

THE  
COLLECTED  
WORKS  
OF  
MAHATMA  
GANDHI

VOLUME EIGHTY-FIVE



THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

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OF  
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If they contemplated the last War, they would plainly see that whilst the enemy powers so-called were crushed, the Allied Powers had won but an empty victory. Apart from the wanton destruction of human heads, they had—between the Allies and the enemies—succeeded in draining the world of its food materials and cloth. And the former seemed to be so dehumanized that they entertained the vain hope of reducing the enemies to helotry. It was a question whom to pity more—the Allies or the enemies. Therefore he asked the people bravely to face the consequence whatever it was, feeling secure in the confidence born of non-violence, be it as an honest policy.

As to the franchise he swore by the franchise of all adults, males and females, above the age of twenty-one or even eighteen. He would bar old men like himself. They were of no use as voters. India and the rest of the world did not belong to those who were on the point of dying. To them belonged death, life to the young. Thus he would have a bar against persons beyond a certain age, say fifty, as he would against youngsters below eighteen. Of course, he would debar lunatics and loafers. Of course, in India free, he could not contemplate communal franchise. It must be joint electorate, perhaps with reservation of seats. Nor could he contemplate favouritism for anyone, say Muslims, Sikhs or Parsis, for example. If there was to be favouritism he would single out physical lepers. They were an outcome of the crimes of society. If moral lepers would ban themselves, the physical lepers would soon be extinct. And they, poor men, were so frightened of modern society that they put forth no claims. Educate them truly and they would make ideal citizens. Anyway, side by side with adult franchise or even before that he pleaded for universal education, not necessarily literary except perhaps as an aid. English education, he was convinced, had starved their minds, enervated them and never prepared them for brave citizenship. He would give them all sufficient knowledge in the rich languages of which any country would be proud. Education in the understanding of the rights of citizenship was a short term affair if they were honest and earnest.

*Harijan*, 2-3-1947

### 575. QUESTION BOX

#### INTELLECTUAL AND MANUAL WORK

Q. Why should we insist on a Rabindranath<sup>1</sup> or a Raman<sup>2</sup> earning his bread by manual labour? Is it not sheer wastage? Why should not brain workers be considered on a par with manual workers, for both of them perform useful social work?

<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath Tagore

<sup>2</sup> C. V. Raman, the physicist

A. Intellectual work is important and has an undoubted place in the scheme of life. But what I insist on is the necessity of physical labour. No man, I claim, ought to be free from that obligation. It will serve to improve even the quality of his intellectual output. I venture to say that in ancient times Brahmins worked with their body as with their mind. But even if they did not, body labour is a proved necessity at the present time. In this connection I would refer to the life of Tolstoy and how he made famous the theory of bread-labour first propounded in his country by the Russian peasant Bondaref.

DHARAMPUR (NOAKHALI) February 6<sup>1</sup>, 1947  
*Harijan*, 23-2-1947

### 576. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU<sup>2</sup>

February 6, 1947

I know that if I were free I could take my share in trying to solve the various problems that arise in our country. But I feel that I should be useless unless I could do something here. . . . We are all in the hands of the Power which we call God.

\* \* \*

Very great pressure is being put upon me to go to Bihar because they all say that things are not properly represented to me on behalf of the Bihar Government. I am watching.

*Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. I, Book II, pp. 208 and 247

### 577. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

February 6, 1947

The way to truth is paved with skeletons over which we dare to walk.

*Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. I, Book II, p. 220

<sup>1</sup> *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 10-2-1947, published this as Gandhiji's answer given at Prasadpur, on Friday, February 7, to a question by Bina Das, a Congress worker in a neighbouring village.

<sup>2</sup> Nehru in his letter dated January 30, 1947, had written: "I know that we must learn to rely upon ourselves and not run to you for help on every occasion. But we have got into this bad habit and we do often feel that if you had been easier of access, our difficulties would have been less." *Vide* also p. 458.