is not available.

<sup>528</sup> SN 12463; *Collected Works*, Volume 29, page 452

<sup>529</sup> SN 12463

<sup>530</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 92, page 285

December 19, 1931

Dear young friend,

In reply to your letter I may say that I expect to reach my God through truth and non-violence. I know that the American youth are with India in her struggle for Independence.

Yours,

Mr. Morris Osofsky  
2085 Walton Avenue  
Bronx, New York

**PERRY, SAMUEL R.**

**Letter, (after May 26), 1928<sup>531</sup>**

[Mr. Perry, an orange grower in California interested in Tolstoy and the Quakers, and a reader of *Young India*, wrote to Gandhiji on May 26, 1928, conveying his opposition to birth control, his views about a true Christian etc. He said he had sent Gandhiji a pamphlet written by him and a book, *Does Civilisation Need Religion?* by Reinhold Niebuhr.<sup>532</sup>]

Dear friend,

I was thankful for your letter of 26th May last. I do not remember having received the book *Does Civilization Need Religion?* It has given me joy to have so many friends and sympathisers in the Far West.

Yours sincerely,

[Mr. Perry wrote again on 7 October and 8 November, and sent more books. He wrote: "... many of us are glad to accord an honoured place to yourself as one who is living in the spirit of the Gospel and imbued with the spirit of Jesus the Christ."<sup>533</sup>]

**PIPER, R. F.**

**Letter, March 29, 1933<sup>534</sup>**

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<sup>531</sup> SN 14043; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 343

<sup>532</sup> SN 13865

<sup>533</sup> SN 15048 and SN 15067

<sup>534</sup> SN 20750; *Collected Works*, Volume 54, page 238

[Mr. Piper, a professor of Philosophy at Syracuse University, was on a visit to India and was unable to see Gandhiji as he was in prison. He sent the following questions: (1) Are not machines necessary for the material development of India? (2) What can religion contribute to human progress? (3) What chiefly is faulty in Christianity? What strong? (4) By what methods do you come by your basic discoveries or insights? (5) How make man good?<sup>535</sup>]

My dear friend,

I was sorry not to be able to meet you. Here are the answers to your questions:

1. By machinery I have no doubt you mean power machinery. Considered in terms of millions of the population of India, power machinery is not indispensable for their material prosperity.
2. Mankind has found religion in some shape or other indispensable for its very existence, hence it is fair to presume that mankind will need religion and I cannot conceive the moral growth of mankind without religion.
3. It would be presumption on my part to pronounce any judgement on Christianity, or for that matter any religion other than my own.
4. By incessant and prayerful striving.
5. I know of no method whereby man can be made good, but in so far as any making is possible it can only be done by setting a personal example.

Yours sincerely,

R. F. Piper, Esq.  
Professor of Philosophy  
Syracuse University  
Syracuse, New York

## **RAGINI DEVI**

**Letter, March 25, 1924<sup>536</sup>**

[Ragini Devi, an exponent of Indian dance, wrote to Gandhiji on February 11, 1924, that in spite of his isolation (in prison), his ideals had commanded more and more attention in America. She wished him a speedy recovery. (Gandhiji was released from prison in February for health reasons and was convalescing in

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<sup>535</sup> SN 20667

<sup>536</sup> SN 8586; *Collected Works*, Volume 23, page 310

Poona). She sought his blessings for her work of popularising Indian music in the United States.<sup>537]</sup>

Post Andheri,  
March 25, 1924

Dear *Srimati* Ragini Devi,

I thank you for your kind letter of the 11th February and the interesting cutting containing your article on Indian music.

I thank you for your kind inquiry about my health, and I am glad to be able to tell you and other friends who are interested in it that I am making steady progress towards complete recovery.

Yours sincerely,

*Srimati* Ragini Devi  
1240, Union Street  
Brooklyn  
New York

### ROMMEL, JON

**Letter, March 2, 1933**<sup>538</sup>

[Mr. Rommel, apparently a believer in the Occult, wrote to Gandhiji in prison on January 16, 1933, asking him not to start another fast, criticising his mode of dress, etc. "I was born... of German parents who in earth life attended the Protestant Christian Church; but I, as a free thinker and reasoner, could not stomach a son of god monstrosity. I am a pure vegetarian, abstaining from eating any living moving creature, or their byproducts, which is strictly prohibited by the inhabitants of the planets Venus and Mercury." He sent a copy of his book, *Regeneration*, to Gandhiji and asked him "to read it carefully several times."<sup>539]</sup>

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter and your book called *Regeneration*. I glanced through the pages, but I must confess to you that I found in it nothing to appeal to me.

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<sup>537</sup> SN 8320

<sup>538</sup> SN 20425; *Collected Works*, Volume 53, page 441

<sup>539</sup> SN 20050

Yours sincerely,

Jon Rommel, Esq.  
Niagara Falls  
N. Y.  
4111 Saunders Road  
Lewiston

**ROSENBLATT, MISS FLORENCE**

**Letter, May 5, 1931**<sup>540</sup>

(As at) Sabarmati,  
May 5, 1931

Dear young friend,

I have your good letter. You should possess your soul in patience. Whatever good you might have seen in my life you can adopt even being there and it would be as good as seeing me, indeed much better. What you can do effectively for India is to put in a good word whenever anybody talks uncharitably about India and her people and in order to be able to put in that good word with confidence, you have to find time to study the Indian struggle. You can then speak with authority.

Yours sincerely,

Florence Rosenblatt  
Brooklyn, New York

**SANGER, MRS. MARGARET HIGGINS**

**Letter, November 27, 1936**<sup>541</sup>

[Mrs. Sanger (1883-1966), leader of the birth control movement, wrote to Gandhiji, before a visit to India in 1935, requesting an interview. She felt that his endorsement of birth control would be of tremendous value. She received a reply on arrival in India: "Do by all means come whenever you can, and you shall stay with me, if you would not mind what must appear to you to be our extreme

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<sup>540</sup> SN 17029; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, page 85

<sup>541</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 64, page 81

simplicity; we have no masters and no servants here."<sup>542</sup> She accepted the invitation and had an extensive discussion with Gandhiji at Sevagram on 3 and 4 December 1935. She was unable to persuade him about the desirability of birth control except by abstinence.<sup>543</sup> The text of the discussion was published in *Asia*, New York, in November 1936. Agatha Harrison, to whom reference is made in the letter below, was a British friend of Gandhiji.]

Wardha  
November 27, 1936

Dear sister,

It was very thoughtful of you to send me an assortment of your choice dried fruit. Agatha Harrison is here just now and I remarked to her, "Whilst Mrs. Sanger went away from me without taking anything, you see how much I am taking from her even though she is so many miles away." You may judge who is the better of us two, of course apart from the natural superiority of the sex to which you belong. I have gone through your reproduction of the interview in *Asia*. My hurried reading left on me the impression that it was a faithful reproduction.

Yours sincerely,  
*Bapu*

Mrs. Margaret Sanger  
Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau  
17 West 16th Street  
New York City

#### SAUNDERS, DR. KENNETH

**Letter, January 25, 1929**<sup>544</sup>

[Dr. Saunders (1883-1937), Professor of the History of Religion, was with the YMCA in India from 1912 to 1917, and met Gandhiji. He wrote several books on Buddhism and on Asia. He sent Christmas greetings to Gandhiji and enquired if Gandhiji would write a preface to his forthcoming book on life in India. He also requested copies of *Young India* in which Gandhiji's autobiography was published.<sup>545</sup>]

*Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati,*

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<sup>542</sup> Margaret Sanger, *An Autobiography* (New York: Dover Publications, 1971), pages 465-66

<sup>543</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 62, pages 156-60

<sup>544</sup> SN 15126; *Collected Works*, Volume 38, page 399

<sup>545</sup> SN 15125



January 25, 1929

Dear friend,

I have your letter. It is a difficult job for me to promise to read any book. But if you can send me your book, I shall only hope to get a few moments to go through it.

I am sending by registered book post two volumes of *Young India* and a copy of my autobiography.

Yours sincerely,

Kenneth Saunders, Esq.,  
High Ascris  
Berkeley, California

**SAYLER, ALLEN W.**

**Letter, May 31, 1931**<sup>546</sup>

[Mr. Saylor apparently wrote to Mirabehn (Miss Slade), an associate of Gandhiji, about his desire to live in Gandhiji's *Ashram*.]

As at Sabarmati,  
May 31, 1931

Dear friend,

Mirabai has shown me your letter to her. I see several difficulties in your coming to the *Ashram*. A passport is necessary and it is highly likely that conditions will be attached to your passport. Therefore my advice to you is for the present to suspend the idea of coming to India to settle down with me but to follow the rules of the *Ashram* there and live the life as close to the *Ashram* life as possible in the circumstances. It is highly likely that then the way will be open for you to come to India without restrictions of any kind whatsoever.

If you are not getting *Young India* there you can look up the file in the University office.

Yours sincerely,

Allen W. Saylor, Esq.  
Chicago, Illinois

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<sup>546</sup> SN 17168; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, page 263

**SHEETS, MISS ETHEL M.**

**Letter, August 12, 1929**<sup>547</sup>

Sabarmati,  
August 12, 1929

Dear friend,

Your claim about American achievements seems to me to be far-fetched, premature and unproved and equally unfortunate is your estimate of "barbarous" races.

Yours,

Miss Ethel M. Sheets  
Cleveland

**SHIRER, WILLIAM L.**

[Mr. Shirer (1904-1993), a journalist and historian, was correspondent of *Chicago Tribune* in India in 1930 and 1931 and enjoyed the friendship of Gandhiji. He was the author of several books, including *Gandhi: A Memoir* (1979).<sup>548</sup>]

**Telegram, (On or after May 30) 1931**<sup>549</sup>

[Mr. Shirer sent a telegram on May 30, 1931, enquiring about reports that Gandhiji may not attend the Second Round Table Conference in London on the future political status of India. Gandhiji had reached an agreement with Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, in February and had agreed to participate in the Conference. The Indian National Congress designated him as its sole representative at the Conference, But difficulties arose as the Government failed to implement all the terms of the agreement and Gandhiji's efforts for a Hindu-Muslim ("communal") accord prior to the Conference were not successful.]

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<sup>547</sup> SN 32577/110; *Collected Works*, Volume 92, page 56. The name is misspelt in *Collected Works* as "Sheets".

<sup>548</sup> William L. Shirer, *Gandhi: A Memoir*. New York: Simon and Shuster, 1979; Washington Square Press paperback edition, 1982.

<sup>549</sup> SN 17167; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, pages 253-54. See also William L. Shirer, *Gandhi: A Memoir* (Washington Square Press paperback edition), pages 153-54, for texts of telegrams by Mr. Shirer and Gandhiji. The text in this book is slightly different from that in *Collected Works*.

WILLIAM SHIRER  
CECIL HOTEL  
SIMLA

YOUR WIRE. ALL REPORTS UNAUTHORISED BEING UNINTELLIGENT ANTICIPATION. SO FAR AS I CAN SEE ABSENCE COMMUNAL QUESTION BLOCKS MY WAY PARTICIPATION ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE. DELICATE SITUATION AND IRWIN-GANDHI SETTLEMENT MAKES MY IMMEDIATE LEAVING INDIA DIFFICULT. APART FROM THESE DIFFICULTIES I AM ANXIOUS ATTEND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE AND TAKE FULL SHARE DELIBERATIONS AND PRESS CONGRESS DEMAND. AM THEREFORE SEEKING WAY OUT OF DIFFICULTY. BUT IF COMMUNAL QUESTION IS NOT SOLVED HERE AND SETTLEMENT DIFFICULTY IS OVER AND IF I AM REQUIRED TO PROCEED TO LONDON TO EXPLAIN CONGRESS POSITION TO RESPONSIBLE STATESMEN AND PUBLIC IN GREAT BRITAIN I HAVE TOLD FRIENDS I SHOULD HOLD MYSELF READINESS PROCEED LONDON. IN SHORT I AM ANXIOUS SECURE PERMANENT PEACE BY NEGOTIATION CONSISTENTLY WITH FUNDAMENTAL POSITION CONGRESS.

**Cable, September 23, 1932<sup>550</sup>**

[On September 20, 1932, Gandhiji began a "fast unto death" in prison, following a decision by the British Government to institute electorates for "untouchables" separate from those for other Hindus, as requested by some leaders of the "untouchable" community. Gandhiji had warned that he would resist such a measure as that would divide the Hindus and make the "bar sinister" permanent.

Indian leaders held urgent consultations and agreed on measures for the advancement of the "untouchables" and the eradication of untouchability. The British Government then withdrew its decision and Gandhiji ended his fast on 26 September.

Meanwhile, during Gandhiji's fast, Mr. Shirer sent a cable from Vienna that American opinion was "profoundly befuddled" by the fast and could not understand his wilfully throwing away his "undisputed political leadership of Indian nationalism by starving to death". He asked if Gandhiji was not dying for one class of Indians, rather than the entire nation, and for a religious principle that non-Hindus had no right to judge. Gandhiji sent his reply within a few hours.]

WILLIAM SHIRER  
CHICAGO TRIBUNE  
VIENNA (AUSTRIA)

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<sup>550</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 51, pages 128-29. *Gandhi: A Memoir* (paperback edition), pages 208-11.

THANK YOU. NOT SURPRISED AMERICAN BEWILDERMENT. IT HAS BEEN MY MISFORTUNE OR GOOD FORTUNE TO TAKE WORLD BY SURPRISE. NEW EXPERIMENTS OR OLD EXPERIMENTS IN NEW STYLE MUST SOMETIMES ENGENDER MISUNDERSTANDING. LAWS OF DECORUM IMPOSE ON ME RIGOROUS RESTRAINT IN LETTERS TO GOVERNMENT. LAWS OF JAIL ADMINISTRATION PROHIBITED CORRESPONDENCE WITH OUTSIDE WORLD. THESE I OBSERVED IN LETTER AND SPIRIT.

PACT NOW IN PROCESS OF FORMATION [AMONG INDIAN LEADERS] WILL PROVIDE FAR BETTER AND LARGER REPRESENTATION THAN BRITISH DECISION. WERE I NOT SURE OF DEPRESSED MASS OPINION BEHIND ME AS DISTINGUISHED FROM THAT OF LEADERS I COULD NOT HAVE TAKEN FAST IN MANNER I HAVE DONE. AND EVEN AMONG DEPRESSED LEADERS SO FAR AS I KNOW VAST MAJORITY BEHIND ME. I WOULD COMPROMISE WITH LATTER TO FURTHERMOST EXTENT CONSISTENT WITH PARAMOUNT INTEREST DEPRESSED CLASSES. YOU MUST NOT BE STARTLED BY MY PRESUMPTION IN CLAIMING TO KNOW DEPRESSED INTERESTS MORE THAN LEADERS. THOUGH I AM TOUCHABLE BY BIRTH PAST FIFTY YEARS I HAVE BECOME UNTOUCHABLE BY CHOICE.

AMERICANS SHOULD KNOW THAT MY POLITICS ARE DERIVED FROM MY RELIGION. IF GOD HAS ORDAINED DEATH BY STARVATION I KNOW THAT IT WILL SET LAST SEAL ON MY POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. NATIONALISM WILL BE THE STRONGER FOR SACRIFICIAL DEATH. VAST MAJORITY OF INDIAN COMMUNITY HAS INSTINCTIVELY REALISED CORRECTNESS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THIS FAST. AM CONVINCED THAT REAL SELF-GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ADVANCED BY THIS PENANCE AND IF GOD GIVES ME STRENGTH TO SEE THIS FAST THROUGH WITHOUT MIND OR BODY WAVERING ADVANCEMENT WILL BE STILL GREATER. HENCE EVERY DAY WELL PASSED IN EQUILIBRIUM BRINGS *SWARAJ* NEARER AS IT CAN BY NO OTHER STEPS.

THIS PREPARATION FOR DEATH FOR UNTOUCHABILITY IS VERITABLE PREPARATION FOR DEATH FOR WHOLE OF INDIA. FOR ME REMOVAL UNTOUCHABILITY IS INTEGRAL PART OF *SWARAJ*. I WOULD REJECT *SWARAJ* THAT EXCLUDED MEANEST SINFULLEST INDIANS FROM ITS HEALTH-GIVING BALM.

FOR ME RELIGION IS ONE IN ESSENCE BUT IT HAS MANY BRANCHES AND IF I THE HINDU BRANCH FAIL IN MY DUTY TO THE PARENT TRUNK I AM UNWORTHY FOLLOWER OF THAT ONE INDIVISIBLE RELIGION. ACCORDING TO THIS REASONING MY SACRIFICE

PROMOTES DELIVERANCE OF HUMANITY FROM UNTOUCHABILITY IN EVERY SHAPE OR FORM AND THEREFORE IT SERVED ALL RELIGIOUS GROUPS. IF THEN AMERICA WHICH HAS SENT ME THROUGH HER KNOWN AND UNKNOWN SYMPATHISERS SO MUCH SYMPATHY IN MY DISTRESS NOW UNDERSTANDS THE INWARDNESS OF THIS SACRIFICE I EXPECT HER TO MOBILISE WORLD OPINION IN FAVOUR OF THE SACRIFICE. THOUGH APPARENTLY CONCEIVED TO APPLY A CORNER OF THIS WORLD IT IS REALLY INTENDED TO COVER THE WHOLE WORLD.

THOSE WHO HAVE AT ALL FOLLOWED MY HUMBLE CAREER EVEN SUPERFICIALLY CANNOT HAVE FAILED TO OBSERVE THAT NOT SINGLE ACT OF MY LIFE HAS BEEN DONE TO INJURY OF ANY INDIVIDUAL OR NATION. MY NATIONALISM AS MY RELIGION IS NOT EXCLUSIVE BUT INCLUSIVE AND THEY MUST BE SO CONSISTENTLY WITH WELFARE OF ALL LIFE. I CLAIM NO INFALLIBILITY. I AM CONSCIOUS OF HAVING MADE HIMALAYAN BLUNDERS BUT AM NOT CONSCIOUS OF HAVING MADE THEM INTENTIONALLY OR HAVING EVER HARBOURED ENMITY TOWARDS ANY PERSON OR NATION OR ANY LIFE HUMAN OR SUBHUMAN.

GANDHI

### SINCLAIR, UPTON

**Letter, October 30, 1930**<sup>551</sup>

[Mr. Sinclair (1878-1968), novelist, socialist and opponent of militarism, sent two of his books to Gandhiji. *Mammonart* (1925) is a history of art and culture in their relation to propertied classes. *Mental Radio* is a record of experiments in mental telepathy.

Gandhiji had known of Upton Sinclair for many years, and had referred to him in *Indian Opinion* of June 16, 1906.]

Yeravda Central Prison  
October 30, 1930

Dear friend,

I read your *Mammonart* with absorbing interest and *Mental Radio* with curiosity. The former has given me much to think, the latter did not interest me. Nobody in

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<sup>551</sup> GN 2552; *Collected Works*, Volume 44, page 263

India would, I think, doubt the possibility of telepathy but most would doubt the wisdom of its material use.

I will now avail myself of your kind offer and ask you to send me your other volumes or such as you think I should read.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. GANDHI

Upton Sinclair, Esq.  
Station P.,  
Pasadena, California

**Letter, December 6, 1934**<sup>552</sup>

Dear friend,

I was thankful to hear from you after a long time. You have mailed your books to Ahmedabad. My headquarters just now are *Ashram*, Wardha. Therefore probably the books are still somewhere in transit. I am looking forward to receiving both *The Cry for Justice* and *Campaign*. If you don't mind, I would like you to send a fresh parcel so that if the parcel already sent miscarries I may not be without the books.

Yours sincerely,

Upton Sinclair, Esq.  
Station A,  
Pasadena, California

**SMILEY, MISS C. D.**

**Letter, November 14, 1929**<sup>553</sup>

[Miss Smiley, an American on a visit to India, wrote to Gandhiji from Bombay on November 6, 1929, requesting an appointment. She said she did a great deal of lecturing and was interested in his ideas.<sup>554</sup>]

Camp Rai Bareli,

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<sup>552</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 59, page 427

<sup>553</sup> SN 15764; *Collected Works*, Volume 42, page 159

<sup>554</sup> SN 15745

November 14, 1929

Dear friend,

I have your letter. You could see me in Wardha near Nagpur between the 8th and 15th of December. My movements are just now subject to alteration but in all probability during the dates mentioned by me I shall be in Wardha. On enquiring about that time at Sabarmati you will know whether I am then in Wardha or not.

Yours sincerely,

Miss C. D. Smiley  
American Marathi Mission  
Byculla, Bombay

**SMITH, FRANK P.**

**Letter, March 18, 1924<sup>555</sup>**

[Mr. Smith, a lawyer, wrote to Gandhiji on February 5, 1924: "With all of the world figures of statesmanship in mind, I greet you as the foremost one from a real Christian standpoint. The great principle of all wisdom, progressing materially with all power that works anywhere to its infinite ends, will vindicate my esteem of you. Your policy is the first one which practically concedes the supremacy of the spiritual over the material, the superiority of the power of love over that of physical force. We could well follow... your example to a peace that will be universal and lasting..."<sup>556</sup>]

Post Andheri,  
March 18, 1924

Dear friend,

I must thank you for your letter of 5th February and for [your] appreciation.

Yours sincerely,

Frank P. Smith, Esq.  
Messrs Thompson & Smith  
Lawyers  
Sapulpa, Okla.

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<sup>555</sup> SN 8524; *Collected Works*, Volume 23, page 271

<sup>556</sup> SN 8234

## SOLOMON, NICK

**Letter, November 6, 1931**<sup>557</sup>

[Mr. Solomon, student at the Ulverston School, Swarthmore, which sought to train students to be able to help in peace work, wrote to Gandhiji on September 21, 1931, that his school planned to publish a periodical devoted to the cause of international peace. He requested a message to be printed in the first issue. Mr. Solomon's sister, Camille, was then staying at Kingsley Hall in London, as was Gandhiji who was attending the Round Table Conference.<sup>558</sup>]

88 Knightsbridge  
London, W.  
November 6, 1931

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter. Of course I see your sister often.

You must excuse me from the task you have imposed upon me - I have really not the knack for writing messages to order. Without knowing anything of the paper, surroundings and the life, I should not know what to write.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Solomon, Esq.  
214 Dickinson Avenue  
Swarthmore, Pa.

## SPILLENAAR, MRS. JOHANNA BATTEEJEE

**Letter, December 9, 1926**

[Mrs. Spillenaar, born and educated in Holland, went to Sumatra where her son was born in 1915. They came to America in 1919 and she worked as a music teacher in New York. She lost interest in her work and was disillusioned with Western civilisation. She had been searching for "spiritual enlightenment" and became interested in theosophy, yoga and the Ethical Culture movement. In a lengthy letter to Gandhiji on October 20, 1926, she wrote: "A few days ago, after a period of quiet meditation, it came to me as a flash of lightning to write to you and to ask, if you could allow occidentals to enter *Satyagraha Ashram* for

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<sup>557</sup> SN 18249; *Collected Works*, Volume 48, page 271

<sup>558</sup> SN 17823



instruction, and to apply for admission for myself and my eleven-year-old boy."<sup>559</sup>]

As at the *Ashram*,  
Sabarmati,  
December 9, 1926

Dear friend,

I have your letter. There is no bar to anybody who enjoys good health and who is prepared to go through hardships of life, to live in poverty, and to do continuous labour, being admitted as a member of the *Ashram*. But I would advise you not to come to India whose climate is different from yours and where customs and habits are also so different. I think that you should try to reproduce the *Ashram* life there with such changes as may be found necessary. I cannot advise you to undertake the risk of coming to India and endangering your health or being otherwise disappointed.

Yours sincerely,

Johanna Batteejee Spillenaar  
61, P.W. 114th Street  
New York City

**STARR, W. B.**

**Letter, March 5, 1928**<sup>560</sup>

[W.B. Starr, a Quaker, read of floods in Gujarat and sent Gandhiji a donation of five dollars. In a letter on January 15, 1928, he expressed his admiration for Gandhiji, and wrote: "I would dearly love to have the privilege of a talk with you. You have been a lawyer and know first hand of the social inefficiency of the ordinary member of that profession. The United States is a lawyer-cursed land. We, as a people, have in the past largely turned over to them the making of our laws, also the organising of the legal machinery to enforce them. Things are in an almost hopeless muddle. The only remedy suggested to us by the lawyers is more laws with additional lawyers as judges to construe them. Here in Texas next year we (the people) hope to start an organised effort that will end with the reorganising of our judiciary, so that justice may be secured in our courts by all litigants with a minimum of expense and time."<sup>561</sup>]

*Satyagraha Ashram*

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<sup>559</sup> SN 19766; *Collected Works*, Volume 32, page 415

<sup>560</sup> SN 10831

<sup>561</sup> SN 14254; *Collected Works*, Volume 36, page 84

Sabarmati  
March 5, 1928

Dear friend,

I have your kind letter enclosing your donation, for both of which I thank you. There was no occasion for you to apologise for the smallness of the donation. The smallest donation in monetary value is a big thing when it comes from a big heart as I am sure yours has done.

The question of reform of the legal profession is a big one. It does not admit of tinkering. I am strongly of opinion that lawyers and doctors should not be able to charge any fees but that they should be paid a certain fixed sum by the State and the public should receive their services free. They will have paid for them through the taxation that they would have paid for such services rendered to citizens automatically. The poor will be untaxed but the rich and the poor will have then the same amount of attention and skill. Today the best legal talents and the best medical advice are unobtainable by the poor.

Yours sincerely,

W. B. Starr, Esq.  
Manager  
Highland Springs Farm  
Cisco, Texas

**STIMSON, H. R.**

**Letter, July 24, 1941**<sup>562</sup>

[Mr. Stimson, correspondent of Associated Press of America, sought Gandhiji's views on the following points:

- (i) whether Gandhiji's policy of non-violence advocated to the British would apply to the Russians also, or would it need any modification;
- (ii) whether Gandhiji was satisfied with the progress of non-co-operation;
- (iii) how many of his followers really believed in non-violence;

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<sup>562</sup> Jayaprakash Narayan Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library; *Collected Works*, Volume 94, pages 7-8

(iv) whether in view of the widespread rioting in the country, India could still have the unity and strength to forge her own destiny.

Gandhiji had launched in October 1940, on behalf of Congress, limited *satyagraha* by individuals from lists approved by him.]

Sevagram,  
July 24, 1941

Dear Mr. Stimson,

Here are my answers:

1. No modification necessary. My advice to the Russians would be precisely the same as to the British. It is cruel misrepresentation of my advice to the British to say that it was one of non-resistance. I suggested non-violent resistance which is any day superior to violent, blood-thirsty resistance.
2. I am entirely satisfied with the progress and achievements of my limited non-co-operation campaign as you call it and which I describe as civil disobedience.
3. It is a difficult question to answer definitely. But I do not mind it being said that the majority are non-violent only out of policy. That is the weakest part of my campaign but it is inevitable. In spite of the appearances to the contrary it is my belief that true non-violence is growing among the people.
4. I have no doubt whatsoever that in spite of the riots, etc., India will have the moral strength and unity to forge her own destiny in her own way. Twenty years of solid work cannot be a waste.

I hope you can decipher my writing and that if you publish my reply, it will be published as it is, *in toto*.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

***SURVEY, EDITOR OF THE***<sup>563</sup>

[*The Survey*, New York, a weekly concerned with social welfare, featured Gandhiji in its issue of January 28, 1922, with a colour picture of the Congress flag and the spinning wheel on the cover, an article on Gandhiji by V.S. Srinivasa

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<sup>563</sup> *The Survey* and *Survey Graphic*, New York, April 29, 1922

Sastri, and four pages of quotations from Gandhiji - entitled "The Gospel of Mahatma Gandhi" - compiled by Basanta Koomar Roy. The following letter from Gandhiji was published in the issue of April 29, 1922, another "graphic number".

The monthly "graphic number" of *The Survey* was at that time also called the *Survey Graphic*.]

Satyagrahashram, Sabarmati,  
5th March, 1922.

I appreciate your courtesy in sending me a dozen copies of the "Survey Graphic." The representation of the spinning wheel flag is very beautiful.

Mr. Sastri and I, if I may say so, are fairly old friends and claim a common political teacher.<sup>564</sup> I do not therefore wonder at his generous estimate of me.

I am aware that America is at the present moment following the Indian struggle with keen, growing and sympathetic interest, and I am delighted to find that you are doing not a little in educating American opinion about the struggle. In its very nature it has to depend upon a growing world opinion in its favour. When I see so much misrepresentation of things in general in the American and European press I despair of the message of the struggle ever reaching the western world, but my abiding faith in the Unseen keeps my hope forever green. Truth must penetrate the deepest darkness.

In your last paragraph you expect something from my pen. You will excuse me for the time being, but I would like to give you and your readers just this assurance that our non-co-operation is not intended to promote isolation or exclusiveness, but it is but a prelude to real co-operation with the rest of the world not excluding the West. Nor would I have your readers to think that in fighting the British Government I am fighting western civilisation, but I am endeavouring to fight modern civilisation as distinguished from the ancient which India has not happily yet discarded. Modern civilisation as represented by the West of today, in my opinion, has given Matter a place which by right belongs to Spirit. It has therefore put violence upon the throne of triumph and held under bondage Truth and Innocence. It is this error which enfeebled India is trying to fight, and I have no doubt whatsoever that if those who are engaged in the fight remain true to their pledge God will help them.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

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<sup>564</sup> Gopal Krishna Gokhale

## TODD, ALBERT M.

[Albert May Todd (1850-1931) was a political economist, entrepreneur and philanthropist in Michigan. He supported prohibition, advocated public ownership of utilities and served one term in the United States Congress. He retired in 1929 as President of the Todd Foundation "for enlargement of the happiness of mankind."]

### Letter, July 15, 1929<sup>565</sup>

[Mr. Todd wrote to Gandhiji on April 25, 1929: "Because I wholly approve of you and your work, I would like to send some money, perhaps five hundred dollars... If I find that you are in need of help, I will be glad to give, so far as I am able..."<sup>566</sup>]

July 15, 1929

It is kind of you to offer me pecuniary assistance if I satisfy you that I am in need. Though I always remain in need by the very nature of the philosophy of life that I have adopted, my needs are supplied by those in India who are interested in the activities I am engaged in. I send you herewith the constitution of the *Ashram* which will give you some idea of the various activities.

M.K.G.

### Letter, November 8, 1929<sup>567</sup>

[Mr. Todd sent another letter on September 25, 1929, asking Gandhiji to let him know when he needed aid for the election campaign. He asked for another copy of Gandhiji's letter as it was lost.<sup>568</sup>]

Camp Hathras,  
November 8, 1929

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter of 25th September. I do not remember having told you in my letter that we would be having an election campaign in the spring and at that time I would be glad to receive financial help from you. It may interest you

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<sup>565</sup> SN 15213; *Collected Works*, Volume 41, page 189

<sup>566</sup> SN 15213

<sup>567</sup> SN 15600; *Collected Works*, Volume 42, page 119

<sup>568</sup> SN 15599

to know that I do not take part either directly or indirectly in any election campaign, being wholly against ourselves having anything to do with election campaigns till we have got redress according to our demands. I enclose herewith a copy of the latest number of *Young India* which I am editing. This will give you some notion of my activities. And if you are still further interested you can have upon application to Mr. S. Ganesan, Printer and Publisher, Triplicane, Madras, a copy of my writings in book form.

Yours sincerely,

Albert M. Todd, Esq.  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

**TROTH, DENNIS G.**

**Letter, May 19, 1931**<sup>569</sup>

[Mr. Troth, Professor of Education and Psychology, State College, Pennsylvania, requested an article on world peace.<sup>570</sup>]

Nainital,  
May 19, 1931

Dear friend,

I have your letter for which I thank you. I am very sorry to inform you that I have no time to write the article you want.

Yours sincerely,

**UKERS, WILLIAM H.**

**Letter, 1931**<sup>571</sup>

[Mr. Ukers (1873-1954), editor of the *Tea and Coffee Trade Journal*, New York, asked Gandhiji in a letter dated September 18, 1931, how his plans for a free India were likely to affect the tea industry. America, he said, was "vitally interested because we get 56 per cent of our teas from India and Ceylon, of which India supplies nearly half."<sup>572</sup> The date of Gandhiji's reply is not available.]

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<sup>569</sup> SN 17003; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, page 174

<sup>570</sup> SN 17003

<sup>571</sup> SN 17794; *Collected Works*, Volume 48, page 40

<sup>572</sup> SN 17794

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter. If and when India comes to her own, it does not follow that the British Indian Tea Estates or any other British interests will be confiscated. On the contrary, every legitimate interest will receive the fullest protection, but the legitimacy of all foreign and other interests will certainly be examined by an impartial Tribunal.

**ULSINS, FRASER**

**Letter, March 15, 1924**<sup>573</sup>

[Mr. Ulsins, a student, wrote to Gandhiji on February 10, 1924 that he was collecting autographs of famous men and would consider it a great honour to add Gandhiji's signature to his collection.<sup>574</sup> Gandhiji had been released from prison in February 1924 for health reasons and was convalescing in Juhu, Bombay, when he sent a reply.]

Post Andheri,  
March 15, 1924

Dear friend,

I have your letter of the 10th February.

I send my autograph on a separate piece of paper. I am sorry I cannot send you one in ink as my hand is yet too shaky for me to write a firm hand with an ink-pen.

Yours sincerely,

Fraser Ulsins, Esq.  
The Hill School  
Pottstown, Pennsylvania

**VILLARD, OSWALD GARRISON**

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<sup>573</sup> SN 8498; *Collected Works*, Volume 23, page 251

<sup>574</sup> SN 8314

**Letter, September 14, 1927<sup>575</sup>**

[Mr. Villard (1872-1949), editor of *The Nation*, a prominent liberal, pacifist and supporter of independence for India, sent Gandhiji a copy of the book *Mother India* by Katherine Mayo and his review of the book.]

As at Sabarmati,  
September 14, 1927

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter and copy of Miss Mayo's book. A friend of hers had already sent me a copy. I have now read it and written for *Young India* a fairly long review.<sup>576</sup> I have asked the publishers to send you a marked copy of *Young India*. In the circumstances, I hope, you do not consider it necessary for me to write anything special. If however, on reading my review you consider that there is any point requiring elucidation please let me know. I read your review with a great deal of interest.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

Oswald Garrison Villard, Esq.  
20, Vessey Street  
New York

### **WELLER, CHARLES FREDERICK**

[Mr. Weller (1870-1957), an executive of various charities in Chicago from 1901 to 1921, became a leader of organisations for peace and co-operation. He set up the League of Neighbours in 1918. He associated with Kedar Nath Das Gupta,<sup>577</sup> founder of the Union of East and West, after he arrived from London and they formed the Fellowship of Faiths in 1925. The three organisations were later combined into "the Threefold Movement," renamed World Fellowship of Faiths in 1929, with Mr. Weller and Mr. Das Gupta as General Executives. The World Fellowship planned a parliament of religions during Chicago's second World's Fair in 1933, the fiftieth anniversary of the first World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. It set up a large national committee and organised a convention of religions, as well as other faiths. The title of the conference was changed to

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<sup>575</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 34, page 533

<sup>576</sup> "Drain Inspector's Report" in *Young India*, September 15, 1927; *Collected Works*, Volume 34, pages 539-47

<sup>577</sup> For a brief biography of Mr. Das Gupta, see S.P.K. Gupta, *op. cit.*, pages 241-52



"International Convention of the World Fellowship of Faiths", and it was held in Chicago and New York in 1933-34. One of its sessions had "Gandhi's Faith" as its theme.<sup>578]</sup>

**Letter, July 26, 1924**<sup>579</sup>

[Mr. Weller wrote to Gandhiji on May 22, 1924, inviting him to visit the United States.]

Sabarmati,  
July 26, 1924

Dear Mr. Weller,

I have been unable before today to overtake your kind letter of 22nd May. I thank you for it and the offer of your home. I must however resist the temptation. I must make no other experiment till the one I am now making can be demonstrated to have succeeded. Today I can make no such claim for it. On the contrary my method seems to have dissatisfied many of my co-workers. I dare not transfer my activity at the present moment to any other place. If the plant I am tending here grows into a hardy tree, all else is easy. I would, therefore, ask you and other friends, instead of tempting me away from the present field of labour, to help me to success by studying the problem and, in so far as it may commend itself to them, by cultivating world opinion in its favour.

With my kind regards to you and yours,

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

Charles F. Weller, Esq.  
League of Neighbors  
Broad and West Grand Street  
Elizabeth, New Jersey

[In January 1926, Mrs. Langeloth and Mrs. Kelly met Gandhiji and personally delivered a resolution of the Threefold Movement inviting him to visit America.<sup>580</sup>

On September 23, 1926, Lillian Hendrick, Chairman of the Peace Week Goodwill Day Committee of the three movements, wrote to Gandhiji inviting him to attend and address a meeting on May 18, 1927. She wrote that at the very

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<sup>578</sup> See Charles Frederick Weller, *World Fellowship; Addresses and Messages by Leading Spokesmen of all Faiths, Races and Countries*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1935.

<sup>579</sup> *The Diary of Mahadev Desai; Collected Works*, Volume 24, pages 444-45

<sup>580</sup> *Young India*, January 21, 1926; *Collected Works*, Volume 29, page 416

successful observance of the Week the previous year, they had performed a play "Mahatma," dramatising his life. "I feel, as many other individuals do, that the young people of this country are distinctly interested in your work and that it would be very valuable if you could come. I personally have been interested in your ideas for a number of years..."<sup>581</sup>]

**Letter, August 10, 1928**<sup>582</sup>

[Mr. Weller wrote on June 21, 1928: "One of my long-time ambitions is to visit India... to organise meetings in which Hindus will pay tributes of appreciation to the Mohammedan faith, Mohammedans to Hinduism and Christians to both..."<sup>583</sup>]

I do like your emphasis upon appreciation rather than toleration. Whether you are now ready to launch out in Chicago, etc., is more than I can tell. It must be a matter of your own feeling and experience. I can only say generally, in all such matters, try after depths rather than extent of service.

M.K. Gandhi

**Letter, June 3, 1931**<sup>584</sup>

[Mr. Weller apparently invited Gandhiji to the proposed World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1933.]

As at Sabarmati,  
June 3, 1931

Dear friend,

I thank you for your warm letter of 17th April. 1933 is a far cry for me and I could not even make tentative arrangements for that year. You will therefore have to write to me, if all goes well, towards the middle of 1932 when I might be able to give a decisive answer. I am sure you will appreciate my difficulty.

Yours sincerely,

Charles F. Weller, Esq.  
Chicago's Fellowship of Faiths  
Chicago

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<sup>581</sup> SN 10820

<sup>582</sup> SN 14333; *Collected Works*, Volume 37, page 150

<sup>583</sup> SN 14333

<sup>584</sup> SN 17205; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, page 296

[On June 28, 1933, Mr. Weller wrote to Gandhiji inviting him, on behalf of the Fellowship, to attend the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in September. He said that Bishop Francis J. McConnell, national chairman of the World Fellowship, had already cabled an invitation.<sup>585</sup> For response by Gandhiji, please see "Message to World Fellowship of Faiths, Chicago, 1933" in Section V below.]

### WILLIAMS, J. MACK

**Letter, November 13, 1934**<sup>586</sup>

Dear friend,

I have your letter of 15th ultimo. The rules that my co-workers and myself seek to observe are eleven, not ten. They are as under:

Truth, non-violence, continence, non-possession, non-stealing, removal of untouchability, *swadeshi*, daily bread-labour, equality of the principal religions of the world, restraint on the palate, that is, eating to live - not living to eat, and fearlessness.

Yours sincerely,

J. Mack Williams, Esq.  
Vass, North Carolina

### WINTHROPLE, GEORGE

**Letter, March 16, 1947**<sup>587</sup>

Patna,  
March 16, 1947

Dear friend,

I have your letter. Of course I am interested in everything about Thoreau and Emerson. My knowledge of Thoreau is confined to *Walden* and *Civil Disobedience* and some stray writings of his. *Civil Disobedience* was the work that gripped me. But I do not consider myself worthy enough for the purpose of identifying myself with any Thoreau Society.

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<sup>585</sup> SN 21502

<sup>586</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 59, page 335

<sup>587</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 94, page 388

George Winthrop, Esq.  
Concord  
Massachusetts

**WORLD, EDITOR OF THE**

**Letter, June 8, 1925**<sup>588</sup>

Sabarmati,  
June 8, 1925

Dear friend,

I have your letter with good wishes for which I thank you. In my opinion the speculation you ask me to indulge in is a vain speculation. Who knows what the whole present is? But we all know that the whole future will be a direct result of the present. The one change needful is humility and introspection. In our arrogance we want to reform the world without reforming ourselves. "Man, know thyself" is as true today as when it was first uttered.

Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

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<sup>588</sup> *The Diary of Mahadev Desai; Collected Works, Volume 27, page 214*

## V. MESSAGES TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

[Gandhiji was often requested by American visitors and the American media for messages. This Section contains the messages he sent in letters or gave orally, as well as the text of a broadcast he made to America in 1931. In many of these messages he tried to explain the moral basis of the Indian struggle for freedom, especially in view of the hostile propaganda in the United States.]

### MESSAGE TO THE READERS OF *THE SURVEY*, NEW YORK, MARCH 5, 1922<sup>589</sup>

The editor of *The Survey*, a weekly concerned with social welfare and related issues, requested a contribution by Gandhiji.]

... you expect something from my pen. You will excuse me for the time being, but I would like to give you and your readers just this assurance that our non-cooperation is not intended to promote isolation or exclusiveness, but it is but a prelude to real cooperation with the rest of the world not excluding the West. Nor would I have your readers to think that in fighting the British government I am fighting western civilisation, but I am endeavouring to fight modern civilisation as distinguished from the ancient which India has not happily yet discarded. Modern civilisation as represented by the West of today, in my opinion, has given Matter a place which by right belongs to Spirit. It has therefore put violence upon the throne of triumph and held under bondage Truth and Innocence. It is this error which enfeebled India is trying to fight, and I have no doubt whatsoever that if those who are engaged in the fight remain true to their pledge God will help them.

### MESSAGE TO AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN, APRIL 5, 1924<sup>590</sup>

[This message was sent to Mr. Walter Heegstra, an American businessman who visited Gandhiji in India, and requested a message. See letter to Mr. Heegstra in Section IV.]

My platform is India. My goal is to attain self-government for India. The means adopted to attain the end are Non-violence and Truth. Therefore, Indian self-government not only means no menace to the world, but will be of the greatest benefit to humanity if she attains her end through those means and those means alone. The spinning-wheel is the external symbol of internal reform, and its

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<sup>589</sup> *Survey Graphic* and *The Survey*, New York, April 29, 1922. Please see full text of the letter in Section IV.

<sup>590</sup> SN 8662; *Collected Works*, Volume 23, pages 361-62

universal re-adoption in India ensures her economic salvation and frees millions of Indian peasants from growing pauperism.

My message to the businessmen of America is: Understand the inner meaning of the message of the spinning-wheel and you will probably find the solution for the World Peace which I know so many Americans sincerely desire.

#### **MESSAGE TO GANDHI CLUB, NEWBURGH, NY, APRIL 5, 1924**

[Please see Section IV, "Murphy, Edward".]

There is no search greater than that of Truth. The only means of finding it out is through non-violence in its extreme form. It is because we have ignored it that we seek to impose by force what we consider is truth upon others.

#### **MESSAGE TO *WORLD TOMORROW*, NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 14, 1924<sup>591</sup>**

[*World Tomorrow*, a pacifist monthly, was edited by the Reverend Kirby Page. This message was published in the issue of January 1925.]

My study and experience of non-violence have proved to me that it is the greatest force in the world. It is the surest method of discovering the truth and it is the quickest because there is no other. It works silently, almost imperceptibly, but none the less surely. It is the one constructive process of Nature in the midst of incessant destruction going on about us. I hold it to be a superstition to believe that it can work only in private life. There is no department of life, public or private, to which that force cannot be applied. But this non-violence is impossible without complete self-effacement.

#### **MESSAGE TO AMERICAN FRIENDS, SEPTEMBER 1925<sup>592</sup>**

[Gandhiji wrote this message at the request of an American friend who visited him and conveyed an invitation to visit the United States.]

It is a privilege for me to enjoy the friendship of so many unknown American and European friends. It pleases me to note that the circle is ever widening, perhaps more especially in America. I had the pleasure of receiving a warm invitation about a year ago to visit that continent. The same invitation has now been repeated with redoubled strength and with the offer to pay all expenses. I was

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<sup>591</sup> *The Diary of Mahadev Desai; Collected Works*, Volume 25, pages 322-23

<sup>592</sup> *Young India*, September 17, 1925; *Collected Works*, Volume 28, pages 186-87

unable then as I am now, to respond to the kind invitation. To accept it is an easy enough task, but I must resist the temptation, for I feel that I can make no effective appeal to the people of that great continent unless I make my position good with the intellectuals of India.

I have not a shadow of doubt about the truth of my fundamental position. But I know that I am unable to carry with me the bulk of educated India. I can therefore gain no effective help for my country from the Americans and Europeans so long as I remain isolated from educated India. I do want to think in terms of the whole world. My patriotism includes the good of mankind in general. Therefore, my service of India includes the service of humanity. But I feel that I should be going out of my orbit if I left it for help from the West. I must be satisfied for the time being with such help as I can get from the West, speaking to it from my smaller Indian platform. If I go to America or to Europe, I must go in my strength, not in my weakness, which I feel today, - the weakness I mean, of my country. For the whole scheme for the liberation of India is based upon the development of internal strength. It is a plan of self-purification. The peoples of the West, therefore, can best help the Indian movement by setting apart specialists to study the inwardness of it. Let the specialists come to India with an open mind and in a spirit of humility as befits a searcher after Truth. Then, perhaps, they will see the reality instead of a glorified edition that, in spite of all my desire to be absolutely truthful, I am likely to present if I went to America. I believe in thought-power more than in the power of the word, whether written or spoken and if the movement that I seek to represent has vitality in it and has divine blessing upon it, it will permeate the whole world without my physical presence in its different parts. Anyway, at the present moment I see no light before me. I must patiently plod in India until I see my way clear for going outside the Indian border.

### **MESSAGE TO AMERICANS, FEBRUARY 11, 1926<sup>593</sup>**

[Gandhiji sent this message in response to a request from Mrs. Fisher, wife of Bishop Frederick B. Fisher, before their departure for the United States. For text of the letter, please see Section III.]

I can only repeat what I have been saying to so many American friends who have been calling on me, namely, what is required most is serious and careful study of the Indian movement. What I see happening in America is distressful, either an exaggerated view of the movement or a belittling of it. Both are like distortions. I regard the movement to be one of permanent interest and fraught with very important consequences. It therefore needs a diligent study, not a mere superficial newspaper glance. May your visit to America then result in the more accurate estimate of the movement in India.

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<sup>593</sup> SN 14095; *Collected Works*, Volume 30, page 8

**MESSAGE TO LEAGUE OF AMERICAN PEN WOMEN,  
WASHINGTON, DC, MARCH 5, 1926<sup>594</sup>**

[This message was sent to Mrs. Alice McKay Kelly, auditor of the League, at her request.<sup>595</sup> Please see letter to her in Section IV.]

Please tell the members of the League that the best way of helping India is to engage in an accurate study of the Indian problem not from newspapers nor after the newspaper style but as diligent students from original sources with patient and prayerful effort.

**MESSAGE TO THE BOYS AT YMCA, NEWBURGH, NY, DECEMBER 9,  
1926<sup>596</sup>**

[This message was sent at the request of Mr. Gordon Law, Boys' Secretary at the YMCA. Please see letter to Mr. Law in Section IV.]

Above all think, speak and do the truth at any cost, with special emphasis on any.

**MESSAGE TO THE AMERICAN NEGRO, MAY 1, 1929<sup>597</sup>**

[This message was sent to Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, editor of *The Crisis*, who had requested an article. Please see Section IV for text of letter to Dr. DuBois.]

Let not the 12 million Negroes be ashamed of the fact that they are the grandchildren of slaves. There is no dishonour in being slaves. There is dishonour in being slave-owners. But let us not think of honour or dishonour in connection with the past. Let us realise that the future is with those who would be truthful, pure and loving. For, as the old wise men have said, truth ever is, untruth never was. Love alone binds and truth and love accrue only to the truly humble.

Sabarmati  
1st May, 1929

M.K. Gandhi

**MESSAGE TO WORLD FELLOWSHIP COUNCIL, SEPTEMBER 14,  
1929<sup>598</sup>**

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<sup>594</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 30, page 78

<sup>595</sup> SN 12427

<sup>596</sup> SN 19756; *Collected Works*, Volume 32, pages 409-10

<sup>597</sup> *The Crisis*, New York, July 1929, and Herbert Aptheker, ed., *The Correspondence of W.E.B. DuBois* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), Volume I, page 403

<sup>598</sup> SN 15239; *Collected Works*, Volume 41, page 393



[This message was sent in response to a request by Allen Melton, President of the World Fellowship Council, Dallas, Texas, for publication in a collection of sermons of great ministers from various countries. Mr. Melton said, in a letter of July 30, 1929, that he was being asked, though not a Christian, because he followed Christ. He asked for a "heart-felt message to the people who call themselves Christians," and to offer "suggestions to bring about a better understanding between people of foreign birth and those who are natives."<sup>599</sup>]

Camp Agra  
September 14, 1929

Dear friend,

I have your letter. My message to the Christians would be to cultivate humility instead of arrogating to themselves the exclusive possession of absolute truth.

The only way I know of bringing about better understanding between different peoples is to treat all as of ourselves.

Yours sincerely,

Allen Melton, Esq.  
President,  
World Fellowship Council  
Dallas, Texas

### MESSAGE TO AMERICA, APRIL 5, 1930<sup>600</sup>

[This message was given at Dandi, during the Salt March, to S.A. Brelvi, editor of *The Bombay Chronicle* and correspondent of the Eastern News and Press Agency, New York.]

I know I have countless friends in America who are in deep sympathy with this struggle but mere sympathy will avail me nothing. What is wanted is concrete expression of public opinion in favour of India's inherent right to independence and complete approval of the absolutely non-violent means adopted by the Indian National Congress.<sup>601</sup> In all humility but in perfect truth I claim that if we attain

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<sup>599</sup> SN 15238

<sup>600</sup> *Bombay Chronicle*, April 7, 1930; *Collected Works*, Volume 43, page 180

<sup>601</sup> The Indian National Congress decided in February 1930 to authorise Gandhiji to lead a Civil Disobedience Movement against British rule. He sent a letter with a list of demands to the Viceroy and when they were rejected, began a march to the sea on 12 March to defy the law by manufacturing salt. He broke the law on 6 April by boiling sea water and simultaneously civil

our end through non-violent means India will have delivered a message for the world.

### MESSAGE TO AMERICA, APRIL 5, 1930

[Gandhiji wrote this message to be sent to an American friend in New York, but was arrested on that day.<sup>602</sup>]

I want world sympathy in this battle of Right against might.

Dandi  
5-4-30

M.K. Gandhi

### MESSAGE TO AMERICA, APRIL 1930<sup>603</sup>

The national demand is not for immediate establishment of Independence, but is a preliminary step to a conference that must take place if Independence is to be established peacefully, to remove certain prime grievances, chiefly economic and moral. These are set forth in the clearest possible terms in my letter, miscalled an ultimatum to the Viceroy.<sup>604</sup> Those grievances include the salt tax, which in its incidence falls with equal pressure upon rich as well as poor and is over 1,000 per cent of the cost price. Having been made a monopoly, it has deprived tens of thousands of people of their supplementary occupation and the artificially heavy cost of salt has made it very difficult, if not impossible, for poor people to give enough salt to their cattle and to their land.

This unnatural monopoly is sustained by laws, which are only so-called, but which are a denial of law. They give arbitrary powers to police, known to be corrupt, to lay their hands without warrant on innocent people, to confiscate their property and otherwise molest them in a hundred ways. Civil resistance against the laws has caught the popular imagination as nothing else has within my

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disobedience began all over the country. Many volunteers were brutally beaten by the police and about sixty thousand people were jailed.

Gandhiji was arrested on 4 May.

<sup>602</sup> Facsimile in Haridas T. Muzumdar, *Gandhi Versus the Empire* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1932), opposite page 113

<sup>603</sup> *Modern Review*, Calcutta, June 1930; *Collected Works*, Volume 43, pages 334-36

<sup>604</sup> In his letter of March 2, 1930, to Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, Gandhiji elaborated on the evils of British rule of India and invited him "to pave the way for the immediate removal of those evils, and thus open a way for a real conference between equals." Among the evils, he mentioned the salt tax as a heavy burden on the poor in India.

When no action was taken by the Government, he led the civil disobedience movement by defying the salt law. Tens of thousands of people manufactured salt from sea water. The Government used undue violence and repression in an effort to suppress the movement.

experience. Hundreds of thousands of people, including women or children from many villages, have participated in the open manufacture and sale of contraband salt.

This resistance has been answered by barbarous and unmanly repressions. Instead of arresting people the authorities have violated the persons of people who have refused to part with salt, held generally in their fists. To open their fists, their knuckles have been broken, their necks have been pressed, they have been even indecently assaulted till they have been rendered senseless. Some of these assaults have taken place in the presence of hundreds and thousands of people, who although well able to protect the victims and retaliate, being under a pledge of non-violence, have not done so. It is true that violence has broken out in Calcutta, Karachi, Chittagong, and now Peshawar. The Calcutta and Karachi incidents were an impulsive outburst on the arrest of popular leaders. The Chittagong and Peshawar incidents though also caused for the same reason, seem to have been serious and well-planned affairs, though wholly unconnected with each other, Chittagong being in the extreme east and Peshawar being in the north-west border of India.

These disturbances have so far not affected other parts of India, where civil disobedience has been going on in an organised fashion and on a mass scale since the 6th instant. People in other parts have remained non-violent in spite of great provocation. At the same time, I admit that there is need for caution but I can say without the least hesitation that, consistently with the plan of civil disobedience, every precaution conceivable is being taken to prevent civil disobedience from being used as an occasion for doing violence. It should be noted that in Karachi, seven wounded persons of whom two have died of their wounds, were volunteers engaged in keeping the peace and restraining mob fury. It is the opinion of eye-witnesses that the firing in Karachi was wholly unjustified and that there was no firing in the air or at the legs in the first instance.

In fact, the Government have lost no opportunity of incensing people. Many of the best and purest and the most self-sacrificing leaders have been arrested and imprisoned, in many instances with mock trials. Sentences, though for the same offence, have varied with the idiosyncrasies of the magistrates. In several instances they have been for more than 12 months with hard labour on well-known citizens. The enthusiasm of the people has up to now increased with every conviction. Thousands of people regard the manufacture of contraband salt as part of their daily routine. In any other part of the world with a Government at all responsible to public opinion, the salt tax would have been repealed long since, but whether now or later, repealed it will be, if the present existing atmosphere of resistance abides as it promises to do.

That this is a movement of self-purification is abundantly proved by the fact that women have come into it in large numbers and are organising the picketing of liquor shops. Thousands have taken vows to abstain from intoxicating liquor. In

Ahmedabad, a strong labour centre, receipts of canteens have dropped to 19 per cent and are still dropping. A similar manifestation is taking place in the district of Surat. Women have also taken up the question of boycott of foreign cloth. It is spreading all over India. People are making bonfires of foreign cloth in their possession. *Khadi*, i.e., hand-spun cloth, is so much in demand that the existing stock is well-nigh exhausted. The spinning-wheel is much in demand and people are beginning to realise more and more the necessity of reviving hand-spinning in the cottages of 700,000 villages of India. In my humble opinion, a struggle so free from violence has a message far beyond the borders of India. I have no manner of doubt that after all the sacrifice that has already been made since April 6, the spirit of the people will be sustained throughout till India has become Independent and free to make her contribution to the progress of humanity.

#### **MESSAGE TO AMERICA, JUNE 4, 1931<sup>605</sup>**

[This message was sent in reply to a request by James Mills, correspondent of the Associated Press of America, then in Simla.]

INDIA NEEDS ALL HELP AMERICA CAN RENDER IN HER NON-VIOLENT EFFORT FOR FREEDOM.

#### **BROADCAST TO AMERICA, SEPTEMBER 13, 1931<sup>606</sup>**

[Soon after his arrival in London to attend the Second Round Table Conference (on constitutional progress of India) in September 1931, Gandhiji made a broadcast to America on the Columbia Broadcasting Service, from Kingsley Hall, a settlement house in a poor neighbourhood where Gandhiji was staying. It was broadcast live.]

In my opinion, the Indian Conference bears in its consequences not only upon India but upon the whole world. India is by itself almost a continent. It contains one-fifth of the human race. It represents one of the most ancient civilisations. It has traditions handed down from tens of thousands of years, some of which, to the astonishment of the world, remain intact. No doubt the ravages of time have affected the purity of that civilisation, as they have that of many other cultures and many institutions.

If India is to perpetuate the glory of her ancient past, it can do so only when it attains freedom. The reason for the struggle having drawn the attention of the world, I know, does not lie in the fact that we Indians are fighting for our liberty,

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<sup>605</sup> SN 17213; *Collected Works*, Volume 46, page 315

<sup>606</sup> *New York Times*, September 14, 1931; *Collected Works*, Volume 48, pages 8-10

but in the fact that the means adopted by us for attaining that liberty are unique and, as far as history shows us, have not been adopted by any other people of whom we have any record.

The means adopted are not violence, not bloodshed, not diplomacy as one understands it nowadays, but they are purely and simply truth and non-violence. No wonder that the attention of the world is directed towards this attempt to lead a successful, bloodless revolution. Hitherto, nations have fought in the manner of the brute. They have wreaked vengeance upon those whom they have considered to be their enemies.

We find in searching national anthems adopted by great nations that they contain imprecations upon the so-called enemy. They have vowed destruction and have not hesitated to take the name of God and seek Divine assistance for the destruction of the enemy. We in India have reversed the process. We feel that the law that governs brute creation is not the law that should guide the human race. That law is inconsistent with human dignity.

I personally would wait, if need be, for ages rather than seek to attain the freedom of my country through bloody means. I feel in the innermost recesses of my heart, after a political experience extending over an unbroken period of close upon thirty-five years, that the world is sick unto death of blood-spilling. The world is seeking a way out, and I flatter myself with the belief that perhaps it will be the privilege of the ancient land of India to show that way out to the hungering world.

I have, therefore, no hesitation whatsoever in inviting all the great nations of the earth to give their hearty cooperation to India in her mighty struggle. It must be a sight worth contemplating and treasuring that millions of people have given themselves to suffering without retaliation in order that they might vindicate the dignity and honour of the nation.

I have called that suffering a process of self-purification. It is my certain conviction that no man loses his freedom except through his own weakness. I am painfully conscious of our own weaknesses. We represent in India all the principal religions of the earth, and it is a matter of deep humiliation to confess that we are a house divided against itself; that we Hindus and Mussalmans are flying at one another. It is a matter of still deeper humiliation to me that we Hindus regard several millions of our own kith and kin as too degraded even for our touch. I refer to the so-called "untouchables."

These are no small weaknesses in a nation struggling to be free. You will find that, in this struggle through self-purification, we have assigned a foremost part of our creed to the removal of this curse of untouchability and the attainment of unity amongst all the different classes and communities of India representing the different creeds.

It is along the same lines that we seek to rid our land of the curse of drink. Happily for us, intoxicating drinks and drugs are confined to comparatively a very small number of people, largely factory hands and the like.

Fortunately for us, the drink and drug curse is accepted as a curse. It is not considered to be the fashion for men or women to drink or to take intoxicating drugs. All the same, it is an uphill fight that we are fighting in trying to remove this evil from our midst.

It is a matter of regret, deep regret, for me to have to say that the existing government has made of this evil a source of very large revenue, amounting to nearly twenty-five *crores*<sup>607</sup> of rupees. But I am thankful to be able to say that the women of India have risen to the occasion in combating it by peaceful means, that is, by a fervent appeal to those who are given to the drink habit to give it up, and by an equally fervent appeal to the liquor-dealers. A great impression has been created upon those who are addicted to these two evil habits.

I wish that it were possible for me to say that in this, at least, we were receiving hearty cooperation of the rulers. If we could only have received the cooperation without any legislation, I dare say that we would have achieved this reform and banished intoxicating drink and drugs from our afflicted land.

There is a force which has a constructive effect and which has been put forth by the nation during this struggle. That is the great care for the semi-starved millions scattered throughout the 700,000 villages dotted over the surface 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad. It is a painful phenomenon that these simple villagers, through no fault of their own, have nearly six months of the year idle upon their hands.

The time was not very long ago when every village was self-sufficient in regard to the two primary human wants: food and clothing. Unfortunately for us, the East India Company, by means I would prefer not to describe, destroyed that supplementary village industry, and the millions of spinners who had become famous through the cunning of their deft fingers for drawing the finest thread, such as has never yet been drawn by any modern machinery. These village spinners found themselves one fine morning with their noble occupation gone. From that day forward India has become progressively poor.

No matter what may be said to the contrary, it is a historical fact that, before the advent of the East India Company, these villagers were not idle, and he who wants may see today that these villagers are idle. It, therefore, required no great effort or learning to know that these villagers must starve if they cannot work for six months in the year.

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<sup>607</sup> A *crore* is ten million.

May I not, then, on behalf of these semi-starved millions, appeal to the conscience of the world to come to the rescue of people dying for regaining its liberty?

**MESSAGE TO AMERICAN CHRISTIANS ON WORLD PEACE AND DISARMAMENT, SEPTEMBER 29, 1931<sup>608</sup>**

[This message was sent to Bishop Frederick B. Fischer, a friend of many years, who had requested a message to American Christians on world peace and disarmament. Please see Section III for letter to Bishop Fisher.]

My message to American Christians on World Peace and Disarmament is that Peace and Disarmament are not a matter of reciprocity. When real Peace and Disarmament come, they will be initiated by a strong nation like America - irrespective of the consent and cooperation of other nations.

An individual or a nation must have faith in oneself and in the protective power of God to find peace in the midst of strife, and to shed all arms by reason of feeling the loving power of God and His protective shield, and I hold such peace to be impossible so long as strong nations do not consider it to be sinful to exploit weak nations.

**MESSAGE TO MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE ON TEMPERANCE, OCTOBER 1, 1931<sup>609</sup>**

[In a letter of September 21, 1931, to Gandhiji, Arthur J. Davis, State Superintendent of the Massachusetts Anti-Saloon League, said: "You can perform a great service if you will send us a word of encouragement and greeting to be read... at an all-day state-wide conference on temperance and total abstinence which is to be held... on October 16th. America is in the throes of a desperate drive of the liquor interests to restore beer, and thus to re-establish the old evils which we fought so long and so successfully."<sup>610</sup>]

It was a brave step, worthy of America, to have undertaken the most difficult task for her of total prohibition. It would be a shame and a rude shock to reformers throughout the world if for any cause America abandoned the policy and returned to the drink evil.

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<sup>608</sup> A facsimile of the original in F.B. Fisher, *That Strange Little Brown Man - Gandhi*; also SN 17872; *Collected Works*, Volume 48, pages 85-86

<sup>609</sup> SN 17808; *Collected Works*, Volume 48, page 98

<sup>610</sup> *Ibid.*

## **CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO AMERICA, DECEMBER 1931<sup>611</sup>**

[During his voyage from Europe to India in December 1931, James Mills, correspondent of the Associated Press of America, pressed Gandhiji for a message of Christmas greetings to America. Gandhiji dictated the following:]

I have never been able to reconcile myself to the gaities of the Christmas season. They have appeared to me to be so inconsistent with the life and teaching of Jesus.

How I wish America could lead the way by devoting the season to a real moral stocktaking and emphasising consecration to the service of mankind for which Jesus lived and died on the cross.

## **MESSAGE TO AMERICA, JANUARY 4, 1932<sup>612</sup>**

Even as America won its Independence through suffering, valour and sacrifice, so shall India in God's good time achieve her freedom by suffering, sacrifice, and non-violence.

## **MESSAGE TO AMERICA, OCTOBER 1, 1932<sup>613</sup>**

[This message was sent to Philip Kingsley, correspondent of *Chicago Tribune*. Gandhiji was then in prison. He had undertaken a fast from 20 September in protest against the announcement by the British Government of the "communal award" to institute separate electorates for "untouchables." The fast ended on 26 September when Indian leaders agreed on measures for the uplift of untouchables and Britain withdrew its award.]

I wish America could trace the Big Finger of God in all the happenings during the past few days in India. It was not man's doing; it was without doubt God's grace.

## **MESSAGE TO AMERICA, NOVEMBER 20, 1932<sup>614</sup>**

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<sup>611</sup> *Young India*, December 31, 1931

<sup>612</sup> Home Department, Political, File No. 141, pages 15-17, 1932; *Collected Works*, Volume 49, page 1

<sup>613</sup> *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Volume II, page 95; *Collected Works*, Volume 51, page 163

<sup>614</sup> Gandhiji wrote: "I thank you for your letter. I was sorry not to be able to see you." And then sent the above message. *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Volume II; *Collected Works*, Volume 52, page 24.



[Mr. Thornberg, an American, was unable to get an interview with Gandhiji. He then sent autograph books for his signature and asked for a message for America. Gandhiji sent this message from prison.]

The way America can help in this internal movement of reform is first by understanding and studying the movement and pronouncing intelligent opinion upon it. Even orthodoxy is today sensitive to reasoned opinion, even though it may come from outside; secondly, by placing at the disposal of the reformers the free aid of experts with reference to the economic question. For instance, there is the tremendous problem of carrion-eaters. They will not give up carrion-eating so long as they continue to take charge of dead cattle, which they skin and whose flesh they eat. I have myself tried to find clean and expeditious method of skinning carcasses and making the best use of all the contents of these carcasses. Not wanting to, and not being able to pay for expert assistance, I have been obliged to grope in the dark. America could easily send us free expert assistance in matters such as I have mentioned, without any ulterior proselytising motives, if only religious-minded men of America could be persuaded to believe that Hinduism, Islam and other great religions are just as true as Christianity and that they do not therefore need destruction but reformation where necessary. The conviction can only come if sober-minded Americans will study the present very big movement.

### **MESSAGES TO WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF FAITHS, 1933**

[Gandhiji sent two messages to the International Convention of the World Fellowship of Faiths, held in Chicago and New York, in 1933-34. The first was a letter of July 3, 1933, in reply to a letter from the Reverend Jabez T. Sunderland.<sup>615</sup>]

What message can I send through the pen if I am not sending any through the life I am living? Let me for the present try to live the life as it may please God. When He wants me to send a written message He will tell me.

[The second was a cable on August 27, 1933, in reply to an invitation by Bishop Francis J. McConnell.<sup>616</sup>]

Fellowship of Faiths attainable only by mutual respect in action for faiths.

### **MESSAGE TO THE COSMOPOLITAN, NEW YORK, 1935<sup>617</sup>**

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<sup>615</sup> Charles Frederick Weller, ed., *World Fellowship: Addresses and Messages by Leading Spokesmen of All Faiths, Races and Countries* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1935), page 13. Also: *The Hindu*, September 12, 1933; *Collected Works*, Volume 55, page 422.

<sup>616</sup> Weller, *op. cit.*

[Mahadev Desai, secretary to Gandhiji, in an article in the *Harijan* on June 18, 1938, said that Gandhiji had sent the following three years earlier in reply to questions from the American monthly.]

Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve the godliness of human nature. Methods hitherto adopted have failed because rock-bottom sincerity on the part of those who have striven has been lacking. Not that they have realised this lack. Peace is unattainable by part performance of conditions, even as a chemical combination is impossible without complete fulfilment of the conditions of attainment thereof. If the recognised leaders of mankind who have control over engines of destruction were wholly to renounce their use, with full knowledge of its implications, permanent peace can be obtained. This is clearly impossible without the great Powers of the earth renouncing their imperialistic design. This again seems impossible without great nations ceasing to believe in soul-destroying competition and to desire to multiply wants and therefore increase their material possessions. It is my conviction that the root of the evil is want of a living faith in a living God. It is a first-class human tragedy that peoples of the earth who claim to believe in the message of Jesus who they describe as the Prince of Peace show little of that belief in actual practice. It is painful to see sincere Christian divines limiting the scope of Jesus' message to select individuals. I have been taught from my childhood and tested the truth by experience that the primary virtues of mankind are possible of cultivation by the meanest of the human species. It is this undoubted universal possibility that distinguishes the humans from the rest of God's creation. If even one great nation were unconditionally to perform the supreme act of renunciation, many of us would see in our lifetime visible peace established on earth.

**MESSAGE TO THE ASSOCIATED PRESS OF AMERICA, APRIL 12, 1937<sup>618</sup>**

[In 1937, elections were held in India under the Government of India Act, 1935, which provided for a limited franchise. The Indian National Congress denounced the Act as it retained British domination and did not meet Indian demands for freedom. The Congress, however, contested the elections and won absolute majority in six of the eleven provinces and became the largest party in three others. It decided on 16 March to accept office if assurances were given that the Governors of provinces would not use their special powers or veto.

This led to a discussion as to whether such assurances could be given under the 1935 Act. The Congress resented a statement on 6 April by Lord Zetland, Secretary of State for India, criticising Gandhiji who, he said, had either not read

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<sup>617</sup> *Harijan*, June 18, 1938; *Collected Works*, Volume 62, pages 175-76

<sup>618</sup> *Bombay Chronicle*, April 15, 1937; *Collected Works*, Volume 65, pages 74-75

or forgotten the 1935 Act. The Governors began to form ministries of persons nominated by them.

The crisis was resolved in July when the Congress decided to accept office in the light of clarifications by the Viceroy in a statement on 21 June.

Gandhiji had resigned from membership of the Congress in October 1934 and devoted himself mainly to his "constructive programme," but continued to be consulted by the leaders of the Congress.]

Wardha,  
April 12, 1937

You ask me to give a special message for the readers of your 1,300 American newspapers, whom you serve. I would like Americans first of all to know my limitations and our internal politics. They should know that I am not even a primary member of the Congress. Whatever influence I possess is purely moral. Congressmen recognise in me the author of purely non-violent action and its technique and, therefore, so long as the Congress retains its creed of truth and non-violence, Congressmen are likely to be guided by my advice whenever it has anything to do, directly or indirectly, with non-violent action, but those who can speak with authority are the President of the Congress, i.e., Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and the Working Committee, i.e., the Congress Cabinet. I function purely as a humble adviser.

For me the present issue is not political, but moral. It is a fight between truth and untruth; non-violence and violence and right and might; for I hold that Lord Zetland could not have uttered the speech he did, unless he was conscious of the might of the sword behind him.

It seems as if British statesmen are repenting of even the limited electorate they have created in India. If they were not, they ought to have bowed to the will of the majority as represented by their elected leaders. Surely, it is violence to impose nominated Ministries on the electorate of their creation.

The crisis is of their own making. It is presumption on their part to interpret Acts of their Parliament. Their jurisprudence has taught us that no man can take the law into his own hands, not even the King. Evidently, the maxim does not apply to the British Ministers. Proof of the pudding is in the eating.

I have offered an honourable way out. Let a judicial tribunal of joint creation give the interpretation. It will be time for them to plead incompetence when the tribunal finds in favour of the interpretation. Till then Congress demand for assurances must be held valid.

I must repeat that the latest gesture is one of the sword not of goodwill; certainly not of democratic obedience to the will of a democratic majority.

### **CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO AMERICA, DECEMBER 1939<sup>619</sup>**

[A correspondent of the International News Service requested a Christmas message to America.]

On the Christmas Day the Christian world is supposed to rejoice over the birth of one whom they delight to call Prince of Peace. How I wish Christian America will rise to the occasion and deliver the message of peace to the warring nations.

### **LETTER TO AMERICAN FRIENDS, AUGUST 3, 1942<sup>620</sup>**

[In 1942, Gandhiji called on Britain to withdraw from India in the interests of Allied cause. On July 14, 1942, the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress, meeting in Wardha, adopted a resolution in which it said that frustration in India over the intransigence of Britain as regards freedom of India had given rise to widespread ill-will against Britain and "a growing satisfaction with the success of Japanese arms." It called for a withdrawal of British domination, followed by a provisional government representative of all important sections of the people of India and discussion by it with Britain on future relations and cooperation as allies in the common task of meeting aggression. The Congress, it said, was agreeable to the stationing of allied armed forces in India. "While... the Congress is impatient to achieve the national purpose, it wishes to take no hasty step and wishes to avoid, in so far as is possible, any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations."

The position of Gandhiji and the Congress was misrepresented in the American media, influenced by British propaganda, and the comments were hostile.

Gandhiji wrote a letter to President Roosevelt (reproduced in Section I) and sent the following letter to American friends through the India League in New York.]

On Way to Bombay,  
August 3, 1942

Dear friends,

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<sup>619</sup> Pyarelal Papers; *Collected Works*, Volume 71, page 31

<sup>620</sup> *Harijan*, August 9, 1942; *Collected Works*, Volume 76, pages 357-59

As I am supposed to be the spirit behind the much discussed and equally well abused resolution of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress on independence, it has become necessary for me to explain my position. For I am not unknown to you. I have in America perhaps the largest number of friends in the West - not even excepting Great Britain. British friends knowing me personally are more discerning than the American. In America I suffer from the well-known malady called hero worship. The good Dr. Holmes,<sup>621</sup> until recently of the Unity Church of New York, without knowing me personally became my advertising agent. Some of the nice things he said about me I never knew myself. So I receive often embarrassing letters from America expecting me to perform miracles. Dr. Holmes was followed much later by the late Bishop Fisher<sup>622</sup> who knew me personally in India. He very nearly dragged me to America but fate had ordained otherwise and I could not visit your vast and great country with its wonderful people.

Moreover, you have given me a teacher in Thoreau, who furnished me through his essay on the "Duty of Civil Disobedience" scientific confirmation of what I was doing in South Africa. Great Britain gave me Ruskin, whose *Unto This Last* transformed me overnight from a lawyer and city-dweller into a rustic living away from Durban on a farm, three miles from the nearest railway station and Russia gave me in Tolstoy a teacher who furnished a reasoned basis for my non-violence. He blessed my movement in South Africa when it was still in its infancy and of whose wonderful possibilities I had yet to learn. It was he who had prophesied in his letter to me that I was leading a movement which was destined to bring a message of hope to the downtrodden people of the earth.<sup>623</sup> So you will see that I have not approached the present task in any spirit of enmity to Great Britain and the West. After having imbibed and assimilated the message of *Unto This Last*, I could not be guilty of approving of Fascism or Nazism, whose cult is suppression of the individual and his liberty.

I invite you to read my formula of withdrawal or, as it has been popularly called, "Quit India," with this background. You may not read into it more than the context warrants.

I claim to be a votary of truth from my childhood. It was the most natural thing to me. My prayerful search gave me the revealing maxim "Truth is God" instead of the usual one "God is Truth." That maxim enables me to see God face to face as it were. I feel Him pervade every fibre of my being. With this Truth as witness between you and me, I assert that I would not have asked my country to invite Great Britain to withdraw her rule over India, irrespective of any demand to the

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<sup>621</sup> The Reverend Dr. John Haynes Holmes

<sup>622</sup> Bishop Frederick B. Fisher

<sup>623</sup> Count Leo Tolstoy wrote to Gandhiji on September 7, 1910, when he was leading the *satyagraha* in the Transvaal: "... your work in the Transvaal, which seems to be far away from the centre of our world, is yet the most fundamental and the most important to us supplying the most weighty practical proof in which the world can now share and with which must participate not only the Christians but all the peoples of the world."

contrary, if I had not seen at once that for the sake of Great Britain and the Allied cause it was necessary for Britain boldly to perform the duty of freeing India from bondage. Without this essential act of tardy justice, Britain could not justify her position before the un murmuring world conscience, which is there nevertheless. Singapore, Malaya and Burma taught me that the disaster must not be repeated in India. I make bold to say that it cannot be averted unless Britain trusts the people of India to use their liberty in favour of the Allied cause. By that supreme act of justice Britain would have taken away all cause for the seething discontent of India. She will turn the growing ill-will into active goodwill. I submit that it is worth all the battleships and airships that your wonder-working engineers and financial resources can produce.

I know that interested propaganda has filled your ears and eyes with distorted versions of the Congress position. I have been painted as a hypocrite and enemy of Britain under disguise. My demonstrable spirit of accommodation has been described as my inconsistency, proving me to be an utterly unreliable man. I am not going to burden this letter with proof in support of my assertions. If the credit I have enjoyed in America will not stand me in good stead, nothing I may argue in self-defence will carry conviction against the formidable but false propaganda that has poisoned American ears.

You have made common cause with Great Britain. You cannot therefore disown responsibility for anything that her representatives do in India. You will do a grievous wrong to the Allied cause if you do not sift the truth from the chaff whilst there is yet time. Just think of it. Is there anything wrong in the Congress demanding unconditional recognition of India's independence? It is being said, "But this is not the time." We say, "This is the psychological moment for that recognition." For then and then only can there be irresistible opposition to Japanese aggression. It is of immense value to the Allied cause if it is also of equal value to India. The Congress has anticipated and provided for every possible difficulty in the way of recognition. I want you to look upon the immediate recognition of India's independence as a war measure of first class magnitude.

I am,  
Your friend,

M.K. Gandhi

#### **MESSAGE TO AMERICA, AUGUST 1945<sup>624</sup>**

[This message was sent to Congressman Emmanuel Celler of New York who had asked how "we in the United States can aid in hastening the attainment of India's

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<sup>624</sup> *Bombay Chronicle*, August 30, 1945; *Collected Works*, Volume 81, page 180

independence." It was conveyed through D.F. Karaka, special correspondent of the *Bombay Chronicle* in New York.]

In spite of my disinclination to answer the question like the one put to me by Mr. Emanuel Celler, I feel that I shall be wanting in courtesy, if I do not meet Mr. Celler's wishes. The best way for America to assist India's struggle for independence is to study the question, so as not to be misled by the untruth that is being spread by British Agency at a great cost about India. Americans have to get out of the way of her struggle. For the rest, India has to fight her own battle of independence which she is trying to secure by a non-violent technique.

**MESSAGE TO AMERICA, OCTOBER 21, 1946<sup>625</sup>**

[Preston Grover of the Associated Press of America asked Gandhiji, during an interview in New Delhi, if he had any message for America.]

Dislodge the money God called Mammon from the throne and find a corner for poor God. I think America has a very big future but in spite of what is said to the contrary, it has a dismal future if it swears by Mammon. Mammon has never been known to be a friend of any of us to the last. He is always a false friend.

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<sup>625</sup> *Harijan*, November 3, 1946; *Collected Works*, Volume 86, pages 10-11

## GLOSSARY

*agiari* - Parsi fire temple

*ahimsa* - non-violence

*ashram* - hermitage

*ashramite* - inmate of *ashram*

*bapu* - father. (Gandhiji was addressed as *bapu* by members of his *ashram*).

*bawi* - female mendicant

*begar* - forced labour

*behn* - sister (a polite way of addressing a woman)

*bhai* - brother (a polite way of addressing a man)

*Bhagavad Gita* - Song of the Lord, part of *Maharabharata*.

Translated by Edwin Arnold as "Song Celestial."

*bhakhari* - home-made wheat bread

*chapati* - flat bread made of wheat flour

*chaprasi* - servant

*charkha* - spinning wheel

*crore* - ten million

*dal* - lentil

*Deenabandhu* - Friend of the lowly. (C.F. Andrews was called *Deenabandhu*).

*gadiwala* - cart driver

*Gita* - See *Bhagavad Gita*

*goor* - brown sugar

*Goseva Sangh* - Cow Protection Society

*guru* - teacher, especially spiritual

*Gurudev* - Gandhiji referred to Rabindranath Tagore, poet and founder of Santiniketan, as *Gurudev*.

*harijans* - people of God (the name used by Gandhiji for people of the caste of "untouchables").

*Harijan Sevak Sangh* - Servants of Untouchables Society

*ji* - suffix of respect

*karma* - action

*khaddar* - handspun and handwoven cloth

*khadi* - same as *khaddar*

*Mahabharata* - a Hindu epic



*mandir* - temple. (Gandhiji called Yeravda Central Prison the "Yeravda *Mandir*").

*Navajivan* - New Life; name of Gandhiji's Gujarati weekly

*panchayat* - village council

*ragi* - a millet

*Rajas, Tamas and Satva* - qualities which belong to living beings. *Rajas* is the quality of action; *tamas* ignorance, sluggishness and inaction; and *satva* goodness, virtue and excellence.

*Ramayana* - a Hindu epic

*Sanatana Dharma Sabha* - Association of eternal moral law

*sanatani* Hindu - orthodox Hindu

*sannyasin* - an ascetic

*satyagraha* - literally, standing firm for truth; non-violent resistance to evil

*Satyagraha Ashram* - Gandhiji's *ashram* at Sabarmati, Ahmedabad

*satyagrahi* - non-violent resister

*Seth, Sheth* - suffix for a merchant or trader

*Srimati* - Mrs.

*swadeshi* - made in one's own country. (The *Swadeshi* movement called for the boycott of foreign goods, especially cloth).

*swaraj, swarajya* - self-rule, independence

*takli* - a portable contrivance for spinning

*tapasya* - penance

*Upanishads* - Hindu sacred texts which form the final part of the *Vedas*

*zamindar* - landlord