

LETTERS FROM ANDAMAN

Veer Savarkar

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1 LETTER 1

Oh Martyrs

The battle of freedom once begun
And handed down from sire to son
Though often lost is ever won!!

To-day is the tenth of May! It was on this day, that in the ever memorable year of 1857, the first campaign of the War of Independence was opened by you, Oh Martyrs, on the battle-field of India. The Motherland, awakened to the sense of her degrading slavery,

Unsheathed her sword, burst forth from the shackles and struck the first blow for her liberty and for her honour. It was on this day that the war-cry 'Maro Feringhee Ko' was raised by the throats of thousands. It was on this day that the sepoy of Meerut, having risen in a terrible uprising, marched down to Delhi, saw the waters of the Jamuna, glittering in the sunshine, caught one of those historical moments which close past epoch to introduce a new one, and 'had found, in a moment, a leader, a flag and a cause, and converted the mutiny into a national and a religious war.'

All honour be to you, oh Martyrs. For it was for the preservation of the honour of the race that you performed the fiery ordeal of a revolution when the religions of the land were threatened with a forcible and sinister conversion, when the hypocrite threw off his friendly garb and stood up into the naked heinousness of a perfidious foe breaking treaties, smashing crowns, forging chains and mocking all the while our merciful mother for the very honesty with which she believed the pretensions of the white liar, then you, oh Martyrs of 1857, awoke the mother, inspired the mother, and for the honour of the mother, rushed to the battlefield terrible and tremendous with the war-cry 'Maro Feringhee Ko' on your lips, and with the sacred mantra God and Hindusthan on your banner ! Well did you do in rising. For otherwise, although your blood might have been spared, yet the stigma of servility would have been the deeper, one more link would have been added to the cursed chain of demoralizing patience, and the world would have again contemptuously pointed to our nation saying, 'She deserves slavery, she is happy in slavery.' For even in 1857, she did not raise even a finger to protect her interest and her honour!

This day, therefore, we dedicate, oh Martyrs, to your inspiring memory! It was on this day that you raised a new flag to be upheld, you uttered a mission to be fulfilled, you saw a vision to be realized, you proclaimed a nation to be born!

We take up your cry, we revere your flag, we are determined to continue that fiery mission of 'away with the foreigner', which you uttered, amidst the prophetic thunderings of the Revolutionary war. Revolutionary, yes, it was a Revolutionary war. For the War of 1857 shall not cease till the revolution arrives, striking slavery into dust, elevating liberty to the throne. Whenever a people arises for its freedom, whenever that seed of liberty gets germinated in the blood of its fathers, whenever that seed of liberty gets germinated in the blood of its Martyrs, and whenever there remains at least one true son to avenge that blood of his fathers, there never can be an end to such a war as this. No, a revolutionary war knows no truce, save liberty or death. We, inspired by your memory, determine to continue the struggle you began in 1857, we refuse to acknowledge the armistice as a truce; we look upon the battles you fought as the battles of the first campaign—the defeat of which cannot be the defeat of the war.

What? Shall the world say that India has accepted the defeat as the final one? That the blood of 1857 was shed in vain? That the sons of Ind betray their fathers' vows? No, by Hindusthan, no! The historical continuity of the Indian nation is not cut off. The war began on the 10th of May 1857 is not over on the 10th of May 1908, nor shall it ever cease till a 10th of May to come sees the destiny accomplished, sees the beautiful Ind crowned, either with the lustre of victory or with the halo of martyrdom.

But, O glorious Martyrs, in this pious struggle of your sons help. O help us by your inspiring presence! Torn in innumerable petty selves, we cannot realise the grand unity of the Mother. Whisper, then, unto us by what magic you caught the secret of Union. How the feringhee rule was shattered to pieces and the Swadeshi thrones were set up by the common consent of Hindus and Mahomedans. How in the higher love of the mother, united the difference of castes and creeds, how the venerated and venerable Bahadur Shah prohibited the killing of cows throughout India, Hew Shreemant Nanasahib after the first salute of the thundering cannon to the emperor of Delhi, reserved for himself the second one! How you staggered the whole world by uniting under the banner of mother and forced your enemies to say 'Among the many lessons the Indian Mutiny conveys to the historian and administrator, none is of greater importance than the warning that it is possible to have a revolution in which Brahmins and Shudras, Mahomedans and Hindus were united against us and that it is not safe to suppose that the peace and stability of our dominion in any great measure depends on the continent being inhabited by different races with different religious systems, for they mutually understand each other and respect and take part in each other's modes and ways and doings. The mutiny reminds us that our dominions rest on a thin crust ever likely to be rent by titanic fires of social changes and revolutions.' Whisper unto us the nobility of such an alliance of Religion and Patriotism, the true religion whichever is on the side of patriotism, the true patriotism which secures the freedom of religion.

And give us the marvellous energy daring and secrecy with which you organized the mighty volcano; show us the volcanic magma that underlie the green thin crust on which the foe is to be kept lulled into a false security; tell us how the chapatti, that fiery Cross of India flew from village to village and from valley to valley, setting the whole intellect of the nation on fire by the very vagueness of its message and then let us hear the roaring thunder with which the volcano at last burst forth with an all shuttering force, rushing, smashing, burning and consuming into one continuous fiery flow of red-hot lava-flood! With in a month, regiment after regiment, prince after prince, city after city, sepoy, police, zemindars, Pundits, Moulvis, the multiple-headed Revolution sounded its tocsin and temples and mosques resounded with the cry 'Maro feringhee Ko' Away with the foreigners! MEERUT ROSE, Delhi rose, rose Benares, Agra, Patna, Lucknow, Allahabad, Jadagalpoor, Jhansi, Banda, Indore- from Peshwar to Calcutta and from the Narmada to the Himalayas, the volcano burst forth into a sudden, simultaneous and all consuming conflagration! !

And then, oh Martyrs, tell us the little as well as the great defects which you found out in our people in that great experiment of yours. But above all, point out that most ruinous, nay, the only material draw-back in the body of the nation which rendered all your efforts futile- the mean selfish blindness which refuses to see its way to join the nation's cause. Say that the only cause of the defeat of Hindusthan was Hindusthan herself, that shaking away the slumber of centuries, the mother rose to hit the foe, but while her right hand was striking the Feringhee dead, her left hand struck, alas, not the enemy, but her forehead! So she staggered and fell back into the inevitable swoon of 50 years.

Fifty years are past, but, oh restless spirits of 1857, we promise you with our hearts' blood that your Diamond Jubilee shall not pass without seeing your wishes fulfilled!! We have heard your voice and we gather courage from it. With limited means you sustained a war, not against tyranny alone, but against tyranny and treachery together. The Daub and Ayodhya making a united stand, waged a war, not only against the whole of the British power but against the rest of the India too; and yet you fought for three years and yet you had well-nigh snatched away the crown of Hindusthan and smashed the hollow existence of the alien rule. What an encouragement this! What the Duab and Ayodhya could do in a month, the simultaneous, sudden and determined rising of the whole of Hindusthan can do in a day. This hope illumines our hearts and assures us of success. And so we allow that your Diamond Jubilee year 1917 shall not pass without seeing the resurging Ind making a triumphant entry into the world.

For, the bones of Bahadur Shah are crying vengeance from their grave! For, the blood of dauntless Laxmi is boiling with indignation! For, the shahid Peer Ali of Patna, when he was going to the gallows for having refused to divulge the secrets of the conspiracy whispered defiance to the Feringhee said in prophetic words 'You may hang me today, you may hang such as me everyday, but thousands will still rise in my place-your object will never be gained.'

Indians, these words must be fulfilled! Your blood, oh Martyrs, shall be avenged.

VANDE MATARAM

2 LETTER 2

Dearest brother

Thus it is after 18 months I have a chance to touch pen and ink again: At this rate one can quickly unlearn the art of writing altogether! You must have been very anxious about this delay but as you had received a letter from our dearest Baba in July, I thought it would be more assuring to you to hear from us a few months later than at about the same time. How glad was I to learn that you have joined the medical course and are doing well. How do you like that course? To me it is a noble course. I should like you to take not only Medicine but the Science of Physiology itself as your special province. Please to follow it up not only as a profession but as a pursuit. It opens out inexhaustible field for charity benevolence. It is respected all over the world, in the Hotentots as well as in the Aryans. The study of body-a temple wherein the soul lives-is next to the study of the soul itself.

Your choice of books last year was simply capital. Moropant, Bharat, Vivekanand-all standard book. Out of the books asked for by me only 'ज्ञेयमीमांसा' and 'अज्ञेयमीमांसा' did not come. Why? I have sent a list for this year, but do not spend more than 10 rupees on my books. If the list comes to more than that please go on omitting from the bottom. You need not buy all books new. You can send some second hand ones if you like.

And how do you like Bengal? By this time after the Puja holidays you are back to Calcutta and must have grown quite into a Bengali Babu-is not it? Forgotten Marathi language? Please take care you do not lose something else. For I am afraid I might hear at any time that some one of those clever Bengalis has stolen your heart away! Though I for one should like so much to have found a dear little Bengali sister in-law. I am as strongly in favour of these inter-provincial marriages among the Hindus as I am deadly opposed to the practice of marrying the European girls at this stage of our national life.

And now my dear Bal, something about me here. My health is all right. Ever since I came to this jail I never had a serious illness and have managed to keep my weight just what it was when I came here. I am both physically and mentally doing well –believe me, dearest, in some respects so well that I had hardly ever done so before; for life in jail, for good, for evil, is a unique chance. Man can never go out of it exactly as he came in. He goes out far better or far worse. Either more Angelic or more Feindish. Fortunately for me my mind has so quickly adapted itself to the changes in circumstances. It seems so strange that a nature so restless and active, roaming over continents, should so quickly feel quite at home in a cell hardly a dozen feet in length. And yet one of the kindest gifts of the Providence to Humanity is this plasticity, this adaptability of human mind to the everchanging environments of life.

When early in the morning and late in the evening I try a bit of Pranayam and then pass insensibly into a sweet sound- sleep. Oh how calm and quiet is that rest; so calm that when I get up in the morning it is long before I can realize again that I am in a prison cell lying on a wooden plank. All the common aims and allurements of Mankind having receded far, the conscience is perfectly pleased with itself with the conviction of having served under His banner and served to some purpose. A calm, a sweet equanimity is left with my soul and it lulls my mind in an intense peace. There are exceptions but this is the general rule. In fact if I be suddenly dropped in the midst of

Bombay or London I think I will have to shout with the hermit in शाकुंतलः – 'जनाकीर्ण
मन्ये हृतवहपरीतं गृहमिव।।'

And even if hearing the market gossip your mind sometimes sighs 'Oh still this life would have been more useful and dazzling outside' even then remember that those who work outside, work much; but those who work in the prison work more; and after all, my dearest Bal, don't you think that suffering is in itself work intense because subtle!

I get up in the morning when the bell goes on at 5 A.M. At its sound I feel as if I have entered a higher college for a higher study. Then we are doing our work of rigour till 10 A.M. while my hands and feet are automatically doing the given task, my spirit avoiding all detection is out for a morning trip, and across seas and oceans, over hills and dales, it roams sipping only pleasant things, and things noble, like a bee amongst the flowers. Then I compose some new lines. Then we dine at 12 noon, work again. From 4 P.M. comes rest; reading &c. This is the usual round of life here.

In your answer please inform me how our dear Motherland is getting on? Is the Congress united? Does it pass the resolution for the release of the Political prisoners from year to year as it did at Allahabad in 1910? Any remarkable Swadeshi enterprise like the iron works of Tata or Steam Navigation Company or new Mills? How is the Republic of China? Does it not sound like Utopia realized? :: A Romance of History! Don't suppose that China's work is a day's. No! from 1850 they have been strenuously at it, though the world knows not where the Sun is making its way –till it is risen: and Persia, Portugal and Egypt? And are the Indians in South Africa successful in getting their demands? Please mention if any important law has been passed by the new Councils, e.g. the Education Bill of the Hon. Mr. Gokhale. When the great Tilak is due to be released?

Did you show my letter to my beloved Yamuna? Please translate all to her. It is only a few years more –not more than 5- when a better day will dawn. So my beloved wife, hold on as nobly as you have done. My most respectful pranams to my dearest Vahini- she who had been and is still through her blessings –a mother, a sister and a friend at the same time. I cannot name, for obvious reasons, other whose memory my heart is now overwhelmingly full: Tell them all that I remember each and all of them. How can I forget them? No, a man in a prison can not forget. The mind, shut up from the new impressions can only feed on the old ones, and so in a prison so far from forgetting old acquaintances one vividly remembers and begins to love even those who were before forgotten. My sweet friends, in a prison one weeps and weeps and vainly waits for some one to come to wipe the tears-to speak a word of affection and love. Oh in a prison how can I forget? To all those please give my affection and love who you know were my sweet friends and comrades and dearer than life to me, and to those who even when some were not ashamed to disown the ties of blood, are still standing by you and remember me, my deepest obligations are due. :: They know that a letter from a jail must be more or less stereotyped, and hence no names. Please give my ashirwadās to dear Mai, my only sister and Vasant, my only hope. Also remember me to dear Mami and little Champi.

With all love
I remain, your own brother
TATYA

3 LETTER 3

Cellular Jail
15- 2- 14
Port Blair.

My beloved Bal,

And now coming along. A year has rolled by and the happy day has come back again! Only those who had been in a jail can fully appreciate what a Soul-entrancing blessing it is to hear from home, to write to Home!! Sweet- sweet something like the sweetness of conversation in the moonlight, by the sea-beach, with one whom one loves and adores! But wait; the bell is gone and I must go to take my food—it is 10 A.M. ...yes, now I have come back again, after having taken my food in the general file of the denizens of the jail. Yes I said it was sweet; in fact the day of a letter to Home is to me always the real पाडवा my new year's day; I count my year from that day; for I get a stock of energy and enthusiasm from the communion with my chosen few, which enables me to breathe and live and laugh a year further on. I was sorry not to write earlier and to compel you to undergo the troubles of sending a telegram. The authorities had kindly informed me of it. But you see, brother, though a year was past and I was entitled to send a letter yet the antediluvian spirit of our postal system here does not carry a letter to Calcutta from this place unless some five or six weeks after it is written so I am told. That is why a letter cannot be sent unless some fourteen months go by. But then any letter that you send reaches here almost as soon as in this twentieth century it ought to. From your letter I am so glad to learn that you are in sound health and passed the examination with credit. Examination or no examination, you must not neglect your health. No. I long to see you robust, bubbling with health and freshness and vigour. The dawn of youth, that is just breaking upon you, is the very fountain of life and energy. So do not waste it by overwork of any one member in excess of the rest. But grow in harmony, brain and body. You are a Doctor yourselves and it is a bit of presumption on a layman's part to insist on good health. But then youth is blind and forgets to lay by, a fund of energy and life, while the vital forces are still welling up from within, and the organism is growing so that when the winter of age comes, they may have abundant fund of vitality to draw on. Otherwise if your eyesight is weakened, if you look like the willow of a man – I will shout out 'Physician, heel thyself!' (Don't laugh in the sleeves- for I am not a physician and so I can afford to have a bad eyesight! For all lawyers have it – at least ought to have!) And how proud am I to know that some of my pet lambs, have come out first class B.A.s and M.A.s. That is noble! But then nobler when the field of duty that faces them now, is also well fought and well own, and are hailed therein too, as deserving of its gold medals of that great corporation of man, the gold medals of these so-called 'Universities' are as of tinsel! I should be so glad to hear from them personally- for some of them are never absent from my memory even down to this day: About those who inform you voluntarily to do so, write to me by naming and particularizing.

The books which you sent are simply capital. The महात्मा परिचय - what a fine translation.- and the introduction of two lines how modest and appropriate –‘फोडिले भांडार, धन्याचा हा माल। मी तव हमाल भार वाही’ ! I liked it awefully. And the ‘जाईचा मंडप’ ! No sooner did I go through a dozen of pages, then each time, each word began to pulsate harmoniously with my heart, and I knew who could have written it! The language is worthy of the sentiments so poetic and sublime, worthy of the theme, and theme worthy of both. I wish that such popular series as the भारत गौरव माला realize their responsibility of guiding and not only tickling the popular fancy and so publish every now and then political history, science and economy, e.g. Mill’s Representative Government etc. About the books on Vedant philosophy, well, I fear it is not opportune that such men should be busy with such things. The Americans need Vedant philosophy, and so does England; for they have developed their life to that fullness, richness and manliness- to Kshatriyahood and so stand on the threshold of that Brahminhood, wherein alone the capacity to read and realize such philosophy can co-exist. But India has not. We are at present all शूद्रा s and cannot claim access to the Veda and Vedanta.

That is the underlying idea why shudras were not allowed to Vedas; not certainly not, for cruelty, nor for narrow or vested interest- otherwise पुराणा s would not have been written by the very Brahmins expounding the same philosophy more lucidly. We, as a Nation, are unfit for these sublime thoughts, for it is well known that Bajirao II was a great Vedantist and that is why, perhaps, he could not see the difference a kingdom and a pension. Let us study history, political science, science, economy, live worthily in this world, fulfil the गृहस्थाश्रम - the householders’s duties – and then the वानप्रस्थाश्रम and its philosophic dawn might come. And whatever these works are meant to do, they might be left to be written by widows, old men and pensioners out of offices. They should live in past – old works and old puzzles of God and soul and man. The young, the youth – why not live in the future? Talk of Vedanta! – Benares has not produced a single martyr and they cannot give up a farthing for their fatherland!!!

And now, something about myself here. Well, during the last year, I had no illness, whatever. My health is excellent and my weight, as yet, unreduced and that is a feat, is it not? In this tiny cellular sanitarium, I get up early, take regular amount of food regularly, and go to bed early- in fact have to do all these things and so ‘early to bed and early to rise’ is making me healthy – (though not ‘wealthy and wise’! In fact you, Oh would be Doctor Saheb! Could not have devised a better time table for your patients. And, good as is the health of my body, the health of my mind is better still. Any work hard or mean, I ply myself to humming every now and then, ‘स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः’

or ‘यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् । स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विदन्ति मानवाः’

or ‘सर्वारंभा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः’! And every evening – for now a days I am in a cell from which a bit of the sky is visible – I watch the glorious sunset and the pomp of light and shade and loose myself in the rose and the lilly, and the lilac of the west; thinking now this and now that ; from the poets ‘एकतस्तटत मालमालिनीम् । पश्य धातुरसनिम्नगामिव ’ Or ‘तेन मानिनि ममात्र गौरवम् ’ to the profoundest fancies of idealist philosophers, that all that seems is but subjective affection and there is nothing objective to correspond to it – at least we do not know of it. And my mind is perfectly

happy – happy even as it was in his company there – with her company there !! And if at times, the mind like a child gets silly and simply will weep – then the Grand Reason steps in the smiles 'well sweet heart, what ails thee? – what unknown you suffer? How silly! Did you want to ride on the crest of ambition, drive in the chariot of self – glorification yourself ? If you did, well, then you deserved to be baffled and defeated in such a selfish and demoralizing ambition! –But God and I know you did not covet any reward personally – no, neither fame nor name nor land nor lucre, nay, not even happiness. The only thing you wanted was to be privileged to suffer most ! At least that is what you used to say in my presence ! –to sacrifice most, for others, for humanity:- Then lo ! where is the disappointment ? you have done 'यज्ञं सर्वस्वदक्षिणम्' are suffering without end, without limitation of time ! Not a minute, not an action of yours that is not dedicated to the purification of the race through suffering. Then rejoice! What could you have done better than this ? And the mind plumes its feathers again, and soars, and rises and sings once more ! But if ever the mind still goes on still puffing up its little Ego, then the Grandam takes it out and showing the world says 'There are the Himalayas 1 There was a time that they were not there and a time there will come when they shall not be there !!!And this moon and this solar system and the Sidereal !! It is too much then for that little mind; it forgets itself, is absorbed in the Universe- ashamed of its self-importance and self-care!!!

So my beloved Bal, both of us here are in perfect health of body and mind. Do not care at all about us. The only thing that we feel individually attaches us to this world is thy health and safety. So if you guarantee these two – of course, try your best and then we do not care for the result-we shall be happiest. As yet jail has left no mark, no shadow on us for anything worse –and all this health is in spite of circumstances and not in virtue of them. You have written about the petition you sent to the authorities here enquiring about the time of visit &c. Well in fact I ought to have been, according to the practice here, released from this cellular jail and allowed to live on the island. My 'behaviour' is admittedly good. But then neither of us is released. I am trying to request to Government to reconsider this and you too whenever you want to know anything be written to the authorities here. Very soon our dearest Baba will have done his 5 years and you can then claim a visit . But our release and permission to bring our relations here to live with us, the authorities here can do very little, though they can do every thing in the case of other convicts. Nor they are very much to be blamed, for orders we suppose come directly from the Indian Government. So you better send a petition to the Indian Government whenever you fail to know anything directly from the authorities here. But even as it is do not worry yourself about any arrangements concerning us. The Government will do in all likelihood all that justice demands themselves. And we shall be reminding them every now and then. What else have we do ? You only care for your health and safety. I am glad you remember what I told you in the High Court.

Assure our beloved Yamuna that these four years will not pass without ushering the dawn of a happier day. So let that noble heart and that heart –our dearest Vahini hold on ! Hold on even as they have been doing up to this time !! Let them read all 'मराठी' literature and not only the old mythological works but new and current and living streams of life's expression in West and East. It was a sad Pride that I felt when I heard the noble death of our noble comrade and brother Sakharam.* You know it was in the High School days that we first saw each other ! He lived bravely –died bravely. What more can one wish for oneself ! His wife, dear Janki Vahini- well I have not seen her and yet have seen her through your pen-pictures. All that I feel for her that she is not poor,

not ill starred- but called upon to play the holiest part in life even because it is the loneliest! Remember me to her, And how is tiny Vasant? Will the great little man write me a word ? He is now some 7 years old, is he not ? And his mother ? Oh ! I saw her for the last time in the Dongri jail! A sister is one of the richest gifts that a man can have!! Give my love to her and a sweet kiss to that great little gentleman- my Vasant ! Also remember me to all our relations- one and all –and above all to her who though not a relation and even because she is not a relation, whom I used to call jokingly the mother of the party and whom now in all seriousness and gratefulness I call as my own mother and who is standing by you and remember me-give her my most grateful regards and loving remembrances –names not to utter which seems a sacrilege and yet which cannot be uttered, for their own sake, from a prison wherein not only legs but tongues too are fettered! Well you know them all. I told you who were nearest to my heart as my most intimate friends-to all of them give my love, my fresher love! If some of them voluntarily ask you to be particularized in letters to me from you I will then imburden my heart and name them. The books that are to be sent to me I write down here. The time is up and so my sweetest Bal, I am with most reluctant steps receding and tearing myself away from you.

Your own brother
TATYA

4 LETTER 4

Cellular jail
9-3-1915
Port Blair

Best beloved Bal,

And once again, my pen after a Ripvanwinkle's sleep is wakened and hastens to acknowledge the receipt of your letter received some 7-8 months ago. To have a letter from you is like to see you: for partly owing to the cinematographic flashes with which your letter abounds and partly owing to the wonderful faculty, with which the solitude of a Prison, endows the power of hearing in man- faculty, which enables one to visualize the thing heard, as in the case of those born blind. Whenever I hear from you , I succeed in almost seeing you and all those dear faces and dear scenes that constitute our happy little home on the banks of the musical Godavari. Our dearest brother Baba and myself are happy in seeing you doing well and as long as you take care of your health and try your best to lead a life, at once noble and happy and healthy, you need not be anxious about our health, mental and physical. The books which you sent last year were 16 and this year's 13 (4 English 2 Oct. 2 Nov. The rest Sanskrit and Vernacular) Please do write whether this is correct. Next time you send a parcel, please to send a list with it in your own handwriting, so that we may be able to check the postal delivery. I was glad to read

'समाजरहस्य' (why you sent two copies of it ?) It is a very good Novel. One thing more – among the social institutions – the greatest curse of India is the system of castes. The mighty current of Hindu life is being threatened to parish in bogs and sands. It is no good saying 'we will reduce it to four caste system first. That would and should not be. It must be swept away, root and branch. The best means to that effect is crusade against it, in all forms of literature, especially drama and novel. Every true patriot should cease to have double dealing and speak out his mind clearly and act up to it. The only care to be taken being not to pay so much attention and not to create so much fuss in this side-issue and our internal relation as to forget and hamper and thwart the Issue – our Relation with the world –but for the right adjustment of which, no internal questions can be satisfactorily solved, or solved to any substantial purpose. So, I shall like to have a number of goodly written novels, like the 'समाजरहस्य', which would attack this effect and unjust social curse. It had done much good in the past, but it is dead now: So let us bury it, -with tears if you like. I am glad to here that the Government is going to allow you to see me this year. Please to thank the authorities for it. But I am firmly of opinion , that dear Vahini should not be put to troubles of the voyage this year. You should come alone and when you see all the facilities or otherwise here and know the best way to bring her, then the next time you come to see me, you may bring her, and dear Mai too. I feel it a duty to forgo the inestimable pleasure of seeing those dearest once this year, for the sake of their convenience. So, please come alone this year.

It sent a thrill of delight in my heart to hear that the Indian troops were allowed to go to Europe, in their thousands to fight against the best military power in the world and that they had acquainted themselves with such splendour and were covered with military glory. Thank God ! Manliness after all is not dead yet in the land! And a funny thing! We have been trying our best to encourage foreign travel and used to congratulate ourselves if a dozen could be sent a year! And now Providence has done

what we could not – thousands of Hindus, orthodox like the Gurkhas and Rajputs and reformed like the Shikhs have crossed the sea and under the Government patronage ! Now let our Pandits sit hatching over the eggs of 'शास्त्रार्थ' to see if foreign travel is permissible to the Hindus or not? Permissible or not, the Hindus have crossed the sea, and in crossing it they have crossed an epoch! What the crusades have done for Europe by bringing it in contact with the superior civilization of Asia, this conflict with the Europeans of our Hindu troops across the seas, will do for India – for Asia.

As for the petition, that is made for the release of Political prisoners in the Punjab we can hardly thank them sufficiently for this their charitable deed. You may be knowing by this time that some of us have already volunteered, to go to the front of the War and I am glad to inform you that Government have made a special note of it, though no answer could come as yet.

By the by , please to write of the rumour that some M.P. had asked a question in the Parliament about me, or some of us before the war broke out, be true and if so the particulars of it. Did you get the poems on Guru and Ravi?

It pained me very much to hear, that Hon. Gokhale was dead. He was after all a great patriot. True, at times, especially in panics, he used to say and do things, which he himself must have been ashamed of a few months after, to own. But then his life was dedicated to the service of motherland and there was very little personal and selfish about him. All along his life, he served Her and for the good of Her, as he saw it. How anxious I was to see him, before death parted us; and to compare notes as he had said to me in London when we saw each other for the last time. We could not agree on certain points and he said 'well Mr. Savarkar, come! We will see each other after some six years and then would compare notes!' Maharashtra must send some one –worthier than he – to his place in councils. If every Indian could do at least as much as he did!

Next time you send books please sand the novels 'जन्मभूमि' and 'गौतम' which brother is very eager to read. I was very much afraid that owing to the invasion of France you would be unable to hear from Madam Cama- who had been ever since my coming here a second mother to you and who had so nobly and so faithfully stood by us in the darkest hour of our life . But I was very glad to be assured that she, even in the midst of this world – hubbub, remembered you and had regularly been sending letters to you. At the touch of one such faithful, noble, unshaken loving hand, one's heart recovers its belief in Humanity-belief rudely shaken by the disappearance of the closest and by the treachery of the truest and by the indifference of the dearest. It is a pity I can not write to the dear lady and tell her How I esteem her noble life and her solicitude for the needy and the distressed- and love and long to see her once more : but as it is please to give her all my esteem and respects before you give them to any of our relatives: for what wonder they do something for us? Wonder is how she does and does so much.

While I am reading the books you sent I see that in the Telagu provinces the new life that is struggling to find expression all over India, has been sweeping over our bretheren there. The Andhra Sabha 'आंध्रसभा' is a great and grand movement but the question of getting that province separated from the Tamil one is not enobling. But what pained me most and what was but a natural corollary from the desire of petty provincialisms was that the national shouts were 'आंध्र माताकी जय!' in this little thing and straw we see the direction of an ominous wind to come. This is one of the unhealthy reactions of the grand Swadeshi movement and must be corrected before it is too late.

The Swadeshi connected in Bengal with the little partition question brought in this reaction. Every province wants to be separated, and shouts and invokes long life to itself! But how can the province live unless the Nation lives? They all-Maharashtra, Bengal, Madras- are great and will live long but through Her-India! So let us not say 'आंध्र माताकी' but 'भारतमाताकी जय' of whom 'आंध्र' is only a limb, and let us sing not 'वंग आभार' but 'हिंद आभार'! All provinces and petty languages instead of asking to be separated, should try to get amalgamated and remove the barriers that yet remain and destroy the confusion of tongues and not to hug it. Smaller nationalities! Is not Belgium a sufficient warning? The greatest good that the British Government has done without meaning it, is to melt and mould the disintegrating factions of our Motherland and hammer us into a one people. Now instead of trying to remove whatever stands in the way of its consummation, we are on the one hand hugging to the fetters that were the necessary price of this boon and trying to turn the very boon into a curse, on the other.

Now I think I had written all that I felt and wanted to ask about your letter and the books you sent. Next time you please to send me the books the list of which I subjoin. Instead of sending a parcel you may bring them with you if you come before September 1st If not send a parcel. Please to answer this letter as soon as you have carried the necessary communication with our friends. I am extremely glad that you could see the gentleman you referred to in your letter. I knew you would like each other very soon for birds of the same feathers gather together. Please to give my affection and best remembrance to him. I remember him every now and then. How is our dear Professor getting on? My heart gladdens at the thought that by this time one more bird must have come back to that dear little nest after sustaining a fight through dreary deserts of burning sands, where no drop cools the thirsty heart and no dew vivifies the parched flower of hope. In his release and release of so many of them I feel as if my own partial release had come. If poor dear Sakharam too would have been there to day! Though foolish and almost dishonourable to feel he should have been living who has done better to die in such a cause – still the heart feels.

As for as we are concerned I again assure you not to be anxious about us at all. All the term –prisoners of our case had been sent back to India, and we lifers(life-transportees)only remain. As long as war is going on, I, on principle, have made up my mind not to ask for anything so as to embarrass the authorities here; and at present both of us are keeping good health and Captain-now Major Murray is superintending the jail affairs. As long as he is here, you may rest assured that nothing that evinces a personal rancour will be done or said; no under hand pin-pricks, beyond what the regulations require. Every letter you send and every book will be duly delivered. As for as our daily life is concerned, well, it is going on in the same even way as it did last year. In a prison what happens on the first day happens always-if nothing worse happens. In fact it seems to be the essence of prison discipline to avoid all novelty, all change. Like specimen and curios in a museum –here we are each exactly in the same place and same position, bottled and labelled with the same numbers with more or less dust about us; and the guide book that I wrote to you in my last years' letter may serve the purpose of description as long as I am here. We get up early work hardly, eat punctually – at the same time, at the same place and the same amount and kind of food prepared with same matchless prison-skill and medical care; - I read much in the time that can be spared from work and sometimes in the evening attack many flowers-now remembered only in names –and flower like themes with blank verse and then sleep. Here one thing must be said. Although it is true that prisoners are not free to do or say

what they will, yet to the credit of the jail authorities it must be admitted that every one is absolutely free to dream what he likes. And I assure you I take the fullest advantage of this concession. Almost every night I tell you I break jail and out by dale and down and by tower and town go on romping till I find some one of you –some one who somewhere had been held close to my bosom! Every night I Do it but my beneficent jailors take no notice of it. You have only to wake in the jail, that is all they say.

I hope just at the end of the war you send a public petition for the release of us. The thing is this. Not only in India but even in any free and self-governing country the Government can not release political prisoners unless the Government are backed up and supported by the wish of the people to that effect. An exercise of the right of amnesty can not be made by the king or the president unless the people are willing to have the prisoners back. If Indians are willing and petitions to that effect go at the end of the war we may be released and if Indians are not willing to have us back neither the Government can release us nor it is worth while to have that release. Port Blair is willing to have me. And I am here. I have no wish to thrust myself on any people unwilling to have me back. At any rate you may ask for our being sent out of this jail just as all other prisoners-even those who had been sentenced here additionally –are allowed to go and settle on the island and bring their family here; in short, all the concessions that the prisoners get under the regulations here in force. In this we ask nothing special and this by repeated petitions from you and us both we in all probability will succeed in getting.

Last year in the letter of our dearest Vahini she had not written how the little Dhondi was? Is she married? Please to give my best love to our beloved Yamuna- how is her health? Does she read? In what class or college is my dear Balvantrao? And the other children? Give my best love and respects to my dearest elder sister in –law – whose life is a record of self –sacrifice and noble enduring and calm and silent suffering for no fault of her and for the good of others, and also to my younger Vahini whose kind remembrances of me I got last year through our Mai's letter. I remember them and all other beloved friends every day. At every corner that my mind takes in its aimless rambles their dear image is sure to be met and then my mind is sure to stop and build a new temple of a sweet and a sad Tear and hold them there a while and worship them who made my life as it is and pray they do not forget me. Whoever allowed, may be for a minute –the right of loving and being loved by me –I worship them all in the same temple and on the same pantheon my petts and boomfriends, my comrades and chums!!

Well my dearest brother , I am glad your study of medicine is promising to be fruitful. Do not injure health for the sake of study. Let me know your weight. Now my dearest Bal with all my love and with my choicest आशिर्वादs to you and our dear little Vasant and our sister Mai, will you allow me to tear myself from your sweet mental communion.

Your own brother
TATYA

5 LETTER 5

Cellular jail
6-7-1916
Port Blair

My beloved Bal and sweet Shanta,

Please accept my and my brother's heartiest congratulations upon your entering the second stage of life –the life of wedded love. Nobly hast thou, dear Bal! fulfilled the first stage of your life –the stage of self-culture and self-sacrifice. Thou possessest the golden keys to the treasured wealth of knowledge both ancient and modern, in the acquaintance with Sanskrit and English languages. The final examination that you have passed in Medicine is bound to stand you in good stead, in any part of the world and in spite of any laws passed by a narrow misguided legislature; while your pen has already made its influence felt in Maharashtra in both the fields of prose and poetry. On the other hand the responsibilities and duties of that stage could not have been better discharged and fulfilled. When the storm began to gather over our Mother it found you unmoved and firm at your post – it burst and left you undaunted and true, and among the many faithless yet faithful! The enthusiasm, to awaken which amongst their youth Europe has been holding before their eyes the glories of iron crosses and Victoria crosses and unrolling rolls of honour –that enthusiasm and Faith had been displayed by you who discarded even the reward of public acclamation nobly therefore hast thou completed the first stage of your life now enter ye-, dear Bal and beloved Shanta ! –on the happiest and most exalted stage of life, the life of wedded love. May the path, dear Bal, be strewn with roses and may thy youth, dear Shanta, blossom forth in Amaranthuses and gold ! Domestic happiness- 'the only bliss of Paradise that has survived its fall' may bless your nuptial shed! मधुनक्तमुतोषसि मधुमत् पाथिवं रजः (The dawn, the evening sweet and grateful be the Earth)!!

You perhaps remember that in one of my letter I had just dropped a suggestion to the effect that it would not have surprised me if some one amongst the clever Bengalis had stolen your heart! After all the expected had very nearly happened. For though I long to see the day, when inter –provincial marriages amongst the Hindus would throw down the artificial and harmful barriers of castes and creeds and the Great River of life – our Hindu Life would, having freed itself of all bogs and sands, flow in an ever fresh and mighty current- uninterrupted and uninteruptible –still the first and foremost thing to be effected. In that direction is to restore to love her sole privilege and right of presiding over the wedding rights. Indeed, we can no longer be blind to the fact that we care more for the good breeding of cattle and fowls than for the Eugenics of man. Centuries of child marriages and marriages by proxies! Centuries of love banished from its legitimate sphere of influence to attract and develop elements that tend to the betterment of body and mind and soul; and the inevitable result is a race puny, debilitated, all vigour and manhood sapped out of it. Thousand things have wrought this-and the marriage customs that prevail in us are one of the few important factors contributing to it. Authorities should come in to sanctify but not to silence love altogether. And glad was I therefore that, the age, the education, the part that mutual attraction and esteem played in welding your hearts together and above all the sanction of all those who feel drawn towards us should have enabled you to have realized that in

which I thought our family should not lag behind. Or in short when dear Bhau has sanctified it with his blessings it goes without saying that it must have been just after my heart.

And now Doctor Saheb, where are you going to settle? Only yesterday I was told to write this second letter as the first had been lost in the Post office by accident. Although it must have cost you a lot of anxiety yet to me it enabled to know your present address. From that I see you are in Bombay, at present. Would you settle in that unhealthy and cramped in city! Would not the rising free Baroda suit better where the enlightened prince Sayaji rules? But all that as you choose and not I –for you are on the spot and know how to judge best. One thing only I would insist upon and that is you must not in any case risk your Health and freedom- personal freedom. This is depend upon me- perfectly not only permissible but positively commendable in your case and the case of those who stand as you do. In other cases too much attention to personal considerations is undoubtedly demoralizing; but you cannot pay too much attention to it. Be anywhere in the world – in the forests of Africa- in the Republic of America-the medical knowledge that you possess is sure to serve a passport and a safe guard to you. For indeed wherever death is Doctors also can be- (Ugh! Seen very angry? Of course I mention this with all due respect to the Majesty of Medicines- in fact in order to exalt it.) Therefore do nothing that would do injury to your Health and also, nay more so, health of Shanta. She should of course be encouraged to read more and to write even if she chooses; but the first and foremost consideration of a young lady should be her health. It is a trust she holds for others, a debt she owes to generations not yet born. Every atom of health that a young lady dissipates is so much that is taken away from the Strength of souls that are yet to rise. She is a golden link that joins the Yesterday to the Morrow; a Promise that holds in it the possibilities of her race. Therefore the first care of a wife should be her health that would harmonise the beauties of her body and mind and soul. So neither study nor pleasure should entice her away so as to tax her energy too much, but both should be indulged in only so far as to render that Health perfect and that Beauty transperantly pure.

Now something about me; and yet I wonder what that something is! For there am I as you left me after you finished the last letter you got from me. Change is a word that is not found in prisoner's dictionary-especially in its Port Blair Edition. The great war that you say has shaken your hemisphere has left totally untouched me and my Port Blair. This our little kingdom here is about the only state that can with a justifiable touch of egoism claim in its yearly speech from the Throne of having maintained its interests in tact in this World –Earth Quake. Our imports and exports are unchanged. We keep our lights all night up. While our international communications are as peaceful as they had been ever since this little kingdom rose out of its Oceanic Night! Mr. Asquith has every reason to be jealous of us. Our citizens have not been forced to subsist only on a reduced scale of meal and Potatoes as the Germans are said to die for the simple reason that we never ate any! Whatever we eat we grow- grass and such other edibles while these solid and aspiring walls of my jail have reduced the very walls of China to a mere heap of debris. Those walls could, and that too not very effectively stop the outsiders from rushing in but these walls while doing that can also effectively prevent any one inside from going out. No! on pain of death' no! Thus we, like a little world organized to serve as a prototype and a foretaste of the hope of the Humanitarians, when the war shall have been banished from the realms of man, live-I beg your pardon – exist- as peacefully and quietly as to put to shame the very realm of Death.

As to the interview –I think it is best to wait till this war be over. For to a certain extent we can understand the hesitation of the Government in granting it now. And even after the war the letters that you may write to them for the interview should be only on the ground that every other prisoner is allowed a visit, so should I after 5 years and not on the ground of any anxiety of our hearts to meet. For in that case even if they do not grant it we shall at least have the manly satisfaction of not having displayed the most sacred and the most human of all wounds-the wounds of separation-to an alien and unsympathetic eye. Again whatever you wish to write in amelioration here should be written directly to Delhi. For almost nothing lies in the hands of authorities here as for as change, especially for the better, is concerned in my case and whatever they can do they are doing and I would request them to do if possible, when it be left undone. I know that some of you though sure and certain that I Shall not break down under this imprisonment are still grieved to think that I should have been suffering all this and should have been forced to desist from all work social or political or even literary. But brother just think- is suffering no work? Who worked more for Christianity –they who suffered in silence and unknown or they who worked? Surely both; but I suspect that those who work for a good cause outside, work much-but they who suffer for it in prisons and fields work more. At bottom work, if true, is suffering and suffering, if true is work. Suffering is the motor, the power that moves, and goads and propels a people. Unless the best amongst them suffer the rest can not work. Both are grand, both are indispensable, and if both be indispensable, then what grief if we be chosen and ordered to guard this post rather than that? I bless myself that this fell to my lot! Do not grieve, brother, that I sit in darkness and simply waiting while every one else is lighting his or her lamp to shed light on the path of man.

Do you not remember that 'Her State is queenly: thousands at her bidding post; - they also serve who only stand and wait!'

And how much more then do they who not only wait but suffer and yet stand!! The worker is great for he puts stone upon stone and chisels and moulds; but then the cement of the Church? – is the sufferer! The martyr that bleeds!!

And indeed, Bal! you can hardly believe how happy I feel from moment to moment – strange breezes of bliss pass and repass kissing all the inevitable physical worry and weakness into ever fresh ever blossoming joy of the soul at rest . I feel just as I used to feel in the college days after some final examination had been satisfactorily gone through and went to stay home quietly but confident by expecting the welcome news of passing. This Great Trial, This Test, to achieve the deliverance of the Mother!-and so satisfactorily gone through as far as I was concerned! And now I have come Home here and am confidently expecting the Great News that must come! Oh! How I sleep soundly –how sweet the things; for I worked so strenuously in the Day and while I was required at Her head- quarters that as soon as this night came sleep fell as gently on my eyelids as dew. There are moments when ugly dreams trouble-desire to shine and see light-but at the first touch of analysis the self stands revealed and the dreams melt away, are swept away- and calm once more set in. Oh, when some times after such a sleep I wake in my cell and hear the waves idly breaking on the beach just outside my little, high placed and barred window I remember the lines of Kalidas प्रासादवातायनदृश्यवीचिः। प्रबोधयत्यर्णव एव सुसम्। and fancying myself like that king I laugh and play and joke – all with myself! Such thoughts are suggested by that consciousness of a rest that is at the same time the intensity of work – and they in their turn guiling away the mind from the too real heidousness of a prison strengthen that consciousness of that rest. And thus

it is a fact that On the whole I am and so is our brother happy, satisfied and willing to live as long as that must be in the atmosphere of frowns and frettings and harshness, of constant clash and constant discipline every step in which reminds you that you belong to a race of slaves.

The account of your marriage ceremony was very graphically written. As to the writer- he is indeed a very gifted man but with him self –diffidence is a great drawback. I think he should first try to write small popular stories and short novels and get them published in some of the magazines for that would give him confidence in himself. Take for example the question of caste system. Let him by suggestive stories paint the harm it is now doing, how it is retarding us from the Great Goal to which all mankind is moving. Then let him write bigger works and so on. To him and to the Sahodar Yamaraj and to all of them give my most affectionate remembrances – my companion of Childhood and chums of the College days and comrades in the field, all they whomever I called mine and to whom I pledge my word I remember them all with fresh affection and esteem. I was glad to know the whereabouts of my dear Rishi! Is he still in the 'Service'; holds the same office? And my new friends! I remember him so much ; for he had been so considerate and kind under- even under these circumstances, even when he himself had been undergoing the same trial! And then he is so intelligent and active. I have missed the name of our Professor in the account of your marriage ceremony? All my best wishes for him, and my dear and very esteemed Madam Cama! She must have suffered a lot of worry owing to the war! Give her my best and freshest love and tell her that those whom I saw in Paris while I was with her then are ever foremost in my memory- especially the Sannyasin! The photos that you sent have been a constant source of happiness to us. My dear Yesu Vahini looks so calm and ever bearing and ever true 'like a Devata',as one of the officers had said to me when she came to see me in the Bombay jail! My deepest love to her and my Tai and my Shanta. I am proud of them all! Next time do not forget to forward the translation of my beloved Yamane's letter – Noble girl! – poor girl! A thousand pitities! And yet a thousand glories for her silent and yet intense fixity of purpose. Do not press her to come to Bombay if her parents object. Their judgment and love must be respected. How are all her brothers ? My most humble प्रणाम to my mother and aunt मावशी.

With all love
I am yours –TATYA

6 LETTER 6

Cellular jail
5 Aug 1917
Port Blair

My beloved Bal,

I was extremely glad to get your answer to my last letter which I sent to you in July 1916. How grateful we felt to here in your latest that you with all our friends are getting on well, and are healthy and happy. Thus it has pleased Providence to spare for you another year of bliss and especially of that tender and pure bliss which is only to be found in the bosom of a devoted and dear family life. You see, my Bal, the times and the climes in which the lot of our generation has fallen, make it so imperative for all noble and honest hearts to choose the path that leads through sorrows and sighs and separations which is the path of duty, that the heart so hardened and accustomed to the hard and merciless blows of fate comes to look upon disasters and disappointments as the very order of nature at any rate of our part in the nature's scheme, and when a delighting event takes place, its attention is more fixed on how temporary such a good luck must be than how good that luck is. To me a joy is ever a solution of tears. Well, any how the days are changed and with changing fortune friends too are returning. When I left you in the Dock in Bombay High Court, and had a last look of you not being allowed even to shake hands, waved my hat and parted, my child, at that time the sting of the whole scene was in the thought that we- Dear Baba and I – could not do anything for you, our nearest and dearest charge. So young, so humble and having already suffered more than a man in his whole life does, you, my brother, were cast adrift, befriended by none, hated by many, suspended by a powerful Empire! The family hearth seemed extinguished for ever, the family gods broken to pieces. And although even all that could not deter us from the right nor make me ally myself with the wrong, yet it was with a bleeding heart that I wrote

जो वंशबाग उध्वस्त झाला। संततपुष्प तोचि एक। (the garden that has shed all its flowers for the garland of the Gods is in blossom for ever.) Even the ever greens of hope stood withered and blasted. Only dear Vasanta, that was the bud, a melancholy memory of the past. But now a few kindly touches of the spring have revived the sap and the creepers are putting forth new buds. We had dear Vasanta, and we have our Raman and God willing we may be blessed with one more messenger of new life. The lamp of love is burning cheerfully under thy roof, and its warm and kind reflections have lightened the utter darkness of my cell here. And the new name of little Ranjan brings to mind the all suffering, the all loving, mother, his grand-mother, my dear Mavashi. What a joy it must have been to her! Please to give my love to that dear little child whom perhaps I may never see! And tell me whether it understands it or not! And why did you not write to me about Shanta herself? You left it to Vahini to do it for you. It is typically Indian but in your next you must write to me directly about your child and everything else. It is this extreme modesty that makes the generality of Indian babes grow rather in the shade than in the full light of their parents' eyes. No, No! you must look upon it as a special and sacred charge. It was a pity that our dear Vahini should have been suffering from Plague. I thought that this dire epidemic had at last by this time left our shores but

it seems that it rages there still. Please be very careful of it. Is it a little less rigorous than it used to be? Has not medical science as yet been able to find some reliable cure for it? You should better leave Bombay as soon as it appears there. Nothing can be too costly to avoid its dire claws, if indeed we can not blunt them.

The last parcel that I got was in January 1916 so neither of us has received any parcel for the last eighteen months or so when we ought to have received two. Now this was the reason what made us very anxious about your safety and I had to ask the permission of the Superintendent, who so kindly gave it, to wire to you. But I think we should take as much care as it is possible to avoid any such necessity. The best way would be that letters and parcels should be posted by you in fixed months, if not dates,.....

This much, so far as we are considered. But then there is the other party in the Post of the Government, and we cannot help suiting things to their pleasure. In your last letter you have written of a parcel lost in the post and last year my letter also was lost. Now what is the meaning of this? Thousands of parcels and letters come all right to this place; Only our letters and parcels should be so mysteriously spirited away! Is it the post? If so please to leave no stone unturned till they give some definite explanation for the loss of this parcel. You must have registered it; then it would be clear whether and through whose indulgence or malice, my letters and parcels are tampered with. This much for the post office. But if not the post – It is the Government ! Well; if so, then, Mum !!! Mum is the word!! As I have learnt to do without so many things which make life worth having, so also I shall and can learn to do without a yearly parcel too! But one should have thought that when a dozen censors have followed a book from the printer's office to the clearance house and when powerful microscopes have searched the very anatomy of the pages, the books, at least, those which are found unobjectionable should have been returned to their owner!

The Nasik conference was really a success. The resolution about the release of the political prisoners has delighted even us, the forlorn and forgotten, and our deep gratitude to those who dare to remember us still. One wonders why the Congress should fight shy of any such thing even after its union. Perhaps the leaders of that body are too much weighed down by the sense of self-importance. Perhaps they think themselves too immaculate – far more responsible a band of statesmen and patriots than General Botha whose Government has released the leaders Rank and file of the Boer rebellion or Redmond whose nationalists have never ceased to try for the release of the Irish prisoners till they succeeded in having it. Nor can it be said that 'that was a general participation in a rebellion' as Mr. Bonarlaw has attempted to state; for firstly in the Indian Political prisoners also the overwhelming majority are convicts of general participation and secondly the suffragists though admittedly and case for case had been convicted of 'Individual' charges were released by Mr. Asquith long ago. But leave the Congress alone ! At any rate as soon as the war ends please to see if a public Petition for our release could be sent. Such a petition and resolution do not in themselves bring such a release, but they at any rate make it more acceptable if it ever comes. For I for one would indeed feel it a Shame to go back to a people which dares not, as for all I know will not to remember those who loved and love and will never cease to love the land of their birth and rightly or wrongly but fell fighting for Her! See, see if the petition could be sent. That would be far more significant than any resolutions or meetings.

While together for a minute or so, I said one day to our dear Baba, that there is said to be a पितृऋण Pitrarina and देवऋण Devarina and ऋषिऋण Rishirina &c. So also there is

Putrarina पुत्रऋण (Debt due to a son). After the receipt of your letter I felt myself fully acquitted of it! For after all you are now fully educated and fully fledged. Now come what may at least two years of joy have been bestowed on you by the kind Providence and through you on us. No day can shine forever . The life on this earth is like a three patalled flower; one is coloured with pleasure, the second with the colour of pain, the third mixed or colourless. Now the petal of pleasure and then that of pain gets wormed and thus this vain round of recurrence goes on. Take any letter or any life or even History itself it is more or less a book of mere statistics of so many births and so many deaths, so many weddings and so many mournings, so much colours and so much shade. So while there is a brief respite, a passing ray of joy, a single touch of the spring, let us not forget the hardship of the winter or foolishly depend upon and get addiction to these wines of spring, while they are dancing in the cup. No, No, our,...of those who are born in India in this age... our constant companion is winter and not spring! Let us not forget- that our life is a vast Sahara unbearable and still to be borne, sandy, burning. And while we are keeping to the path of duty that passes through this parched desert, if the grace of God places in our path such an 'Oasis' as this with which we have been recently blest, then let us not forget that it is an accident, an art of grace; and without haste and rest must continue our way on this holy pilgrimage of life. Let us pray in all humility as the old saints prayed 'Give unto us what thou wilt and when thou wilt and how much thou wilt! And also take away from us what thou wilt and how much thou wilt'. After all the fine ideal for a young man is not to acquire but to sacrifice, not to rear but 'the garden that sheds all its flowers for the garland of the Gods and thus is in blossom for ever.

How is my dear Mai getting on. What a silly idea I could forget my only Sister! I may as well get angry and cease to speak with myself. While the day lasts try to save something and invest in some safe form in the name of dear Shanta or dear Ranjan for we can never tell when winter may come again.!! Nothing could match the ideal constancy of affection of our dear Madam Cama. Even the war has not made her forget you! Thus it is that many a time the blood is not thicker than choice and there are affections which noble hearts alone can know of which neither the lack of blood nor of interest can cool and which growing up in an ideal land flourish and are nursed on forces so subtle that the every day and matter of fact would fails to see or comprehend.

How are also my beloved Mai (Yamuna) and Vahinis getting on. My love to them all. How is dear Balu? When I saw him in the Bombay jail he seemed to upright and so loving a boy! Now he must be quite a respectable gentleman? And so also Anna. I expected him to be a clever and able youth and shall be very glad to know how far my guess has been correct. I wish I could know everything about all my brothers including dear Dattu and Nana and what they do. But it is not and can not be owing to my forgetting them as my dear Yamuna seems to think but for other reasons which she can well understand by her past experiences that refrained me from mentioning in my previous letters. If there be any man or any family next to dear Baba to whom I owe all that is best in me, and owing to whose noble patronage and winning solicitude I had unusual chances and facilities of assimilating the noblest things of this world and even of doing something for our common Mother-land, then that man and that family is theirs: (Chiploonkers). But the sense of having been the cause of so much worry and loss and pain to them with whom the dearest ties of blood and love and mutual respect have bound me, has already been so keen a source of sadness and mental unhappiness to me that I do not dare to add an inch more to it all. And so have denied myself the gratification of expressing my thankfulness or love. Otherwise who cannot be proud of

those fine youths such as my own brothers in law are-at any rate promised to be? And of him who brought me up as dearly as them?.....and of that saintly dutiful mother!! The same thing is true of all my friends! I remember them all! But for their own sake and not for my own sake, dare not acknowledge them all. I could not understand who the pleader was, who came to you as my contemporary but if really so, please to thank him on my behalf for remembering me still. By the by, be very careful of men who may come to you as acquainted with me or even claiming to have seen me here or having had talk with me here. You are too experienced to be cautioned but nevertheless I assure you I send no word or message through any one to you. Hear all but believe none, except what stands to your reason without my recommendation and on its own merit. Now the time is over and I must finish. I am all right, the details you asked would be sent in dear Baba's letters. Love to all from both of us. Do not worry for our health. As far as possible take care of your own health. If in spite of all human effort the worst comes to the worst well then we are quite ready to face it all! Do not worry.

Yours-affectionately-TATYA

7 LETTER 7

4-8-1918
Port Blair

My dear brother,

I was very glad to read your letter. This year owing to the regularity with which your parcels and letters had been dispatched we could get them all at the expected time and were thus able to get rid of a lot of anxiety and trouble and petitioning. The answer to my letter, then the parcel to brother and then his letter-all these enabled us to get your news almost every three months. Please to follow up this plan as regularly as possible. The news that the Maharashtra provincial conference had passed a strong resolution and that with greater unanimity in favour of the release of all political prisoners was very welcome! In fact the Bombay provincial conference has been doing its duty with greater vigour, consistency and persistence than any other P.C. in India. Last year so far as I could know the provincial conference of U.P. and especially the Andhra Conference had also passed resolutions in favour of this release. The resolution of the Andhra conference was very definitely and comprehensively worded and showed that the heart of the Andhras beat in thorough and honest sympathy with those who, with the means they thought best to effect the Great Deliverance had, may be rightly, may be wrongly but in utter sincerity and indisputable selflessness offered themselves to pine away in prisons. You write that many of the papers write constantly for the release and magazines too press on to the point that the release of all political prisoners is one of the conditions under which the removal of Indian discontent is possible. If all this be true then I really fail to understand why the Congress so far as I know, should still be fighting shy, should still be trembling to utter a syllable that might smell of sympathy, nay even of ordinary humanity for the political prisoners, of the people in whose name it poses to speak! Last year they passed a resolution for the release of the interned forgetting totally and very conveniently that the sufferings which brought tears to the eyes of the patriots sitting comfortably in the well aired and well decorated Pandal had been indefinitely multiplied and incessantly faced by other men-not one not two but thousands of other men whose services or sacrifices cannot at least be less than our interned brothers and who because their misery cannot automatically end with the war as in the case of the interned and therefore demand a greater and more persistent agitation on the part of those who are passing as responsible leaders of the people! 'Responsible' that is the thing! They talk of the 'interned' only, because they know that it is Safer to do so and they dare not talk of the rest because they might be losing their responsible positions in the eyes of their boss! Otherwise when the different provincial conferences have so clearly and so often made it obvious that the majority of the provinces heartily wish to effect the release of the political prisoners, one fails to understand why the Congress should fail to do so. The business of the Congress is not to voice the sentiments of the few that dominate its proceedings but of the many who give it its Weight and support and in whose name ought to derive its right to be a 'Congress' at all. When so many provincial conferences have passed this resolution and so often, when the leading papers and magazines have incessantly pressed this point, when many of the leaders of the Congress itself when it was their turn to be rotting

behind the prison walls had expected and had thought they had a right to expect the sympathetic mention of them by the people for whom they fought, above all or rather least of all when the very Austrian people, not to mention the Irish, the Boers &c. had been bold and honest and grateful enough to agitate for the release of all their political prisoners and succeeded in getting it done, when all these things are known and admitted then I think that the Congress could be and should be immediately forced to pass as bold and as comprehensive a resolution as that of the Andhra or Maharashtra Conferences this year. If some old hags tremble let them absent themselves from the sittings that adopts this resolution. Why should you all share in this guilty silence because a handful of 'Responsible' are shaky about it ?

Secondly one or two precautions should be taken in case of any such resolution or movements if to be effective. Many papers write about 'Political prisoners' but the language is so conveniently dubious that the Government and even the people are quite likely to fail to understand what is meant by that omnibus term 'Political prisoner'. Some times it means interned, at others the detenué, then deported or the state prisoners, but hardly it ever means those who are convicted for offences of political nature. I pointed out to you last year that Mr. Bonarlaw himself made a distinction in Irish cases that the rebels were not guilty of 'individual acts' including arson ! Yet they were released as soon as the war broke out by the very Government in which Mr. Bonarlaw works. Then I don't see why the word 'convicted' should be a bogey to the Indian 'Responsibles' and the 'individual acts' a screen to hide the Government anomalies in the hands of Mr. Bonarlaw. Botha is a prime minister and Redmond the constituted Leader of a Parliamentary Party and yet they released their own opponents and actual rebels, against their Government. But the congressmen think they are 'responsible men' ! The pariah that stands begging at the city gate is more responsible citizen and belongs to a higher caste than the Sheriff and the Chairman of the city itself! So in the future resolution and articles this point should be clearly and definitely pressed that 'political prisoners means all those undergoing imprisonment whether convicted or not, whether for individual acts or acts in general' (I indeed fail to understand it altogether!!!)- for actions which proceeded from purely and admittedly political motives.' The term political can be distinguished from private only by the criterion of the motive of the act and not by the act itself. No act is or can be by itself political. For even a rebellion if that proceeds entirely for my own bread and butter is not political and ought not to create any sympathy in others, unless indeed my cause was only a case in hand and was fought out for establishing a general privilege or in vindicating of a general right. The Thugs fought battles and were not political in the sense of sacrificing for the General Good. But even the arson cases or flogging the prime ministers by a suffragist in England had been recognized by the British Government itself as political because the motive was neither personal aggrandizement nor revenge but the advancement of some social good. The means may be wrong, even criminal or not, the Motive counts so far as the moral value, and here national aspect of the act is concerned. I write this with special stress for the reason that in case of an amnesty being granted –which I expect not –this point will be a stumbling block in our path, for the Government might adopt some anomalous distinction and interpret the term in any sense convenient to them but not just in itself. Try your best to make this clear to all you can approach and let our journalists and leaders keep this constantly before them.

(a) Please to write to me in your letter whenever any of the provincial conferences have passed any resolution to this effect, whether last year's Congress had deliberated on it in the subjects committee; how many papers write wholeheartedly about it, and if

something could be done in this year's Congress. When you write about it only mention those cases in which the general amnesty is asked and not only that of a few interned &c.

(b) Then again what had come of the movement of sending a general and mob petition –of which you did not speak in your last. That idea should not be dropped at all. I believe you have only postponed it in order to put it forward more effectively at the end of the war. If it is so all right. In the meanwhile I saw in one of the letters here that a petition for the release of P.P.s had been forwarded to Montague while he was in India. How far is this correct? (c) The campaign of the meetings of which once you spoke should be kept in view and not only once but almost every year it should be carried on. (d) The Congress, the P. conferences the petitioning of the individual members, families, special series of meetings arranged for this purpose, the constant attention of the press, questions in the Viceregal and Provincial Councils and in the Parliament: all this and each of this must be systematically and persistently carried year in and year out till the amnesty question becomes a necessity of the politics there. In each of your letter please to give me a summary of what could be done in each of these directions, and forget not to make clear the meaning of the 'Political prisoners' whenever resolutions and articles talk about it to the people and the Government as well.

Throughout the discussion, I must frankly admit, I have aimed not so much at the actual result of the agitation as to the moral effect of it. I know and have clearly written to the Government in one of my petitions last year that the question of a general amnesty of the political prisoners is closely and inevitably bound up with the question of the establishment of a progressive and really constitutional Government in India. So the chances of such an amnesty being actually granted are not and cannot be immediately and primarily expected. But though thus we should fully realize the impossibility of any actual results being attained yet we should not lose sight of the moral ones, which would reward our efforts immediately by an elevation of the national tone and character and which by reminding the nation of the sufferings of their Martyrs and soldiers and victims that fought for the success of the common cause, and more enthuse the people to see the fight continued and fought out to its ultimate victory. Gratefully remembering the soldiers who fell is the most effective way of recruiting more soldiers to continue the fight.

In the petition to which I referred to above I had put before Mr. Montague and the Viceroy a frank statement of the case of such an amnesty as this. The main points being that while they were considering the question of the Reforms in India they should not fail to recognize that if they aimed at the establishment of any responsible Government in India they should thereby render it utterly futile to continue to lock us in jail. For if a real responsible Government be given and still the amnesty not granted then the latter fact would act as a millstone round the neck of such a system as that. For our presence behind the stone walls and cells cannot fail to keep the memory of the old suspicion and embitterment between the people and the Government living and would take away much from whatever claims and confessions the Government might make as to change of angles & efforts for co-operation and mutual trust. For even if Home Rule be granted to the people unaccompanied by a general amnesty of the P.P.s how is it likely to touch the real roots of discontent in the Land? How can there be peace and contentment and trust in a land where a brother is torn away from a brother, where thousands upon thousands are rotting in cage cells and stand exiled and in jails and where every other family has a brother or a son, or a father, or a friend, or a lover snatched away from its bosom and kept pining away his life in the parched and thirsty Saharas of Separation!!

While on the other hand it would be as futile; I stated this for the sake of entire honesty and truth though it was against my personal interest –to release the political prisoners unaccompanied with a sincere and substantial effort to a responsible Government in India. For it would be intolerable for us to live in a land where all paths to progress are barred by a ‘Trespassers would be prosecuted’ or to move there without treading on suspicious paths, where every step forward is an affront to the Sultans ahead and every step backward an affront to one’s self-respect and conscience which is no less Sultanic in its exaction. Therefore Home Rule and Amnesty go hand in hand and in order that the one may be effective, it should and must be accompanied by the latter. I also stated in it that my motive and aim in sending the petition being the Grant of a General Amnesty, I should be the last to be dissatisfied if that could be done by omitting my own name, if that alone be a thorn in the way of its fulfilment. If such view be ever taken by the Government and I see that the recently published Draft of Mr. Montague’s Scheme has in a striking paragraph expressed the hope almost in it –a way of answer to a corresponding question-that the revolutionists would now find something to be constitutionally done to the realizing of their hopes and aspirations and would change their minds and return to useful paths of activity;-and a really Responsible Government meaning thereby at least a substantial majority in the Viceregal Council-without of course the fetish of a Council of State kept presiding over it and mixing a curse with every blessing the first may confer on the land –if I say a substantial majority of the elected be granted in the Viceregal Council, and such a great be accompanied with a graceful and general amnesty of the P.P.s, including the Exiles in other lands such as America and Europe –then I for one and many whom I know would consciously accept such a constitution as that and would, if thought fit by our people and given a chance to do so by the Government work under it and try to fulfil the Mission of our life through the council chambers which have up to this time been bearing nothing but ill will towards us and have spared nothing to embitter our hearts against them and their policy. Where is the man who would run the ordeals of fire or would tread the paths of furies with bleeding feet-for sheer amusement! That is rare and rarer it is to find true patriot and humanitarian who would indulge in reckless and bloody and necessarily outrageous Revolutions –if but and even when, a safer, nobler, more certainly moral because entirely effective and employing least resistance, if but such a path, the path of constitutional Progress be open and accessible to him? It is mockery to talk of constitutional agitation when there is no constitution at all; but it is worse than a Mockery-a crime to talk of Revolutions as if it was a work of Rose –water even when there is as elastic and progressive a constitution as say there is in England or in America.

This word for word I wrote in October last to the Government and the recent changes give me a hope that if properly and organisedly pressed the bill when it comes before the Parliament would grant us acceptable scheme. And I would like to bring this to the notice of the Victory once more and ask whether the Indian Government have come to any definite decision as to my petition. I received an answer on 1-2-18 from the Viceregal Government that the ‘petition for the Amnesty of political prisoners’ is being considered by the Government. After that I have reason to think that the Government mentioned to submit the question of such a release immediately after the war. Please to enquire directly yourselves as it takes a lot of cajoling the Red Tape System for me to enquire often.

You asked in your last letter about the advantages we reap in being promoted to the second class; Well going out of the jail? No! Being allowed to keep writing material? No!

Being allowed to live with or even to speak with my brother? No! Being exempted from the compulsory and hard labour? No! Being promoted to be a warder or cease to be locked up in the cell? No! Better and hospitable treatment ? No! More letters? No! Any visit from home? –others get it after five years and I am in the 8th- No! Then if you still ask what advantages in being promoted to 2nd class-well the great one-that of being promoted to the second class!! Do you understand, Doctor?

So far as to the advantages in the jail : but all this was bearable to me when my health was comparatively sound. But this year I must tell you that great and counting disadvantage has been added to my lot for my health is utterly broken. You know I could not have used such language but I feel it my bounden duty to do so. Confident am I that a student of Gita and my own brother would not be shaken under any calamities that the Blind Dame may bring to us in her usual rounds and would stand squarely firm facing all winds as they list. Brother ! each year one day which was joy unalloyed –that was the day of writing the letter Home. This year even that is a partial joy for though I am writing to you to the immense delight of memory –all the pleasant scenes and dear faces and grateful remembrances being made alive –yet am feeling the strain of penning even such a letter as this! The flesh complains and I could not go on without a rest! Last year March, I weighed 119- this year I weigh 98! They take the weight with which we come here as the normal one; that is a wrong test for we come here after rotting for years in the jails and custodies there; But even when I came here I was 111Lbs. Chronic Dysentery due to disregard of the medical treatment in the beginning has reduced me to a skeleton. Eight years I bore the burden well. Innumerable and unknown hardships taxed my metal and an atmosphere of frowns and threats and sighs, of demoralizing and disheartening stench tried to stifle the noble breath of life-but God gave me strength to stand and stand firm and face it all for these eight years or so. But now I feel the flesh has received wounds that are hard to heal and is day by day pining away. Recently the Medical Superintendent has been paying a little special attention to my weakness and though I am still on 'Duty' i.e. work and not in the Hospital yet I get Hospital diet that is better cooked, and eat only rice and am allowed milk and bread at present. It is better a bit and hope it may improve. But what is likely is that this constant debility may end in some fatal malady or that inevitable friend so well known in jails, specially in Andamans-the Pthisis. Only one thing and one thing alone could assure me of my recovering and that is a change –not in the sense of jail technicalities where a change means always for the worse- but a change for the better to a better climate in some Indian jail. The monotony is getting appalling ! And yet be not over-anxious, trying it is but it cannot be decisive. For jails as such have a great sustaining power. They corrode but they do not kill. They petrify but they preserve. And cases are not wanting of prisoners living with slender chances of life for 80 years and more. So however weak the body be still there is no fear, at any rate unless some further complications arise of any fatal event.

And all this again so far as the flesh is concerned. For although one cannot afford to be flamboyantly defying fire while one is bound to a pile of leaping flames-yet I may mention that the sprit is still willing and able to dominate the quivering flesh, willing to suffer even further and even all not only ungrudgingly, but even unflinchingly. Brother's health is relatively better though the headache has reduced him to 106 lbs.

Please to give my reverence and love to my dear Madam Cama, Hope she takes care of her health. How awful for her to pass her days in exile when one should have thought of passing them attuned to the Music of sweet smiling children? Then what of

Mai? Our sister! Never mind whatever troubles she has to face –let her remember first that her brothers are facing greater troubles for Duty and secondly come what may her Vasant is with her and the sight of his face should make her forget and forgive all the miseries of her life. Nevertheless the love of a brother goes out to her and his sympathy and hope that may be a little cheering news for her. My love to my dear Yamunabai and my dear sister-in-law. Glad to hear Shanta improves. And about the friend –the Dear and kind hearted Doctor whom you mentioned in your letter please ask him to forgive me. If ever I see him he could know how I prize him and friend-few indeed-but so constant as he-Sorry I would do nothing for him or for my brothers –in-law Balu, Anna, and others or for my chosen chums of College days or for my dear and faithful comrades-except to send forth my hearty grateful memory of them all. How is my little Ranjan? Does he know me? I hear that plague is likely to break out once more. Sc be watchful and take care of your health which is life to us!!

Yours affectionately

TATYA

8 LETTER 8

Cellular Jail
Port Blair
21-9-1919

My dear brother,

I expected to hear from you as soon as you reached Bombay and so I waited longer than usual. But as I have not heard from you upto now I have decided not to wait further in writing to you. Ever since my last letter to you my health has been just as it was when you saw me. After your going back for a week or so it continued to be well and then again either a malarious fever or an attack of Dysentery upsets it and takes a toll of lb. or so causing my weight to fall yet more :and again it continues well for a week or a fortnight further. Thus have I been going on and on and consequently my weight which last year when I wrote to you was on the average at 99 lbs. has for the last couple of months been at 96 lbs. and 95 lbs. In fact my health would have been worse but for the little better food and little better cell that have been allowed to me though too late, and although my weight is rapidly going down yet on the whole my appetite is improved and my stomach causes less complaints owing to the Hospital diet that I have been getting for the last 10 months or so. Moreover in consideration of my weakness and chronic malarious inroads I have been treated as a hospital patient and have been exempted from rigorous work. So far as this jail life is concerned I gladly state that the Superintendent has been trying to put things as straight as he can after I wrote to you about the rapid breaking down of my health. But it is therefore all the more necessary and is all the more forcibly demonstrated how necessary it is to remove me from this unhealthy and malarious climate where in spite of much attention of the jail superintendent, my health and my weight are ever on the decline, and not a fortnight passes without a fever or some attack of stomach complaints. I can assure you that the climate of this place is acknowledged as a very unhealthy one and the life in a cellular jail in such a climate as doubly dangerous to the health of even a strongly built man used to hard labour throughout his life –by the medical authorities themselves.

I do not know whether you in India know anything about the order that was read out here on the day of the peace celebration in England, concerning the Amnesty of prisoners. On that day or owing to the remission granted on that day –some convicts have up to this time been released from this convict colony. But so far as the political prisoners are concerned nothing beyond the vaguest promises was done, not a single day's remission has been as yet positively granted to any of them barring a couple of Bengali P.P.s An order was read out in the name of the Secretary of state and the Government that so far as the political prisoners were concerned the Government was considering the question of granting some remission to them. The above consideration being guided by the opinion of the respective provincial Governments in the first instance and secondly by the local recommendations of the jail authorities based on the jail conduct of the prisoners. Moreover the personal opinions of the individual prisoner would be carefully weighed before any decision is arrived! Now this language may mean much or what is more likely may mean nothing . No time is mentioned as to when the decision would be arrived at. And when in addition to that one remembers that four years ago the Indian Government had been pleased to assure me that they were even then having the question of Amnesty 'under consideration' one hardly can help

suspecting that this reiteration of the same words may be asking for another four years hence. Again the clause referring to the personal opinions is very likely to be the curse of almost any one who falls under the head of P.P.s for if personal opinions means the opinions of the individual about the political situation in India-then of course that is quite sensible and natural-but how the Government is going to know them? If by the statements of the individual concerned then there could be no objection to that at all. But if –as is more likely to happen –by hearsay or secret reports then it would be better if the Government and the public would be frankly telling that they do neither wish nor want to consider this question at all. For being forced to live amongst such distinguished company such as thieves, robbers and habitual convicts and in such a company alone – what chance is there that these would be reporting only truth about our opinions on politics when these neither understand a bit of what opinions on politics mean nor are ever wanting in the gift of instinctively hating any one who is spotted out to them by the authorities as one whose opinions they are required to report. No sooner does an officer ask these 'gentlemen' in the jail to know and inform about A or B than do these people come to the conclusion that a report against that individual would be more likely to increase their importance in the eyes of the authorities. And even the highest officers in an institution like jail cannot but depend on the reports of these men who have themselves been convicts and criminals and raised to higher posts in the jail through sheer double dealing and in general this is the case. So I think that unless the public makes all these matters clear to the Indian Government in time and even now, even with the best of intentions on the part of the Secretary of State little or nothing will come out of the promise that the Government has made.

Do you know anything about this promise ? Is it made public? If so are the provincial Governments already approached and have they submitted their opinion? Has any one attempted to get the time fixed or at any rate approximately but definitely indicated by the Government? I again submit that unless the public makes it quite clear and that not spasmodically but systematically that there is an unanimous, hearty and determined desire in the hearts of our countrymen to effect an Amnesty of the political prisoners before this opportunity of the Peace celebration passes by, the Indian Government can neither be in a mood and even if in a mood yet not in a position to do much in this direction. The promise, vague as it is, is made to feel the public pulse, and if the people do not before hand express their will and sympathy with this projected Amnesty, I for one could not find much cause to blame the Government for not having granted it.

If the charge of 109, 302 is true against me it is truer against all. And if for that I am not going to be released as a political prisoner then there is no political prisoner in India at all! I simply indicate the line of argument knowing pretty well that you would fill it in much better way than I can do it here. Secondly 'jail conduct.' Well for the last 5 years there had been no occasion of being cased even once. I am sure the authorities here would not have anything particular against me on that score to say.

Thirdly so far as my personal opinions are concerned-well I had definitely and clearly stating them to all concerned-the Government itself not expected. So early as 1915 and again in 1918 I had sent and sent voluntarily a clear statement of my thought knowing full well that misunderstood, they were quite likely to deprive me of any chance of release. The statement sent to the Government is exactly like what I wrote to you in my letter last year and which had already been before the public eye. So neither the public nor the Government can be in any way unacquainted with my opinions. I believe that as soon as the reforms are effected and if they be soon effected and at least the Viceregal Councils are made to represent the voice of the people then there would be no

hesitation on my part-infinestibly humble though it be –to make the beginning of such a constitutional development a success, to stand by Law and Order which is the very foundation and basis of Society in general and Hindu polity in particular. Do not the Scotch or ever the Majorities of the Boers choose to maintain a partnership in the Empire when that Empire –opens better facilities for their respective developments than otherwise? India too and for the matter of that any other people ought to and naturally will join in forming a Common Wealth and an Empire. Why should they be against it? When such a common life promises to be more fruitful than divided petty and lonely individuality? As man is Social animal so is also state. And Empires had been and would be as natural a development of the inherent tendencies of the social nature of man as nations and families had been.

Well my dear Bal, I have been getting fever for the last two days as I have caught a cold and so find it necessary to leave much that I meant to write to you. Please to take care of your health, and do not worry on our account or any other account. Take things easy. Please not to forget what I told you about our family affairs when you met me. Try to save a little and spend less. Dear Yamuna promised me to send a very very big parcel of almonds and candy and sweets and what not at an early date. But being very very big it is quite natural that it is taking months to pack it up. It was indeed a pleasure to see her and know how she is as courageous and as sweet as ever. But poor Vahini! Half the joy of any release fades into apathy at the thought of my going back to a home where she is not likely to come to welcome me! My earliest friend, my sister, my mother and my comrade-in one, all at once, she really died as dies a suttee! Did she not immolate her silent soul and even at the alter of our Mother-land? Ah! As truly as martyr dies for his Land or Religion do these Indian girls of to-day die panting, withering, watching for the return of their lovers who are not destined to meet them; suffering in silence, serving though unknown, paying though unacknowledged, -do these Hindu girls pine away and die for their Motherland, for their religion. Woman in general is sweet beyond measure ! But a Hindu girl-good, good good. She inflames not but soothes, remembers though forgotten each and an ever newly published edition of the Immortal Story of Sita! Dear Baba asks me to tell you to console Mathutai especially on his behalf; he feels more for her than our dear Vahini herself . Nothing pleased me so much as to find you quite healthy and bubbling over with life when I saw you here. Always try to be as healthy and more. I am totally unable both owing to the intensity of my feeling and the circumstances under which I have to pen this letter to express faithfully my and our thanks and sense of gratefulness to all those who through a personal or public concern had felt such deep Sympathy for me and for us and tried to bring some relief or other to us. To tell you the truth I honestly believe that this consciousness alone had been the only medicine that has enabled me to pull on without being worse and in fact made me live throughout this year in spite of dysentery, malaria and jail-this consciousness that there are so many men in my Bharatvarsha who are ready to share my sadness and lighten my burden –friends that enquire and papers that wrote –those who are moved through personal friendship or acquaintance and much more than that those who felt out of a genuine and simple humanity. How is my dear Shanta? Don't you trouble her much for any reading or writing. But do trouble as much as you can my friend Yamuna on that score –she has promised me to act as a typewriter and a clerk – of course without any pay and out of sheer patriotic favour!-when and if I ever come back and my love to dear Babu, Anna, and all my brothers-in-law.

Yours affectionately
TATYA

9 LETTER 9

Cellular Jail
Port Blair
6-7-1920

My dearest Bal,

Your letter to dear Baba dated 2-6-20 reached us and made us glad by removing the sense of anxiety caused by your constant postponing your coming over here. My health is just as it was when you left me. It is not worse either. But after your going the health of our brother has been going from bad to worse. It is his turn now. The complaint is the same. Digestion troubles and consequent liver disorder. His weight is 106 lbs. Because I write this much do not imagine that our health must be worse still. Not so. I write exactly as it stands. If something worse happens I shall inform you of it.

After all the general amnesty has come ! Hundreds are being released. Thanks chiefly to the great exertions of the Bombay National Union and of our leaders and of our patriotic countrymen who organized, supported and signed the mass petition for the release of Indian political prisoners. That huge petition signed by no less than 75,000 people at such a short notice as that must have certainly put an immense though unacknowledged pressure on the Government. At any rate it elevated the moral status of the P.P.s and therefore of the cause for which they fought and fell. Now indeed our release if at all it comes in worth having, as the people have expressed their desire to have us back. We cannot sufficiently thank our countrymen for sympathy and solicitude for us all. They had really shown greater regard for us than we honestly believe to have deserved. Nor have their efforts been entirely fruitless. For although we two have been declared to fall outside the scope of the Amnesty and are still rotting in the cells yet the sight of hundreds of our political comrades and co-sufferers' release makes us feel relieved and repaid for all the agitation that we have been carrying on for the last eight years or so through strikes, letters, petitions, the press, and the platform, here and else where.

On the 2-4-20 I put in a fresh petition to the Government of India on subject of Royal clemency recently granted. Therein after thanking the Government for the release of hundreds of political prisoners and for thus partially granting my petition of 1918, I have pleaded for the further extension of the Royal clemency to those who are yet in jail as well as to the Political exiles abroad. I had once more defined my personal position as regards the political situation in India, especially with reference to those questions which from time to time are still being discussed and debated upon in the official circles and have been personally pressed before me by some of them only very very recently .

We believe in an universal state embracing all mankind and wherein all men and women would be citizens working for and enjoying equally the fruits of this earth and this sun, this land and this light, which constitute the real Motherland and the Fatherland of man. All other divisions and distinctions are artificial though indispensable. Believing thus that the ideal of all political science and art is or ought to be Human state in which all nations merge –their political selves for their own fulfilment even as the cells in an organism, organisms in families and tribes, and tribes in nation-states have done; and believing therefore that humanity is higher patriotism and therefore any Empire or Commonwealth that succeeds in welding numbers of conflicting races and nations in one

harmonious, if not homogenous, whole in such wise as to render each of them better fitted to realize, enrich and enjoy life in all its noble aspects is a distinct step to the realization of that ideal I can conscientiously co-operate with any attempt to found a common-wealth which would be neither British nor Indian but which may, till a better name be devised, be styled as an Aryan Common-wealth. With this end in view I am willing to work now. And therefore I rejoiced to hear that the Government have changed their angle of vision and meant to make it possible for India to advance constitutionally on the path to Freedom and strength and fullness of life. I am sure that many a revolutionist would like me cry halt under such circumstances and try to meet England under an honourable truce, even in a halfway house as the reformed Council Halls promised to be, and work there before a further march on to progress be sounded.

For it was this very principle that humanity was a higher patriotism that made us so restless when we saw that a part of it should aggrandize and swell like a virulent cancer in such wise as to threaten the life of the human whole; and forced us for the want of any other effective remedy; to take to the Surgeon's Knife and feel that severity for the moment would certainly be mercy in the long run. But even while combating force with force we heartily abhorred and do yet abhor all violence. For violence is force aggressively used-force that is life killing. I never cherished not even in my dreams any aggressive ambition for personal or national aggrandizement, and so far was I from being a party to violence that I actually kept opposing it tooth and nail whenever I saw it used by powerful combinations against their weaker but righteous rivals. I heartily abhorred violence resorted to in days gone by-by ambitious men and nations not only outside India but even in India herself. I felt as rebellious against the caste systems and the untouchability inside India as her dominated by foreigners from outside.

Thus we were revolutionists under necessity and not by choice. We felt that the best interests of India as well as of England demanded that her ideals be progressively and peacefully realized by mutual help and co-operation. And if that be possible even now I shall take the first opportunity to resort to peaceful means and rush in the first constitutional breach effected by revolution or otherwise, however narrow it be and try to widen it so as to enable the forces of evolution to flow in an uninterrupted procession.

If the reforms whole heartedly effected and worked out by the Government would serve the purpose of such a constitutional breach as that then revolution ceases and evolution becomes a watchword and a rallying cry of us all. And I as one humble soldier in Her rank would honestly try my best to make the reform successful, that is, work them out so as to render them a stepping stone to the realization of the great mission of our generation of making India free and great and glorious, leading or marching hand in hand with others to the appointed destiny of man.

Such were my view when I was working in the revolutionary camp. And such are my views after 12 long years of being pent up within the four walls of a solitary cell. True it is that we found it impossible to bear love and loyalty to laws that were dictated by the Sword, and constitutions that serve as masks to conceal the heidousness of Tyranny yet it is equally true that we honestly felt and still feel ourselves in duty bound to stand by the side of Law –that is the expression of the righteous resolve of a free people and constitution that holds together harmonizes and fuses the efforts of free men and women towards the good of man and the glory of God.

As to the question so often put to me and others by officers no less exalted than the members of the Indian Cabinet 'what if you had rebelled against the ancient kings of India? They used to trample rebels under the feet of Elephants'. I answer that not only

in India but even in England and all other parts of the world such would have at times been the fate of rebels. But then why did the British people fill the whole world with a howl that the Germans had ill treated their captives and did not allow them fresh bread and butter ! There was a time when captives were flayed alive and offered as victims to Moloch and Thor and such other Gods of war !' The thing is this that this advanced stage in civilization attained by man is the resultant of the efforts of all men and therefore their common inheritance and benefits all. Speaking relatively to Barbarian times it is true that I had a fair trial and a just sentence and the Government is at liberty to derive whatever satisfaction they can from the compliment that they give a fairer trial and a juster sentence to their captives than the cannibals used to do. But it should not be forgotten that if in olden days the rulers flayed their rebels alive then the rebels too when they got the upper hand flayed alive the rulers as well. And if the British people treated me or other rebels more justly i.e. less barbarously then they may rest assured that they too would be as leniently treated by the Indian rebels if ever the tables are turned?

Please do not hope much from this petition so far as our release is concerned. We never pitched our hopes too high and if not released we shall not be very much disappointed. We are quite prepared to face it either way. You have tried your best and it is mainly due to your unceasing efforts that the release of P.P.s because such a burning question as that and though not we two, yet hundreds of others have won back their liberty.

Hoping to find you in good health and with best and loving regards to all our friends and relations.

I remain dear brother
Yours affectionately
TATYA