THE
COLLECTED
WORKS
OF
MAHATMA
GANDHI

VOLUME EIGHTY-TWO

THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
205. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,
December 1, 1945

He began by referring to his attempts made since 1914, when he was in England to learn Bengali. He made some progress in it, though he could not keep up his Bengali studies. It was his ambition to be able to speak to the people of Bengal in Bengali so that he might be able to penetrate into their hearts. He was sorry he could not do so on the present occasion. He was also of the opinion that no Indian could call himself a full-fledged citizen of India unless he could speak to the people of the various provinces in their own tongues. Failing this proficiency in the different languages it was the duty of every Indian to learn at least Hindustani which alone could be the rashtrabhasha\(^1\) of India.

He then proceeded to give the etiology of his present visit to Bengal. Ever since his release from prison, he had been anxious to visit Bengal but he could not do so owing to ill-health. Moreover, he did not want to visit Bengal unless he was sure that the authorities would welcome his visit and that there would be no restrictions on his movements. He was not prepared to submit to any restrictive orders on the one hand or on the other to offer civil disobedience against such orders under conditions now prevailing in the country. Even after the way for his visit to Bengal was clear it had to be postponed for several months on account of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who was in need of nature cure treatment and needed his (Gandhiji's) presence by his side. He was glad, however, that after all he had been able to come to Bengal.

Explaining next the object of his visit, Gandhiji said that it was purely to offer whatever consolation his presence in their midst could give to the victims of Bengal famine and to do whatever he could to relieve their distress. He had not come to take part in the politics of the province or in the forthcoming elections. In fact, as they all knew, he took very little interest in these things. Where his chief interest lay was too well known to need reiteration.

Mahatmaji then concluded after appealing to the people assembled to contribute their mite to the Harijan Fund as a token of their sympathy with the cause of the abolition of untouchability as also to ameliorate the condition of Harijans. Incidentally he mentioned that in this way he had

\(^1\) National language
collected 2 lakhs of rupees for the Harijans since his release. The proceeds of the autograph fees that he charged were earmarked for the Harijan Fund. Anyone by paying a fee of Rs. 5 could have his autograph. There could be no exemption on the ground of poverty because according to him the autograph-hunting was essentially a rich-man’s hobby. Anyway, there was none poorer than the Harijans and consequently none had a right to cheat the Harijans out of the autograph fees which had been premortgaged to them.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 2-12-1945*

**206. DISCUSSION WITH IAN STEPHENS**

**SODEPUR,**

*[On or after December 1, 1945]*

GANDHIJİ: Arguing on those lines, you will be able to understand the prejudice in South Africa too. The root cause—a false notion of preservation of the race and economic status—is common to both. The difference is only one of degree. If you apply concrete facts to individual cases it is half a dozen of one and six of the other. It is on a par with the racial prejudice here.

IAN STEPHENS: Oh, no. Here it is much less.

G: Yes, owing to the vast disparity in numbers. But take the case of the individual who actually suffers. His experience does not differ from that of the coloured men in South Africa or America.

I. S: We, Englishmen are apt to forget that side of the question.

G: Habit becomes second nature. There may he no deliberate intention either.

I. S: In the Punjab and Delhi races mix much more freely than elsewhere. Was that due to the fact that the disparity in numbers was comparatively less there?

Gandhiji was of opinion that the contrast presented by Bengal in this respect was perhaps due to the violent spirit having manifested itself there on a much larger scale than in Delhi or in the Punjab. The Punjab did

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1 This report by Pyarelal appeared under the title “With an English Friend”. Ian Stephens, a correspondent of *The Statesman*, Calcutta, was of the opinion that colour bar and racial segregation was at its worst in South Africa, and did not agree with Gandhiji that it was equally bad in America.

2 Gandhiji reached Sodepur on December 1, 1945.
show the violent spirit in some measure. But it was not a patch upon Bengal. The daring of the Chittagong Armoury Raid was neither attempted nor duplicated anywhere else.

1. s. I have often thought over it, and it has always baffled me how these Bengali young men, so gentle by nature, have drifted into violence.

G. I have solved it for myself. They feel they have been unjustly libelled in the past. Lord Curzon harped on their softness. It soured them. So they say, ‘We may not be wealthy, but surely we are not effeminate.’ So they adopted this devious method and surpassed every other province in daring. They defied death, defied poverty and even public opinion. I have discussed this question of violence threadbare with so many terrorists and anarchists. It is terrible whether the Arab does it or the Jew. It is a bad outlook for the world if this spirit of violence takes hold of the mass mind. Ultimately in destroying itself it destroys the race.

1. s. And it has spread all over the world for the last two or three years.

G. Look at the latest ukase of Gen. MacArthur. He has divided the entire Japanese nation into two categories, those whom he calls war criminals and those who do not come under that label. As I read it, it struck me that this was not the best way to introduce democracy among the Japanese—a race so proud, so sensitive, so highly organized along Western lines. They will do what the Italians did in Garibaldi’s time on a much larger scale. You cannot deal with the human race on these lines. Whatever happens in one part of the world will affect the other parts. The world has so shrunk.

This evoked from the friend the observation that he did not think that the world had deteriorated so much theoretically as it might have during the last three years. Gandhiji agreed with him though his grounds, he remarked, were different.

1. s. My reason for that belief is that in spite of the fact that suffering, for instance in Indonesia and elsewhere, has been appalling during the last three years, the human mind has not been equally warped.

G. My hope is based on a detached view of the situation. Whilst in detention in the Aga Khan Palace I had leisure to read and think. What struck me was that whilst practice

¹ Douglas MacArthur, U. S. Army General; Commander of the occupation forces in Japan after the War
showed deterioration, the mind of man had very much progressed. Practice has not been able to keep pace with the mind. Man has begun to say, 'This is wrong, that is wrong.' Whereas previously he justified his conduct, he now no longer justifies his own or his neighbour's. He wants to set right the wrong but does not know that his own practice fails him. The contradiction between his thought and conduct fetters him. His conduct is not governed by logic. Then, of course, there is my standing prediction in favour of non-violence that it will prevail —whatever man may or may not do. That keeps my optimism alive. Extensive personal experience too confirms my belief that non-violence is self-acting. It will have its way and overcome all obstacles irrespective of the shortcomings of the instruments. It makes no difference how we arrive at our conclusion, but it keeps us fresh and green.

The conversation next turned upon Gandhiji's pet theme of living up to 125 years. Gandhiji's visitor wanted to know how he managed to keep physically fit. Gandhiji replied that outwardly he owed his physical fitness to strict adherence to regular habits in eating, drinking and sleeping and to his partiality for nature cure principles which he had adopted strictly in life since 1901. Reminiscently he described how up till 1901 he used the medicine bottle but had almost thrown it away and for forty-five years he had lived more or less according to nature cure principles.

G. But, in a still greater measure, it is due to the practice of detachment of mind. By detachment I mean that you must not worry whether the desired result follows from your action or not, so long as your motive is pure, your means correct. Really, it means that things will come right in the end if you take care of the means and leave the rest to Him.

He based his belief on the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita which he had called his "dictionary of action".

The friend remarked on the close analogy between the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita and the thesis presented in Aldous Huxley's1 Ends and Means. The mention of Aldous Huxley's name revived in Gandhiji's mind memories of old days about Aldous Huxley's father2 whose writings he used to read during his student days in London in 1889.

I. S. But there is a physical side all the same?

1 British novelist and critic; in later life became increasingly drawn to Hindu philosophy.

2 Gandhiji presumably has in mind T. H. Huxley, biologist and writer, who was, however, the grandfather of Aldous.
g. Yes, only I attach greater importance to the mental. What you think you become. Thought is never complete unless it finds expression in action and action limits your thought. It is only when there is a perfect accord between the two that there is full, natural life.

1. s. But what about the legacy of one’s past life? It cannot be written off the balance-sheet.

G. I have my answer for that. If my past conduct does not warrant the full span of life, no matter however correct my present life may be, I can still counteract the effect of past mistakes by attaining complete detachment between the mind and the body. Detachment enables one to overcome the effects of past faulty practice as well as handicaps of heredity and environment. Normally speaking, every deviation from the rule of nature, whether ignorant or wilful, e.g., anger, ill-temper, impatience, errors in conjugal life, exacts its toll. But there is this promise that if you have arrived at complete detachment you can rub out all these. “Except ye be born again, ye cannot have everlasting life.” Conversely, you can have everlasting life if you are “born again”. There is no hurdle placed before death. You can turn over a new leaf and begin life anew here and now; the past will not disturb its tenor provided you have completely severed yourself from it and its legacy by the axe of detachment.

On the previous occasion when this friend had visited Gandhiji, Gandhiji had done all the talking and the friend had listened. This time Gandhiji had intended that he would only speak in answer to questions and let the friend do the talking but the friend again had the better of his resolve. Gandhiji remarked, discomfited, at the end of their talk:

I admit defeat. After all you are a practised journalist.

1. s. I am only human.

Harijan, 7-4-1946
207. DISCUSSION WITH MEMBER OF FRIENDS AMBULANCE UNIT

CALCUTTA,
[On or after December 1, 1945]

E. A. U. MEMBER: However much we may want to be friendly the past tradition clings round your neck and drives you to desperation. It seems to me, that there is hardly any hope of giving to a young Bengali student an idea of the better side of Englishmen unless perhaps he is transferred to England. The atmosphere in India is so poisoned that I wonder if it would not be better for Englishmen not to attempt to come to work in India just now but to wait for better times.

GANDHIJI: Any friend, who is a real friend, and who comes in a spirit of service, not as a superior, is bound to be welcome. India, when she has come into her own will need all such assistance. The distrust of Englishmen, as you say, is there. It won't disappear even by transporting Indian students to England. You have got to understand it and live it down. It has its roots in history. The late Charlie Andrews and I were bed-fellows. There were scarcely a thought in our mind which we did not share. He even adopted Indian dress though sometimes with grotesque results. But even he could not escape suspicion. He was even dubbed "a spy". His was a very sensitive spirit. He suffered unspeakable anguish under these unmerited attacks and I was hard put to it to dispel the baseless distrust. 'If he is a spy, I am a spy,' I said to these critics. In the end C. F. A.'s spirit triumphed.

Pearson³ was C. F. Andrews' disciple and friend. He too came in for his share of distrust. Then there is Stocks⁴. "If

¹A war-time organization, begun in 1914, it was reorganized in 1939 to give those with pacifist views an opportunity to serve the suffering and the distressed. It came to India in 1942 after the Midnapore cyclone and again in 1943 during the Bengal famine. Its presence in 1945 was due to widespread famine conditions all over India. This appeared under the title "An Englishman's Difficulty" by Pyarelal.
²Gandhiji reached Calcutta on December 1.
³W. W. Pearson, a British missionary worker in Bengal and for some time a teacher in Santiniketan
⁴Samuel Stokes, a British missionary and an associate of C. F. Andrews. He was a member of the Congress and courted arrest in 1920; became a
I am to serve India I must become an Indian,” he said to himself and married a Christian Rajput. He was boycotted by the Rajputs. The Government distrusted him too in the beginning. But he has lived down the distrust of both the Government and Indians.

If then, even a C. F. Andrews and a Stokes and others had to labour under distrust, for you to be distrusted may not be wondered at. So far Indians have known Englishmen only as members of the ruling race—supercilious when they were not patronizing. The man in the street makes no distinction between such an Englishman and a good, humble European, between the Empire-builder Englishman of the old type that he has known and the new type that is now coming into being, burning to make reparation for what his forefathers did. Therefore, if one has not got the fire of sacrifice in him I would say to him: ‘Do not come to India just now.’ But if you are cast in a heroic mould there will be no difficulty. You will in the end be taken at your worth if you persevere. Anyway those of you who are here have no reason for going back.

The same friend was able to elicit from Gandhiji what he considered to be the weak spots in the Indusco Plan of Chinese co-operatives. Firstly, the Indusco was a product of abnormal times. Its production was war-time and war-purposes production stimulated by the Japanese blockade. Secondly, it was organized by foreign missionary enterprise and their work was tainted by the proselytization motive.

g. If you try to merely copy the Chinese co-operatives in India you will end in miserable failure. Here you have to work among Indian Christians. The temperament is different, the character is different, and the circumstances are different. Co-operation which is rooted in the soil always works. You have therefore to find out for yourself what type of co-operative is best suited to the Indian temperament and soil. Even those who have become converts to orthodox Christianity are today veering round.

m. By “veering round” you mean going back?

g. Yes, I mean going back to real Christianity, to Christ, not Western Christianity. They are beginning to realize that Jesus was an Asiatic. Having seen this they are reading their Bible through Indian eyes. You should study the meaning of Indian Christianity through J. C. Kumarappā’s book Practice and Precepts of Jesus.

Harijan, 31-3-1946

Hindu to deliver the message of Jesus to the Hindus; changed his name to Satyanand, and took up work for the uplift of the Hill tribes at Kotgarh.
208. MESSAGE ON RAJENDRA PRASAD’S BIRTHDAY

[December 2, 1945]

Rajendra Prasad is a true patriot. Long live Rajendra Prasad.

The Hindu, 4-12-1945

209. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,
December 2, 1945

Addressing the congregation after the prayer Gandhiji said he would like to thank them and congratulate them because they had maintained silence and were peaceful during the prayer. The gathering of this evening was very big indeed. On Saturday the prayer meeting was less crowded. On both the days they had shown remarkable discipline. So he would thank them and hope they would continue to behave calmly in future also.

The prayer song which was sung this evening had a special significance. Gandhiji said it was very appropriate in the conditions obtaining at present. The song was also sung in a very melodious tune.

In the song there was an appeal to God to lead humanity from darkness to light. It said the humanity was engulfed in thickening darkness and had lost vision. So they were praying to God to give them strength and lead them to light.

The import of the song was that they must be freed from all bondage and attain enlightenment. The freedom from bondage also included the winning of swaraj. India wanted release from the bondage.

We are all engulfed in darkness today. Not only India but the world also is engulfed in darkness. India wants peace. So also does the entire world. We are all travellers groping in that thickening darkness. We are all blind and cannot feel the absence of light.

The prayer we have offered is the most important thing of this evening. I was in South Africa when I used to pray privately.

1 The news report which carried the item was dated December 2, and was exclusively published in Advance on the occasion of Rajendra Prasad’s 61st birthday.
When I returned to India I saw the necessity of holding mass prayers. I have been holding mass prayers since then. There is of course the necessity of individual praying in his own way.

Our prayer today to God is to lead us from darkness to light, from untruth to truth, and let us have peace—peace not only for India but for the entire world.

Gandhiji said he did not like the shouting of slogans. The shouting of slogans disturbed the peaceful atmosphere which was the condition prerequisite to holding prayer. So he would request them not to disturb the peaceful atmosphere of the place by shouting slogans.

In conclusion, Gandhiji asked the gathering to remove untouchability from their midst. Untouchability was a slur on humanity.

Gandhiji then requested those who had assembled to contribute their mite to the Harijan Fund.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 3-12-1945*

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210. **SPEECH AFTER PRAYER MEETING**

*Sodepur,*

*December 2, 1945*

I know your love for me. I also want to love you. I also want to win your heart. But that I want to achieve through work. Do not ask for my *darshan* or want to touch my feet. I am not God; I am a human being. I am an old man and my capacity to stand the strain is limited. If I am to appear before you again and again my strength will be exhausted. And I will not be able to do work.

So my request to you is that you should not ask for my *darshan* or request me to stand before you so that you may touch my feet. If you come at prayer time you will have my *darshan*. But I want to impress upon you that I like peace. I do not like shouting of slogans or claps. They irritate me. If you love me you will not do so.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 3-12-1945*

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1 The source had reported that this was in response to requests from a large number of people who arrived at the Ashram after the prayer was over. Gandhiji returned to the lawn and spoke to them for a few minutes.
211. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SODEPUR,
December 3, 1945

CHI. AMRIT,

Just got yours (at 11.45). The mail closes at noon. You may take all the time you need, whether at Delhi or Simla. Come when you can. I am in Calcutta till 10th at the least. Then is all uncertain.

Pyarelal is well and working. Sushila is in Sevagram looking after Madalasa. She is due here on 5th.

All well.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4172. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7808

212. LETTER TO NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE

SODEPUR,
December 3, 1945

DEAR NIRMAL BABU¹,

Your sweet letter. You will do exactly as you please.

In order to interpret my writings, you should be for some time in Wardha when it is fairly cool.

Your amoebiasis may not be removed but can certainly be brought under control by nature cure methods. I suggest your coming to the clinic in Poona when I am there. From 1st January it will be for the poor.

Yours,

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 10511

¹ Professor of geography and anthropology, Calcutta University. He first met Gandhiji in 1934 at Wardha and thereafter devoted himself to study and propagation of his ideas.
213. SILENCE DAY NOTE TO R. G. CASEY

[December 3, 1945]¹

Do you want me to come tomorrow? 7.30 is better for me, but I could easily come at 7 p.m. if that is better for you.

I have brought a lot of literature for you that I promised yesterday—of this more tomorrow.

From a photostat: G.N. 809; also G.N. 810

214. LETTER TO ARUNA ASAF ALI

SODEPUR,
December 3, 1945

CHI. ARUNA²,

I have read your letter carefully. How I wish I could meet you openly and have you with me for a few days. I love you too dearly to talk to you through letter-writing. Know that I have been silent not through indifference but by design. I am trying to reach the truth. You are helping me. Go on doing it. You can help me much more by appreciating than following my advice.

For the present no more.

Hope you are well.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ The source carries the following note by Casey, then Governor of Bengal: "Notes passed to me by M.K. Gandhi during our 'talk' on December 3, 1945—one of his silence days—during which I talked to him for 1½ hours; he said nothing."

² Wife of Asaf Ali, a Congress leader. She was a member of the Congress Socialist Party and had played a prominent part in the Quit India movement in 1942, ever since when she had continued to work underground.
215. LET TER TO NARGIS CAPTAIN

SODEPUR, CALCUTTA,
December 3, 1945

DEAR SISTER,¹

Just a line to thank you for your note. Of course you will point out the things you mention, when we meet. I have to work double speed. But I am so far well. I did read Jh’s words. Love to you two.

BAPU

SMT. NARGISBEHN CAPTAIN
DUNLAVIN LODGE
POONA 5

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

216. LETTER TO SARAT CHANDRA BOSE

SODEPUR,
December 3, 1945

MY DEAR SARAT,

Whilst writing this I am on my back with mud-pack on the abdomen.

Nathalal saw me too. I like your reply to him. But we must talk more when you are free.

Please don’t ask me to come to your place for Gita’s² wedding. She saw me yesterday. She has grown. You know how my views have grown about marriages. Whether I am present or not Gita and her husband (to be) have my blessings. (Here I went off to sleep.)

Of course I have to come to your house, the old house, to Mona³ and the rest of the Deshabandhu⁴ family. You must

¹ The superscription is in Gujarati.
² Addressee’s daughter
⁴ C. R. Das
tell me how and when. It must be after the Working Committee meeting\(^1\).

Love.

BAPU

SHRI SARAT CHANDRA BOSE
1 WOODBURN PARK
CALCUTTA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

217. LETTER TO KRISHNAVARMA

SODEPUR,
December 4, 1945

BHAI KRISHNAVARMA,

I have your letter. The charge against you is that you are hypocritical and given to falsehood. My own experience with you is the opposite, but nevertheless you are thoughtless and impatient and your thinking is not consistent. That is why your work does not shine. I have already told you that if you cannot accommodate more people in a hygienic way have only one. If I send someone from here, my fear is you will not be able to put up with him. So I feel you should do what I say. If you insist I may think of sending someone but if you do you may have to repent it later.

DR. KRISHNAVARMA
NATURE CURE HOSPITAL
MALAD, BOMBAY

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

\(^1\) To be held in Calcutta from 7th to 11th December

82-11
218. LETTER TO VALLABHRAM VAIDYA

SODEPUR,
December 4, 1945

BHAJ VALLABHRAM,

I have your letter. After I return to Sevagram and settle down there you may certainly come if you wish.

Maybe you are not acquainted with my views as they have progressed. They were of course implicit in all my writings but of late they have become more explicit. I have no longer any interest in marriages, whether within the caste, inter-caste or even interprovincial. Therefore, so far as possible, I do not say anything anywhere on the subject of marriages. As it is I hardly ever attended any and now I have firmly stopped attending them altogether. What I believe is that if we want to preserve whatever is good in varnasrama every Hindu has to become not only a Shudra but an atishudra, and regard himself as such. And as a true indication of it marriages should really take place only between atishudras and the so-called other varnas. These marriages also should be not for the sake of indulgence but so as to observe restraint and keeping in mind the restrictions it implies.

Now I can send my blessings to Chi. Ramakant and Chi. Tara. May they be happy, live in restraint and may their alliance be doubly devoted to service. Often after a marriage instead of one sevak multiplying into two both the parties drop out of service. This is my experience. There are exceptions, and may this union be one such. To that end pure restraint on your part will prove helpful to them in every field.

The Medical Board has not been lax; it has to do work that is vast in scope. Besides, they are contemplating a co-ordination of the various systems of medicine; so the matter it seems will take some time. Let me also add that although I have a great regard for Ayurveda my experience with those practising it has not been very good. But, at the moment this is beside the point. We shall discuss this further when you can find time to come over.

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

1 The lowest among the shudras
219. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

December 3, 1945

DAUGHTER AMTUL SALAAM,

You have fallen ill. It should not have happened. What you say is correct. Do what you think is proper. It will be all right if you go to different villages.

Do not worry about me. God will keep me fit as long as He will. You may come whenever you get an opportunity. You had better not come if there is no particular business.

There is nothing more to write. I am writing this at night.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 540

220. LETTER TO SAILEN CHATTERJEE

SODEPUR,
December 4, 1945

BHAI SAILEN

It is thought, and it has been my experience, that through the power of prayer, heart-felt prayer, one can achieve what cannot be achieved by any other power. Swaraj is a very small thing. But prayer should not be recited mechanically. True prayer transforms the life of a man.

Your second question displays sheer ignorance on your part. When did I say that I would live up to 125 years? If I can be so arrogant I shall be God as the questioner says. On the contrary I do not know whether I shall be able to take the next breath. What I have said is that I want to live for 125 years while rendering service. And I have also said that all should aspire to that end. We can only wish. I am an humble devotee of God.

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal
Gandhiji explained that the real purpose of the prayer could not be fulfilled unless the congregation became calm and quiet.

I have just seen that a crowd of people have entered the prayer ground after we have finished the prayer. I must remind you all that the prayer begins punctually at 5 p. m. (Bengal Time). Those who want to join the prayer must reach the place earlier.

Proceeding, Gandhiji said that he was happy that such a big gathering attended his prayer. He was also happy that those who had unfortunately come late had imbibed the mass feeling and stood at the edge of the congregation and listened to what he had to say very calmly and quietly. Even though they could not take part in the prayer they were very silent. That attitude, said Gandhiji, was what the prayer intended to teach the average man. It was called self-control and was a great factor of human life. For the last sixteen years he had practised it. Whenever he was late in attending any meeting or function he decided better not to go at all as otherwise he was sure to disturb others. When placed in such a position he requested friends to excuse his inability to comply with their requests for attending the meeting. He would strongly urge upon those who came to attend the prayer to learn the virtue of self-control and develop it in their lives.

During his stay in Calcutta, concluded Gandhiji, he would try to explain the social and other important aspects of self-control and prayer.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 15-12-1945

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1. According to the source the gathering included British, American and Chinese nationals as also a large number of women students.
222. LETTER TO SHANTILAL DESAI

December 5, 1945

CHI. SHANTILAL,

I have your letter. One of your notes is kept in my files so that whenever I get the time I can go through it and return it to you. The other one I have already read but I don't know where it is now. It is not lost. But I agree it should reach you at the earliest. I am sorry there has been some laxity about it but I do not know how it happened.

It is good that you gave me the information about Manibhai. I have had a talk with him. I now have my eye on him. I am very keen on engaging him in Dinshaw's clinic. I believe that the experience he will gain there will prove very useful for village work. Moreover, since he has to spend some time with me he will certainly be under my supervision from time to time and so I shall myself get better acquainted with him.

I hope you are getting on well at your end.

SHRI SHANTILAL DESAI
ANAVIL VIDYARTHI ASHRAM
NANPURA, SURAT

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

223. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

SODEPUR,

December 5, 1945

CHI. JIVANJI,

I got your letter and the cheque. It has to be considered whether we should go as far as you suggest regarding the copyright. Anybody writing to us for permission and our giving it will mean that we have read the work or got it read by someone and approve. In this connection Anand Hingorani had suggested different Boards, so that the Tamil Board would decide about the Tamil translation and the Malayalam Board would advise about the translation in that language. There would, thus, be a separate
Board for each language. We have to consider how far it would be advisable and becoming for us to bother ourselves to that extent.

There are several translations of Tolstoy’s books in the same language. All of them are not up to the mark, and the titles of the books also have been translated differently. All of them sell, but the translation which is most faithful to the original, most pains-taking and beautiful sells more than the other translations. The same has happened in the case of the Bible. The authorized version is there but there are many others in the field and their publication is not prohibited. Every translation has its own circle of readers.

You have raised the question of the Autobiography. A translation has been brought out by one Tamil publisher and now this is the second. How would we know which of the two is really good? Or would it be advisable to stop other translations from being published? I do not see much benefit in that. Even when we decided to claim copyright, I did not go as far as that. This matter cannot be looked at from a purely legal point of view, nor from a purely financial one. We should look at it wholly from a moral and practical point of view. And looking at it thus I feel that we should permit the person who has written to us to publish the translation. I have not replied to him, however. Consult all the others and discuss the matter with them and suggest whatever reply you think should be given. I will think over it and then send a reply to the man.

Blessings from
Bapu

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9959. Also G.W. 6933. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

224. LETTER TO SONAVANE

SODEPUR,
December 5, 1945

Bhai Sonavane,

I have your letter. It is good that you wrote. I hope that your legal practice will flourish. I very much like your idea of not going into the Assembly.

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal
225. **SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING**

**SODEPUR,**
**December 5, 1945**

Gandhiji spoke about the technique and purpose of prayer which was to commune with the inner self by the individual. To the extent this communion was achieved the individual man got a fresh lease of spiritual enlightenment to sustain one for the next 24 hours.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 6-12-1945


226. **LETTER TO R. G. CASEY**

**SODEPUR,**
**December 6, 1945**

**DEAR FRIEND,**

As you were eager to have a copy of the *Constructive Programme*\(^1\), I had procured a copy. But today's post brought me a proof copy of the revised edition. I send it for your perusal. You will read what you like. The copy need not be returned to me.\(^2\)

The other things I am trying to collect as fast as possible in the midst of the overwhelming work before me.

May I repeat the pleasure it gave me to meet you and Mrs. Casey.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

**H. E. THE GOVERNOR OF BENGAL**

**CALCUTTA**

From a photostat: G.N. 811; also *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government 1944-47*, p. 105

\(^1\) *Vide* Vol. LXXV, pp. 146-66.

\(^2\) The addressee in his letter of December 9, 1945, said that he entirely agreed with Gandhiji’s views on home-spinning and weaving but he was against each cultivator growing his own cotton as that would reduce the already very small areas for the growing of his main crop—paddy. Further, his scheme would not free cultivators from the thraldom of monsoon or other disabilities arising out of lack of irrigation.
227. LETTER TO MONA

SODEPUR,
	December 6, 1945

MY DEAR BABY,

Your sweet letter. I was pleased to see your big family. Only I was too busy to play with them to my heart's content.
If you have not come up to your promise, try again.
You need not trouble to come, I shall not misunderstand your absence.
Love to you all.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

228. LETTER TO A. K. M. ZAKARIAH

SODEPUR,
	December 6, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

I was glad to see yours of 3rd inst. to Shri Pyarelal. You can come any day just before 5.15 p.m. You will forgive me if I am called away for work at the time.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

JANAB A. K. M. ZAKARIAH
68 SYED AMEER ALI AVENUE
CALCUTTA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal
229. LETTER TO THE AGA KHAN

KHALI PRATISHTHAN,
SODEPUR (NR. CALCUTTA),
December 6, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

I write this about the little crematorium on your ground. You know perhaps that when I was a prisoner in the Aga Khan Palace in Yerawda the ashes of Mahadev Desai first and then of my wife were buried in your compound. The remains were cremated there at the Government's instance. They would not let me cremate them outside at the usual crematorium. Through Government's good grace and your people's forbearance, friends have been able to have access to the above crematorium. I have been pleading with the Government that they acquire the little plot and some right of way for devotees. Now that you are in India, may I look to you to facilitate my request in the manner you think proper?

I hope you are keeping well and that we shall meet before you leave India again.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

H. H. THE AGA KHAN

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

230. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR N. MORARJEE

SODEPUR,
December 6, 1945

CHI. SHANTIKUMAR,

I have just been able to reach your letter. A letter to the Aga Khan is enclosed.¹ Read it. If you approve of it, send it on to him. If you wish, you may show it to Sir Purushottamdas².

Blessings to you both from BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4806. Courtesy: Shantikumar N. Morarjee

¹ Vide the preceding item.
² Purushottamdas Thakurdas
231. LETTER TO MADALASA

SODEPUR,
December 6, 1945

MADALASA,

You want no reply, but I do wish to reply. You have had
fever again. I do not like it at all. Make a practice of lying in
the sun. You may, if you like, increase the duration gradually.
Cover up the body to start with and, as you feel warmer,
remove the covering gradually till finally you are stripped of all
clothing. This will not only cure the chest complaint but I am
sure make the whole body perfectly healthy.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Panchaen Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 327

232. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SODEPUR,
December 6, 1945

MUNNALAL,

I got your two letters. If other people's advice differs from
mine, follow mine. I assume that you have gone to Poona and
am accordingly addressing this letter there.

Why should you feel concerned over anything that you may
hear? Remain engrossed in your work and don't speak except
when absolutely necessary. You should attend to only three duties
there and discharge them to the best of your ability: writing the
accounts, doing the marketing and maintaining cleanliness. In
doing the last you may occasionally have to express your opinion,
but in doing the other two things you need speak nothing. If
you keep up courage and faith, your work is bound to win
appreciation. But even if it does not, what does it matter?

170
LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

Kanchan seems to be keeping good health. I get very little time to talk to her. She works and remains cheerful. I have torn up your letter.

Blessings from Bapu

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8615. Also C.W. 7197. Courtesy: Munnaalal G. Shah

233. LETTER TO BALBHADRA

SODEPUR,
December 6, 1945

Bhai Balbhadra,

I have your letter. Since Satyawati1 has passed away, I should certainly like to be better acquainted with you.

Shri Balbhadraji
6 Pyarelal Building
Kashmere Gate, Delhi

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

234. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SODEPUR,
December 6, 1945

Chhi. Krishnachandra,

1. With regard to Om Prakashji I think there is no need for an M. A. degree. Of course he must improve his knowledge of Urdu and achieve proficiency in it. But how will a degree help in that? If he wishes to go home when his brother sends for him, he can certainly go.

2. I had entrusted the sadhu to Aryanayakum’s charge because I felt I should not burden you with the responsibility of a case which needs careful [medical] attention. Let him go if he wishes to. If he stays he has to abide by all the rules. Cleaning of lavatories is the first duty. He should not be a burden in any way. From what Kanu tells me he seems to be a totally useless man.

As for new Sevagram only what is deemed proper should be done. In this connection, only what Jajuji says should be done.

1 Grand-daughter of Swami Shraddhanand
Read the letter to Sankaran which is enclosed herewith. That includes my reply regarding his sister and his son.

Any girl who wishes to learn only Hindi can easily learn it on her own. But we cannot provide facilities for teaching only Hindi. Provision can be made for both the scripts. This point is perfectly intelligible. Try to convince them by appealing to their reason. We may not compel anyone to learn both the scripts, but let us provide facilities for those who wish to learn both the scripts.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4835

235. LETTER TO V. A. SUNDARAM

SODEPUR,
December 6, 1945

CHI. SUNDARAM,

I have your letter. I do not take the least interest in the Assembly elections. I am forwarding your letter to Pantji\(^1\). I remember Suresh very well. I am surprised that even a man like Suresh wants to enter the Assembly.

Blessings from

BAPU\(^2\)

SHRI V. SUNDARAM
KRISHNA KUTIR
BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY
BANARAS

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 2895. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

236. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING\(^3\)

SODEPUR,
December 6, 1945

In his introductory speech Gandhiji referred to the incident which took place at Sodepur Railway Station when one person either in attempting

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\(^1\) Govind Ballabh Pant

\(^2\) The subscription is in Tamil.

\(^3\) The meeting was also attended by Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Jawaharlal Nehru.
to board a running train which was not scheduled to stop at Sodepur or for some such reason was run over and killed.

They might think that when there were crores of Indians what did it matter if one met with death in such circumstances. But that was a totally wrong view. And if they allowed themselves to think in that way they would not be able to build up a brotherhood in India and secure her salvation. They must instead think that the person who met his death the other day was one of them and must feel sorry for his tragic end.

Perhaps, said Gandhiji, he himself was partly responsible for his death for the deceased went there either to see him or to attend the prayer. The congregation too was partly responsible because after the prayer was over they rushed to the Station, vied with each other to catch the train and thereby created a situation which caused this death. They, therefore, should henceforth take the vow with him not to create any such situation in future which might cause the death of a fellow-brother.

All this happened because they were not disciplined. The prayer was intended to confer upon man that discipline which he required so urgently. If they were mentally disciplined through the practice of prayer they would no more commit the mistake they committed the other day.

If by prayer they could be mentally disciplined, stated Gandhiji, they would attain a state which was nobler and higher than even the salvation of India.

Perhaps, freedom of India could be maintained with the help of pistols or swords. But were those weapons of any value if their votaries were not disciplined? Therefore whether a country was wedded to violence or non-violence discipline was of paramount importance to all men.

Without discipline it was difficult to attain swaraj as he had stated two days ago.

If they practised prayer with all concentration they would find that all their difficulties would smoothen.

Concluding, Gandhiji referred to an incident in South Africa where a ship came upon a rock and was about to sink. Its Captain was a strong-willed and disciplined man. He preserved the calm of his mind and realized that he could not save all lives. He, therefore, secured the safety of as many men as he could and then went down with a hymn to God on his lips alone with the sinking ship. If he was not a disciplined man, said Gandhiji, he could not have saved the lives of the many passengers of the ship whom he brought to safety. What was, therefore, urgently required of all was discipline and this all men could acquire by actively participating in prayer.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 7-12-1945
237. *TELEGRAM TO THE AGA KHAN*

**SODEPUR,**

*December 7, 1945*

**H. H. Agakhan**

**BOMBAY**

*Many thanks your wire. Would love to meet you and learn from you way to solution communal problem. Maulana is ill but at work. Expecting to reach Wardha February. Writing.*

**Gandhi**

*From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal*

238. *LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI*

**SODEPUR,**

*December 7, 1945*

*Ghi. Jivani,*

I got your proof-copy of the pamphlet on constructive work yesterday. I wanted to use that copy here and did so. But I had already gone through the proof earlier. As there is no letter accompanying it, I don’t quite understand why you have sent it. You have given a heading to my preface but there is no heading on the page on which the pamphlet itself begins. I infer from this that final touches still remain to be given to the printing. I have of course asked Pyarelalji to write to you about this, but I think it is better to dictate this just now in the morning.

I have the impression that I have already written to you about the cover. My suggestion is that the eighteen headings which you have given in the pamphlet should be reproduced on the cover in their proper order, with the page number given against each. This will help the reader and we shall be able to show what topics have been covered. The topics can also be shown on the cover in the form of a circle. We can have a
drawing of the spinning-wheel in the centre and the headings can be printed round it like the planets round the sun. There is one difficulty in this, of course. How can communal unity be represented as a planet? If it is so represented, my original conception would be vitiated, for the basic conception is that khadi is the chief handicraft and that the other industries take their place and revolve round khadi like planets round the sun. If now we can find a place in this scheme for Adivasis, kisans, students and communal unity, then the conception will have been worked out. It might be better, therefore, to give up the idea of the circle, or to form the circle only with khadi and cottage industries. But we need not waste any time over this, for it is essential that the pamphlet should be published as soon as possible. It is also necessary that the translations should be published simultaneously. It would, also, be good if at the end a supplementary list of other books to be read with the pamphlet are given. For example, Rajendra Babu’s book, Gulzarilal’s essay, etc. You may drop this also, if you cannot recollect the names of the books immediately. Pyarelal will most probably send you a wire today saying, “Send another copy proof.” The idea behind this is that if I have to correct the proof, the time which would be taken by an ordinary letter may be saved, for the copy which I have passed on is not likely to come back to me now.¹

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 9960. Also C.W. 6934. Courtesy : Jivanji D. Desai

239. LETTER TO JATINDAS AMIN

SODEPUR,
December 7, 1945

CHI. AMIN,

I got your letter sent with Sushila. She arrived the day before yesterday. You do not seem to have calmed down yet. You can render great service if you calm down. Take up only a little work there. If you bring credit to it, it will be greatly appreciated.

¹ This was given to R. G. Casey, the Governor of Bengal, vide p. 167.
What you write is absolutely correct. Greatness lies in becoming small and smallness in assuming greatness. We should therefore only serve by becoming as small as dust particles.

Your camera is to be sent only with somebody going there, is that not so? I am sure you are not in a hurry.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

240. LETTER TO MANORANJAN CHATTERJEE

SODEPUR,
December 7, 1945

Bhai Manoranjan Babu,

I have your wire. I am writing to Dr. Shyamaprasadji and I shall send either Dr. Sushila Nayyar or Pyarelalji there.

Yours,
M. K. Gandhi

SHRI MANORANJAN CHATTERJEE

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

241. LETTER TO SHYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE

SODEPUR,
December 7, 1945

Bhai Shyamaprasadji,

Why did you fall ill? Dr. Bidhan tells me that you do not take care of your health and that once you take up some work you never let go. This is a virtue as well as a vice. It is good when you persevere in it within a certain limit. It is bad when you go beyond the limit. I hope that, as reported in the newspapers, you will resume work after taking complete rest.

Yours,
M. K. Gandhi

SHYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE
CALCUTTA

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

1 Vide the following item.
242. LETTER TO SURENDRANATH VISHWAS

SODEPUR,
December 7, 1945

Bhai Suren Babu,

I have your informative letter. It will be useful to me.

Yours,

M. K. Gandhi

SHRI SURENDRANATH VISHWAS
1/23 Prince Gulam Mohammed Road
KALIGHAT
CALCUTTA

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

243. LETTER TO CHARUPRABHA SENGUPTA

SODEPUR,
December 7, 1
1945

Chi. Charuprabha,

These days I try to write to all Indians in the national language. How long shall we go on writing to each other in English?

I am occupied with many things up to the 10th. I don’t know how long I shall be here after that. Even then I am writing to Aruna.²


¹ A copy of the letter available in Pyarelal Papers bears the date December 8.
² Addressee’s daughter; vide the following item.
244. LETTER TO ARUNA SENGUPTA

SODEPUR,
December 7, 1945

CHI. ARUNA,

Mother writes to me that I should write to you to come here. I am busy till the 10th. I don’t know where I shall be after that. Look up the newspapers and if I am in Sodepur come any day at 5 o’clock for the prayer. I shall have a talk with you for two minutes after the prayer.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRIMATI ARUNA SENGUPTA
93/3/2 HARI GHOSH STREET
CALCUTTA


245. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

December 7, 1945

Asked whether he would like to say anything about the Congress Working Committee meeting\(^1\), Gandhiji replied:

No, I am tired.

In reply to another query Gandhiji remarked:

What can I give you? The Maulana is here. You can take whatever you like from him. They have called me here, but they have not given me any food to eat, or water to drink. And after my work has been finished they are sending me back to my place. Your food is being cooked at Maulana’s hands and he will give it to you when it is ready.

\(^1\) Held at the residence of Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress President. According to the source “Gandhiji spoke for over an hour and touched upon the political situation, the Indian National Army, changes in the Congress constitution, Congress prospects in the Central and Provincial elections and other matters. He also reported on his talks with R. G. Casey.”
While waiting for the car Gandhiji turned to Maulana Azad and remarked:

Maulana Saheb, these Press reporters and photographers are having a good time and detaining our car.

A hearty laughter followed. A Press correspondent drew Gandhiji’s attention to the announcement from New Delhi that the Viceroy had agreed to see Mahatma Gandhi. The correspondent inquired whether it suggested that Gandhiji had sought the interview.

Gandhiji replied the news had appeared in the newspapers and he declined to make any further comment.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 8-12-1945

246. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,
December 7, 1945

Gandhiji said that he noticed that the people became quiet only after he arrived at the place. That was not ideal. The place where a prayer was conducted, he said, should be considered as a temple and only in prayerful mind should they present themselves there. They should come silently and maintain calm and should leave the place in the same mood.

If, however, those who joined in the prayer would remain quiet and peaceful he would be only too glad to see the whole of Calcutta assembled there.

Proceeding, Gandhiji said that there were incorporated in the service Bengali songs as the majority of those present were Bengalees; but for the benefit of others he wished to get a booklet including all songs and other prayers printed in both Devanagari and Urdu scripts. This proposed booklet which might be priced two pice would be of permanent benefit to the readers who could then be acquainted with the texts whenever they so wished.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 9-12-1945
247. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

Camp: Khadi Pratishthan,  
Sodepur (near Calcutta),  
December 8, 1945

Dear Mr. Abell,

I have your letter of 26th November about Shri Yajee.¹ I am thankful for the considered reply. I am now trying to put myself in touch with the gentleman and see what he has to say.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.
Private Secretary to the Viceroy

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 61

248. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

Camp: Khadi Pratishthan,  
Sodepur (near Calcutta),  
December 8, 1945

Dear Mr. Abell,

I thank you for yours of 1st instant.² I shall send you in due course fuller details about Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia and have written to Shri Prabhu Dayal Vidyarthi to proceed to New Delhi and report himself.³

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 63-4

¹ The addressee had written that the allegations of Sheel Bhadra Yajee about food and inhuman living conditions given to him in the jail were all exaggerated. Vide also p. 35.
² The addressee had asked Gandhiji to send directly to the Home Member the details about Vidyarthi and Lohia.
³ A telegram was however sent on December 9. Vide also pp. 114-5.
249. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

Immediate

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,

December 8, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

I write this with the greatest hesitation. The more I see and hear, the greater is the grief over the happenings in Bengal. Here is a sample demanding immediate attention.

Satish Babu brings me the story that potato-growers cannot get seed potatoes and the planting season will be over in a week's time. Seed potatoes are there in the market under Government control. But the grower cannot get them.

There is evidently something radically wrong if the news brought by Satish Babu is true. I wonder if you can do anything. You were telling me about the clever Mr. Dey whose services you have enlisted for such matters. Can you make him over to me or some other officer who can attend to this immediate affair?

I am having this letter delivered at once. The question is small enough on the large Bengal canvas but is all in all to the poor growers whose livelihood is at stake.¹

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 813; also Gandhi’s Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 113

250. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,

December 8, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

I have just finished reading your broadcast to be delivered today. It makes interesting and informative reading. If the waters of the rivers can be captured and utilized by the people

¹ In Gandhi’s Emissary. Sudhir Ghosh writes that the Government, using emergency powers, seized whatever stocks there were with the profiteers and 250 mounds were distributed among the growers that same day.
of Bengal, instead of being wasted in the Bay, it would be a great gain. But it is a long-term proposition. The millions, meanwhile, must be taught to utilize every minute of the working hours for their own benefit. If they learn this art they will make good use of the captured waters. You have well said:

The tens of millions of farmers of Bengal are idle more than half the time. They constitute the biggest problem of unemployment in the world and the biggest waste of potential human effort.

I have provided you with a complete answer which can be worked out today with a very little outlay on the part of the Government. Regard human labour more even than money and you have an untapped and inexhaustible source of income which ever increases with use. If I had been your adviser, before the speech was printed I would have suggested the insertion immediately after, “Let us examine the problem”, of a paragraph or two, showing the way of immediate utilization of human effort. You could then have followed it up with your entrancing scheme as a long-range proposition.

Is your peroration right? You say:

The answer to my mind lies not in our politics, our religion or our individual ambition, but in the abiding factors of our environment, i.e., the land and water of Bengal.

This is a gross error of thought and consequent action, handed down from generation to generation by the British official element. Your gigantic project will come to nothing until the whole mass of the people of Bengal is interested in the Government of the province. Therefore, religion and even individual ambition are intermixed. They are as much abiding factors of our environment as the land and water of Bengal, and they are equally shifting.

You asked me for my reaction to your thoughtful speech and I have given it as it has come to me.

Very many thanks for your prompt action1 on my letter of this morning on seed potatoes.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi

From a photostat: G.N. 812; also Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 107-8

1 Vide footnote on p. 181.
DEAR FRIEND,

I had your long wire to which I have replied\(^1\) as follows:

Of course, I shall be glad to receive your suggestions. It does not matter to me in the least that in this matter you will be representing nobody but yourself. The only question is how we shall meet, when and where. I have a fixed programme for Bengal, Assam and Madras, which is calculated to take me up to almost the middle of February before I return to Sevagram. If, therefore, I know your movements about February, I shall try to see what I can do.

Maulana Saheb has interrupted his rest for the sake of the Working Committee. He is none too well, but I have no doubt he will be in communication with you himself.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

H. H. THE AGA KHAN
BOMBAY

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

\(^1\) Vide p. 174.
252. LETTER TO SATYANAND

SODEPUR,
December 8, 1945

DEAR SATYANAND BABU,

It was a delight to receive your postcard. I am doing all I am capable of for the alleviation of distress. I do not know what God will do through the effort.

I hope you are keeping well.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

253. LETTER TO NOEL BARWELL

SODEPUR,
December 8, 1945

DEAR MR. BARWELL,

I thank you for your cordial note. I am so much fixed up and so embarrassingly besieged wherever I go that I dare not promise myself the pleasure of visiting the society you mention. But I shall certainly be pleased to see you for a few minutes at this place if you and Mrs. Barwell can conveniently come. There is not a moment left open till Monday, but I shall know more fully on Monday where I stand.

Could you please phone on Tuesday next or send a messenger?

Yours sincerely,

NOEL BARWELL, ESQ.
6 MIDDLETON ST.
CALCUTTA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal
254. LETTER TO BALWANTBHAI D. DESAI

SODEPUR,
December 8, 1945

CHI. BALWANTBHAI,

I got your postcard. I am really very glad. Get rid of all doubts.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. BALWANTBHAI DADUBHAI DESAI
DARER

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

255. LETTER TO KISHORELAL G. MASHRUWALA

SODEPUR,
December 8, 1945

CHI. KISHORELAL,

I have your letter. I am certainly going to...¹ Tara. Her letter reflects her character. The work which she is doing now will not clash with the work of K.G.N.M. Trust. She will also have some help from Sushilabai.² If she would rather not stay at the Mahila Ashram, she can live in Akola and there can be no hitch even if she has to be paid a salary. I am passing on Chi. Tara’s letter to Bapa. I strongly feel that you two should go and stay at Bombay for a time.

How strange that I myself never knew that my car had met with an accident. Still it made a story. People might be escaping hundreds of such accidents daily. If the papers were to take note of them we would have to stop travelling by cars, etc. If Prabhu Dayal is there please ask him to stay on.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. KISHORELAL MASHRUWALA
SEVAGRAM

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ Omission as in the source
² Sushilabai Mukundrao Joshi, a teacher at the Mahila Ashram, Wardha
256. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

SODEPUR,
December 8, 1945

CHI. NARAHARI,

I have your letter. I think the kind of questions asked by Vishnudatta’s friend ought not to be encouraged. Had I been conducting Harijan I might occasionally answer such questions. Generally those who ask such questions are idlers.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

257. LETTER TO SHANTILAL TRIVEDI

SODEPUR,
December 8, 1945

CHI. SHANTILAL,

I have your letter. Saralabehn spoke at great length of your courage and service. I am glad.

I am pleased with what you write about wool. It may be useful if you have your experiences during the journey published. You should be concise and to the point.

SJT. SHANTILAL TRIVEDI
GOVIND NIWAS
ALMORA

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal
258. LETTER TO TARA N. MASHRUWALA

SODEPUR,
December 8, 1945

CHI. TARI,

I read your letter to Kishorelal. How long will you continue to be so diffident? Your name will be announced as an Agent. Thakkar Bapa will write to you the details. You will no doubt take all the help you can from Sushilabai. It would certainly be better if she could be spared from the Mahila Ashram and stay with you in Akola. I think her salary can be paid from the K. G. N. M. Trust. Write to me at length, or write to Bapa.

I take it you are all well. Sushilabehn and the children are not with me; Manilal is.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

259. LETTER TO ATMARAM

SODEPUR,
December 8, 1945

BHAI ATMARAM,

It is certainly a bad thing that during prayer undesirable thoughts come. But you should not worry. Take any sloka of the prayer and concentrate on it. If even this is not possible repeat Ramanama from the depths of your heart with such concentration that there is no room for any other thought. It is no doubt difficult but it can be done. Such has been my experience and the experience of other people as well. That is why Ramanama is said to be the panacea for all ills.

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal
260. LETTER TO KHUSHIRAM

SODEPUR,
December 8, 1945

BHAI KHUSHIRAM,

Bhai Jairamdas has told me how generous you are. It is
good to give whatever you want to give without laying down
unnecessary conditions. And the trust is being made. All this
makes me very happy.

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

261. LETTER TO MRS. S. R. DAS

SODEPUR,
December 8, 1945

DEAR SISTER,

I was happy to see you, but it also made me unhappy. I
was not prepared to see you in such broken health. Urmiladevi
has given me a cheque for Rs. 500. I will spend that money on
the Adivasis. You know who the Adivasis are, don’t you?
Thakkar Bapa and Khersaheb are working among the Adivasis.

Blessings from
BAPU

MRS. S. R. DAS
1 AUCKLAND PLACE
CALCUTTA

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal
262. LETTER TO UDDHAV

SODEPUR,
December 8, 1945

BHAI UDDHAV,

On the death of your brother you performed only the yarn sacrifice and no religious rites. I liked it very much. It will bring great benefit if all do so.

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

263. LETTER TO V. V. SAXENA

SODEPUR,
December 8, 1945

BHAI SAXENA,

Kishorelalji has forwarded here your letter addressed to him. I shall not be able to reach Sevagram before February in any case. It will be best if you write to me what you want to discuss with me. In this way both of us will save time—and money of course.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

PROF. V. V. SAXENA
VANASTHALI VIDYAPITH
VANASTHALI (JAIPUR)

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

264. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,
December 8, 1945

Congratulating the congregation on its maintaining an ideal condition for proceeding with the prayer straight away as soon as he reached the place, Gandhiji explained the significance and gradual development of the system of mass-prayer at Sodepur Ashram.
In 1936 about a dozen Japanese monks paid him a visit when he was staying at Maganwadi, Wardha. The leading monk suggested to him that he intended to send one or two of his disciples to the Ashram, a proposal which he approved. First came one and later on another. Of the two, one was staying with him till the war with Japan broke out and as a result he was taken into custody. This Buddhist monk used to do all the tasks he was given very punctually and methodically. In between his work he used to spend the time at his disposal in singing religious songs in the Japanese language all the time beating a little drum. This he did while taking his rounds. This was a Buddhist religious song in praise of the Infinite. Gandhiji said that he incorporated the song in his prayer. This was the first item of the prayer.

The second item of the prayer was a Sanskrit sloka and was, according to him, universal in its appeal. This was an invocation to Mother Earth, sustainer of man. If there was any objection to it on any score he would plead that he was helpless. To him all faiths were welcome. He believed in all faiths but he saw no reason to give up his own faith. Possibly, said Gandhiji, this Sanskrit sloka was symbolic, but, according to him, many noble thoughts and ideas were couched in symbolic language.

Thirdly, there was the prayer quoted from the Koran. It was incorporated at the instance of the daughter\(^1\) of Abbas Tyabji, the well-known Congress leader. She possessed a gifted voice. When on a visit to the Ashram she expressed the desire to propagate the teachings of the Koran to the Ashramites, he readily agreed. She suggested a verse from the Koran for inclusion in the prayer and it was done.

The fourth item of the prayer was taken from the Zend-Avesta written in the Pahlavi language. When he was fasting in the Aga Khan’s Palace, Dr. Gilder was there as were also Dr. Bidhan Roy and some other medical men. Dr. Gilder was a Parsi and from him the verse from the Zend-Avesta was taken and included.

So far as bhajan songs were concerned, said Gandhiji, there was no hard and fast rule. It all depended upon the time and place of the prayer. As the prayer was for the moment being held in Bengal and Bengalees in larger numbers were present, Bengali songs had to be included in the prayer daily.

It was Gandhiji’s desire to get all the prayers included in a booklet with their meanings given in Hindustani. He wished it to be printed both in Devanagari and Urdu scripts and, if possible, in Bengali too.

He asked the assembled people to follow the prayer in a proper spirit and to live up to the lofty ideals it inculcated.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 9-12-1945

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1. Raihana Tyabji
265. TELEGRAM TO PRABHU DAYAL VIDYARThI

CALCUTTA,
December 9, 1945

PRABHU DAYAL
ASHRAM
SEVAGRAM, WARDHA

PROCEED NEW DELHI AND SEE DEVDAS WHO HAS
INSTRUCTIONS.

BAPU

From a photostat G.N. 11673.

266. LETTER TO SAMARENDRANATH ROY

SODEPUR,
December 9, 1945

DEAR SAMARENDRA,

It grieved me to learn from Satis Babu that your great
father\(^1\) was no more. You may know that your father and I
were friends. We often met and exchanged views. My con-
dolences to you all.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI SAMARENDRANATH ROY
33/2 BEADEN ST.
CALCUTTA

From a copy: Pyare Lal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

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\(^1\) Kalinath Roy, editor in charge of *The Tribune*, who died on 9th
December, 1945
267. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

SODEPUR,
December 9, 1945

CHI. SUSHILA,

I got your letter. It is enough that your aspiration is pure. I don’t think there is anything special in staying with me. When you serve people wherever you are, I shall take it that you are with me. I do not feel that you are losing anything by not being with me. The air is humid and it is cold, too.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4967

268. LETTER TO SITA GANDHI

SODEPUR,
December 9, 1945

CHI. SITA,

You seem to be demanding too much. How can you expect a letter from me unless you write to me? I know that you are keeping well and are working hard. Pass the examination. Come to me when you can. I am glad to know that you do rowing. It is a good exercise. Row the boat of India, too.

Take care of your health while studying.

Blessings to all.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4968
269. LETTER TO SHRIMAN NARAYAN

SODEPUR,
December 9, 1945

CHI. SHRIMAN,

I got your letter today. I made very few changes. I am sending it back.

I am happy to hear that Madalasa is all right. Tell her that I think of her every day.

Do not give any importance to my cold. I did have a touch of it but am I not a “mahatma” after all?

Blessings from Bapu

[From Hindi]

Panchwen Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, pp. 307-8

270. LETTER TO BHAGWATI PRASAD

SODEPUR,
December 9, 1945

CHI. BHAGWATI,

How will the marriage be performed in Gondia? You have not said whether there will be any rites or it will be a civil marriage before a magistrate. I wish both of you well. I cannot have any objection to marriages which are intended not for indulgence but for observance of self-control, for enhancing the spirit of service and widening its sphere. On the contrary I encourage such marriages. And therefore I would like to have your reply to the above question.

What is the girl’s brother doing? Why doesn’t the girl write to me? What has she been doing these years since she visited the Ashram? I am keen to know all these things.

Blessings from Bapu

SHRI BHAGWATI PRASAD
C/o Deviprasad Damohe
RANGE OFFICER, CENTRAL EXCISE
GONDIA

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal
271. LETTER TO LAKSHMI NARAYAN GADODIA

Bhai Lakshmi Narayan,

I have your letter. Personally I liked it very much. I intend to show it to Sharmaji. You have not asked me not to do so. Similarly, if it becomes necessary I shall also want to show it to Jajuji and Vichitra Narayan. The whole episode seems strange to me.

I will find out more about khadi because I have received complaints from other people also in this regard.

Shri Lakshmi Narayan Gadodia
P. O. Box No. 17
Delhi

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

272. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA

Ghi. Sharma,

I had sent a copy of your letter to Gadodiaji. I have a long reply from him, saying that whatever you have said is all fabrication and where it has any truth it has never been hidden nor is it a matter of shame. I only hope that you have not done anything improper and if you have you must frankly confess it. I enclose a copy\(^1\) of Gadodiaji’s letter.

Blessings from

Bapu

Shri H. L. Sharma
Khurja

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

\(^1\) This is not traceable.
273. LETTER TO SARASWATI GADODIA

SODEPUR,
December 9, 1945

CHI. SARASWATI,

What is there in your letter that makes it confidential? Still, since you want it, I shall treat it as such. Of course I shall not take it to mean that it is to remain confidential from those who work for me. For instance, I did not read the letter, but Kanu read it out to me while I ate.

You would want me to show it to Sharmaji, wouldn't you? If I don't do that, the letter, which I like and which I find clean and pure will become useless. Even then I shall wait for your reply. My advice is that not only the above-mentioned letter but anything we do or write should not be kept secret. We should do nothing which has to be kept secret or hidden. That is the main thing.

Blessings from
BAPU

C/o SHRI LAKSHMI NARAYAN GADODIA
P. B. NO. 17, DELHI

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

274. LETTER TO RADHAKANT MALAVIYA

SODEPUR,
December 9, 1945

BHAII RADHAKANT,

I have gone through your letter. I do not take any interest in the elections. I know that the Congress must win.

Babuji has formed a separate association. I did not like it. But who was I to prevent him from doing so? I think it is improper for you to run it. It is a different thing if Babuji does so. Have a talk with the Working Committee about the role of the Hindu Mahasabha. I personally do not like it. I am returning the two letters.

Blessings from
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal
275. LETTER TO SHYAMLAL

SODEPUR,
December 9, 1945

CHI. SHYAMLAL,

You are going ahead very fast. If it is in keeping with your strength, it is good. The work of Kasturba Memorial can progress only with such self-sacrifice. We cannot always measure the strength of self-sacrifice. What does it matter? May God preserve your strength.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

276. LETTER TO VASUDEV

SODEPUR,
December 9, 1945

BHAIHRI,

Your letter is written in a very bad hand. And that too in English. Can’t you express your views in Hindustani?

I have gone through the printed statement. I did not like it. Its pompous and lacking in humility. There is also exaggeration in it. Read what I have written about students. Writing will not help. Only work will. Constructive work is easy as well as difficult. Meet Rajendra Babu. Do what he says.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

VASUDEV
YOUTH LEAGUE
PATNA

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

1 Secretary of the Kasturba Memorial Trust

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Bhai Moti Babu,

How long should I go on writing to you in English? These days, as far as possible, I write to everybody in the national language or the mother tongue. Perhaps you may not be having anyone who can read the national language, so I am enclosing a Bengali translation of the letter also. Amtul Salaam will deliver this letter to you and also have a talk with you. She has complained a lot to me about the khadi policy of the Pravartak Sangh. Amtul Salaam has stayed with me for years as a daughter. She is very industrious and very knowledgeable. Hence, she has been doing the khadi work at Borkamta for the last few years. Now the Pravartak Sangh is also functioning there. Amtul Salaam’s work is purely altruistic and for service of the people.¹ Amtul Salaam says that the [Pravartak Sangh]² is not for selfless service but...³ ends. She also says that its work is against the policy of the Charkha Sangh and may cause harm to it. I refuse to believe that you are aware of these things and allow them to continue. And so I am sending Amtul Salaam to understand the situation. She will explain things in greater detail.

It is a matter of regret that the money advanced by the Charkha Sangh has not been returned so far. They should get it back now. It belongs to the Trust. And how can the Trust write it off?

*Blessing from*

*Bapu*

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 11058

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¹, ² & ³ A few words are indistinct here in the source.
278. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

SODEPUR,
December 10, 1945

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

The newly-opened account in the United Commercial Bank, as per papers herewith, is to be operated by you or by me. I am thinking of two more signatures, though I have not decided who the persons should be. If you can think of any names, let me know. Perhaps two names may suffice for the present. The question will arise when one of us dies.

Send your specimen signature on the accompanying form. I have given mine in Hindustani and intend to sign in that language in future. You also can do the same. Think over this and do as you like. Preserve the other papers relating to the account sent with this. Send the specimen signature to me.

I shall be here for some time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10648

279. LETTER TO SHITIKANTH JHA

SODEPUR,
December 10, 1945

BHAI SHITIKANTH,

I have your letter. If you want to sit by my side, come over some day. But what is so special in sitting near me? Doing the work suggested by me amounts to sitting near me.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI SHITIKANTH JHA
KHADI PRATISHTHAN
GRAM SEVA KENDRA
THAKURDANDI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 7477. Also C.W. 4923

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280. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,
December 10, 1945

When we are making a supreme effort for the realization of our goal, let nobody have any opportunity of pointing it against us that we are not disciplined and therefore not fit for swaraj. Either today or tomorrow the power must come to our hands. But how are we going to exercise that power unless we are disciplined?

The British Government, he reminded the people, was not the last hurdle to be got over. If the people were not disciplined then even if power came to their hands they would not be able to retain it and someone else would be there to snatch it away from their hands.

It was only wild animals which were not disciplined and took recourse to unreasonable and meaningless climbing. But if men also took recourse to such tactics how could drivers and guards of trains manage their affairs. It was also often found that small boats which had only limited capacity often gave way and sank because of overcrowding. They were crores and perhaps for that reason they did not notice the loss they sustained in such catastrophes. If they could not board a train they should just wait for the next to travel instead of overcrowding the first and thus make it impossible for the driver and the guard to run it.

Proceeding, Gandhiji said that they must learn discipline. There were two ways of learning it. The soldiers learnt it by having drill exercises. But there was the prayer to teach them the other way. Prayer not only secures for them their salvation for the next world but also in this world. If they failed to secure their salvation in this world, could there be any possibility of securing the salvation for the next? In the circumstances, concluded Gandhiji, they should conduct themselves as thinking men.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 11-12-1945

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1 The reference is to the conduct of passengers who boarded engines and guards’ compartments on the previous day to travel to and from Sodepur.
281. SPEECH AT CALCUTTA

December 10, 1945

Addressing the gathering outside Government House, Gandhiji said that when he entered Government House in the evening he found a crowd of people around his car. Hence he had come this time walking to them.

He asked them to be calm and peaceful. He was an old man and could not bear the strain of demonstrations. If they did not allow him to go by car, he would have to walk on foot to Sodepur.

Gandhiji added that he had come there to serve them and the country. He urged them the need for discipline. India had attained a great position in the past because of her great message of shanti. They could attain freedom only by peace and discipline.

Referring to the prayer meeting at Sodepur Ashram, Gandhiji said that thousands and thousands of people came there to join the prayer, but perfect silence was maintained.

Gandhiji then asked the gathering whether they would allow him to go by car. The crowd respectfully replied in the affirmative and Gandhiji got into his car while a corridor was made for him to pass through. Sitting with his hands folded in salutation, Gandhiji then moved out in the car to his Ashram at Sodepur.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 11-12-1945

282. CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

[On or before December 11, 1945]

After the arrest of the principal Congressmen in the August of 1942, the unguided masses took the reins in their own hands and acted almost spontaneously. If many acts of heroism and sacrifice are to their credit, there were acts done which could not be included in non-violence. It is, therefore, necessary

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1 At 8.40 p.m., after his talk with the Viceroy. For the Viceroy’s version of the talk vide Appendix I.

2 & 3 The resolution, drafted by Gandhiji, was passed by the Congress Working Committee on December 11, the concluding day of its five-day session held in Calcutta.
for the Working Committee to affirm, for the guidance of all concerned, that the policy of non-violence adopted in 1920 by the Congress continues unabated, and that such non-violence does not include burning of public property, cutting of telegraph wires, derailing of trains and intimidation.

The Working Committee is of opinion that the policy of non-violence as detailed in the Congress resolution of 1920, since expanded and explained from time to time, and action in accordance with it, has raised India to a height never attained before.

The Working Committee is further of opinion that the constructive activities of the Congress, beginning with the spinning-wheel and khadi as the centre, are emblematic of the policy of non-violence and that every other Congress activity including what is known as the parliamentary programme, is subservient to and designed to promote the constructive activities as explained by Mahatma Gandhi.

The Working Committee is of opinion that civil disobedience, mass or any other, meant for the attainment of freedom, is inconceivable without the adoption of the constructive programme on the widest scale possible by the masses of India.

The Hindu, 12-12-1945

283. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,

December 12, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of 10th instant, for which I thank you.

I have not discounted¹ your irrigation scheme. I have only suggested an addition to it so as to bring almost immediate individual relief to the crores of villagers by occupying their admitted leisure hours. In your written note you seem to be in entire accord with my proposition. Where then is the difficulty in the Government of Bengal sponsoring the scheme and at once creating a hopeful situation so far as the shortage of cloth is concerned? I have never suggested that attainment of happiness is possible without the control of physical surroundings. But I have no desire to enter into any argument. If you have immediate regard for home-spinning and weaving and other village crafts,

¹ Vide pp. 181-2.
I have suggested a way out. That each cultivator should grow his own cotton is not a *sine qua non* of my scheme and certainly no cultivator should be compelled or even advised to grow cotton to the detriment of any staple crop. The question is one of utilizing waste labour, as under your scheme it is one of utilizing waste water.

If you favour the idea as practical and capable of immediate application, I could furnish you with a detailed scheme which, as I have told you, can be worked with the help of the various khadi organizations controlled by the All-India Spinners’ Association.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. Gandhi

*Gandhiji’s Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 110*

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**294. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY**

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,

December 12, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your kind letter of 10th instant regarding the Gope Palace.¹ This is a matter of such a delicate nature that I do not think I can usefully interfere. And why should there be any hurry if a popular government is shortly to replace the present regime?

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. Gandhi

*Gandhiji’s Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 112*

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¹ The palace, which was on the outskirts of Midnapore, housed a British Military Hospital and the Health Department of the Bengal Government was anxious to acquire it permanently for a T. B. sanatorium. The addressee had suggested to Gandhiji to use his influence with the owner who was a Congressman.
285. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

SODEPUR,
December 12, 1945

CHI. PREMA,

Chi. Sushila¹ has addressed the following letter² to Shyamalal:

I had assumed that Sushila would readily take up this work and had, therefore, welcomed Shyamal’s suggestion that he himself should write to her. But Sushila suggests your name and has declined to join while you are there. So I ask your advice as to what should be done. Shouldn’t we do what would help the work and bring credit to it? If you want to give your reply after consulting Sushila, do that. You may make any suggestion you like. If you address your reply as above, I shall get it wherever I am at the time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10441. Also C.W. 6880. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

286. LETTER TO DR. N. B. KHARE³

SODEPUR,
December 12, 1945

BHAJ KHARE,

I think that you are anxious to meet me.⁴ It will be all right if you can come tomorrow evening at 8 o’clock.

Tours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 4869. Courtesy: N. B. Khare

¹ Sushila Pai
² Not translated here. She had declined to be the Agent of Kasturba Memorial Fund Committee for Maharashtra and suggested the addressee’s name instead.
³ (1884-1967); Congress Premier of C. P., 1937-38, and member of Viceroy’s Executive Council, 1943-46
⁴ Some of Khare’s supporters wanted him to explore possibilities of rejoining the Congress and to see Gandhiji in this connection.
287. LETTER TO RADHAKANT MALAVIYA

SODEPUR,
December 12, 1945

BHAI RADHAKANT,

I received your letter last night. The meeting of the Working Committee is over. Please understand my limitations and also my unwillingness concerning what you write.

SHRI RADHAKANT MALAVIYA
16 TARACHAND DUTT STREET
CALCUTTA

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

288. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,
December 12, 1945

Gandhiji said that an individual, even if a snake might be lying on his way, would pass by it, assuming that it was not a snake but a piece of rope. He would not be frightened then. But if his companion then drew his attention to the fact that it was not a piece of rope but a living snake that he passed by, he would at once be frightened. Was it not curious, asked Gandhiji, that although the same conditions prevailed, at one time the individual had no trace of fright in him and at another he would be awfully frightened and would thank God for his miraculous escape.

Drawing the moral from the illustration, Gandhiji concluded that the source of happiness and woe, therefore, did not lie elsewhere but in one’s own mind. In his reply to Arjuna as to who had attained illumination, Krishna explained the nature of such a man by stating that he only was self-illumined (sthitaprajna) who was not affected either by a feeling of happiness or woe.¹ This was possible only on the part of that individual who was self-controlled. To a self-controlled man life becomes simple and salvation easy.

Amrita Bazar Patrika 13-12-1945

¹ Bhagavad Gita, ii, 54 and 56

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289. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,
December 13, 1945

No knowledge conducive to the real good of the world could be attained without purification of heart, said Mahatma Gandhi. Those who attended these meetings should derive some benefits from them; otherwise, it would be useless for them to attend prayer meetings. They must concentrate their minds and only then would they realize the existence of God in their hearts. But if they kept quiet because he (Gandhiji) had asked them to do so, they would derive no benefit from the prayer. By concentration, their hearts would be purified and their inner knowledge would grow. Everybody should think that they were going to the prayer meeting for self-purification. Only then would their intellectual progress be uninterrupted and they would get real peace by controlling their passions.

The Hindu, 14-12-1945

290. LETTER TO THE AGA KHAN

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,
December 14, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your kind telegram. I do not return from Madras via Poona. The probability is that I shall return via Bezwada to Wardha in February, when a date mutually convenient can be agreed upon either in Bombay or Poona, wherever it is convenient for you at the time.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

H. H. THE AGA KHAN
BOMBAY

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

1 According to the source a large number of women and over a hundred Harijan boys attended the meeting.
291. LETTER TO BISHOP FOSS WESTCOTT

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,
December 14, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

Your kind letter (undated) from Ranchi has been received. I thank you for the book Sudhir has given me. I shall try to make time to read it.

I entirely agree with you that the spirit of hatred can never solve India’s problem, for I believe in the general proposition that the spirit of hatred has never solved and never will solve any problem in the world. But I also believe that the causes for such hatred have to be discovered and removed. The removal of these, in India’s case, lies first in the superior, i.e., the ruling party, undoing the wrong it is doing. My method, by which I swear, is calculated to do it in the quickest manner possible.

I am glad you will bear in mind the thought of passing some time with me in the quiet of Sevagram.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

THE Rt. Rev. Bishop FOSS WESTCOTT
C/o The Bishop’s House
RANCHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

292. LETTER TO KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADHYAYA

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,
December 14, 1945

DEAR KAMALADEVI,

Your letter of 2nd instant came into my hand only this morning. When, after the conference\textsuperscript{2}, you find that you have to go to Mysore for Kasturba work, after due notice of your

\textsuperscript{1} Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan Bishop of India
\textsuperscript{2} All-India Women’s Conference to be held in 1946 over which the addressee was to preside
proposed entrance and that you will proceed to Mysore for that definite purpose, you should enter the State and take the consequences. If the State presumes to interfere with your activities, it might be worth while to test the legality of such action. But of that nothing need or can be said at the present moment.

About those who will be thrown out of work,¹ is not Jawaharlal developing some central scheme or, it may be, the Congress? I have only a hazy notion. But I know this much clearly that it is a big problem not to be tackled by any single individual. The Talimi Sangh can only take in the smallest number possible, and then they are to be specialists having love for the work. The A.I.S.A. can absorb some more but such have to appreciate the dignity of village life and village simplicity. Can those whom you have in view take to it?

Of your future activity I understand what you say and I would much like to see you settle down in a village and put your hand not to the plough which may be too hard for you but to the wheel which is hard for nobody.

Love.

Yours,

BAPU

SHRIMATI KAMALADEVI
C/o Women’s Conference Office
LAMINGTON ROAD, BOMBAY 7

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

293. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SODEPUR,
December 14, 1945

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I got your long letter. I was taken aback a little. I was not unaware that meat, and even beef, is cooked in the kitchen there. This is a problem which can be solved only with patience. You need not get alarmed and run away. It should be enough that you yourself do not eat either meat or beef. But you cannot prevent others from doing so. It would be good if they

¹ The reference is to the demobilization of army personnel and labour engaged in war service. The A. I. C. C. which met at Bombay from September 21 to 24 passed a resolution expressing its concern.
thought about it and stopped on their own. I would, therefore, advise you to have patience and go on doing the work I have suggested.

I do not want to keep you too long. But I shall be satisfied if you start writing up the accounts and set them in order and bring the sanitation work within manageable limits. The other changes can be introduced only after my return. Jehangirji must have arrived there by now.

Kanchan remains engrossed in work. She has not recovered complete strength, but I am hopeful that she will. Has Durlabh-bhail left for good or only temporarily? If you know anything about this, write to me.

Blessings to all.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8610. Also C.W. 7193. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

294. LETTER TO ATUL CHANDRA GHOSH

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,
December 14, 1945

Bhai Atul Babu,

What can I do? I cannot be young for ever. Therefore be content with whatever service I can render from one place. Please tell the people of Manbhum that we can achieve everything through ahimsa and the symbol of ahimsa is the charkha.

Blessings from

BAPU

Babu Atulchand Ghosh
Nivarana Ashram
Purulia (Manbhum)

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal
295. LETTER TO V. G. GAVANDE

SODEPUR,
December 14, 1945

BHAIGAVANDE,

Ramkrishna has given me your statement. When you send something to someone, whether it is long or short, it should always be legible. What you have sent is illegible. Unless one gives it concentrated attention one can't read it. Where do I have so much time? I am sorry to say I have not been able to read it. In writing this my intention is to tell you that anything, any statement you send, should be in a clear and legible hand.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI V. G. GAVANDE
MAHAL, NAGPUR

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

296. TELEGRAM TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

December 15, 1945

YOUR LETTER. DO ALL WORK YOU CAN SECURING NECESSARY ASSISTANCE.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 8614. Also C.W. 7194. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

297. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

CAMP: KHADI PRATISHTHAN,
SODEPUR (NEAR CALCUTTA),
December 15, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

A correspondent writes from the United Provinces to the effect that manufacture of *gur*\(^1\) is prohibited there. *Gur*-making is a

\(^1\) Jaggery

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village industry. It is manufactured on their fields by cane-growers from juice extracted by means of village kolhus\(^1\) and boiled in village pans. I, therefore, thought that my correspondent must be mistaken and asked him to send me a copy of the order on which his observations were made. He has sent me a copy of the enclosed startling order.\(^2\) Cane-growers have since passed resolutions protesting against the order and threatened to disobey it if it was not withdrawn. As a result the authorities relaxed the order. A copy of the relaxation order is also herewith enclosed. I doubt not that you realize what this means to the poor people. The original order could not have been issued for the protection of sugar mills but must have been meant to secure judicious use and distribution of sugar as gur or refined. If so, it defeats the purpose. The modified order, though less bad than the first, does not really serve the purpose, considered in the light of the villagers. There should be no licence for gur made in village.

As this is not a mere provincial matter but applies to all India wherever cane is grown, I venture to approach H. E. the Viceroy for relief.\(^3\)

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq., I.G.S.
Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy
The Viceroy's House
New Delhi

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 70-1

\(^1\) Cane-crushers

\(^2\) The notification was to the effect that in certain specified areas no person should “manufacture gur, introduce or set up any kolhus for crushing cane” or “move sugar-cane... to any place outside such areas except to sugar-cane factories listed”.

\(^3\) The addressee in his letter of January 4, 1946, said that gur-making was not prohibited except in a small area of the United Provinces and that too in order to plan production and distribution of sugar and gur in the Province.
DEAR NARAYANASWAMI,

I am afraid that, owing to my movements after leaving Poona, I have not been able to be up to date with my correspondence. I hope that Menon is making good progress with his work.

As to the constructive programme I can say this much that it is doing better than before. But have you any workable suggestions to make? What you have said in your letter is good enough for city mentality. What you and I have to do is to think out suggestions in terms of village mentality unless, of course, you have reached the conclusion that the village and village mentality are to go if they have not already gone. My conclusion emphatically is that if the world is not to end, the village and village mentality alone will save it. In spite of their glamour the city and city mentality are going before our eyes. Therefore, I have left for me no other alternative but to think of ways and means for sustaining the village life.

What is your concrete suggestion about Muslim unrest?

Yours,

BAPU

SHRI C. K. NARAYANASWAMI
5 HIDAYAT HOUSE
BOMBAY 19

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

1The source has October but Gandhiji was then in Poona.
299. LETTER TO J. C. GUPTA

SODEPUR,
December 15, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

Many thanks for your letter.¹
I am doing all I can about the prisoners.² I do not think
I need trouble you to see me about them.
It was a pleasure to see your blind son and his wife.

Yours sincerely,

SHRI J. C. GUPTA
23 CIRCUS AVENUE, CALCUTTA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

300. LETTER TO UTTIMCHAND GANGARAM

SODEPUR, CALCUTTA,
December 15, 1945

DEAR UTTIMCHAND,

Though the receipt for the 4th instalment has, I presume
been sent you, I have not been able to acknowledge your p. c.
of 22nd ultimo. I have been travelling.
Your puzzles baffle me and my clever friends. I must
therefore give up hope of getting prizes from you for Harijans.
I must rely solely on your love of Harijans and khadi, perhaps
also Adivasis.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI UTTIMCHAND GANGARAM
BOMBAY BAKERY
HYDERABAD (SIND)

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ According to The Hindu, 26-12-1945, the addressee who was chairman of the All-Parties Political Prisoners' Release Campaign Committee had said in his letter that "43 pre-Reform political prisoners between themselves had undergone imprisonment for no less than 600 years . . . ."

301. LETTER TO HARJIVAN KOTAK

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,
December 15, 1945

CHI. HARJIVAN,

I got your letter of the 10th yesterday. You seem to be very impatient. You ask my blessings by wire. We are after all poor people and trustees of those much poorer than we. And how can we so much as wish for blessings? Even if we have such a desire, how can we have it met telegraphically? So thinking I refrained from sending a wire. Why should you need any blessings? Here is the secret of blessings. When we are engaged in a work which is worthy of blessings, then the work itself is a blessing; it does not wait for blessings from others. Seeking blessings from other people is, therefore, meaningless; it is nothing but self-deception. It no doubt has a meaning in that blessings act as a stimulant from which a weak person derives momentary encouragement. But this kind of encouragement is not of much help. If you understand this and still really need my blessings, you certainly have them for your work of producing the tools necessary for making khadi provided it is done intelligently. When I say intelligently I mean that we should not manufacture spinning-wheels, winding frames, taktis, etc., just to sell; we should make only as many as are needed and see that they are so perfect that no one may find fault with them. Our aim should be—and is—that all the things are produced locally. Only then will the villages prosper. What I am now saying is covered by the new line of thought on khadi that I am propounding. Whatever I have not elaborated may be deduced from the aforesaid.

Yesterday Sardar was here. He wanted to know why he was not informed about your leaving the khadi shop. I could not give him a satisfactory answer. I take it that you must have gone through all the formalities since you are so alert. However, if you have anything to say in this regard, write to Sharda. I see from your letter that Sharda is with you. Is she doing anything?

Blessings from
BAPU

HARJIVAN KOTAK

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

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302. LETTER TO RAJENDRA PRASAD

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,
December 15, 1945

BHAI RAJENDRA PRASAD,

I have your letter. I shall start working on Mahendra Chaudhary’s case after receiving other opinions on it.

You should be perfectly fit.

I am going to Santiniketan on the 18th. I shall return on the 20th.

Blessings from
BAPU

DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD
SADAQUAT ASHRAM
DIGHAGHAT
PATNA

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

303. LETTER TO KHWAJA NAZIMUDDIN

KHADI PRATISHTHAN,
SODEPUR, CALCUTTA,
December 15, 1945

BHAJ SAHEB,

Amtussalaam has given me your letter inviting me to your place on the 4th. How nice it would have been if I could come to your place. But circumstances do not permit me to do so. Does it mean that we shall not be able to meet? If that happens I shall be very sorry.

SIR NAZIMUDDIN
CALCUTTA

From a copy of the Urdu : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

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304. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,
December 16, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

I have insistent complaints about goondaisag and favouritisag at the elections. We had a talk about these. But they seem to persist. I know you do not want these things. Can something be done in the matter?

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 113-4

305. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,
December 16, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

Literature about your prisoners is pouring in on me. According to the papers in my possession, you have over twenty-five pre-Reform prisoners, all of them having undergone sentences above ten and most of them above fifteen years.

Then you have untried detenus, detained only on one-sided secret evidence which they have not seen, and some convicts, all of them political.

Among these prisoners are two women cooped up in a small cell. I am told that there is no terrorism to be feared. The prisoners are all likely to be public-spirited. But that can be no reason for keeping them behind prison bars.

I submit that they should all be discharged without the slightest ado.

I plead for a little grace before, as you and I hope, the transference of power comes.

1 It was Fazlul Haq, ex-Premier of Bengal, who had brought the matter to Gandhiji's notice. The goondaisag was resorted to by supporters of the Muslim League.

2 Vide also p. 212.
I have offered, and still do, to see these prisoners, if it is thought desirable.
I leave for Santiniketan on 18th instant, returning here on the 20th evening.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhi’s Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 132-3

306. LETTER TO DHUNDIRAJ

BHAII DHUNDIRAJ,

I have been receiving the figures sent by you. I glance through them as they arrive. According to the new policy, you are also required to indicate the number of people who go there to learn or to spin, how many of them know all the processes, whether those at the shop have learnt them and so on. All these particulars should be shown in figures.

Blessings from

BAPU

Smt. DHUNDIRAJ
KHANDI BHANDAR
395 KALBADEVI
BOMBAY

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

307. LETTER TO SARALADEVI A. SARABHAI

DEAR SISTER,

I came to know of your brother’s passing away from a letter of Chi. Mridula. I also learnt that you had been to Rajkot in this connection. Such things are part of life. All of us have to go—some sooner, some later. That being so expression of condolence would only be folly. Why should I then indulge in it? And why should you expect me to? So the purpose of writing this letter is only to let you know that you are not out of my thoughts.

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal
308. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI

SODEPUR,
December 16, 1945

CHI. MRIDULA,

Sushilabehn gave me news of the death of your maternal uncle and told me how calm and unperturbed you were in your bereavement.

Badshah Khan left yesterday. He was telling me that in the event of Akbar\(^1\) being prepared to go to him, you would take up his work at Samau or make some arrangement. If this is correct, talk it over with Akbar and finalize the arrangement. If Akbar is still not satisfied then let me know who is willing to take up the work at Samau and how it can be done, so that I can write to Akbar. If some dependable worker is not available, do tell me so frankly.

I have not yet written to Saraladevi regarding her appointment as Agent because I had a letter from Mavalankar that he would be seeing her. Write to me if you know anything more. I hope you are well. I shall go to Santiniketan on the 18th, and return on the 20th. 24th Midnapore. It is correct to regard Sodepur as my camp for the present.

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

309. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SODEPUR,
December 16, 1945

CHI. MUNNALAL,

Your second letter written on the 12th arrived here on the 15th. You must have received the following wire which I sent you yesterday:\(^2\)

The description you have given is quite good. I am sure that as the problem about beef was solved so will the other also

\(^1\) Akbarbhai Chawda

\(^2\) Vide p. 209.
be solved through patience and love. I entrusted certain jobs to you as being the most important, but since I have already accepted responsibility for all other arrangements except medical attention I should certainly like you to take up that work also. So do take up whatever work you can without coming into conflict with anybody.

Though I shall not be there on January 1, from that day the institution will be run only for the poor and on behalf of the poor. From that day the management of all departments except the medical will be considered to have become my responsibility. I trust you will take up the responsibility on my behalf. But you must assume the responsibility for only as much work as you can easily attend do. Let me know what jobs you are not able to take up.

After January 1, there will be no wealthy patients there. If there are any, they will not be treated as wealthy men.

Dr. Dinshaw had said that he would himself see about the furniture. He wanted it for his clinic in Bombay. There will be very few poor indoor patients for the present. Maybe there will be none. Hence, though we shall keep facilities ready for a large number, the hospital is not likely to get filled in the immediate future. We shall have to use our judgment in the matter of furniture. Ascertained Gulbai’s wishes. Don’t insist on ordering things which the two do not want.

From among the patients there, those who wish to leave may be permitted to do so. From January 1, really speaking, the only patients will be Balkrishna, Vanu and Zohra. You will have no difficulty in looking after them. You must have realized by now that it is no easy job to shoulder the responsibility of that institution. The task would easily test the capacity of any man.

I wish you not to worry about Kanchan.

Blessings to everybody there.

Blessings from
Bapu


1 Vide pp. 207-8.
2 Nature Cure Clinic
3 Wife of Dinshaw Mehta
4 Balkrishna Bhave
5 Vanamala Parikh
310. LETTER TO G. RAMACHANDRAN

SODEPUR,
December 16, 1945

G. RAMACHANDRAN,

Why should I now write to you in English? If you have to write in English, you may do so. However, I should like you to make an attempt to write in Hindustani.

How can I explain to you how much harm we are causing to India by being unable to write except in English.

I have seen to the matter of the Rs. 100. You do not have to worry.

I hope your work is going on well. Write to me whatever you want to. I shall be going to Santiniketan on the 18th for two days. After that I shall return here.

I hope Saundram is well.

SHRI RAMCHANDRAN
GANDHI ASHRAM
SALEM DISTT.

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

311. LETTER TO JASWANTRAI CHURANI

SODEPUR,
December 16, 1945

Bhai Jaswantrai,

I had your letter dated the 20th. Ever since I have been touring. You have done well in sending the receipts of the deposits. If there is anything more, Mukherjee will write to you.

SHRI JASWANTRAI CHURANI
15 LAKE ROAD
LAHORE

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal
312. LETTER TO KUMAR BABU

SODEPUR, December 16, 1945

Bhai Kumar Babu,

You have spared me from having to visit Vasudevpur. Thanks. I am indeed sorry that I cannot go there.

Yours,

M. K. Gandhi

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

313. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR, December 16, 1945

The tendency of learning English rather than one's own language was deprecated by Mahatma Gandhi. "If we could stop this tendency we would be free from one of our slaveries," said Mahatma Gandhi, adding that he could not express how this tendency of some people talking and writing in English damaged them and the country. But in England, whenever a good book was published anywhere in the world, within a few days it would be translated and would reach the hands of the English-speaking public. Mahatma Gandhi asked:

Should we not do the same thing in India? Although it would take time for all people to understand the rashtrabhasha, there were languages of the locality and any good book could be translated and presented to the public in their mother tongue.

The Hindu, 18-12-1945

314. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

December 17, 1945

I see that I have overstayed my time in Calcutta. I found I had more work in Calcutta than I had expected. And then events compelled me to work more strenuously than I had counted 220
upon. The result is that, much to my and my fellow-workers’
disappointment, I have been compelled to cut off the places I
had originally conceived and tentatively discussed with friends who
were arranging the tour. But let no one think that the curtail-
ment will affect my study of the Bengal situation. The visit to
Santiniketan is more by way of a friendly visit than study. I do
not expect to see or meet visitors. They will oblige me by
abstaining from wishing to see me during my very short stay there.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 18-12-1945

315. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

SODEPUR,
December 17, 1945

CHI. MIRA,¹

This is merely a love letter written on the silence day. I
have read your descriptive letter with much interest. But I
do not know when I shall reach the Kisan Ashram. Is your
account to the English Press quite accurate?

LOVE,

BAPU

SHRI MIRABAI
KISAN ASHRAM, MULDASPUR
BAHAADRA BAD POST, via JWALAPUR
SAHARANPUR Dt.

From the original: C.W. 6513. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9908

316. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SODEPUR,
December 17, 1945

MY DEAR C.R.,

Your letter. You have not much to do for deserving what
I said about you to the friends. For my observation was based
on the past performance, not on the promise of the future.

Let my thought work, if it is true and well thought. The
spoken word may spoil matters. Wait, watch and pray. Let us see.

¹ The superscription in this and other letters to Mirabehn is in Deva-
nagari.
You should write regularly or, if you are too busy, ask someone to write. How are you? The account given to me was none too good.

Things here are as bad as could be imagined. I am trying. I go on 18th to Santiniketan, return on 20th and go to Midnapore on 24th for a week. Your letters should be addressed to Sodepur.

Love.

Bapu

From a photostat: G.N. 2114

317. LETTER TO MAHANLAL ROY-CHOWDHURY

SODEPUR,
December 17, 1945

DEAR PROFESSOR,

If you can come at 5.45 p.m., i.e., just after public prayer on 22nd instant you can talk to me while I am having my walk.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

PROF. SHRI MAHANLAL ROY-CHOWDHURY
12 SITARAM GHOSH ST.
CALCUTTA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

318. LETTER TO JANAKIDEVI BAJAJ

SODEPUR,
December 17, 1945

JANAKIMAIYA,

It was good that I got your telegram.
I was a bit worried. You must have got Sushila’s wire and letter. I hope you remember about the cow. You are coming to Madras, aren’t you?

Blessings from

Bapu

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5851. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

1 In Pyarelal Papers the date is 18.
319. LETTER TO MADALASA

SODEPUR,
December 17, 1945

CHI. MADALASA,

It is good that you have undergone the second operation. I hope you are well. You are learning your lesson all right. Write to me when you are fit enough to do so. Ramakrishna\(^2\) is fine. He does some work of service. Kamalnayan\(^3\) has come today. I hope the child is well. Is he growing normally?

Blessings from BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashiroad, p. 37. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

320. LETTER TO ARUN GANDHI

SODEPUR,
December 17, 1945

CHI. ARUN\(^5\),

I think of you every day, but especially today during silence. Do you spin carefully at least 160 rounds daily? Is the yarn even? Do you yourself fix the spinning-wheel? Do you keep a daily account? If you keep this one promise, you will learn a lot. Are you all right? How is Ila\(^6\)? Has she become a little wiser?

Blessings to all of you from BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4969. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

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1 In Pyarelal Papers the date is 18.
2 & 3 Addressee’s brothers
4 In Pyarelal Papers the date is 18.
5 Son of Manilal Gandhi
6 Addressee’s sister
321. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

SODEPUR,
December 17, 1945

Bhai Kumarappa,

Your work has come to my notice. Look after your health and do not tempt God. If you have understood what I have said, then you need not move about a lot. It is a question of your being ready. What is required is mastery over one vocation and working knowledge of the others. It is very necessary to have good knowledge of Hindustani.

Blessings from
Bapu

Kumarappa
Wardha

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 10406. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

322. LETTER TO RAM MANOHAR LOHIA

SODEPUR,
KHADI PRATISHTHAN,
December 17, 1945

Bhai Ram Manohar,

I am sorry that your father passed away suddenly yesterday. We used to meet often. I had sent Pyarelalji and Prabhat to see his charkha activity. In my view he died in the manner he wanted. He had been engrossed in his work.

Yours,
M. K. Gandhi

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia
Agra

From the Hindi original: C.W. 11065. Courtesy: Hardev Sharma. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

1 In Pyarelal Papers the date is 18.
323. LETTER TO SHRIKRISHNADAS JAUJU

SODEPUR,
December 17, 1945

BHAI JAUJU,

I have your letter about the appointment of Ramdhanbhai in Kashmir in place of Vichitrabhai. I agree.
I have sent my signatures on the authority letters for opening accounts in banks.
I have sent the letter after signing it to the Bihar Charkha Sangh.
The reply sent to Badshah Khan is all right.
Do whatever you can about... I khadi.

Blessings from
BAPU

JAUJU

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

324. LETTER TO DR. SYED MAHMUD

SODEPUR,
December 17, 1945

BHAI MAHMUD,

How was it that you came and went away? I kept on waiting? It was much easier for you to come to Sodepur. How can any arrangement be made now?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 5092. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

1 A word is illegible here.
2 In Pyarelal Papers the date is 18.
325. LETTER TO VEENA PATEL

SODEPUR,
December 17, 1945

CHI. VEENA,

I have your beautiful letter. Let me know to what extent you had been suppressing yourself. Khimji is no doubt a good man and you will be happy there. Keep on writing to me. I am going to Santiniketan tomorrow. Father meets me quite often. He will go to Wardha. He will take Swadhina with him. Dhiren is well.

Blessings to you and Khimji from BAPU

VEENA

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

326. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,
December 17, 1945

We have come so close together and you have been observing such exemplary silence that it will give me a wrench to be away from you. God willing I shall be leaving for Santiniketan on Tuesday. I hope to return and again join you in the prayer on the 21st.

The hymn that has been sung on Monday is particularly appropriate. It says that he who gives his all gets all without asking. As against this he who grabs what he has no right to, loses all.

I have been told that some of you travel without ticket on trains and even stop trains by pulling the alarm chain at will.

1 Although the date in the source is 18, it would appear from the contents that the letter was written on the 17th, for Gandhiji left for Santiniketan on the 18th.

2 The speech, written in Hindi, was read out by Kanu Gandhi, it being Gandhiji's silence day.
The report has pained me. Both these things are illegal. But I do not want to dwell upon the legal aspect. These practices are contrary to the spirit of the prayer. All I can say is those who indulge in these practices have not grasped the meaning of prayer. If they will reflect on the hymn that has just been sung they will realize that they may not travel without ticket or pull the alarm chain without legitimate cause. I hope that such things will not occur again. If we continue to indulge in this kind of behaviour it will neither bring us independence nor enable us to retain it after it has been won. May God guide us aright.

*Amrta Bazar Patrika*, 18-12-1945

**327. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL**

**Camp: Khadi Pratishthan, Sodepur (Near Calcutta), December 18, 1945**

DEAR MR. ABELL,

In continuation of the correspondence1 about the alleged ill-treatment of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, I am now able to send as requested a copy of the statement made by Dr. Lohia to his legal adviser.2

*Tours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI*

_Gandhi’s Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 66_

**328. LETTER TO PUSHPA K. DESAI**

**Sodepur, December 18, 1945**

CHI. PUSHPA,

Owing to my many preoccupations, I have not been able to write to you of late. I hope you are getting on well. You must be learning Hindustani.

Enclosed is a letter from Vrajlal. Read it and preserve it. Give it to me when I return. I have replied to Vrajlal and told

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1 Vide pp. 114-5.

2 Acknowledging this in his letter dated December 20, the addressee said that the statement had been forwarded to the Home Member.
him that if he finds it convenient he may go to Sevagram even in my absence. If he can persuade you to marry him, he may by all means do so. As I understand you, you do not even countenance the idea of marrying. But my judgment of you may be wrong. Can any man or woman really know his or her heart? Does not God alone know it? If, therefore, you change your mind after meeting Vrajlal, believe yourself to be absolutely free to do what you like. Don’t be obdurate through a false sense of shame. Obey the promptings of a pure heart. I shall welcome your writing to Vrajlal, and if you do write, send the letter to me. I will forward it to him. If you are not very eager to write, I shall not press you to do so.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 9267

329. LETTER TO DINSHAW K. MEHTA

SODEPUR,
December 18, 1945

CHI. DINSHAW,

Though I am here I keep thinking of matters there. Please train Munnalal well. He is hard-working, honest and accomplished.

What did you do about the furniture? We will not take in any new patient from the new year. We might admit some who are poor. I hope you are calm. I am enclosing the wire from Met Manage. Let him come when he can. Those who stay on should do so after careful consideration. Those who want to leave may go. Write to me at the address given above.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal
330. LETTER TO GULBAI D. MEHTA

SODEPUR,

December 18, 1945

CHL. GULBAI,

You must now be due for confinement. How are you? You are calm, aren’t you? Write to me whatever you like. You are not going to fight shy of me. How is Mother? How is Ardesher?¹

Blessings from BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

331. LETTER TO ANASUYABAI KALE

SODEPUR,

December 18, 1945

dear sister,

I was happy to read your letter. Your Hindi is not in any way inferior to mine.

Everyone should do some constructive work over and above parliamentary work. And the aim of parliamentary work should also be to advance constructive work.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI ANASUYABAI KALE
ANAND BHAVAN
DHANTOLI
NAOPUR

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ Addressee’s son
332. LETTER TO B. P. SINHA

SODEPUR,
December 18, 1945

Bhai Sinha,

I have received the statement\(^1\) of Dr. Rammanohar which you have sent. Thanks.

Yours,

M. K. Gandhi

Shri B. P. Sinha
Kashi Vidyapith
Benaras Cantt.

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

333. LETTER TO N. G. RANGA

SODEPUR,
December 18, 1945

Bhai Ranga,

I have gone through your letter. I will read your pamphlet. You are doing a lot of work.

Blessings to you both from

Bapu

Prof. Ranga
Nidubrolu

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

\(^1\) Vide also p. 227.
334. LETTER TO H. C. DASAPPA

SODEPUR,
December 18, 1945

Bhai Dasappa,

I have your letter. Meet me in Madras when I go there. I doubt whether I shall be able to go to Mysore. Be in Madras, both of you. Blessings to Yashodhara.

Blessings from
Bapu

Shri H. C. Dasappa
Shri Kasturba Shibir
Paduravally
V. V. Mohalla Post
Mysore

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

335. LETTER TO SANKARAN

SODEPUR,
December 18, 1945

Chil. Shankaran,

I have your letter. I understand. I have already written for the expenses of [your] son and sister being paid. Come here after improving your health. Write to me about everything there. Let me know how many patients there are and what treatment they are being given and so on.

Blessings from
Bapu

Shri Sankaran
Baleshwar Singhji
Jivan Sakha, Lukerganj
Allahabad

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal
336. LETTER TO SHYAMLAL

SODEPUR,
December 18, 1945

Bhai Shyamlal,

I have your letter about Durgabai. You may accept her services. I am not however fully satisfied. How will she be able to do the work of Kasturba Memorial Trust while practising law? Let us see whether she learns Hindustani. I have your letter about Shri Panajikar, but I have not received his letter.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHYAMLAL
SECRETARY, KASTURBA GANDHI SMARAK NIDHI
WARDHA

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

337. LETTER TO PURNIMA BANNERJEE

SODEPUR,
On the Train,
December 18, 1945

Chh. Purnima, 

You must be knowing that from January onwards the Kasturba Smarak Nidhi will function through its Agents instead of the committees. I am enclosing herewith a copy of the resolution passed in this connection. Will you become an Agent? It will be easy for you to fulfil the conditions laid down. I had a talk with Jawaharlalji. He says neither he nor Pantji has any objection to your taking up this work. That is to say, they will relieve you from other activities. Someone told me—I cannot remember his name—that you might try to get into the Assembly. One going into the Assembly will not be able to do the work of Kasturba Memorial Trust well because an Agent will have to give a lot of time to the work if she wants to bring credit to it.

Purnima Bannerjee of Allahabad, sister of Aruna Asaf Ali

232
LETTER TO OM PRAKASH

Now write to me at the Sodepur address. I wanted to write to you a few days back but forgot about it.

Blessings from
Bapu

PURNIMA BANNERJEE

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

338. LETTER TO MANGALDAS PAKVASA

[CAMP] SODEPUR,
ON THE TRAIN [TO SANTINIKETAN],
December 18, 1945

BHAI MANGALDAS PAKVASA,

I have your letter and the opinions. It was good that you sent copies of the opinions to Jajuji. I shall now see what can be done.

Blessings from
Bapu

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C.W. 4784. Courtesy : Mangaldas Pakvasa

339. LETTER TO OM PRAKASH

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,
ON THE TRAIN,
December 18, 1945

CHI. OM PRAKASH,

I have your letter. If you have to go to your brother and do the work there, you should spare some time and come back after finishing the work. Take care that you do not devote too much time to it.

It is necessary to have a good knowledge of Urdu but why should you crave for a degree?

Blessings from
Bapu

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal
CHIL. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I have received all your letters. The letter written on rough paper is also lying with me. Today I shall answer whatever I possibly can.

I am doing quite a bit of work here.

As for hand-carding I believe that this makes the cotton very clean. It is not so well cleaned either by machine or by any other means. By all these other means the fibre does become somewhat weak. In my view hand-carding is a grand process. Combing should be given a place in it. Hand-carding teaches us cleanliness and patience. Adding the time spent in hand-carding [to that of the whole process] the speed of spinning the yarn seems slow. But that does not matter. Hand-carding of course cannot provide a livelihood. But it has a very significant part in self-reliance. As the process of hand-carding has not been very much in vogue, we have not had a real estimate of its power. We shall have an idea of its power if large numbers of people take to hand-carding. Show this letter to Vinoba also. Hand-carding is his discovery. He has also had a wide experience. I would like to know if I am mistaken in this.

Because the sadhu had gone away, it was quite proper that he was asked to leave the Ashram. In my view this does not mean that it was quite wrong to have kept him in the Ashram. This will enable you to understand my argument.

I have no doubt that there should be separate classes for women. As for Om Prakash I shall be content with whatever you think right. It would not be proper for me to write anything about this.

I think the proper thing would be for me not to lay down limits as to the expenses of the people who are staying in the Ashram and who come as visitors. For my experience these days should be regarded as limited. In my view you have all gone too far ahead. And when one has left a thing behind, one's view of it becomes less acceptable. The same applies to me.
A doctor, however great a specialist he may be, does not regard himself as a specialist when he has given up practice. Others, who have acquired degrees later would be considered more competent. Hence, if it is decided to limit the expenses, let me first know the amount now being spent. Then I shall provide whatever light I can.

As for quarters for workers in the Ashram, I have discussed the matter at length with Shantabehn. But I am neutral. Shantabehn must be well now.

I shall not write anything from here about the work of Kamle and Om Prakashji. It would be improper for me to write. But I shall be ready to write to them when you write to me that I can place your views before them.

I understand what you say about Kailasbehn. It would have been better if I had asked you to be present when I spoke to her. I admit that what happened was improper. But I was dealing with things under such pressure that, much as I should have wished it, I could not have kept you with me all the time. This does not imply that I should not be warned again. Even a cautious person is likely to commit mistakes. Hence, it is a good policy to give a discreet warning.

It seems to me that however much we may get to know Vinoba, there is still more to learn. Do take the girls and the boys with you. Let there be one rule in this matter, that is, there should be no undue pressure on Vinoba. We should value his time.

Do you want a wall clock or a timepiece?

As a general rule, the new entrants should bear their own expenses. If it is decided to keep anyone free of charge, it should be done after recording the reason for doing so. I hope you have kept some such book there.

What decision did you want from me with regard to Chakrayya? What do you want now?

Blessings from
Bapu

[PS.]

On the train. Have not revised.

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 4536