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دوه

## خدایي خدمتگاران

مهادیو دیسای

(انگلیسی)

خان عبدالغفار خان  
دوه خدایي خدمتگاران

Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan  
Two Servants of God

# Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan

The Apostle of Nonviolence

N Radhakrishnan



## Two Servants of God

Mahadev Desai

(English)



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**KHAN ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN**  
**The Apostle of Nonviolence**

DR. N. RADHAKRISHNAN



**Two**  
**Servants of God**

MAHADEV DESAI

*WITH A FOREWORD*

By

MAHATMA GANDHI

Books Name - Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan (the apostle of  
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- Two Servants of God

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Translator Zir Gul Wardak

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**KHAN ABDUL GHAFAR KHAN**

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## **Foreword**

This year, as usual, six to seven-year-old children in Kabul bought toy guns during Eid al-Fitr days and fired on each other. They would run away, hide themselves and shoot at each other with those toy guns. In such a manner, our children grow up with playing fights and violence. Neither their parents nor any other person in the society stop them from doing so. As these children grow up, they start using real guns and kill each other. Our children, in home and the society, face violence that has consequently adverse effects on their entire life. The children who are violated during their childhood, for example they are hit by their parents or any other person, violate others when they grow up.

One of the reasons behind thirty years of fratricide and warfare in Afghanistan and Pakhtunkhwa is the violence and hatred in people's minds.

Few people know that a great proponent of non-violence Abdul Ghafar Khan has lived in this region and had many followers who believed in non-violence. Since many books have been written about Bacha Khan, in 20<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of him (2008) which was held in Boon, Germany by Afghanic, it was decided to translate the books written in foreign

languages about him into Afghani languages and publish them.

This book is printed as a combination of two books:

1. The first one is *The Apostle of Non-Violence*, which was published by Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti publication center in New Delhi in 1998.
2. The second is *Two Servants of God* that comes along with a foreword by Mahatma Gandhi. It was published by Hindustan Times Press in New Delhi in 1935.

Both of the booklets were recently translated into Pashto by my father Zir Gul Wardak in Hamburg. I would like to thank him for willingly translating these two books in his old age (85 years old, this year). I wish him a long healthy life.

Also, I would like to thank German Civil Peace Service for Afghanistan and its director Andreas Selmeçi for funding publication of this book. It is worth mentioning that this organization funded publication of Bacha Khan's autobiography entitled "My Life and Struggle" that was printed in Pashto and Dari, last year, in Kabul.

Hopefully, other books about Bacha Khan will also be translated and submitted to us in order to be printed and published.

Yahya Wardak  
Head of Afghanic  
Kabul, October 2017

# **First Book**

## **KHAN ABDUL GHAFAR KHAN** **The Apostle of Nonviolence**

DR. N. RADHAKRISHNAN

First Published by Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti  
Rajghat, New Delhi-110002

## **Preface of Pashto Translator**

I would like to point out an important issue that I faced with while studying about four Indian writers and poets. I realized that each of the writers and poets had tried to introduce, describe and explore realities of Bacha Khan's life and political struggles. These works are worth appreciating. However, It seems that all of the authors have attempted to show the role of Fakhre Afghan as in second position regarding non-violence.

Thus, this evaluation does not seem to be objective because Fakhre Afghan himself has struggled for non-violence, and according to him, the very first initiator and implementer of non-violence was Prophet Mohammad (pbuh). He (pbuh), over 1400 year ago, struggled for non-violence in Holy Mecca for 13 years. In the works of Indian writers, it is several times indicated that Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan would accept the one who had completely submitted himself to Allah (S.W.T). Ghandhi Ji said that Ghafar Khan was the man of God.

Regards,  
Zir Gul Wardak  
Hamburg, July 19, 2013

# I

“THERE IS NOTHING surprising in a Mussalman or a Pathan like me subscribing to the creed of nonviolence. It is not new creed. It was followed 1400 years ago by the Prophet all the time. He was in Mecca and it since been followed by all those who wanted to throw off an oppressor’s yoke. But we had so far forgotten it and only when Mahatmaji placed it before us we thought he was sponsoring a novel creed. To him belongs the credit of being the first among us to receive a forgotten creed and to place it before a nation for the redress of its grievances.”

“Do you know who said this?”, My father asked me. “Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan”, he himself answered without waiting for an answer. It was one of the regular Sunday sessions of story telling at which father would narrate his impressions and experiences as a freedom fighter. Though the stories were repetitive, the passionate manner in which he would narrate even the minor incidents of that epic struggle would bring to any listener’s mind the glory of a period of fight, sacrifice, challenge, hope and anxiety. We could see that by narrating the incidents of those days father was trying to recreate the remarkable saga of sacrifice made by several million people all over India for the

sake of the freedom of the country. He was a great admirer of Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, Sardar Patel and Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Among them he had greater admiration for Abdul Ghaffar Khan. To my question why it was so, his reply was "seldom do we come across a personality like Badshah Khan who was the symbol of sacrifice, one of the finest virtues we can think of and he was a relentless nonviolent fighter for freedom of all kinds."

Born in a community known for its fierce martial qualities Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan—popularly known as the Frontier Gandhi or Badshah Khan became a staunch convert to Gandhi's ideal of nonviolence and never even once did he stray from the straight and narrow path the Mahatma set for his followers. He considered Gandhi as his master and, like Gandhi, he fought the British without hating them. He suffered persecution both in India and Pakistan but did not entertain any malice towards his persecutors. Beginning his public life at the age of 20 he spent 32 years in jail fighting for what he believed was right. Of this, 17 years were in the British jails and the rest in Pakistani jails. Like my father, I became an admirer of this unbelievably inspiring man and wanted to study more about him. But in our village there was no library from where I could borrow some books on him nor could anybody tell me more about him than what I

learnt from father.

Dr G. Ramachandran who knew about my interest after I joined Gandhigram Rural University gave me a copy of Pyarelal's '*A Pilgrimage for Peace*' and encouraged me in my desire to research on Gandhi's influence on Badshah Khan. This was in 1968. As I read more about him an intense desire grew in me to meet this legendary fighter and my excitement knew no bounds when I heard he would be in Delhi in 1969 to attend the Gandhi Centenary special programs and also to receive the 1969 Jawaharlal Nehru Peace Award. I reached Delhi in the last week of September, a few days before Badshah Khan arrived in Delhi.

When Badshah Khan was invited to participate in the Gandhi Centenary celebration in India and to receive the Jawaharlal Nehru Peace Award, he readily accepted the offer—some people had suggested to him that he should not go to India and should lodge his protest against the violence which some states in the northern India were experiencing at that time. But he said:

"If I protest, how will it help India and Pakistan? If I go to India, I shall be able to have consultations with the people of India."

Several thousand people had assembled at the airport to welcome him. The special plane carrying

him reached Delhi 20 minutes behind schedule. I still remember the tumultuous shouts of welcome that rent the air on sighting the plane. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi went up the aircraft ladder to receive the distinguished guest. It was virtually a redcarpet welcome.

Badshah Khan was dressed in a simple long shirt and carried his luggage in a small cloth bundle which he himself held. Replying to the welcome, in a voice choked with emotion he asked, "Those who don't listen to Gandhi, how can they listen to me? I am only his humble co-workers."

He told the crowd that he was quite clear about one thing. Seeing the conditions in India, he said:

"You have forgotten what Gandhi had told you. I have come for you, to sit with you all, Hindu, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians, to talk you, to understand you and to serve you. Slogans have no meaning. What was important was to follow the teachings of Gandhi."

Shortly after his arrival at the house where he was to stay he said that he was pained to see that communalism, hatred and selfishness were rampant in India. A solution to India's maladies lay in fostering love, mutual trust and co-operation. If the country was to progress it was essential to shun hatred and violence. Countries whose citizens indulged in anti-

social acts like corruption, dishonesty and vandalism were looked down by others. Such people destroyed the image of their motherland and become a menace to civilisation.

“Gandhi always stood for nonviolence and love. I myself learnt these things from him. But I am grieved to know that here in Gandhi’s country there is still a lot of violence”.

There were streams of visitors waiting to meet him and he was busy in the next three days and my efforts to meet him for a few minutes did not yield any result. His hosts assured me of a meeting when he would go to Gandhigram later.

Badshah Khan made a surprise announcement at the memorial meeting held in connection with Mahatma Gandhi’s birth Centenary that he would go on a three-day fast to atone for the violence, hatred and communal feelings prevalent in India. The fast was also to eliminate the prevailing tensions and remove the venom of communal hatred, which had reappeared after along interval. He hoped to create harmony and forge unity among the people of India.

Soon after this public meeting where he announced the decision about his fast, Prime Minister and Congress President called on Badshah Khan and enquired about his health and expressed concern about his decision to undertake the fast. The Prime

Minister said "I have nothing to say to you about your decision but we hope you will not undergo too much strain in view of your failing health".

After offering prayers (Namaz) he began the three-day fast at 7 a.m. on 3<sup>rd</sup> October rejecting even the advice of a panel of doctors. Seated in a diwan on the floor were U.N. Dhebar, Dr R.R. Diwakar, Pyarelal, Dr Sushila Nayar and a few others. Adorning the wall was a portrait of Gandhi with fragrant followers beneath it.

Badshah Khan's fast 'electrified' the whole nation as V.V. Giri, President of India, put it later. In spite of the appeals made by leaders who were in charge of arrangements at his residence, several hundreds of visitors were pouring in throughout the days. The doctors kept a constant vigil on him. He took only plain water. Though the doctors announced that his condition continued to be satisfactory, anxiety spread over the whole nation. Special prayers were also offered in several places of worship of all faiths all over the country for the success of the mission for which he was observing fast. What Dr G. Ramachandran said perhaps indicated the general mood: "In the absence of the Mahatma himself none was better equipped for this mission than Badshah Khan."

On October 6<sup>th</sup> he ended his fast sipping a

glass of orange juice given to him by Jayaprakash Narayan. Before sipping it Badshah Khan raised his hands and prayed, "May God have mercy on our people and forgive them for their weakness and bless them to follow the path of righteousness and nonviolence". There was relief and a sense of happiness in many as this ordeal ended.

Back in Gandhigram I could join the arrangements being made by Dr G. Ramachandran to receive Badshah Khan who would be visiting Gandhigram after three weeks. My heart jumped with joy when Dr Ramachandran put me incharge of the Shanti Sena reception along with Sri V.M. Chandrasekhar and also as one of the three persons incharge of accommodation and food. Finally on the great day when the car carrying Badshah Khan arrived at Gandhigram and when the tall great figure emerged out of the car with only a cloth bundle under his arm pit containing just a pair of dresses which was all that he brought many of us felt that it was Gandhi himself coming to bless us in our work and to chide us for our lapses.

As he was being escorted to the dais for the Shanti Sena reception I could hear him asking a few questions to Dr Ramachandran on the nature of training imparted to the young men and women in nonviolence through the Shanti Sena. His message at

the reception was very brief. He said "I am happy under the leadership of Ramachandranji, Shanti Sena training is given to the students. You are my Khudai Khidmatgars. Your generation has forgotten Gandhi. We need another revolution and the Shanti Sena should lead it. May the spirit of Gandhiji guide you in this". Later at night addressing the workers of Gandhigram he made a passionate plea to work for the completion of the tasks which Gandhiji left for us. He was simple. He ate simple food and wore simple dress but the words he used went deep into our hearts.

Next morning when I had my interview with him I found him to be very considerate—he was the embodiment of love and affection. We spent almost half an hour together and I still remember the friendly manner in which he answered my questions:

Badshah Khan: Your Shanti Sena training programme impresses me. Your friends in this part of India are doing what Gandhiji wanted all of us to do after independence. The communal divide would not have become so deep had we followed Gandhiji's advice and undertaken village service as our motto. Still talks are being held on what kind of village work should be undertaken by the different groups in order to strengthen the young emerging democracy.

Now, you friends in India think of the villages only during the elections. Only Vinobaji and his select band of followers think of the villages. Land to the landless was one of the dreams of Mahatamaji and Vinobaji is striving hard to take this message to the masses with great difficulty. I doubt how many people take Vinobaji seriously. The need of the hour is that all should join to strengthen his hands. The Shanti Sena units Vinobaji has established, I understand, have disappeared. You should strive to revive all the Shanti Sena units and make them functional so that the nation would think gradually in terms of replacing the police and army some day.

N. Radhakrishnan: Don't you think that the national and international scenario have undergone tremendous change during the last two decades making the relevance of unarmed group of soldiers trying to promote harmony even greater. What do you think went wrong with even those well meaning efforts to promote the idea of International Peace Brigade?

Badshah Khan: Why think of International scenario? Have you given a fair trial to Gandhi's ideas in free India? I don't think so. The failure,

if there is any, is not because the model or the idea is defective. It might be due to lack of either conviction and courage. A tree does not grow from the seed overnight. We seem to have forgotten this basic truth. If only Mahatmaji had not gone from us that soon! I tend to believe that his sudden passing away made all the difference. The history of the India subcontinent would have been different had Mahatmaji been alive. India and Pakistan would not have drifted apart so dangerously.

N. Radhakrishnan: Can you recollect when you first met Bapu?

Badshah Khan: In Delhi in 1920 at the Khilafat Conference. I saw him only from a distance.

N. Radhakrishnan: How did you become a follower of Gandhi and when?

Badshah Khan: The second time I saw him was eight years later in 1928 at Calcutta when both the Congress and the Khilafat Conferences were in session.

N. Radhakrishnan: Did you have any lengthy discussion with him then?

Badshah Khan: No-what struck me at this meeting was the greatness and equanimity of the mind of Mahatmaji. During his speech an angry young man stood up and shouted at him

that Gandhi was a coward. We were all taken aback. Mahatmaji only laughed at this grave provocation and went on speaking unperturbed.

N. Radhakrishnan: What was the basis of your loyalty to Gandhi? Many of Gandhi's close friends parted company with him, particularly people who like Shoukat Ali and Mohamed Ali (The Ali Brothers)

Badshah Khan: Well, that depends on their temperaments. I feel that the relationship between one person and another depends on their attitude towards life. I found that there was no divergence in the goals both Gandhi was seeking and I was trying to follow. Our goals were service of the people and there was no better model or person than Gandhi who exemplified great virtues any nation or society would cherish.

The discussion would have gone on for a few more minutes but for the indication from Dr Rahmachandran that it was time for the next meeting.

Badshah Khan was a sad man. What he said to those who met him clearly indicated that he did not come to India to give anybody a certificate of good conduct. Those who had hopefully looked up to him playing the stellar role in the centenary drama by

recreating the Gandhian image by repeating his guru's words, were disappointed also. What he had said on being asked for a message on his arrival in New Delhi perhaps set the tone.

"You have forgotten Gandhi. Who am I to give a message? Where I had once seen love, I now see hatred; where there was ahimsa there is now violence; instead of the spirit of service there is the desire to plunder and murder. People who offer prayers in mosques and temples have forgotten what religion is."

"It was the love and affection of the people and my deep attachment to Gandhi that brought me here. It was my desire to see for myself how far the people have followed the path shown by Gandhiji... I was pained to observe that the ideals, for which Gandhiji lived, worked and died have been completely forgotten and true Gandhism has almost vanished from India...Socialism is not building skyscrapers in the capital city of Delhi. Freedom, democracy and socialism must help people to be honest, self-restrained and contend."

He knew about the hostile reaction some of his frank observations have generated. He said on the eve of his departure: "Some friends did not like my frankness and were critical of some of my observations, but I would have failed in my duty not to point out their failings frankly and fearlessly to them

as a friend who was once a co-worker in the freedom struggle of India and who still cherishes in his heart and dreams of seeing India great and prosperous, morally and materially.”

True, what Badshah Khan said did embarrass leaders, Gandhian Constructive workers and institutions claiming to propagate Gandhian ideals. But it did not embarrass the common man. To the common man Badshah Khan represented certain values, attitudes, qualities and perception about which he has been hearing quite a lot.

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## II

"DO YOU MEAN to say that he, a Pathan, believes in nonviolence? Impossible. No Pathan does it. If they say so, they are lying. You should go to the Frontier Province and see for yourself how violent the Pathans are," Lord Irwin said to Gandhi who had come to persuade the Viceroy to release Ghaffar Khan, who was still in prison though all the political prisoners were released following the Gandhi–Irwin Pact in 1931. Irwin was not altogether wrong in his assessment of the Pathans. Generally they were turbulent, quarrelsome, trigger-happy–race members who generally believed to love gun more than their parents. This was not true of all and for all times. Irwin knew little about Ghaffar Khan. Those who knew Badshah Khan's personality and cultural background found no wonder in the transformation Ghaffar Khan had undergone after he adopted Gandhian nonviolence both as a creed and strategy.

Even a casual look at the circumstances and surroundings of his upbringing and the cultural background of the Pathans would help one to understand Badshah Khan's characteristic distaste for all forms of violence. The Pathans are like the Rajputs who are renowned to be among the fiercest warriors

in the world.

They were inheritors of a cultural essentially Aryan. Their land was known in ancient days as 'Aryanviji'. There is every reason to believe that the Aryan race first saw the light of the day in this land. Their tongue Pushtu has close affinity with Sanskrit from which it is supposed to have derived. Modern Peshawar was known in those days as Parasurama. It was known by another name Gandhar in honour of Gandhari who was believed to have been a native of this District. 'Indus', 'Sindhi' and 'Hindu' all these terms derived from a Pushtu word. 'Sind' means river. It was here that Zoroaster was born. Thus the Pathan land was a meeting ground of many cultures. Buddhism also found its way here. Gautama the Buddha came to this land and stayed here for a while. Two magnificent statues of the Buddha, perhaps the largest statues of Buddha in the world, are seen here. Peshawar was the capital of Kanishka's Empire. The great Taxila University also flourished here.

The young Khan began his public career in 1914, a year before Gandhi returned to India from South Africa. He was twenty four and Gandhi forty six. Through his services in South Africa, Gandhi had captured the imagination of India. He had proved himself a born rebel and it was natural that his return to India roused new hopes particularly in the peasants.

Under Gandhi's leadership the Indian National Congress was soon converted into the sole instrument of emancipation of India. Gigantic figures from different parts of India joined the stream of national awakening and political freedom. The Rowlett Act agitation brought the different sections of people together. The Khilafat Movement was the next that brought the Muslims also close to the National demand. The Pathans who had been waiting for a call found the necessary impetus and uprising was sudden there. Ghaffar Khan who was only a youth of twenty six years had won the hearts of the rough and turbulent Pathan by dint of ceaseless persuasion and force of character. He emerged as 'Fakhre-Afghan' (Pride of Pathans), a title he was conferred upon when he was released from jail in 1924 after three years of imprisonment. He had only one of the two alternatives: either to carry on with constitutional agitation, or to support the terrorists. His inherent adherence to nonviolence did not permit him to resort to terrorist movements. It was at this time the new technique of nonviolent resistance which Gandhi preached and practised appealed to him. He read with interest what Gandhi said in 1920 about the technique of nonviolent action.

"Nonviolent action", Gandhi wrote, "does not mean weak submission to the will of the evil-doer, but

it means putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. And so I am not pleading for India to practise nonviolence because she is weak. I want her to practise nonviolent being conscious of her strength and power."

Abdul Ghaffar Khan was irresistibly drawn to Gandhi as the former found a kindred spirit in the latter. He found in Gandhi a man truly connected with mankind, a man who lived for the sake of others, one who was interested in other people and their lives, even in the lives of the poorest. So when they met together, both of them had, by then acquired preeminence in public life. The unique similarity in their outlook and approach made him believe that in Gandhi he found the one whom he was searching for.

The second Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 was a testing time for Ghaffar Khan. He had successfully managed to kindle a spirit of patriotism and a feeling, which he thought would ultimately take them to the front row of national movement. The reaction was tremendous. The fame of his Khudai Khidmatgars travelled fast. The response from Muslims was very considerable. But all was not well for the Khan. The simmering communal passions also showed their ugly head. The British true to their policy of divide and rule exploited the situation to the utmost. Several people lost their moorings. Had it not

been for the magnificent personality of Ghaffar Khan, the virus of communalism injected into the body politic by the British would have taken a heavy toll of life. He undertook long and arduous tours on foot to carry the message of love, tolerance, nonviolence and the technique of fight without weapons. It yielded good results. His speeches removed from the Pathans' heart the fear of the British Government and inspired them with new hope and courage. "Of all the remarkable happenings in India," Nehru wrote in the *Discovery of India* "in recent times, nothing is more astonishing than the way in which Abdul Ghaffar Khan made his turbulent and quarrelsome people accept peaceful methods of political action involving enormous sufferings."

During the Civil Disobedience struggles between 1930-33 the Frontier Province was virtually under a blood and iron rule. The Government had launched tyrannical and oppressive measures. They had blockaded the whole province and nobody was allowed to move out of it. No outsiders were allowed to enter the province lest they should see the condition of the people. *The red shirts*, as the members of the Khudai Khidmatgar movement were called, were the targets of persecution. Several of them were burnt to death and their houses set on fire too. As Nehru wrote:

“The suffering was indeed terrible and has left a trail of bitter memories; and yet their discipline and self-control were such that no act of violence was committed by the Pathans against the forces or others opposed to them . . . this self-discipline appears little short of miraculous.”

This was good news to Gandhi. He sent word of congratulation to Ghaffar Khan and his Khudai Khidmatgars. In one of the public meetings arranged in honour of Badshah Khan shortly after his release, he was lovingly called “the Frontier Gandhi.” Badshah Khan was highly critical about it. He did not like people call him Frontier Gandhi. On 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1934 addressing a student gathering he said:

“I request you not to call me Frontier Gandhi, because there should be only one Gandhi. And if there be two then inevitably there would be quarrel. Mahatma Gandhi is our general and there should be one general only. So do not add the name of Gandhi to my name.”

Badshah Khan and his brother were not allowed to enter the Frontier Province and the Punjab. Hence they went to Gandhi and stayed with him at Wardha. Gandhi was also eagerly waiting for an earlier meeting with Badshah Khan. ‘I was thus privileged’, Gandhi wrote in the forward to Mahadev Desai’s Book *Two*

### *Servants of God.*

"To come into intimate touch with the Ali Brothers. The more I knew them the more attracted I felt towards them. I was struck by their transparent sincerity, frankness and utmost simplicity. I observed, too, that they had come to believe in truth and nonviolence not as a policy but as a creed. The younger brother, I founded was consumed with deep religious fervour. His was not a narrow creed. I found him to be a universalist. His politics, if he had any, were derived from his religion."

This was the most important formative period in Badshah Khan's Life. He had many heart-to-heart talks with the Mahatma during his stay at Wardha. His short stay at the Ashram enabled both of them to come closer. Whenever Gandhi had leisure time, he was found walking or talking with Badshah Khan. Gandhi found in Abdul Ghaffar Khan a true Fakir in the strictest sense of the word as used in the holy Koran. Ghaffar Khan found in Gandhi the one who had 'surrendered himself to God'. He learned from Gandhi that nonviolence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. The 'rishis' who discovered the law of nonviolence in the midst of violence, practised it and expounded it in a novel way. What is required is a constant adherence to nonviolence. Elimination of

hatred is the first step towards this goal. Where there is hatred, violence naturally creeps in. Suspicion also can play foul roles. So man should be free from hatred, violence and suspicion. The only way to purify one's mind is the way of truth. This essence of all religions and the prophets and the Avatars has also taught the same lesson, though in different languages.

The short stay Badshah Khan had with Gandhi proved so mutually infectious, that both were drawn irresistibly towards each other. Gandhi found that they were almost identical in their ideals, outlook and ways of life. He aptly designated Badshah Khan 'The Man of God'. Badshah Khan left Wardha in August 1937. He wrote in *Young India* that his abiding faith in the Gandhian technique of nonviolence was a matter of faith with him.

Tough he was a believer in Gandhian Ahimsa even before it was the unparalleled success of the experiment in his province which made him a confirmed champion of nonviolence and he demonstrated convincingly that nothing could shake his ultimate faith in nonviolence which he was convinced the dire need of his beloved people at that critical period.

Gandhi paid a four-week visit to Frontier Province in September 1938 on Ghaffar Khan's invitation. Gandhi was accompanied by Shri Pyarelal,

Dr. Sushila Nayar and Kanu Gandhi. It was a thrilling experience for both both Gandhi and Ghaffar Khan. In fact Gandhi had been eagerly looking for an opportunity to see and know to talk to the people of that part of India, separated by thousands of miles in climate and surrounding. Gandhi found altogether a new race there. They are child-like and jovial. In appearance the Pathans are lean and wiry who seldom move out without their weapons.

To the Pathan also Gandhi's visit was a new experience. As usual Gandhi had congregational prayers every day. At these meetings were sung 'Allah-Isvar' Ram-Rahim ek hai' these Pathans had never been conditioned to think on these lines. In the atmosphere of mutual distrust between the Hindus and Mussalmans, Gandhi's prayer meetings proved to be the oasis of harmony and amity. The Hindus and Sikhs who regarded contacts with the Mussalmans as polluting, were led to think contrary. He asked them to cultivate an attitude of equal respect and reverence towards all religions. His speeches went deep into the innermost recesses of the Pathan's mind and purged every bit of deposition which would often demolish the ordinarily accepted faith. His visit and meeting instilled fresh life and hope into the hearts of both the Pathan masses and the Khudaikhidmatgars.

He taught the Pathans that mere renouncing of

weapons did not mean that the Khudai Khidmatgar had assimilated the practice of nonviolence. There was much violence in their hearts. It would take longer time to understand and practice nonviolence fully; what was required was an attitude first. And that test the Khudi Khidmatgars had passed. It showed only their readiness to respond to his call. It was not the wearing of Red Shirts or regular drills that makes someone a Khudai Khidmatgar. They should be able to feel the strength of God which is the opposite of the strength of arms. Only through systematic training in nonviolence this could be achieved.

To become a member of the movement each one was required to swear that he would never use violence, never take revenge, and never be a party to any feud but, rather, would forgive anyone who wronged them, consider all Pathans brother, and using the methods of Gandhi's Constructive Programme, work for the welfare of their people. Because of the leadership provided by Badshah Khan and his Khudai Khidmatgars, the Pathans were swept into Gandhi's struggle for independence, and the political force in the Northwest Frontier Province.

Gandhi had a meeting with the officers of the Khudai Khidmatgars at Nowshera. They thanked him for giving them the weapon of non-violence which was infinitely superior to and more potent than the

weapons of steel and brass. Congratulating them on their resolve to take to nonviolence Gandhi pointed out the difference between a Khudai Khidmatgar and an ordinary soldier. A Khudai Khidmatgar should understand that the basis of his activities was not violence but nonviolence. A soldier was trained to kill, to him killing was only an art. On the other hand a Khudai Khidmatgar was trained only for silent service. He must be a friend and win the confidence of all in his village. He must be gentle in his speech and behaviours. Gandhi reminded them 'so long as a single individual is afraid of you, you are no true Khudai khidmatgar'.

If Badshah Khan's meeting with Gandhi and his subsequent transformation into a votary of non-violence could be mentioned as a turning point in his life, the acid test of his faith in non-violence came when he was confronted with the question of the Partition of India.

"If the Congress wishes to accept Partition, it will be over my dead body. So long as I am alive I will not agree to the Partition of India. Nor will I if I can help it allow Congress to accept it", Gandhi said to Maulana Azad. The Muslim League was not prepared to yield an inch in its demand for Pakistan and there was large-scale killing and violence to press their demand. Patel and Nehru were reconciled to the idea

of Partition, Gandhi said, "He (Jawaharlal) is our king, but we should not be impressed by everything the king does or does not do. If he has devised something good for us we should praise him. If he has not, then we shall say so".

The Mountbatten plan had created a strange situation for the Frontier. The Khan brothers and their party had always supported the Congress. During the 1946 election the League was defeated and the Khan brothers had been able to form a Congress Government in the Frontier, the only Congress Government in a Muslim majority area. Partition would place the Khan brothers and their Government in a most difficult situation. They feared that it would throw them and their party at the mercy of the League.

When the Congress Working Committee voted for Partition Badshah Khan was completely stunned for several minutes. He could not utter a single word. "I felt as if they had pronounced a death sentence on all the Pathans. I sat there, confounded and deeply distressed" He had reminded the Committee. "We Pathans were standing side by side with you in the struggle for the freedom of India and we had also made great sacrifice for the cause". If the Congress now deserted them the reaction in the Frontier Province which supported the nationalist movement

would be highly adverse. Neither the issue of Partition nor referendum was discussed by the League with the Pathans. The Congress now gave up its opposition to Partition without even consulting the Frontier leaders. He warned them that the Pathans would regard it as act of treachery if the Congress now threw them to the wolves:

“We held an election on the question of India or Pakistan and we won the election with a large majority. Is there any doubt about what the Pakistanis wanted? It was clear to the whole world. That is one reason why we don’t want a referendum. And another reason is that India has left us to decide ‘India or Pakistan’?

He said that if there was to be a referendum at all it always supported the Congress. If we had left the Congress on our own accord, the British would have given us what we wanted but we did not want to leave, I am convinced that if the Congress had pressed this issue, if they had been as firm about it as they were about the question of Gurdaspur. I am convinced the British would have had to listen to them”. He repeatedly told the Congress that if the Congress now deserted them his enemies would laugh at him. Even the Almighty will accuse the Congress of the treachery they had shown to the ‘Servants of God’, he reminded those who accepted partition of India as a fait

accompli. Gandhi was moved by the appeal and agreed to raise the matter with Lord Mountbatten.

Accordingly Gandhi met Lord Mountbatten and told him that he would not support the plan for partition till he was satisfied that the Muslim League would deal fairly with the Khuda Khidmatgars who had stood with him loyally in the days of difficulty and stress. At the initiative of Mountbatten, Jinnah and Ghaffar Khan met in Delhi. Though Jinnah was sympathetic he told Ghaffar Khan that once Congress and League had accepted partition, Muslim majority provinces should be separated and formed into a separate State. Muslims were in majority in the Frontier Province and it was bound to be included in Pakistan. Badshah Khan then insisted that if there was to be a referendum the Pathans of the Frontier should have the right to opt for Paktoonsitan, a homeland for the Pathans. Neither Jinnah nor Lord Mountbatten was prepared to accept this demand. Mountbatten said that the Frontier could not form a separate and independent state, but must be included either in India or Pakistan.

Badshah Khan and his brother Dr Khan Sahib considered this a gross insult and injustice because everywhere in India the representative assemblies had been asked to decide whether they wanted to remain in India or wanted to go over to Pakistan, but the

Frontier Province Assembly had not been given this right to choose. This was an insult to the Pathans and they decided to boycott the referendum, "so that the world might learn of the gross injustice that was to be inflicted upon us. Not only was the Viceroy's order for a new referendum illogical and unreasonable but it was also discriminating and partial. If the British meant this is to be their parting gift to us, we do not accept it", he wrote later.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan took it as the end of a dream. He had all along been fighting for a united India. A divided India would look like a haunted house. He had been entertaining the hope of a last minute rapprochement between the Congress and the League. The acceptance of Mounbatten Plan by the Congress and the League placed the Khan brothers and their Khudai Khidmatgars in a very serious plight. They were clear that their Province being a Muslim majority area would opt only for Pakistan. This would mean the handing over of the Khudai Khidmatgars to the mercy of the League. In the Frontier Province Khan brothers and their Khudai Khidmatgars were the mortal enemies of Pakistan. In the eyes of the Leaguers Khan brothers were 'Hindus' and their 'Servants of God' were only 'Servants of Hindus'. The inhuman and unIslamic acts of violence enacted by the Muslim League in the name of religion made the

Khan brothers and the League drift away. There was no love lost between them, only animosity remained. The Khan brothers could not understand the logic of the grouping and did not like to live under the tender mercies of those against whom they had fought.

Against this background they claimed that the plebiscite should not be on the basis of a choice between Pakistan and India but there should be the third alternative of an Independent Paktoonsitan, a homeland for the Pathans.

"I have been working for establishment of Paktoonsitan all my life. It was for the purpose of achieving unity among the Pakhtoons that the Khudai Kidmatgar organization was started in 1929, and I stand for those principles even today. My path is, therefore, quite clear. I will not forsake it even if I stand alone in the world opposing the one unit scheme and preventing the merger of my beloved Frontier with West Pakistan", he said.

He toured all over Pakistan "But nobody listened to me and the referendum was forced upon us. As we refused to take part in this referendum the way was clear for the Muslim League, and they used all the cunning, deceit and force they could command".

The Muslim League's slogan was "Are you giving your vote to the Mosque or to the Temple". The

British also did not remain neutral in the referendum. The *Hindustan Times* on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1946 reported a warning issued by a League functionary which indicated the nature and the extent to which communal passion was being incited. Khan Jalaludeen, MLA, (Hazara District) in the course of a meeting held to canvass support for Pakistan declared according to that report that before returning to Hazara the Hindus and Sikhs should clearly declare their full support to Pakistan and send a copy of such a declaration to the League office if they wanted to live peacefully in the District.

Because the Khudai Khidmatgars refused to take part in the referendum the Muslim League is alleged to have registered thousands of false voters in their names. Badshah Khan complained, "Even the name of Khan Amir Mohamed Khan had, as I had already suspected, been falsely registered." They added a new chapter of successfully playing malpractice. Muslims from other parts were also freely introduced. Badshah Khan could only turn to his master Gandhi and the latter in turn wrote to Mountbatten:

"Badshah Khan wants me . . . to draw your attention to the fact that Punjabi Muslims are freely introduced in the Frontier Province to affect the referendum. . . This increase the risk of bloodshed and worse. He also says that non-Muslim refugees

numbering many thousands will have no chance of taking part in the referendum and they are threatened with dire penalty should they dare to exercise the vote.

“I see in today’s papers that Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah contends that if the Pathans abstain from voting, the abstention will constitute breach of the terms of referendum. I do not see the force of the contention”.

Eventually Badshah Khan and his supporters kept away from the referendum to register their protest and North West Frontier Province was declared to be part of Pakistan.

But Badshah Khan and his brother Dr. Khan did not think that they were defeated. They took it as a new challenge thrown at them. They thought that they had only begun another battle. They continued their campaign of educating and organising public opinion and support for the realisation of a homeland for the Pathans.

Badshah Khan’s fight for what he believed to be the just demands of his people invited hostile criticism from the new rulers of Pakistan. His indomitable spirit recognised no defeat. It was his firm conviction that the carving out of a separate Muslim Sovereign State out of India would not do any good to either country. The attempts to create a theocratic state out of a

composite country like India which is one of the ancient civilisations could create more problems than what it might solve. It would be suicidal too to the national interest. He compared the idea of partition as the only way to restore the Hindu-Muslim unity a mad man's idea of cutting his head to cure his headache. He predicted with prophetic accuracy and insight what would be in store for these countries in future. The countries would naturally maintain war like attitudes towards each other, he pointed out.

Thus the myth that religious affinity can unite areas which are geographically, economically, linguistically and culturally different was torn to shreds even before the plan of partition was accepted. This was portent of an impending storm. As Maulana Azad pointed out, the plea for a separate state for the Pathans was the only alternative to the Khan brothers and it was in conformity with the resolution which the Muslim League itself accepted at its historic Lahore session.

Jinnah and Badshah Khan had different cultural backgrounds. All the violent steps Jinnah had taken to pressurize the government to concede to his demand for a separate Pakistan were open to Badshah Khan also. He modified his attitude in conformity with the demands of the situation, when the division of the India became a fait accompli, he said.

'Now the existence of Pakistan is a fact and the Congress and the Muslim League both accepted that fact, I only wish to serve my country and my people, without asking for share in anything. My people are now loyal citizens of Pakistan and we will do our bit for the reconstruction and the progress of the country.'

He took oath of allegiance and considered Pakistan his common motherland. The Khan brothers extended their services to make the destinies of Pakistan. He attended the constituent Assembly. Badshah Khan explained his demand for Paktoonsitan to the Pakistan authorities. Just as the Punjab Bengal, Sindh and Beluchistan were the names of the Provinces of Pakistan, Paktoonsitan was also name of a province of the Pashtu speakers within the framework of Pakistan. He stood for the parliamentary form of government in Pakistan based on the British model, which provided for maximum regional autonomy without concentrating too much power at the centre, the whole idea was that there should be no central interference in the functioning of the regional unites within the limitations set by an agreed Constitution.

Badshah Khan's opponents in the Muslim League who have been waiting for any stick to beat him took full advantages of his pronouncements. They

described him as an enemy of Pakistan, an agent of both India and Afghanistan. The demand for an autonomous Pathan state within the framework of Pakistan was mistaken by many and they believed that the cultural affinities the Pathans had with Afghanistan might drive them at a later stage to join Afghanistan. Accordingly he was charged with playing in the hands of Afghanistan. Gandhi had written on it. "The charge that Pathanistan is a new cry being flung in Badshah Khan's face. Even before the Congress ministry came into being, so far as I know, Badshah Khan had in his mind Pathan independence in internal affairs. He does not want to create a new additional state. If he can frame his local constitution, he will gladly make his choice of joining one state or the other. . . . The more serious charge is that he is playing into the hands of Afghanistan. I consider him to be incapable of any underhand dealing. He would not allow the Frontier Province to be absorbed by Afghanistan."

But none listened to Gandhi. Ghaffar Khan's demand for an autonomous Pathan land was treated with contempt at least by a few. They propagated the story that Ghaffar Khan would some day try to merge the North West Frontier Province with India. But those who knew Ghaffar Khan never bought this theory, for they were convinced that he was a man of his words and his sincerity and loyalty were above question. At

one stage Jinnah was impressed by Ghaffar Khan's sincerity and tried to win him over to the League's side. But the machinations and lust for power of some leaders who were close to Jinnah made him take a negative stance. Ghaffar Khan had made clear that at no stage he advocated complete separation from Pakistan. The Pathans who, like the other ethnic groups in the country such as the Sindhis, Baluchis, Punjabis and Bengalis, only demanded regional autonomy so that all these elements could live in peace without any fear of excessive domination by the central government.

### III

BADSHAH KHAN BEGAN his public life in 1910 at the young age of twenty. Of his sixty years of public life he spent nearly thirty two years in British jails and Pakistan jails. Before 1947 it was for the emancipation of India. But after 1947 what for? Commenting on Abdul Ghaffar Khan's imprisonment in independent Pakistan it was officially stated. "Abdul Ghaffar Khan wanted the Frontier Province to become part of India. Having failed in this venture he demanded a separate province in Pakistan, where he wanted to make this Frontier region a part of Afghanistan." This was said by no less a person than by Ayub Khan, President of Pakistan. If what the President said was correct, none could blame him. It is the duty of every established government to put anti-national elements and enemies of the nation behind the bars. But when such an allegation was leveled against a leader like Ghaffar Khan it was the duty of the authorities to prove it. While the Pakistan government miserably failed in providing anything substantial to prove their charges they seemed to have succeeded in mystifying the public. Now the word 'Paktoonsitan' is unpopular, because it was associated with the demand for separation.

Facts are facts and any attempt to deny the extremely important role played by Ghaffar Khan in leading his people to a period of awakening will be an aberration of history. It must be admitted that it was Ghaffar Khan who kindled the spirit of nationalism in the warrior-like Pathans and brought them to the forefront of India's freedom struggle. He fought for a free India and an India of Ghandiji's dreams. He had no connection with the Muslim League. He believed that the very basis of the League was hatred towards other religions and that its foundation was anti-Hinduism. He had admiration for Jinnah but he could not agree with him politically. He held that was not true that racially Hindus and Muslims were distinct entities. Many Muslims had been converted to Islam by Moghul invaders. Jinnah's grandfather had been a Hindu. There were no areas exclusively Muslim or exclusively Hindu in India. One could see that Muslims and non-Muslims interpenetrated throughout the length and breadth of India. To accept Jinnah's demand for Pakistan would be to admit that the Muslims in India were not only members of a different race which had no affinity with the Hindus. He believed that the battle cry for Pakistan was 'synthetic and artificial' and had been raised by Jinnah simply out of greed for power and a desire to revenge himself on Congress.

Jinnah resigned from the Congress and Muslims and Hindus began to drift apart. The Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS which claimed the supremacy of the Hindus wanted an all India Hindus Raj—the Hindustan. Jinnah successfully managed to make League a rival Organisation to the Congress. The Muslim membership of the Indian National Congress steadily declined. The Muslims were told that any system of Government based on popular election Muslims could never depend on impartial justice under a permanent Hindu majority. The British officials in India played a double role. Many of them did not like to see the end of British Raj and were out to use every stratagem possible to make the gulf wider. It was a known fact that many of Jinnah's 'Kitchen' advisers were Britishers. One British Governor of an important Indian Province had even wrecked a conference at Simla at which the Hindus and Muslims had come together. Another section of the top British officials were emotionally pro-Muslim and wished to stoke the fires of Hindu-Muslim animosity, hoping to maintain the status quo. Jinnah was shrewd enough to exploit the religious sentiments of the poor Muslims. He told that the Muslims minority would be swamped by all powerful Hindu majority. They would be persecuted and the only solution was the creation of a separate nation for the Muslims. Thus the two nation

theory was flung at the Muslims offering them a homeland.

In March 1940 the League met at Lahore and defined its role in Pakistan, where the Muslims could shape their own destinies. Their religion would be safe and pure. It would spell power for the politicians, office for the office seekers, higher wages for the workers. From this conference Jinnah emerged as the spokesman of the Muslim of India. The religious animosities hitherto suppressed were to rage like a hurricane. A wave of communal riots swept across the country. But Abdul Ghaffar Khan kept aloof from all these inhuman and ungodly activities. The League considered Ghaffar Khan and his brother Dr. Khan Sahib to be their mortal enemies. The majority of the Pathans were Muslims, but they were not allowed to be misled and misguided by the fanatics.

The Congress asked the British to Quit India, while the League wanted them to Divide and Quit India. Ghaffar Khan tried to win the League over to the side of the Congress. He asked the League to co-operate with the Congress and help it to make India a democratic republic.

"If the Hindus agree to this we will join the federation and if they do not agree our provinces will leave the federation. I would then be in favours of seceding from the federation and making our Province

into a sovereign," he told the League.

"You have become a Hindu", was the curt reply he received from those who were championing the two-nation theory."

The general elections held in 1946 only helped to increase the animosity between the Hindus and the Muslims. The NWFP returned the Congress with an overwhelming majority. The Congress success in a predominantly Muslim majority area was a shock to Jinnah. Jinnah gave the call for Direct Actions to press for the demand for Pakistan. It was a master plan to force the Viceroy to accept the two nation theory. Jinnah became successful in this also. The British argued:

"How can we give India her freedom when the Indian's can't decide themselves in which form freedom shall come? If we accept the Congress view point and handover the whole of India the Muslims will revolt and there will be civil war. If we accept Pakistan, the Congress will rally their forces and fight against partition."

This statement clearly betrayed the intentions of many British officers who were actively following the line of thinking 'divide and rule' and 'divide and quit'

Jinnah asked the Muslims to observe 16 August as the 'Direct Action Day' to press the demand. As he

warned 16 August turned out to be a black day in the history of India. Both the Hindus and the Muslims responded very quickly and savagely to Jinnah's call. Calcutta witnessed dreadful and filthy slaughter. For full three days the whole city was in the grip of goondas of both Hindus and Muslims. More than 6000 people were stabbed or shot each other to death. More than 20,000 innocent people including women and children were raped and maimed. Property worth crores of rupees was destroyed, all in the name of religion. As a British author put it "the filthy dreadful slaughter which turned Calcutta into a slaughter house for seventy two hours in August 1946 is important because it did more than murder innocent people. It murdered hopes too. It changed the shape of India and course of history."

The disturbance in Calcutta spread to other parts of India. It was clear that the miscreants' intention was to keep the disturbances going on. Ghaffar Khan wrote:

"What was behind the degusting and unholy plans the Muslims League was brooding on? What was the purpose of the fires of hatred and revenge they were lighting all over the country. Why were their hands red with the blood of their country men? All this could mean that either the Muslim League wanted to assume absolute power, or that they wanted to break

up the country into pieces. The British were pleased to see the Muslim League playing into their hands, for they should now convince the Labour Government in London that the Indians were absolutely unable to take up the responsibilities of freedom.”

The orgy of communal violence spread faster and furiously to the other parts of the country. The main centre was Decca upto October; Naokhali, Chittagong and Howrah became affected very soon. Hindus poured into neighboring Bihar telling their stories to the press. The Hindus and the Sikhs followed the League’s example and 25 October was proclaimed Noakhali Day. Chanting “blood for blood” they paraded and on the pretext of revenge they enacted unspeakable and mad acts of looting and killing on a massive scale. The resultant riots took a heavy toll of nearly 5000 lives.

Ghaffar Khan was deeply moved at the riots and atrocities. By this time the League had become more active in his province. A sense of despair among the Hindus and desire on the part of Muslims to avenge the Hindus was slowly creeping in. But in the NWFP none of those inhuman acts had been enacted hitherto, thanks to the presence of Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Dr Khan Sahib’s ministry was on constant vigil to defeat any possible mischief and hooliganism that the Muslim League might make. Both the brothers

stressed the importance of preserving unity among the different communities.

Gandhi who rushed to Bihar from Noakhali to build the golden bridge of reconciliation between Hindus and Muslims, requested Ghaffar Khan to join him. He toured the riot affected areas. Here he describes what he saw there:

“In Patna District the Muslims had suffered terrible loss. All over Bihar houses had been looted, destroyed and set on fire and many people had been killed. I made a tour of the villages and everywhere I found destruction and desolation. Most of the people had left and the few who remained had been put into camps. But in spite of all the destructions, the Muslim League’s fury had not yet abated. They wanted to make political profit out of this misery and tried to persuade the poor victims to migrate to Bengal whereas I was worrying about how to rehabilitate them in their own villages and their own homes. . . . Hindustan today seems an inferno of madness and my heart weeps to see our homes set on fire by ourselves. I find today darkness reigning over Hindustan and my eyes vainly turn from one direction to another to see light.”

The Muslim League continued to pressurise the Muslims to migrate to Bengal. He asked them not to behave like cowards. He requested them to stop

exploiting the name of religion. He reminded ever one that there are provinces where Hindus are in a hopeless minority as there are places where Muslims are similarly situated. If what has happened is repeated at other places and the majority community tries to crush and kill they are doomed to eternal slavery. Ghaffar Khan reminded the countrymen:

“I want those who are setting our dear country on the fire to realize that the fire they kindle will consume them also. I fail to understand how Islam can be served by setting fire to religious places and killing and looting of innocent people.”

The North Western Frontier Province could not hold on and soon it also acted on the lead given by Calcutta. Communal passion hitherto checked burst out in Hazara District, a stronghold of Muslim League. Badshah Khan hurried back to his Province. The League and their British supporters launched a campaign of ‘Civil disobedience’. Several innocent people were killed in the wake of this here also. Here the Muslim League’s targets were the Hindu minority and the Khudai Khidmatgars. Peshawar, Ghaffar Khan’s home district, plunged into violence. But the ten thousand Khudai Khidmatgars who had arrived in Peshawar could prevent the Province from going into a civil war. This was real test to know whether the Khudai Khidmatgars would abandon the creed of

nonviolence. The amazing fact was that they did not go even an inch behind from their faith. They had come up to the expectations and it was their active participation that prevented bloodshed in the province. Ghaffar Khan toured all the provinces of Frontier Province with bands of selfless Khudai Khidmatgars and helped the Ministry of Dr Khan Sahib to bring the situation under the control.

Meanwhile Mountbatten had arrived on 22<sup>nd</sup> March. Brisk political discussions followed. He said that the British accepted the demand of both the Congress and the League—to Quit, but 'Divide and Quit'. Both the Congress and the League agreed to divide India into two sister dominions-India and Pakistan.

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Badshah Khan toured all over Pakistan. The Muslim League smelt that things were going against them. On 1<sup>st</sup> September 1957 the West Pakistan Assembly adopted by an overwhelming majority a resolution favouring dismembering of the West Pakistan into 4 or more Provinces. Both the President and Prime Minister rejected the resolution. The Legislative session was adjourned and President's rule was imposed on West Pakistan and Dr Khan Sahib, Chief Minister of West Pakistan was also dismissed. Khan took the initiative of bringing the different

opposition parties on a common platform. The result was the formation of a new democratic party. Maulana Bhashani, GM Syed, Mian Iftikharuddin formed the National Awami Party. It led to the fall of the Suhrawardhy Cabinet in 1967. This was followed by the installation of two cabinets which were short-lived. And one could clearly see indications of political instability on the national scene in Pakistan. The disagreement and quarrel in the ruling camp the progress, India made the line of democratisation, all these were their disadvantages. They could no longer subjugate the people as they had in the past. Disappointment and unrest among the students, workers and peasants followed.

Dr Khan Sahib, the leader of the Republican Party was murdered on May 9, 1958. The following excerpts from the secret document entitled "One–Unit–Plan", which Badshah Khan quoted in a Pamphlet in 1958 speaks volumes for the master plot behind his brother's murder:

"One page 22 the document says: Everything has gone wrong in the Frontier Province' Sardar Abdul Rashid and the Muslim Leagues would surely have supported the one unit as Qaiyum's fall has cleared their way. Qaiyum's corrupt and vicious rule ran only on propaganda and its collapse has greatly increased the Muslim Leaguer's influence. But the situation there

got spoilt, because in Qaiyum's place greater power has emerged—the formidable Red Shirts. We can never win over Abdul Ghaffar Khan or trust him. It would have been advantageous not to have been hemmed in with restrictions. Some people mistakenly give more political importance to Dr Khan Sahib than to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. But shortly they will realise their folly. If the two brothers stay together, they will have a united strength. If they are separated, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan will retail his position, whereas Dr Khan Sahib will pass into eclipse because individually he has no position. A change should be brought about immediately in the Frontier situation. We should give full co-operation to Rashid so that he will be encouraged to ignore the Red Shirts and organise the old Muslim Leaguers. In this way the widespread influence of the Red Shirts all over the province after their release will be ended and this work should be entrusted to Qurban Ali Khan, who can effectively do so. He was made the Governor of the Frontier for this purpose. Abdul Ghaffar Khan should be totally ignored. Our parleys with him, will enhance his political influence and eclipse whatever influence we have, because none of us can equal him in political acumen, whatever psychological advantage once we had, is now lost by us."

Badshah Khan observed in his public speech

that his brother fell a victim to the same hands for whose sake he discarded his party, threw away his political career. He warned that his murder would only accentuate a feeling of hatred between the Pathans and the Punjabis. If the present trend continued it would be impossible for both the Pathans and Punjabis to walk on a common track.

On April 4, 1959 a press note announced that Badshah Khan was being released on consideration of his age and indifferent health and "trusts that he would no longer indulge in the activities prejudicial to the solidarity and security and Pakistan". Later a special tribunal appointed to purge unwanted politicians from public life served notice on him disqualifying him from being a member of any elective body until the end of 1966.

Warm welcome awaited him on his release. Speaking in a mosque, he said:

"Today I will remind you of a few sayings and beliefs of our Prophet . . . . If we had followed the teachings of our Prophet, our lives would have been worthy and contented. The Prophet has also declared that if his followers concerned themselves mainly with riches and luxury when for them both the worlds—the world here and the world thereafter—would be completely ruined. For a trivial temptation we sell our

religion and our community. Our present plight is the result of our greed for money. The Prophet told us that love for and service to our community and nation is an integral part of our faith. Contrary to this we are inimical to our own people and indulge in petty rivalries.”

His freedom was short-lived and soon he was again arrested on the curious charge of indulging in anti-State activities, “including the spreading of disaffection towards the Government causing a feeling of despondency and alarm among the public and creating hatred between various sections of the people.” He was released only on January 30, 1964 when his health deteriorated alarmingly. The Pakistan authorities knew very well the consequences had they kept him in the jail any longer. He complained that in jail he did not get fair treatment. He had to cook his food several times. He went on hunger strike for three days. Once wrong medicine was administered to him. The Amnesty International requested the Ayub regime to release him: “Despite appeals, the old man still lies in jail.” The Association observed, “Nonviolence has its martyrs. One of them, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, has been chosen by the Amnesty International as the ‘Prisoner of the Year’. His example symbolises the suffering of hundreds of million people all over the world who are

in prison for their conscience.”

There were clear indication that he was released out of fear that he would not survive. They did not want to face the odium of his death in prison.

Meanwhile many in India tried to contact Badshah Khan. Report reached India from time to time of his sufferings in prison. But nothing could be done. No communication was possible. Nehru believed, “Any step that we may take might add to the difficulties of Badshah Khan.” Jayaprakash Narayan tried to meet him during one of his good-will missions to Karachi but in vain.

In September 1964 he was allowed to go to England for treatment. He wrote to Pyarelal:

“Perhaps you have forgotten us but we have not forgotten you. Man in his happiness forgets his friends but those who are in distress can’t forget theirs. In our adversity we think of you. If Mahatmaji had been alive he would certainly have remembered us and come to our help. It is our misfortune that he is no more and the rest have forgotten us. You might be knowing that I have come to England for treatment. Since my arrival here my health had improved somewhat. But the cold weather has now set in and the doctor says that the cold climate is not good for me. He has advised me to go to

America and pass the winter in a milder climate. I have applied to our Higher Commissioner for passport. If I get it I shall precede to America . . . . Remember us in your prayer and pray to God that He may restore me to health for the service of His creatures."

He was not allowed to go to America by the Pakistan Government. The Afghanistan Embassy at Cairo gave him a visa to go to Kabul. When he reached Kabul the whole Cabinet was at the aerodrome, headed by the Prime Minister. He wrote to Pyarelal again:

"Nothing worse can befall us than what we have already suffered and continue to suffer. Considerations of personal harm have never weighed with me. What saddens me is that, the Congress on attaining it (freedom) forsook us. They gave themselves up to enjoyment, while we were left to suffer alone. We are still dubbed 'Hindus' . . . . This was unbecoming of the Congress. We are oppressed. To help the oppressed is the essence of religion in its true sense."

Vinobaji wrote to him on April 5, 1965:

"I am distressed beyond words to have to admit that in our freedom fight a great injustice had been done to you and you have been practically let down by your friends. But you have borne it all with great

patience and fortitude. Your example has been a source of inspiration to all of us . . . . These days a conviction has been growing within me that in this age of nuclear weapons, so-called politics is quit outdated, and problems, national and international, can only be solved by resort to spirituality, '*ruhaniat*' and I know that you are essentially a man of God with deep spiritual convictions, rather than a man of politics. You have always been a staunch believer in nonviolence and self-suffering. May be God is putting you as an instrument in solving world problem: *Bashshris Sabireen.*"

A month later he got the reply from Badshah Khan:

"I was deeply touched to receive your affectionate letter of 5<sup>th</sup> April 1965. It is extremely fortifying to receive a note of encouragement from a source so worthy as yours, to a person who is fighting a losing battle not only with his adversaries but his own rank and file who have become so desperately disgusted with the tyrannical government of Pakistan. They are losing confidence in the creed of non-violence which I had taken so much pains to inculcate in their hearts. Their argument is that with the Britishers who were a civilised nation, brought up in the democratic

tradition of their homeland, non-violence could have its efficacy, but not with Pakistan who do not attach much importance to moral values.”

“In the last 18 years since Pakistan came into being I have been, as you know, behind bars for 15 years—mostly in solitary confinement—with taunts and insults from those who were my wardens. This was not only my fate. All those who were Khudai Khidmatgars and, you know, that they formed an absolute majority in our land have undergone similar treatment, rather worse than mine. Their property is confiscated and their children and families are now destitute, because their bread-earners are in prison. If you add to the list the savage bombardment of Baluchistan and the tribal area, then, the picture becomes very grim indeed. Baluchistan and Bayans are even now the operational ground for the Pakistan army, where they have encircled vast areas and where the military operations are still in progress. I will not mention the casual shootings, now and then, of the peaceful citizens of my country. There is none to report these brutalities to the outside world. Our newspapers have been banned, our organisation is declared unlawful, centre has been demolished and we have been

deprived of all human rights, even of those given to us by the alien British Government. The Government and people of Pakistan label us as Hindus whenever we open our mouth or move in the public. I tried to serve the people of Pakistan, but they do not allow me to do so. Because of my past association with Congress, they don't trust me for anything. We are heading towards a catastrophe. Vinobaji, this is being done to me when I have not moved a finger against Pakistan or anything to start a movement, campaign or action against any Government in that country, though they may much deserve it. I don't know what to do now. Kindly think over it and given me your advice which I value most in the whole world. Should I leave my people in that condition? It is not possible. But to do anything has become impossible. My comrades in India, who are now in Government, cannot realise my difficulties because we have become a different class now. They do not see anything bad in it. I am now a man of a deferent world to them. . . . I don't know what their conscience says, but if I had been in their place, I would have acted otherwise to secure justice for them for the sake of humanity, if nothing else."

Badshah Khan was very bitter, about how he was let down by his comrades in India and this bitterness stems out of his belief that the partition of the country was artificial. Culturally, spiritually, ethnically and temperamentally he refuse to believe that he is not a citizen of the country for whose freedom he spent fifteen years in jail. This anguished cry of this gentle soul who was a born fighter raises certain fundamental questions: can a people who are inheritors of a common culture and who were living together for centuries be separate because of political expediency? And how long the wounded souls of those who worked for decades to liberate, and to educate the masses for it, from colonial rule be kept in check from giving vent to their cries of despair and pain? His criticism of the political leadership in India or Pakistan is not due entirely to his basic difference with their ideology. One can see from the strident nature of his view that it is all because of the utter failure of the leadership in making available to the suffering masses the benefit of freedom in both the countries. This becomes obvious from what he told Ved Mehta who met him in Kabul:

“In India, Gandhism is dead. Gandhi is completely forgotten. It’s the story of Buddha all over again. When I was in India recently, I said in my speeches again and again. ‘Why do

you not honour your own prophets? Your government does all the things that Gandhi opposed the British for doing—arms itself to the teeth, neglects the villages and the poor, support a huge, uncaring remote bureaucracy. The Gandhians among you, with a few notable exceptions, either put all their emphasis on the spinning wheel, as if that were his entire message, or trade on his name for personal aggrandizement. I am your friend, and I cry over your weakness. If I were your enemy I would jeer at them. Gandhism has more life among us Pathans than among you. At the moment, we are oppressed and politically powerless, and so in no position to do much about Gandhiji's Constructive Programme. But we are holding fast to the principle of non-violence, even though on occasion our hot Pathans blood has boiled over under the lash of our Pakistani persecutors."

He believed that partition of the country would only create problems. The fifty years of Independence has proved it. Speaking at Ahmadabad on October 18, 1969, he said that partition was brought about not by those poor Muslims but by some others. In fact it was done by the British who thought that if Hindus and Muslim remained united they would be a threat to

their interests. Leaders were responsible for the partition and not the masses in Hindu or Muslim communities. Those who were really responsible for partition had gone to Pakistan to be in power. He said that it was true that Muslims agitated for partition. But the circumstances in which they were misled by Muslim leaders were also to be taken into consideration. Hindus had great political leaders who served people, went to jails and sacrificed for the nation.

On the other hand Muslims lacked such leaders. Their leaders were 'Khanbahadurs' and served the interest of the British. By and large Muslim League leaders acted at the instance of the British and did according to whatever was whispered into their ears by them. Serious efforts were not made by anybody to instill patriotic feeling in the Muslim masses. Poor Muslims were not actually responsible for the wrongs attributed to them. His own feeling was that great Hindu leaders did not work among the Muslims and left them at the mercy of the Muslim leaders. He urged young men and social workers to work among Muslims also. If they mixed with them he was confident of changing the situation and problems of communal differences could be sorted out amicably. The poor masses in both Hindu and Muslim communities are full of love and sympathy for each

other. They were not interested in clashes which lead to ultimate suffering to both. What was necessary was to give them proper guidance and care.

Gandhi said of Badshah Khan:

“This I know, that with him non–violence is a matter not of intellectual conviction, but of intuitive faith. Nothing can, therefore, shake it. He derives his ahimsa from the holy Koran. He is a devout Muslim. During the stay with me for over a year, I never saw him miss his namaz or his Ramazan fast except when he was ill. But his devotion to Islam does not mean disrespect for other faiths. He has read the Gita. His reading is slight and selective, and he immediately assimilates what appeals to him. He loathes long argument and does not take long to make up his mind.”

Gandhi was correct in his judgment of Badshah Khan. This great messenger of peace and nonviolence who worked for one humanity conclusively proved through his life of challenge and sacrifice that *nonviolence is love in action*. A devout Muslim that he was all his life, he could realize that non-violence is deeply consonant with a vigorous, resurgent Islam. What he said about himself might be of some interest in this context:

“I am a man of non-violence. Amongst us there

were some who used to say that only violence could accomplish things. I refuse to accept this. I seek to serve the people and can indeed do so only through non-violence. I have nothing against those who seek to do so through violence, but our ways are different. Even so, I respect their love of country, their patriotism.”

Nonviolence is love. Violence is hatred. Violence can never solve problems or bring peace to the world. Else there should have been peace after the First World War. Was there peace? No. Then came the Second World War. Did any peace follow in its wake? None at all. Violence is such a thing that after one act of violence, there will be another of even greater violence. Each of the wars was more fierce than the preceding one. The next war may well be the most destructive. One thing is clear: If the world wills it, there can be peace, but only through nonviolence. If not, there will be wars greater than any before in history because of nuclear weapons and the world will be utterly destroyed.

When he was offered the Presidentship of India National Congress in the thirties he declined it saying: “I am a born soldier and I shall die as one.” And verily he died a soldier’s death at the age of 98, armed with inner and spiritual strength of a Yogi who through his *Sadhana*, sacrifice and conviction acquired over the

year the supreme awareness that all mankind is one and there is no room for hatred. It is not fair to describe his life to that of a hero in a Greek tragedy. He has risen to the level of a man, who convincingly demonstrated the power of suffering and love, and to him what is meant by success or failure according to ordinary mortals has only very limited meaning.

Human history is replete with instances of men and women who were never lured or tempted by material attainments, power or comforts, who willingly gave up all and embraced a life of suffering to realize the full meaning of life. To them faith is the battle. To this category of brave men and women belongs Badshah Khan. He has demonstrated throughout his life that unflinching loyalty to his conscience is dearer than material comforts. Like his mentor he was never lured by power. He rose to the level of a legend of courage, patriotism, selfless and detached service and had no personal ambition to serve. So his life itself has become an open book that may inspire generations to come. He believed that he was only a servant of God, a Khudai Khidmatgar. 'A Khudai Khidmatgar shall expect no remuneration' this has been the guiding principle of his life. He has proved that he is of the element of which heroes and martyrs are made of. It is necessary to have the right faith and right path and the right people should come forward to follow that

path so that they become the crusaders of their faith or creed. The masses, are sure to follow. He demonstrated this through his life.

Service which does not have the slightest touch of self has been the guiding principle of Badshah Khan all through his life. He was inspired by what Gandhi exhorted: "Man's ultimate aim is the realisation of God, and all his activities, social, political, religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings become a necessary part of the endeavour, simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can be done by service to all. Badshah Khan's six decades of public life is an illustration of the level to which the spirit and soul could rise in harmony with the demands of one's conviction braving difficulties and inflicting injury upon oneself in response to the inner call. He also demonstrated through his life the infinite depths of nonviolence. Tulsidas' hymn would perhaps be useful in the understanding of the tremendous contribution made by Badshah Khan to the cause of liberty and freedom:

Grant me, O Master, by the grace  
To follow all the good and pure,  
To be content with simple things;  
To use my fellows not as meant but ends

To serve them stalwartly, in thought, word,  
deed;  
Never to utter word of hatred or of shame;  
To cast away all selfishness and pride;  
To speak no ill of others;  
To have a mind at peace,  
Set free from care, and led astray from thee  
Neither by happiness nor woe;  
Set thou my feet upon this path,  
And keep me steadfast in it,  
Thus only I shall please thee, serve right.

Though Gandhi did not live to see the heroic fight of this favourite disciple of his in nonviolence for another four decades what is conveyed through the following pithy sentence from the Mahatma amply sums up the legend of heroism which personified itself in Badshah Khan: "He is a man of God, every inch of him, if you want to see one in flesh."

No doubt Badshah Khan's struggle typified man's boundless courage to fight and fight until he wins or chooses himself to be lost in the effort through *Amal, Yakeen and Muhabat*—selfless service, faith and love.

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# **Second Book**

## **Two Servants of GOD**

With a foreword By  
MAHATMA GANDHI

**Mahadev Desai**

First Printed & Published by Hindustan Times Press, Delhi [1935]

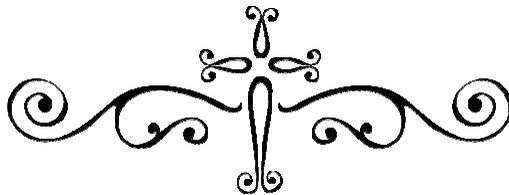
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“My non-violence has almost become a matter of faith with me. I believed in Gandhi’s ahimsa before. But the unparalleled success of the experiment in my province has made me confirmed champion of none-violence. God willing, I hope never to see my province take to violence. It may be I may fail and a wave of violence may sweep over my province. I will then be content to take the verdict of fate against me. But it will not shake my ultimate faith in non-violence which my people need more than anybody else.”

Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan



## FOREWORD

THOUGH I had always longed for it, I was never able to be with Khansaheb Abdul Gaffar Khan for any length of time before the closing months of last year. Good fortune, however, brought me not only the younger brother but also the elder, Dr. Khansahib, very soon after their discharge from Hazaribagh Prison. As luck would have it, they were under orders not to enter the Frontier Province till 28<sup>th</sup> December last. They were under discipline not to offer Civil Disobedience. And so they accepted the hospitality of Seth Jammalal Bajaj in Wardha. I was thus privileged to come in intimate touch with the brothers. The more I knew them the more attracted I felt towards them. I was struck by their transparent sincerity, frankness and utmost simplicity. I observed, too, that they had come to believe in truth and non-violence, not as a policy but as a creed. The younger brother, I found, was consumed with deep religious fervour. His was not a narrow creed. I found him to be a universalist. His politics, if he had any, were derived from his religion. The Doctor had no politics. This privileged contact led me to the conclusion that the brothers were much misunderstood. I, therefore, asked Mahadev Desai to not all he could from them of their lives and prepare for the public a sketch introducing them as men. He was to leave politics alone and avoid criticism of the Government. The result is this character-sketch. Let the reader judge whether the brothers' claim to be known as simple *Khudai Khidmatgars* (i. e., Servants of God) is vindicated by the following pages, assuming that they give an accurate and truthful recital of the events of their lives as the brothers gave them to Mahadev Desai.

M. K. GANDHI

DELHI: 14th January, 1935

# **Two Servants of GOD**

## **CHAPTER I**

### **THE FRONTIER PROVINCE**

THE struggle for India's freedom, which has been going on for the past fifteen years, may be likened to an earthquake in many respects. As it has been strictly non-violent, it lacks some of the volcanic features of an earthquake. But it has stirred our national being to its foundations no less than an earthquake does the earth. Edifices of power and privilege and age-worn prejudices have been thoroughly shaken up, if not yet brought to the ground, and the political topography is no less radically altered than the physical by a natural earthquake.

Twenty years ago who knew J. Ilianwalla Bagh and Bardoli and Chauri Chaura? And who knew Chirala Perala, Vedaranyam and Borsad? Dandi and Dharasna and Wadala were known to none but the few scores of people residing near those places. To the historian of the future writing the history of the fight for India's freedom, all the places I have named and many more I could name will have a significance which their positions on the map, if indeed all of them had a place thereon, never gave them.

And if they had no significance twenty years ago, had the whole of the North-West Frontier Province any, until it peered before our vision in 1930 and has since been piercingly visible because of events that we know and more because of events of which we have been ignorant?

The handful of us who read the newspapers had indeed a hazy notion of the Frontier Province as some terribly red speck on the north-western horizon, and as soon as there was any mention of it we bethought ourselves of the Britisher's pet bogey of the Russian menace. The student of history strained his eyes for the reality when he read the Britisher's account of punitive tribal expeditions, some of which ended in the British paying the tribes "subsidies" for the latter agreeing to seek their advice on critical occasions. The kidnapping of a Miss Ellis revealed not so much the character of a tribe or people as that all the resources of a mighty Empire could be mobilized when the aggrieved party belonged to the ruling race. The ignorant and the illiterate villager knew that there was a country called *Sarhad* (Frontier) from which usurious and exacting Pathan money-lenders came, to which when they retired with their hoarded interest or with a crime hanging over their head, they were beyond reach.

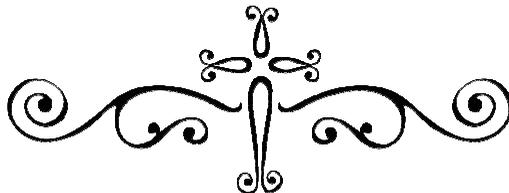
But 1930 and the years that followed showed that the North-West Frontier Province had men who had felt and thought like us, who had claimed the fight for freedom as their own no less than we in the other provinces of India had done, and who had suffered much more and given greater sacrifices than their brethren in other provinces. Those who had the good fortune to attend the great Congress session in Karachi in 1931 had for the first time a glimpse of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan Saheb and some of his followers. It was a perfect revelation that the simple, easily excitable, giant-like Pathan could belong to an organization pledged to non-violence and could carry on non-violent activities in face of grave provocation. We

read in books about peoples of many lands stories of the stern determination of the Pathan, reminding one of the Roman who thrust his arm into a flame and held it there until it was charred away. A Pathan robber, we are told, was about to be caught whilst boring a hole in a house he had decided to break into. The owner of the house woke up and found a hand thrust through the opening. He seized hold of it and shouted for help. Rather than be caught, the thief severed the hand at the wrist and left the owner of the house staggering back with the severed limb! The non-violent struggle, in which the Pathan had taken part, had the same stories to tell of his cool courage and determination but of a more ennobling type. Haji Shah Nawaz Khan, one of the Khan Brothers' cousins, was in prison in 1930, under the Security section. Domestic circumstances compelled him to pay the security to secure release. Whatever the circumstances, however, not one of his relations outside could be reconciled to his having paid the security, and they suggested that he should do some act in breach of security and go back to prison. He thought about it for a while, and then quietly killed himself, leaving a note in which he said that going back to prison was no reparation for the disgrace that he had brought upon the family! Death could be the only reparation!

Syed Abdul Wadud Badshah, a prominent worker and a great religious head and zamindar, not belonging to the British districts of the Frontier, but belonging to the Malakand Agency, was in prison for nearly three years under the Security section; he was not even released during the Truce of 1931; his father, decrepit, old and

very near death's door, paid the security that he might see the son before he passed away. The Syed was exasperated at the way his release had been brought about. So deep was his sense of shame that reckless of the pain he would cause to the old father he shot himself dead.

Who would not like to know more of the indomitable race that produces such heroes? I have the rare good fortune of knowing intimately the Khan Brothers who have just been released from the Hazaribagh Jail where they were detained as State prisoners. Intimacy has but deepened the affection and regard I had for these brothers. They have permitted me to ask them all sorts of questions about their lives. The story they have told me is so enthralling that I must reduce a part of it to writing and share it with the public. The public know that the Brothers, though they have been discharged from prison, are under orders not to enter the Frontier Province. When the reader has finished reading the story of the Brothers, they will wonder with me why they are debarred from entering their own province.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **BIRTH AND PARENTAGE**

"I COULD tell you the year of my birth," said the younger of the Khan Brothers, "but not the date. For I know the date according to the lunar month Jeth, but not the Christian date."

Jeth!" I exclaimed rather surprised. "We too have got Jeth." "Oh, yes. You and we have more things in common than we know. Our traditions are the same, many of our customs are the same, and after all it should not be forgotten that for centuries the religion of people of our parts was Buddhism. Our district is strewn with relics of the Buddhist times and the names of some of the towns are Buddhist or Hindu, and quite a number of Pushtu words are derived from Sanskrit," said Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan.

Dr. Khan Sahib, the elder brother, was born in 1883, and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, the younger brother, was born in 1890. They come of a family of Khans belonging to the Mohmadzai tribe. "Zai" means literally "born of" and indicates descent, and Khan Means "chief." All the tribes on the Frontier derive their names from their oldest ancestors. The Brothers' father, Khan Sahib Bahram Khan, was the Khan of the village of Utmanzai in the Charsadda tehsil of the district of Peshawar. Chsarsada is twenty miles from Peshawar, and Utmanzai is beautifully situated on the river Swat, about two miles from Charsadda. For about twenty miles west is the territory of the Mohmand tribes through which one enters Afghanistan. Born and bred in these surroundings, they are children of Nature and find themselves rather uncomfortable in our modern seats of

civilization—though we must remember that the elder brother has had the bulk of his education in England and has spent about eleven years abroad. But often enough in their talks their thoughts run back to those hills and the river and the little island in the river on which they have built a little bit of a retreat where it is their dream one day to have Gandhiji for their guest. "You will have your Ashram there, Mahatmaji," they say "and we could not think of more peaceful and beautiful surroundings. The whole Peshawar Valley abounds in fruits of all kinds and we assure you that you will put on pounds of weight there." They talk of their sugar-cane fields and the rich creamy milk of their cows which they use exclusively for butter and of their buffaloes which they use for all other purposes. "But where those fields are and what is happening to them to-day we do not know," they say with a sigh which indicates no defeat or despair, but the natural home-sickness of an exile.

But to return to their good father. When the Brothers told me the story of their father, I was put in mind of the story of the Patel Brothers' father. Both the stories are full of interesting parallels. Both the old Patel and the old Khan were deeply religious, both lived to a ripe old age—over ninety—and both had pretty nearly the same share in the upbringing of their children. But there the parallel ends. For whilst one may call the Patel Brothers absolutely self-made, one may not perhaps say that the Khan Brothers are self-made quite to the same extent. For the old Khan was one of the chiefs of one whole village—something like a Zamindar—and had at least the wherewithal to send his son to England. The Patel Brothers' father had a much

more modest income and his sons had to educate themselves. The old Patel was more of a recluse than a man of the world, but the old Khan wielded such influence that when he was over eighty he had to be imprisoned soon after the younger son in 1919!

"Both my father and my mother live in our memory as supreme examples of a truly religious life," said Abdul Gaffar Khan. "Both of them were unlettered, but both lived more in the world of the spirit than of the flesh. My mother would often enough sit down after her *namaz* (prayer) to meditate in silence and stillness. I have yet to know two more God-fearing souls.

"My father throughout his life made many friends and no enemies. In fact, without mentioning the names of some of the nearest and dearest relations, I may say that my father had many enemies who at the end of their days repented of the treatment they had given him and died his devoted friends. He knew no revenge and he had something in him which instinctively told him that there was no dishonour in being deceived, it lay in deceiving. He was a man of his word and he was so transparently truthful that not even his enemies dared to disbelieve or contradict him. Crowds of people would come and deposit their savings with him without ever asking for a receipt and they knew that his was a bank which would never fail. He never believed in dancing attendance on those in authority, but the mightiest in the land held him in awe. The biggest of the British officials would address him as 'Uncle' and think twice before they could decide to displease him."

"How long did he live?" I asked. "Did he interest himself in our fight for freedom?"

"He died in 1926 at the age of 95. I cannot say that he understood the implications of the struggle. But he was in favour of reform in all spheres. In our days, priests used to look askance at men sending their boys to the modern schools. But he would not countenance the prejudice. When the Rowlatt Bill agitation came, I threw myself into it. I was immediately arrested. There was on the 6th of April a meeting in Utmanzai of over a hundred thousand people. My father attended the meeting. After my arrest, there were attempts to implicate several people. For over a fortnight they would not say where I was. The Police Chief came with a *jirga* (deputation) to my old father and tried to frighten him. 'They will shoot the Badshah,' they told him."

"Badshah?" I asked in wonder.

"Yes," said Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, laughing. "I was *Badshah* then! They used to call me by that name."

"Reminds me of the 'King of the Jews'," I said.

"Well, that is so good of you. All that they wanted was to frighten my father by giving him threats of imposing a heavy sentence on me."

"What was the upshot?"

"The upshot was that my father was also arrested with several members of the family."

"The arrest must have been too much for the old man?"

"On the contrary, he was mighty glad to be brought to the same jail. 'How happy I am to be imprisoned!' he exclaimed. 'Otherwise I should not have been able to see you for days or years, who knows?'"

"And how long did he suffer imprisonment?"

"For a little over three months. For Sir George Roos Keppel

followed a policy of placating the Pathans, and even I was not kept for more than six months.”

The old gentleman died in 1926. He never knew the date of his birth, but the sons fancied he had approached, if not passed, a century. For though he could not tell his age, he had the most vivid recollections of the Mutiny of '57, when he was in the prime of life. He was never proud of the record of the Pathans during that critical period and the Brothers recall, not without a certain sense of shame, how their old father used to tell them of their elder uncle who served the British so nobly by commanding the military guard of the Charsadda Treasury.

“Where is there cause for shame?” I asked. “I remember Pandit Motilalji telling me that his father and uncle also served the British during the Mutiny.”

“That may be,” said the elder Khan. “But somehow, I do not think it is pleasant to recall the part played by the Sikhs and Pathans during the Mutiny.”

“They were different times. Is it not good that two great families with such historic traditions should be pledged to sacrifice their all in the fight for freedom?”

“It is, indeed.”

I cannot conclude this chapter without referring to the deep emotion with which the Brothers always mentions their father—specially his boundless charity—charity which includes loving-kindness and long-suffering. It is this father from whom the sons have inherited their instinctive adherence to non-violence.

## CHAPTER III

### EARLY YEARS

THAT led up to the story of the Brothers' early years. I was eager to know how in that dark province the Brothers managed to get the education they did and how they came to join the movement for freedom.

"I have told you," said the younger Khan, "how all education in schools was taboo in our parts. There were *maktabs* in mosques where *maulvis* taught the Holy Koran and gave a smattering of the secular subjects. But with the advent of the British even the *maktabs* went under and very few schools took their place. There was a strong prejudice against these schools, but my father conquered this prejudice and sent us to a Mission School in Peshawar. My brother passed the Punjab University Matriculation, did a year at the Grant Medical College, Bombay, and proceeded to England to finish his medical studies. There was quite uproar in our community when the question of sending my brother to England came up. There was the fear of his turning Christian; there was also the fear of his settling down there and not returning home, and of his marrying an English girl, which did prove true. But my father had the broadest views in these matters and said he was not going to stand in the way of his sons' education. I unfortunately did not pass the Matriculation examination. The question of sending me to England was also discussed and I should indeed have gone but for two or three deaths in the family which were considered to be anything but propitious for my going for higher studies. These domestic events and the superstitions attaching there to robbed me

of two precious years and the fact of my brother having married an English girl finally sealed the fate of my visit to England, and my studies too came to a stand-still.

But even the brief career at the Mission School was not without its lesson for the young Khan. Both the Brothers cherish the memory of the then Principal of the school, Rev. Wigram, whose character and self-sacrifice had endeared him to his pupils. The younger Khan made some kind of a resolve to serve his community as his Principal had served his faith in a missionary spirit. Before, however, the talk of his going abroad was given up, and before he entered on his mission of service, he nursed for a while the ambition to serve in the Army and distinguish himself as a soldier.

The Pathan is born soldier, and his application for a commission in the Army had the added recommendation of his coming of a rich aristocratic family, and so it was accepted. "The military rank," said Khansaheb to me, "was not without its glamour. There were several people of my acquaintance who enjoyed high positions, and I flattered myself that I was specially fitted to look like, and enjoy an equal footing with, Englishmen. But Allah had willed it otherwise. I was on a visit to a friend in the Army and I saw with my own eyes the disagreeable spectacle of his being grossly insulted by a British officer of inferior rank. That decided me and saved me from a military career. After this I spent about a year at Aligarh. It whetted my appetite for Urdu studies and I became a keen student of Maulana Zafar Ali Khan's *Zamindar* and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's famous Urdu weekly *Al Hilal*, which was unfortunately suppressed during the War. But my political education may be said to have begun with these studies and my

interest in national education dates as far back as 1911 when I took an active part in establishing several national schools in the province. When after the War the Rowlatt Bills were presented to us as a reward of our services, I had no hesitation in plunging into the agitation that was launched by Mahatma Gandhi. There were unprecedented *hartals* in our province as everywhere, and I have already told you how my old father attended the meeting at Utmanzai on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April, where no less than a hundred thousand people had gathered. There was no overt action of Satyagraha. The fact of our having had this meeting was quite enough for the authorities. Though I was arrested, there was no kind of trial. I was asked if I was a 'Badshah of the Pathans.' I said I did not know it, but I knew that I was a servant of the community and that we could not take these Bills lying down. The *jirga* that waited in deputation on me used all kinds of threats and all kinds of specious arguments. I shall just cite one. It was this, that the Frontier Crimes Regulation, which was already in force in the province, was, if anything, worse than the Rowlatt Bills, and that if the Pathans had no grievance against the Regulation it was hardly fair for them to join in the agitation against the Rowlatt Bills! Besides, when British India had so far hardly ever shown any sympathy for the Pathans, why should the Pathans be anxious to run any risk for the ungrateful people in British India? But this argument, like the previous one, fell flat upon me. I remained adamant and so there was nothing for it but to arrest me with a number of others."

"I should like to know how you were treated at the time of this your first imprisonment," I asked.

"Well, I was not only an ordinary convict but a most

dangerous convict. I was taken to the jail handcuffed and I had fetters on all the time of my imprisonment. I was twice my present bulk in those days, weighing 220 lbs., and there were no fetters to fit my legs. Whether a special pair was made or not, I do not know. But they were hard put to it to find a pair, and when they did put one on me, the portion above the ankle bled profusely. That apparently did not worry the authorities who said I should not take long to get accustomed to them! As though this was not enough, they made a most vicious attempt to implicate me in a serious offence. A Pathan from my village had been tried and convicted for having tampered with the telegraph wires and was asked if he knew me. He replied in the affirmative. He said he had joined the movement because of my appeal. 'Well then,' he was asked, 'did he not instigate you to break the wires?' To which he gave an emphatic No."

"But what was happening to the elder brother during all this while?" I wondered. I was told that he had taken his degree of M. R. C. S. (Lond.) from St. Thomas' Hospital and had gone to the front. After the War he was serving in France when the agitation here broke out. Not a letter from India reached him. He tried to return home, but he had to wait six months in London until he could get his embarkation orders in 1920. Thus whilst his father and brother and other relations were in jail, he was serving the British in France and was deliberately kept in ignorance of the happenings at home. On return here, it was with the greatest possible difficulty that he could obtain permission to resign.

Whilst the elder brother settled down to practice medicine, the younger interested himself more and more in the

Congress and the Congress cause. On one occasion whilst speaking to Gandhiji he said: "One learns a good deal, Mahatmaji, in the school of suffering. I am just trying to think what would have happened to me if I had had an easy life and had not had the privilege of tasting the joys of jail that and all it means. The imprisonments that followed were by no means the ordeals that the first and the second one were, but I am deeply thankful that God imposed on me that severe discipline in the very beginning of my career."

The Khansaheb attended the Nagpur Congress 1920, took a leading part in the Khilafat agitation, though he later resigned his office as President of the provincial organization and led a numerous party of Muhajarins (pilgrim-exiles) who went through untold suffering in their march to and back from Afghanistan. "My old father, who was nearly ninety years old then, was eager to join the party, ," said the elder brother to me, "but I interfered and pleaded with him to desist if not in the interests of his own health, at least in the interests of the paternal estate. He had a better physique than any one of us and could walk long distances even at that age. It was with some difficulty that he could be dissuaded." I need not tarry to recount the details of the ill-starred adventure which deserves mention only for the heroic resolve of the aged parent and the suffering that the younger Khan and his brother pilgrims underwent.

1921 again found Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan in jail under omnipotent Security section 40 of the Frontier Crimes Regulation. The circumstances are worth noting. He had soon after his return from the Nagpur Congress laid the foundation of constructive activity by establishing a

national school at Utmanzai, his village, and was trying to establish branch schools all over the province. There was no question of civil disobedience, but this part of the constructive programme had appealed to him greatly and he bent his energies to its accomplishment. But even this was enough to alarm the authorities. Objection was taken to his touring the districts and he was asked to furnish security which he refused. Sir John Maffey, the Chief Commissioner, tried to persuade the father to ask his son to close down the school. It was anti-British, said he to the old Khan, "Why should your son take it upon himself to establish this school, when no one else is interested in it?" he suggested to the father. The old Khan spoke to the son about it. The son replied in a manner that went home. "Father," he said, "supposing all the other people ceased to take interest in the *namaz*, would you ask me also to give it up and forsake my duty, or would you ask me to go on with the religious duty in scorn of consequences?" "Certainly not," said the father. "I would never have you give up your religious duties, no matter what other may do." "Well, then, father, this work of national education is like that. If I may give up my *namaz*, I may give up the school." "I see," said the father, "and you are right." Thus Sir John's plans were foiled, with the result that Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan was sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment for the offence of teaching the Pathan boys in his own way.

The suffering that he went through during this incarceration completed the baptism that had begun in 1919. It is a most moving story. Solitary cells, fetters for months, grinding for prison ask and what not. The rigours

left him physically weaker. He lost 55 lbs. in weight and had scurvy and lumbago and chronic companions. But his spirit burned brighter with increasing trials. Persecution and persuasion were alternately used to break his spirit without avail. Sir John Maffey once sent Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahim Khan to him with a message that Sir John did not object to the Utmanzai School, but that he wanted the Khansaheb to undertake not to tour the villages. If he gave the promise, he should be immediately released. Needless to say, he rejected the offer.

But I would like to dwell at some length on the moral and spiritual side of this imprisonment. I have heard some of the stories of his experiences with admiration not only for his brave spirit, but for the exemplary manner of his life in jail. He was a model prisoner. He would brook no breach of jail discipline, would expect or accept no favours and compromise no principle. There were officials who would accommodate him and go out of their way in relaxing the rigours that they were bound to impose on him under the rules. He implored them to do no such thing. There were poor convict warders who would gladly do the task for him, or have him exempted from the task in other ways. "Let me tell you in all frankness," he would gently warn them, "that I cannot possibly tell lies." There were quite a lot of petty corruptions going on in jails, then as now. Exemption from tasks and remissions could be easily bought. He detested this practice and exhorted the convicts that he came across to eschew it. He even advised the poor constables not to soil their hands with corruption. In one case a man piteously said to him: "I find it impossible otherwise to make both ends meet." "I will not tell you what to do. But I may tell you that what you are

doing is bad and immoral." The man resigned. This was more than the authorities could bear. There was absolutely no political meaning to be attached to this, but interested parties did so. Even if it was his moral influence, they thought that it was out of place in a prison! He was transferred from his province to a Punjab jail where he had the good fortune to be placed with other political prisoners. Here too the model prisoner carried with him his strict disciplined way of life. What the prison authorities found it difficult to tolerate in the Frontier jails, his fellow-prisoners found it difficult to appreciate in this Punjab jail. But he saw no reason to revise his attitude. "Once you compromise a principle, you not only compromise truth, but you compromise self-respect," he said to me; "and I know that those who did not think it a serious matter to receive contraband articles through obliging sources ended ultimately by bidding good-bye to their own self-respect." But this imprisonment in a Punjab jail also proved for him rich in spiritual experience.

He established life-long contacts with Hindu and Sikh friends and began his study of their faiths and cultures. "I read the Gita for the first time here," he said to me; "and I also read the Granth Saheb and also the Bible. I thought this was the least that I owed to my friends of these faiths. I should not be able to understand them properly and to value their friendship if I did not know their books. I must say, however, that I found that the Gita was then beyond me. I read it over and over again. I had not then perhaps the intellectual equipment for it, or perhaps receptivity. It was Pandit Jagatram, from the Andamans, who really taught me the Gita in 1930. He had a passion for it and he made me enter into its spirit." The name "Frontier Gandhi,"

affectionately used by his admirers and slightly by "enemies," would seem to derive from this period. He had studied Gandhiji's life critically and had always showed a readiness to take a leaf out of his book. During this imprisonment he not only kept a fast once a week, but also observed silence for a day each week. This was enough to earn him the title, though bigots his own community have gone the length of labeling him a "Hindu," as blind *Sanatanists* have not spared Gandhiji choice labels.

The darkest of our days, 1924-1929—years of acute Hindu-Muslim tension—found him absolutely unaffected by the raging passions of the hour. He kept himself severely aloof from all activities of a narrow communal type, and without mentioning them one may say that there have been occasions in his life when he refused to be drawn into the surging tide. "Let me tell you," said Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan to me once with considerable feeling, "I do not measure the strength of a religion by counting heads. For what is faith until it is expressed in one's life? It is my inmost conviction that Islam is *amal, yakeen muhabbat* (right conduct, faith, love), and without these one calling himself a Musalman is like sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. The Koran-e-Shareef makes it absolutely clear that faith in One God without a second and good works is enough to secure a man salvation."

And yet he is no less a Musalman than any orthodox Musalman. I do not think he has ever missed a single *namaz*, and has the spirit of brotherhood innate in himself more than many so-called orthodox Musalmans. The elder brother having spent many years abroad, and claiming as he does friends of various nationalities and creeds, is

somewhat of an eclectic, but he has inherited his father's religious spirit no less than the younger brother. Often enough he says in jest, "My brother offers the *namaz* on my behalf also," but he feels deeply hurt when anything compromising the liberal spirit of any true religion is mentioned. I once showed the Brothers a cutting from an ultra-orthodox weekly issued by Musalman containing criticism of Gandhiji's fast, and asked them whether, as the writer maintained, Islam sanctioned fasting only of the orthodox type obtaining to-day and no other. "What does he mean by an orthodox fast we should like to know," they asked. I explained that the true fast, according to Islam, in the opinion of the writer, consisted in abstinence from all food and all drink during daytime and breaking the fast between sundown and daybreak. "Absurd," said the younger brother indignantly. "I myself observed complete fast all the seven days that Gandhiji fasted in August last, drinking salt and water of evenings! It is a mockery of Islam to say that the fast, as is observed by the bulk of Musalmans, is the only true one. The Prophet observed complete fasts, days and nights. I think he permitted eating after sunset out of consideration for human weakness. The Prophet needed no food, because, as he said, Allah sent him spiritual food which ordinary mortals could not get, as they had not the faith that is need for it. This paper's criticism is on a par with the one that tried to make me out to be a Hindu because I was observing silence every week or because I studied the Gita."

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **THEIR VIEWS ON RELIGION**

THAT brings me to the articles of their faith. It is very necessary both for Hindus and Musalmans to know what constitutes the Khan Brothers' strength and what makes them true champions of Hindu-Muslim unity. Casually Gandhiji was once inquiring about the English wife of Dr. Khansahib and asked if she was a convert to Islam. "You will be surprised," said the younger Khan, "that I cannot say whether she is a Musalman or Christian. She was never converted—that much I know—and she is completely at liberty to follow her own faith, whatever it may be. I have never so much as asked her about it. And why should I? Why should not a husband and wife adhere each to their respective faiths? Why should marriage alter one's faith? You will be amused to hear that my brother's son, who has just passed his London Matriculation and proposes to go to Oxford, tells us in one of his letters that boys regard him as a Christian and that he does not know what to tell them!"

"I see," said Gandhiji, considerably surprised. "What you say about your brother's wife does surprise me agreeably. What would other Musalmans say? Many do not think like you in this matter?"

"NO, I know that they do not think so. But for that matter, not one in hundred thousand knows the true spirit of Islam. That is at the back of most of our squabbles and interested parties on both sides have simply fanned the flames of passion and prejudice. To what depths of degradation we have fallen! When I was in Gujrat jail in

1930, I decided to devote my time to cultivating an acquaintance with my Hindu brethren and we decided that in order to understand one another better we should have Gita and Koran classes, each to be conducted by men who could teach with knowledge and authority. The classes went on for some time, but ultimately they had to be discontinued for want of any other pupil but myself in the Gita class and for want of more than one pupil in the Koran class—I forget now this friend’s name. But each of us incurred a lot of odium, I being railed at as a Hindu and the other friend as a Musalman.

“But I kept on my reading of the Gita which I read thrice. I think at the back of our quarrels is the failure to recognize that all faiths contain enough inspiration for their adherents. The Holy Koran says in so many words that God sends messengers and warners for all nations and all peoples and they are their respective prophets. All of them are *Ahle-Kitab*—Men of the Book—and the Hindus are no less *Ahle Kitab* than Jews and Christians.”

“But that is not the orthodox Musalman opinion?”

“I know. But they fail to see that the Hindus and their books are not mentioned in the Koran-e-Shareef, because the list there is not exhaustive, but merely illustrative. The Quran-e-Shareef simply lays down the principle, namely, that those who have had inspired books come within the category of *Ahle Kitab*, and I am absolutely clear that the meaning of the text includes all people who have inspired books to govern their faith and conduct. And I would go even further and say that the fundamental principles of all religions are the same, though details differ because each faith takes the colour

and flavour of the soil from which it springs.

“To take a simple illustration. Both Islam and Hinduism lay the greatest emphasis on cleanliness. There is not, there cannot be, any difference between them on the question of cleanliness as such. But practice differs. Islam lays down the use of dry tooth-brushes, Hinduism of fresh green tooth-brushes. Hinduism insists on ablutions daily or even oftener, whereas Islam insists on a full ablution at least once a week. What does this show? They merely show that Hinduism sprang out of the Gangetic soil where there was no dearth of water and that Islam sprang out of a desert soil where sometimes it was impossible to get a drop of water for days. But that does not mean that Islam can have anything to say against Musalmans having a daily bath or using fresh tooth-brushes. The difference in the practices enjoined by several religions means nothing more than the fact that each faith sprang from its own particular soil. I should not, therefore, disturb anyone’s faith. I cannot contemplate a time when there will be one religion for the whole of the world. Every community will have to derive sustenance from its own faith and it is no use one community trying to disturb the faith of the other.”

That, however, does not mean that, in the Brothers’ opinion, there should be water-tight compartments between the communities. There could be no greater mistake than to think so. The cries we hear at every railway station of ‘Hindu water’, ‘Islami water’, ‘Hindu tea’, and ‘Islami tea’, take our breath away,” they are not tired of repeating everywhere. “Why should a Hindu and Musalman have any objection to drinking clean water

from each other's vessel?"

There can be, however, no question of compulsion in this matter as in any other, and no one knows and insists on this more than Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan. There is an incident of the days of 1922 when he was in Dera Gazi Khan Jail which I am tempted to mention in this connection to show the Khansaheb's delicate regard for the susceptibilities of others. He had given up meat for over six months, simply out of regard for the feelings of vegetarian brother-prisoners. But his health suffered and the doctor advised him strongly to have mixed diet if he did not want to lose all his teeth. He reluctantly agreed, but then there was the question of cooking the meat. The Superintendent said it should be cooked in the general kitchen. The Khansaheb said that he would rather go without it than have it cooked in the general kitchen and injure his vegetarian brethren's susceptibilities, with the result that the Superintendent was good enough to have it cooked in a separate kitchen. The Khansaheb's delicate regard for his friends carried him to the extent of ordering no meat to be cooked in his own house during all the time that Sjt. Devadas Gandhi was the Brothers' guest in 1931. But he also holds, and rightly, that even so should the Hindus have a tender regard for practices of Musalmans. It is a pathetic reflection that when on medical advice he had to start taking meat diet in 1922, some of the Sikh and Hindu friends could not tolerate it. This intolerance is our bane. "Without a tender regard for the feelings of one another we are never going to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity," he has told me times without number.

But whatever the present conditions, and however dark the present outlook, the Brothers' faith in Hindu-Muslim unity is undimmed. They have never doubted that it is going to be settled fact and that the leaders of both communities have to sacrifice their all in the attempt to achieve it.

"When we went to .....,," said the younger brother, "I met a Maulvi in charge of a mosque who seriously took me to task for preaching Hindu-Muslim unity. 'What a vain attempt!' he said. 'They are all idol-worshippers. How can we have any dealings with them? You seem to be going against the teachings of Islam.' I pulled him up and said: 'If they are idol-worshippers, what are we? What is this worship of tombs? How are they any the less devotees of God when I know that they believe in one God? And why do you despair of Hindu-Muslim unity? No true effort is vain. Look at the fields over there. The grain sowed therein has to remain in the earth for a certain time, then it sprouts, and in due time yields hundreds of its kind. The same is the case about every effort in good cause."

In another place a Musalman editor went to them with practically the same plea as the Maulvi in the foregoing paragraph, urging different grounds, "Why will you plough the sands" These Hindus can never be trusted. Don't you know Shivaji?" he asked.

The elder brother had no difficulty in giving him short shrift. "So you think you know Shivaji! What will you say if a Hindu comes calling Aurangzeb all kinds of names and saying that therefore all Musalmans cannot be trusted by Hindus? Well, well, my friend, both Shivaji and Aurangzeb are dead and let us not worry about them. What do you

say about Mahatma Gandhi? So long as you think that he can be trusted, all is well. So long as we brothers are trust worthy, we can ask Hindus to trust us. Do not judge a community by those who, you think, are its worst representatives, but by its best."

"We have heard doubts expressed about your Harijan movement, too. Mahatmaji," said the younger brother once. "Even the Yeravda Pact and the 21 days' fast have been misunderstood and we have been told that you had become a communalist. We have stoutly refused to countenance any such criticism. Yours is a purely humanitarian movement and those who belong to a faith have absolutely no business to treat their other brethren of faith as untouchables. We sent you from jail a telegram, to congratulate you, you will remember. Of course your reply took days in being delivered to us!" And both had a hearty laugh.

Not only had they appreciated the fasts, but they had come to the heroic determination of giving up meat, and had not touched it since then in jail. Even outside jail they have continued the practice, except when they go to households where meat is cooked and where they may have to sit down to eat without previous notice. The younger brother not only fasted with Gandhiji during the last fast, but he added one more article to his self-denying ordinance. He gave up tea which he was very fond of. "I would get a headache whenever I missed my tea, and I would take plenty of it whenever I took it, but it is surprising that whenever I fast I do not miss it at all, and so I had no hesitation in giving it up," he said to me one day. But the elder brother is anxious about the

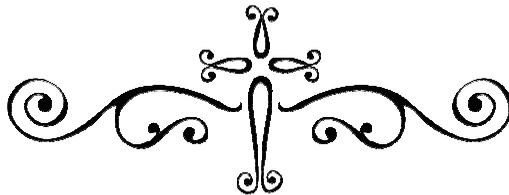
younger brother's health, and often raises a protest against his self-denials. And it is quite natural. He who was 220 lbs. in 1919 weighs now something like 170 lbs. That really is the toll that imprisonment has claimed.

But I have digressed. Islam, to them, is no narrow creed and they implicitly believe that it is just because one is a devout Muslim that one should be a worker in the cause of unity and of the Indian National Congress. "I am surprised," he said at a mass meeting in 1931, "that the very name of the Congress scares away some of my Musalman brethren. They think that the Congress is a Hindu organization and that therefore they may have nothing to do with it. There never was a more incorrect description of a body, which is essentially national in character. I appeal to my brethren to study the aims and objects and the rules and constitution of the Congress. Briefly, the Congress aims at liberating the people from slavery and exploitation, or, in other words, the Congress aims at being able to feed India's hungry millions and cloth India's naked millions. I want you to read the history of Islam, and ask you to consider what the Prophet's mission was. It was to free the oppressed, to feed the poor and to clothe the naked. Therefore the work of the Congress is nothing but the work of the Prophet, nothing inconsistent with Islam.

"Seeing this as clearly as daylight, I do not understand how Musalmans can remain aloof from the Congress. Then we come to the creed of non-violence. There is nothing surprising in a Musalman or a Pathan like me subscribing to that creed. It is not a new creed. It was followed 1,400 years ago by the Prophet all the time he

was in Mecca and it has since been followed by all those who wanted to throw off an oppressor's yoke. But we had so far forgotten it that when Mahatmaji placed it before us we thought he was sponsoring a novel creed or a novel weapon. To him belongs the credit of being the first amongst us to revive a forgotten creed, and to place it before a nation for the redress of its grievances.

"To Hindus and Musalmans I would say, this fight for freedom is for the liberation of both. The Hindus are obliging none by taking part in the struggle and the Musalmans will oblige none by joining the Hindus. There are influences enough to divide us. You in India are familiar with the cry of the Afghan bogey. We have been made familiar of late with the cry of Hindu rule, —a rule of the rich Hindu, of the educated Hindu, of the Nationalist Hindu. To those who come to warn me against a Hindu rule I say, perhaps, it may be better to be slaves under a neighbor than under a perfect stranger."



## CHAPTER V

### KHUDAI KHIDAMATGARS

ON his release from jail in 1924, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan settled down to the quiet work of social reform, though he did attend the various sessions of the Congress. Remarkably simple in his habits, and unassuming to a fault, there is no wonder that he should not have attracted much attention and certainly escaped the glare of limelight. But as we know already he could not quite escape it in his province. We have seen how in 1921 he had established a national school in Utmanzai. It is this school which turned out numerous workers and which suffered in 1932 the same fate as the Gujarat Vidyapith in Ahmedabad. These workers may be said to be the nucleus of the vast organization that some years later came to be known as the *Khudai Khidmatgars*. Being essentially a man of God, Khansaheb could not think of any other name for his volunteer band, and a more appropriate name than *Khudai Khidmatgars*—servants of God—could not have been chosen. These volunteer workers were at first intended entirely for the work of social reform, e.g., weaning the Pathans from lawlessness and loot, educating them, making marriages etc. less expensive, and so forth. It was in 1929 that the Khansaheb decided to turn the small body of workers into a full-fledged political organization to carry out the whole programme of the Congress. The name “Red Shirts” is just a case of giving a dog a bad name and then hanging him. It is possible that the fine vernacular name was found jaw-breaking by some officials who had no knowledge of the vernacular. Ready to see red

in anything calculated to organise the community, they saw something "red" in the red shirts! The Brothers tell me that the uniform was originally pure white khaddar. When it was found that the white khaddar looked dirty in no time, it was decided to give the uniform the brick color which can hardly be described as red. The brick colour has no connection whatsoever with the red color of Soviet Russia.

The Congress programme the *Khudai Khidmatgars* were carrying out consisted of the picketing of foreign cloth-shops, liquor shops, etc. They were being regularly drilled and taught to take long marches in military fashion. But all weapons were eschewed, including *lathis*. They were under the strictest discipline, and the least little act of disobedience or insubordination meant dismissal. The members on enlistment had to take a solemn oath:—

1. To be loyal to God, the community and the Motherland;
2. To be always non-violent;
3. To expect no reward for services;
4. To eschew fear and be prepared for any sacrifice;
5. To live a pure life.

In April 1930 there were not more than 500 *Khudai Khidmatgars*, but the arrest of the Khansaheb gave a fillip to the movement. There were shootings and numerous *lathi* charges. Which far from suppressing the movement popularised it. I cannot go into the details of these shootings and *lathi* charges. Even if I had all the evidence before me and leisure to sift it, I should not care to put it before the public whilst the whole movement of Civil Disobedience is under suspension and when its author is trying to devise means of preventing a renewal, if it may be at all possible to do so. Suffice it to say that the

Brothers have chapter and verse in support of the statements made in the suppressed literature published in vindication of the Brothers and the band of volunteers. The elder Brother was an eye-witness to many of the terrible things he has described to me, but with the consent of both the brothers since the Civil Disobedience movement is suspended, I prefer to draw the curtain over the whole of the tragic events.

But one thing may not be passed over. The charge has officially been leveled against the volunteers of violent conduct. During the whole period of 1930-33 not a single concrete case of actual violence on the part of the "Red Shirts" was adduced. The Peshawar happenings in April 1930 were the subject of two inquiries, official and non-official, and, while both the Suleiman Committee's and the Patel Committee's reports contain some blood-curdling accounts of a ghastly tragedy that was enacted there, there is no mention, in either of the reports or in the evidence tendered by any of the officials, of any *Khudai Khidmatgars* or "Red Shirts." The worst that the Government had to say about them was the following in a proclamation issued by the Chief Commissioner of the Province in May 1930: "You must prevent Congress volunteers, wearing red jackets, from entering your villages. They call themselves *Khudai Khidmatgars* (servants of God). But in reality they are the servant of Gandhi. They wear the dress of Bolsheviks. They will create the same atmosphere as you have heard in the Bolshevik dominion." What exactly is meant by the statement that they are "nothing but Bolsheviks" it is difficult to say, but no one of the numerous official communiqués that were issued after the 23<sup>rd</sup> April tragedy attempts to implicate

any of them in it. Father Elwin did see some officials during his brief visit in 1932 and all that the latter seem to have alleged against the *Khudai Khidmatgars* amount to this: (1) some police officers in the districts were insulted and abused; (2) stones and dung were thrown into their cars; (3) stones and brickbats provoked the shooting at Kohat. In a movement the whole strength of which lies in its non-violence, it would not do to minimise even these offenses if they were really committed. But it must not be forgotten that the one security against offences of this kind was removed by Government arresting all responsible leaders, and that these offences are negligible when we remember the terrible insults and humiliations heaped upon a brave people.

Need I discuss here the story of the numerous apologies said to have been given by the "Red Shirts" prisoners in order to secure release? The discussion would land me into a rather detailed statement of the other side, which is beyond the purpose of this book. Suffice it to say that the story would seem incongruous and incredible when we know that two men, whose cases I have already mentioned in the first chapter, took their own lives in order to escape the disgrace of payment of security—a disgrace certainly lesser than that of tendering apology. When some day a full and accurate story of the sufferings undergone by these brave Pathans in jails and outside, the losses endured by them of movable and immovable property, and the wonderful endurance shown by them in face of gave provocations, comes to be unfolded, if it must be, it will reveal a record of which any nation might be proud.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **THE INDICTMENT AND TRUTH**

WHAT then is the Khan Brothers' offence? All official statements are silent about the elder brother, Dr Khansahib, whose crime would seem to be that he is the brother of one who had become so notorious in the eyes of Government. Here are some of the charges against the younger brother.

1. "After Mr. Gandhi left for the Round Table Conference, he made an extensive tour in the districts leading the Congress movement at the request of the Working Committee of the Congress."

2. He disobeyed prohibitory orders and toured the villages, delivered political harangues in mosques, under the pretext of religious sermons.

3. He preached non-payment of revenue and water rates and persuaded people to refuse to take Government canal water.

4. The Red Shirts were "a revolutionary organization, the object of which is to drive the British out of India by force," and that the Khansaheb was with their help carrying on propaganda in the tribal areas.

5. The Mohmand territory had been affected by the Congress propaganda in Peshawar.

6. The Provincial Congress Committee repudiated the Premier's declaration of the 1<sup>st</sup> December 1931 and repeated the demand for Indian Independence, and the Brothers rejected the invitation to attend the Chief Commissioner's Durbar.

7. Though stress was laid on the observance of non-

violence, people were encouraged to expect some great event, to be united in anticipation of it, and to be ready to resume the struggle which was described as war.

8. The Khansaheb had always described the Truce as temporary.

9. He had said at a Conference in Meerut that he had joined the Congress because both the Congress and he had the same object viz., "to drive the British out of India."

10. The *Khudai Khidmatgars* had interfered with the law, by compounding cases, or administering justice, or withholding evidence.

The first, sixth, eighth and ninth charges would be admitted by the Khansaheb at once and no serious effort would be made to account these as offences peculiar to him. Many a leader who has been held guilty of these charges is free to-day and his no prohibitory orders against him. That he preached non-payment of revenue, etc. In certain cases is true, but he did so not because there was any no-tax campaign—he himself paid the revenue on his own land—but because the parties in those cases were unable to pay. The second, fourth and fifth charges have no foundation and it was open to Government to prosecute the Khansaheb under the ordinary law. He stoutly repudiates the charge that he never preached or countenanced force and declares that if he had done so the movement would easily have taken a violent turn which it never did. The last charge is a compliment to the "Red Shirts" rather than a discredit for them. It only shows how well-organised was the movement, how the "Red Shirts" had carried out

effectively the principle of non-co-operation with law-courts, which the other provinces held in common with them but had never been able to carry out effectively.

The ninth charge is worth discussing in some detail, because the Meerut speech was the one thing that the Home Secretary had cited against Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan when he saw him in 1931 at the instance of Gandhiji. Here are some of the worst passages from the official translation of his speeches:

"If do not die, I will prevent the English from ruling my country, and with the help of God I shall succeed.

"People complain against me for having joined the Congress by selling my nation. The Congress as a body is working against the British. The British nation is the enemy of the Congress and of the Pathans. I have, therefore, joined it and made common cause with the Congress to get rid of the British. We should not be deceived by the tactics of the *Firangi*.

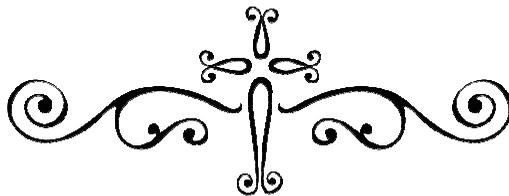
"We (the "Red Shirts" and the Congress) have two purposes; first, to free our country, and secondly, to feed the hungry and clothe the naked.

"Do not rest till freedom is won. It does not matter if you are blown up with guns, bombs, etc. If you are brave, come out on to the battlefield and fight the English, who are the cause of our troubles. The Congress is a society against the English; the English are the common enemies of the Congress and the Pathans. For that reason I have joined the Congress."

Compare these extracts with the extracts I have given in a previous chapter from one of his Bardoli speeches. The extracts here given are from the Meerut and the Frontier

speeches. Is it not the same brave, truthful, earnest soul speaking out his creed in both? And is it not that in these extracts he figures more as the victim of crude and wooden translators rather than as a fire-eater? He talks indeed in the language of "war", but who did not in those days, who does not even now? But it is not the removal of the British *by force*, as Government have baselessly alleged, but by "being blown up with guns, bombs," as even the official translator owns.

The fact of the matter is that the Truce which two earnest souls had so labored to bring into being was the *bete noir* of the officials, especially in Frontier. The trouble with them then and now was and is, *not* that the "Red Shirts" indulged in violence or that the Khan Sahib preached the doctrine of force, but that the worth official violence could not provoke them into violence, that they had so badly become "the servants of Gandhiji" (as an official leaflet naively declared) and that they so implicitly obeyed the "Frontier Gandhi."



## **CHAPTER VII**

### **FACTS ENGLISHMEN MUST KNOW**

BUT the charges we have considered are three years old now. As though three years' imprisonment without trial was not enough punishment for those unfunded charges, the latest traducer of the Khan Sahib, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, in an article in the *Morning Post*, has formulated a few more and blamed Government for having accorded the rebels even restricted liberty. The ex-satrap, who spent his early year in the North-West Frontier Province and claims to know the province and its leader better than Government, has tried to shed more "Light" by identifying the Brothers with terrorism and Communism, describing the younger Khan as "the daring Afghan revolutionary, Abdul Gaffar (sic) Khan, who is known as the 'Frontier Gandhi's though he openly sneers at Gandhi's 'non violence' cant, and makes no secret of his intentions to expel the British and organize on the North-West Frontier a Communist republic on the Soviet lines." This, of course, is a revised edition of the original Government indictment which pales into insipidity before this concentrated poison which is the privileged possession of Sir Michael. But look at the foundation on which the edifice of that malicious charge is built. "Abdul Gaffar,"he says, "is in close touch with the hostile Frontier tribes and is the son in law of our most persistent enemy, the Haji of Turangzai, who has so often in recent years roused the Mohmands, Afridis and other tribes to attack Peshawar itself."

Now for a few facts. Let me say at once that there is as

much relationship between the Khan Sahib and the Haji of Turangzai as between him and his malinger, Sir Michael O'Dwyer. Khan Sahib's father-in-law was Sultan Muhammad Khan of Rajjar, who, until he died, was a J.P. and whose services, perhaps, Government officials could tell better than the Khans themselves. How, then, has Sir Michael mixed up the Haji of Turangzai with the Khan's father-in-law? I must try to explain. The Haji belongs to Turangzai, a village within easy distance of Utmanzai, the Khan's village. He became known in 1911 when he started his own schools as instruments for social reform. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan readily associated himself with the Haji, who may be regarded as the pioneer of national education in the province. This was, perhaps, the time when Sir Michael was a junior civil servant in the province and, as the Haji came later on to obtain a fearful notoriety, Sir Michael thinks it fit to exploit his knowledge of the old association, and, as he does not think it a sin to sacrifice truth for picturesqueness, he makes the Haji the Khansaheb's father-in-law. This is no place to follow the Haji's fortunes, but it is necessary to note here the fact that the Haji's schools were demolished in 1915 and that he fled from his village and has never since returned. He was known to have helped the Afghans against the British in 1919, and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan did meet him on his way to Afghanistan and back when he led the *Khilafat Muhajirins* (pligim-exiles) in 1921, but since then he has never seen him or heard of him.

So much about the Haji. Now regarding the Khansaheb's being in league with the tribesmen. It is necessary to note a few facts about the tribal areas. These are the

mountainous regions beyond the five British districts and up to the Baluch-Hindukush border, known as "Independent territory" and comprising nearly twice the area of the British districts and having about the same population—all Pathans speaking the same dialect Pashto, with slight variations. The "independence" of these areas is a misnomer. The Governor of the British districts in the Governor-General's Agent holding sway over these areas, and tribesmen often find themselves no better than pawns on the strategic chess-board of the N.-W. Frontier. They are wild and untamed, and yet they are not so senseless as not to see the awakening that has been going on in their neighborhood. That a Pathan could smilingly receive *lathi* blows and worse, without being provoked into a rage, was nothing short of a miracle to these tribesmen. It was enough to interest them if it did some in the neighborhood, to the extent of joining the movement and there was nothing surprising in the depredators of the same race and creed wanting to be friends and wanting to throw off a double yoke—the yoke of the tribal chief and that of the British who hold him as a virtual vassal. It is the height of folly to imagine that in the present age it would be possible to play upon the ignorance of a mass of people. The Khansaheb told me that from the contiguous areas of Malakand, Bajor and Swat the tribesmen used to send their children to the Azad School founded by him in 1921 and that these tribes had to some extent identified their fortunes with their brethren in the British districts. Some of them did join the *Khudai Khidmatgars* and went to jail during the last campaign. But the tribesmen beyond these areas

were untouched. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan does not make it a secret of his intention to make all the tribesmen peace-loving and to weld the whole Frontier into a harmonious whole. But it is just a dream. He has never been allowed to cross the Frontier, so much so that when Sjt. Devadas Gandhi visited the province in 1931 and wanted to see the Chakdhara Bridge, which commands some of the most picturesque scenery in the world, the Khansaheb could not indulge in the luxury of providing this little entertainment to his guest. The bridge is just beyond a stretch of road which passes through the Malakand Agency and Sjt. Devadas Gandhi made it clear to the officers in charge that the Khansaheb and he wanted to go there just for the purpose of sight-seeing. This could not be done in the absence of previous arrangement! All that we hear at present moment about the tribesmen is that the British districts are often the victims of their depredations. Let Sir Michael O'Dwyer know that the Khansaheb's faith in non-violence is so great and his allegiance to Gandhiji so perfect that the Khansaheb once through it fit to ascertain whether in case of an attack by dacoits or bandits Gandhiji would allow a *Khudai Khidmatgar* to use force in self-defence. What a gross calumny is contained in that statement of Sir Michael, wherein he says that the Khansaheb "openly sneers at Gandhiji's non-violence cant," will be apparent from a statement of the Khansaheb made in 1931. The Khansaheb never denies that his province is more "murderous" than other provinces, as a Government report declared the other day. But he also declares it to the world that it is to make it less murderous, and, if

possible, to rid it of all violence and murder that he has adopted non-violence as a creed. Nothing but non-violence can bring peace to that distracted province and the Khansaheb hit upon the sovereign remedy long before Satyagraha had become current coin in India.

No man of good will fail to recognize the fervour and sincerity of Khansaheb's own words in this connection uttered as far back as 1931 and published in *Young India* dated June 11, 1931.

"My non-violence has almost become a matter of faith with me. I believed in Gandhiji's *ahimsa* before. But the unparalleled success of the experiment in my province has made me a confirmed champion of non-violence. God willing, I hope never to see my province take to violence. We know only too well the bitter results of violence from the blood-feuds which spoil our fair name. We have an abundance of violence in our nature. It is good in our own interest to take training in non-violence. Moreover, is not the Pathan amenable only to love and reason? He will go with you to hell if you can win his heart, but you cannot *force* him even to go to heaven. Such is the power of love over the Pathan. I want the Pathan to do unto others as he would like to be done by. It may be I may fail and a wave of violence may sweep over my province. I will take content to take the verdict of fate against me. But it will not shake my ultimate faith in non-violence which my people need more than anybody else.

And now for a few facts about the Khans' family which must disabuse the Britisher of all fears about their anti-British temperament or activities. I shall introduce to the

reader some of the principal members of the Khans' family. The reader knows, of course, that the elder Khan has an English wife. He may not know that when she was in India, before the imprisonment of her husband, her house (now acquired by Government for a pittance) was open to all kinds of friends among whom there were numerous officials. The wife of the present Governor, Col. Sir Ralph Griffith, used to be a great friend of hers and the Colonel himself was not unoften the Doctor's guest. One of Dr. Khansahib's sons has just passed his London Matriculation and proposes to prosecute his studies at Oxford. His own daughter and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan's own daughter, who was until a month ago in Mrs. Khansahib's care both read in an English school. The elder Khan's eldest son (by his first wife), Sadullah Khan, finished his education and took his degree in Civil Engineering from Loughborough Engineering College and returned from England in 1930. The second son, Obeidulla Khan, who is known throughout India by his 78 days' hunger-strike, learnt training Madras College and had obtained his passport to go to England for further education in training when he was arrested for non-payment of rent. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan's eldest son spent two year in England and several years in America learning sugar-refining, in order that he might be useful on his paternal estate (which has now, under the Ordinance rule, gone to pieces) and was until a little while ago in Poet Tagore's Shantiniketan. His second son until a few days ago was in Col. Brown's school at Dehra Dun, from which he passed his Senior Cambridge examination.

His youngest son is still in this school.<sup>1</sup>

I mentioned Rev. Wigram in an earlier chapter. Both the brothers were the good clergyman's pupils and both still cherish his memory. When they grew up, they kept up their acquaintance with the Wigrams, which ripened into close friendship, and Dr. Khansahib still recalls with gratitude that it was entirely due to the good offices of Dr. Wigram, Rev. Wigram's brother, and now the Principle of the Livingstone College, that he could get admission into St. Thomas' Hospital in London. Dr. Khansahib has numerous friends in the Indian Medical Service to which he once belonged. Some of the Brothers' English friends continue to be friendly and write affectionate letters.

Dr. Khansahib is a member of the Peshawar Club, the members of which are almost all military officers, and is a Scout Commissioner. I am writing this open to correction, lest he should have been removed from the Club and the Scout Commissionership during his incarceration. I have already mentioned his relations with the officials (even the highest) before his incarceration. During the incarceration Mr. Robert Brown, a Scotch and a high official in the Agricultural Department who in the course of his duties used to tour the whole province and who has now retired, wrote to Dr. Khansahib from Australia (his wife's home) a friendly letter in which he recounted the old days of happy friendship and mutual hospitality and referring to Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, said: "I have never met a more noble and kind-hearted gentleman than Abdul Gaffar Khan." I am giving these personal

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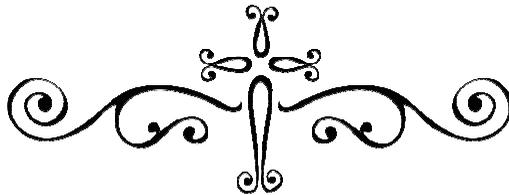
<sup>1</sup> In Wardha at present.

details, just to tell the reader that these contacts which the English people and this willingness on the part of the Brothers to give their children education in British surroundings, are not things which one is accustomed to associate with " Afghan revolutionaries" and "organizers of a Soviet Republic." Let me also tell the reader that a fanatical section of the Muslim press in the Punjab has not only not spared the Khans, for their advocacy of Hindu-Muslim unity, but questioned their allegiance to the Muslim faith on the ground of their having sent their children to England and America for education!

As for the desire imputed to them to establish a Soviet Republic, let it also be noted that the extracts from the younger Khans, speeches that Government have published contain no reference to the Soviet system or to Russia. The last thing they want in India and in the Frontier Province is Bolshevism. They frankly dread the Soviet as much as they sit down to the quiet work of revival of village communities in their districts after which they have set their hearts. "There are numerous weavers in our parts, but they are slowly dying out," said the Khansaheb one of these days, "and I should be deeply thankful if I could spread the gospel of the spinning wheel in our districts." There are about three thousand villages in the five districts of the province and there is practically no village that the Khansaheb has not visited. "But it is no use my talking about the wheel unless I learn to spin and do it regularly myself," said he and set down to learn spinning and began to spin good, even, well-twisted yarn in three or four days.

"Show us a truer socialist than Gandhiji," they say to

whoever comes to argue the socialist theory with them, "and we shall follow him." And they look back to the days when there used to be a periodic redistribution of holdings in their districts. "The Khanship, which is only another word for a kind of *zamindari*, is the creation of the British," said the younger Khan to me, as he was discussing this redistribution of holdings which I did not quite understand. "Every such Khanship or *zamindari* was created in order to serve as a prop to the new administration that was being established, and I say this in spite of the fact that my grandfather as a Khan was thus placed in possession of hundreds of acres of land. This happened some twenty-five years after the establishment of British rule in 1848. Before that we used to have a *jirga* of all the Khans who numbered all the villages and plots of land in every village and then cast lots. Every twenty years this thing used to happen. All, including the Khan, used to possess practically the same size of holding and whole populations used to transfer themselves from one village to another under this redistribution system. I could not think of a purer socialism than this."



## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **THE WHOLE FAMILY IN PRISON**

BUT I must summarise rapidly the detail before the Brothers' final indefinite imprisonment. It would be tedious to discuss in detail the question as to who was responsible for the breach of the truce, even if we confine it to the N.-W. Frontier Province. It is impossible to have accurate details either. Let us remember, however, that even during the Truce the *Khudai khidmatgars* were marked out for special persecution for failure to pay the land revenue, though there was no no-tax campaign, the Khans having paid the revenue due from them. I am omitting reference to numerous cases of persecution of a gruesome nature because the purpose of this book is neither to rake up the past nor to frame an indictment against Government. Two comparatively mild cases may, however, be cited, one because it refers to member of the Khan family, the other because it is one of those where the facts have not been disputed. Mazulla Khan's case is well-known. A leading landlord and a *Khudai Khidmatgar*, he was put in the lock-up as a defaulter. He wrote to the authorities saying that he had no intention to withhold payment and that he would try to pay up as soon as possible. For a sum of Rs. 2,000 due from him, a motor car, a tonga, a horse and three buffaloes belonging to him were attached. After his release his crops were attached and finally his land worth over Rs. 150,000 was attached. Obeidulla Khan, the elder Khan's second son, who has already been referred to in the foregoing chapter, had a large amount due from him on land

standing in his name. He had paid the bulk of it, and Rs. 300 was in arrears. He was arrested for this failure and put in a lock-up in Charsadda which was so indescribably filthy that he thought it fit to refuse all food rather than put up with those conditions. The term of his imprisonment was a month and a half. He had to be on hunger-strike for 38 days before the conditions were improved, and within a couple of days there after he was released. He went through his convalescence under his father's care for a month and then went to his village where he was arrested under the ordinance.

In the communiqué justifying the ordinance the Khan Brothers are blamed for several sins of commission which I have summarized in Chapter VI. Until 23<sup>rd</sup> December when they were invited to attend the Durbar these sins obviously had not assumed the alarming proportions they did on account of their refusal to attend it. No wonder that they should have instinctively refused to accept the invitation when they knew that humiliations and insults were being poured upon the rank and file. But that gave government the signal to promulgate the ordinance and to arrest the brothers with all the important members of the family. The refusal to attend the Durbar is cited as one of the reasons for the promulgation of the ordinance. Would not the ordinance have been promulgated if they had attended the Durbar? The younger brother had arranged to go to Bombay to see Gandhiji who was expected to return on the 29<sup>th</sup> December. The elder had an invitation from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Whose personal friendship he had made in the days of his study in London, to go and spend

the Christmas holidays with him and Allahabad, and he was thinking of going there. But government had arranged a different Christmas for them. The Brother were arrested on the night of the 24<sup>th</sup> and taken to Attock Bridge. Dr. Khansahib's eldest son, Sadulla Khan, who had just returned from England and become secretary of the Provisional Congress Committee, was also arrested and put on the same special train as his father and uncle. Mrs. Khansahib, who had left for her village two days earlier, and her whole family were aroused at midnight from their slumber and asked to vacate the house to allow the police to affect through search; and Obeidullah Khan, the second son, who was still convalescing, was arrested. Though the fathers and sons were arrested at the same time, government would not keep them together. The elder brother was taken off the special train to Naini Jail (Allahabad), the younger brother to Hazaribag Jail, and the elder son Sadulla Khan to Benares Jail. It was not without some outside agitation that the elder brother was transferred later to Hazaribag Jail to be with his brother. The younger son, Obeidulla Khan, was marked out for special treatment into the details of which I shall have to go presently. All that were left at home were the wives of the elder Khan—the younger has been a widower for over ten years—and their minor children. Their two sisters had taken part in the agitation, as indeed hundreds and thousands of Pathan women who had attended several meetings, but they were, not, arrested. Their sons were, however arrested, cousins, near and remote, were arrested, and then followed a wholesale round-up of all the important

*Khudai Khidmatgars.*

If the younger Khan had been allowed to go to Bombay and if Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had not been arrested on his way to Bombay, the history of the last three years might have been different. If Gandhiji had been allowed an interview with Lord Willingdon even after these two important arrests, which were most flagrant breaches of the Truce and constituted a clear indication of Government hostilities, even then perhaps the history would have been different. Gandhiji wanted nothing more than a discussion of the question of the breakdown of the Truce and was desperately anxious to revive it, if possible. Within a few days of his imprisonment he wrote from jail a letter imploring Lord Willingdon to allow him the interview even to vouchsafe a reply. Viceroy disdained even to vouchsafe a reply. Reason or no reason, Government was determined to crush the movement and they could not afford to have any truck with rebels.

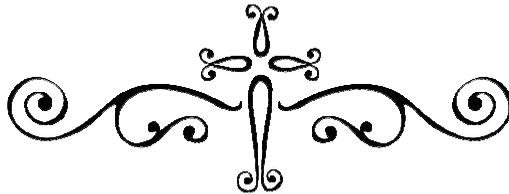
The brave Obeidulla Khan had already earned a bad name by his 38 days' hunger-strike. He was taken to Ludhiana, then to Multan, and thence after considerable public agitation to Sialkot Jail, where his health improved and where the climate seemed to suit him. But within a short time he was again transferred, in spite of his protest, to Multan Jail, where immediately on arrival on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, 1934, he declared a hunger-strike for Government's persistent refusal to keep him in a place which suited his health. The duration of the strike was unparalleled in the history of this movement for freedom and naturally drew the attention of the whole country. It lasted for 78 days. Government made successful and

unsuccessful attempts to feed him forcibly. Perhaps they succeeded when he was unconscious and failed as soon as he was conscious, but they had to yield at last to the iron determination of the Pathan whose life or sanity the hunger-strike had failed to affect. Any other man in these circumstances would have been dead or demented. At the end of 78 days, he was removed to Sialkot Jail in accordance with his demand and there he remained until his release on 18<sup>th</sup> August.

Obeidulla Khan's is an instance to record, hardly one to follow. It could not come under the strict definition of Satyagraha, and if he had taken the opinion of the apostle of Satyagraha before he went on hunger-strike, he might not have been given the permission. But he followed the truth as *he* saw it. The value of his act lies in his grim determination and his readiness throw his life away for the sake of it. The elder Khan proudly narrates the story of the son and says "The boy is a specimen of rare courage and daring." But the courage of the father and the uncle also deserves to be mentioned in this connection. The brothers were both in Hazaribag Jail following the progress of Obeidulla Khan's fast from the newspapers whenever these cared to print reports of his health. Government never informed them of the boy's health. Neither did they care to apply to Government for permission to see him or to persuade him to give up the fast. When day after day reports began to come that death was certain, the Brothers decided to send instructions as to how the dead body should be buried. If I remember aright, within a day or two of the actual letter being sent containing these instruction the news came

that Obeidulla had won and had broken his fast in Sialkot Jail. In spite of the excruciating ordeal that the son and more than the son the father and the uncle had to go through, let me say that there is no bitterness in the mind of the Brothers. The proud father was smiling as he narrated to me the story; there was no bitterness and no loathing as he gave me the details and at the end of it he said: "But there is one thing about this Government. They treated him wonderfully well after the breaking of the fast. The care they took of him left nothing to be desired and it is this after-care for which I am grateful. For that saved his life."

A word about the youngest son of Dr. Khansahib. Hidayatulla Khan is a student in the Grant Medical College in Bombay. He had gone to Utmanzai just to enjoy his holidays. He had taken no part in the movement and was due to go back to the College. But he too was taken into custody under the Ordinance and suffered six months' imprisonment.



## CHAPTER IX

### CHARACTERISTICS

IT is these brothers that are bracketed to-day with India's "public enemies," whatever that American phrase may mean. They have made unparalleled sacrifices. They have gone through suffering which few have experienced, and they have still before them years of service during which even their perpetual imprisonment—certainly their freedom—might be an incentive to their people to win their freedom. It is this that alarms the British Government which might not hesitate to have them shot, if it had an iota of evidence to prove that they had on any occasion preached or countenanced actual violence. The secret of their hold on their people lies certainly in their sacrifices and their suffering, but more in their daily life. While the younger brother is a man of God, the elder is a knight *sans peur et sans reproach*. All untruth, unreality, show and glamour produce in them nothing but loathing. Born aristocrats, they have taken to a life the simplicity of which it is difficult to surpass. When the younger Khan went to Bardoli in 1931, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and others, who went to receive him, sought him in vain in the second class compartments. He came out from the third class with a small hand-bag in which he had just a change of clothes and a time-table! He looks like a true *fakir*<sup>2</sup> and is one. In

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<sup>2</sup> *Fakir* (lit. a beggar) is a term used for those who retire from the world and live a life of the spirit. Curiously enough the word *Pathan* has an opposite significance, meaning one who has worldly possessions and who counts in the world. "*Pathan*" is not now a racial term, whatever its original significance may have been. It now denotes status, and is said in Swat and Dir to describe one who possesses a share in the tribal estate and who has, therefore, a voice in the

the midst of the poorest and humblest of his Pathan followers, it would be difficult to distinguish him from the rest. The transparent purity of his life, and his humility and selflessness has a magic touch about them. They give him the power to evoke a devotion that asks no questions but yields unflinching allegiance. "All kinds of calumnies have been spread against me by some of the Punjab Urdu papers," he said to me once: "there is a paper which loses no opportunity to make me out to be an enemy of Islam. "But he lives his life undeterred by these calumnies. When free he knew no rest. He was always on the move, devising and preaching ways and means for the uplift of the community. He will not use a conveyance when he can walk out the distance, he will select the cheapest means of transport when he cannot do without it. He eschews all luxuries and lives on the simplest fare. No wonder his example is infectious wherever he goes.

He commands implicit obedience and unflinching loyalty because he himself is a model of these virtues. "I am a born soldier, and I will die one," he said when he refused to countenance the move to have him elected President of the Congress for the year 1934. But he is a soldier who has thousands of soldiers ready to obey him and to do his bidding. He is impatient of all cant and hypocrisy and he cannot understand leadership which connotes anything more than the greatest service. He is no convert to the programme of constructive work. He loathes all programmes which mean show and no constructive work.

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village and tribal councils. One who has lost his share is called a *fakir*, forfeits the name of *Pathan* and has no voice in the councils."— Imperial Gazetteer, (Vol. XXVI) The Khansaheb is no longer a *Pathan* in the sense, and is a true *fakir*.

He has received rude shocks all his life to his faith in the good intentions of the British and he has seen the policy of "Divide and Rule" working untold havoc everywhere and it is with very great difficulty that he can be persuaded to trust the word of a British he has none, and he would subscribe to every word that Gandhiji has said and written about our attitude to the British people. His brother's friends among the officials are his friends too and it is one of the surprises of his life that the present Governor, who knows the family so intimately, and who has been both his brother's guest and host often enough, should allow misrepresentations of him and his intentions to go on without contradiction.

But the greatest thing in him is, to my mind, his spirituality or better still the true spirit of Islam, *viz.*, submission or surrender to God. He has measured Gandhiji's life all through with this yard-stick and his clinging to Gandhiji can be explained on no other ground. It is not Gandhiji's name and fame that have attracted him to Gandhiji, nor his political work, nor his spirit of rebellion and revolution. It is his pure and ascetic life and his insistence on self-purification that have had the greatest appeal for him, and his whole life since 1919 onwards has been one sustained effort for self-purification. I have the privilege of having a number of Musalman friends, true as steel and ready to sacrifice their all for Hindu-Muslim unity and for the motherland, but I do not yet know one who is greater than or even equal to Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan in the transparent purity and the ascetic severity of his life, combined with extreme tenderness of feeling and living faith in God. "Whenever a question of great pith and

moment arises in Gandhiji's life and Gandhiji takes an important decision, "he said to me once, "I instinctively say to myself, 'That is the decision of one who has surrendered himself to God, and God never guideth ill.' I have taken all Gandhiji's fasts as unquestionably directed by God." When questioned about Gandhiji's statement on his proposed retirement, he said: "I am not surprised that he has come to this conclusion. I have never found it easy to question his decisions, for he refers all his problems to God and always listens to His commands. Every great reformer's has been like that and there always comes a stage in every reformer's life when he must take leave of his following and soar with ample pinion untrammelled by their limitations and weaknesses. But he does not by doing so limit, but increase, the reach and sweep of his services. After all I have but one standard of measure and that is the measure of one's surrender to God." That is how he judges men and things and would be judged.

The elder brother is of a different type. He has travelled far and wide, has met all sorts and types of men, and has looked as much out of himself as the younger has tried to look within. While the younger loves to retire occasionally in the inner sanctum, the elder brother would go out to develop fresh contacts. While the younger pins his faith on more and more self-discipline, the elder takes life easy and would not brother to demand of it and human nature more than they can give. He is a born sportsman. He led the cricket team of his college, and while in London played not only excellent cricket but distinguished himself in soccer. And thus he has taken life in the spirit of sportsmanship. It was perhaps more difficult for him to

burn his boats and embrace the hazards of political life so late in life as 1931-32, after years of comfortable ease, then it was for the younger brother who received his baptism of fire at the early age of 29 and then took to a life of suffering like fish to water. But the Doctor took it all in a spirit of sportsmanship. He knows that if life holds its sweets for us in an ample measure, even so dies it not withhold its bitters from us. The younger brother would prefer to enjoy the sweets through the bitters of life.

The younger brother places the greatest emphasis on self-restraint and even revels in it. The elder accepts it with a cheer when the occasion comes. Talking once about smoking, the Doctor told me that he was once such an addict that he smoked nothing less than fifty cigarettes a day, but in 1931 he left that imprisonment which was so much in the air would claim him one day and therefore decided never to smoke. He has not touched tobacco since. But Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan has never smoked at all. Dr. Khansahib told me a story which I must record here. Col. Sandeman, the son of col. Sir Robert Sandeman, of Quetta fame, was in a visit to Peshawar with his "Guides" during the Truce. There was great unhappiness in the minds of the officials over the Truce and Col. Sandeman did not disguise the feeling from his friends, Dr. Khansahib. The Doctor said to him: "No, Col. Sandeman, dismiss the thought of your having been defeated entirely out of your mind. Political life is a game in which the victor and the vanquished must shake hands with one another as much as in a game of football or cricket. And here in this instance there is no question if a victory. We have just had a draw in which there is no victor and no vanquished." And

with this he immediately put the official at ease. When they parted from each other the soldier said: "Well, well, we have known each other so well that I hope and pray the Guides may not have to be guilty of anything bad in Charsadda."

The younger meets his opponents in a purely religious spirit; the elder approaches them in a purely practical one. Whilst thus the elder has patience with the bitterest opponents, the younger would find it difficult to negotiate with them beyond a certain limit. The elder can talk away with students, joking with them and bantering them, the younger would find it difficult to make friends with boys wasting their time over a useless education. He has his obvious angularities from which the elder brother does not seem to suffer at all. But no one knows limitation better than Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan. Dr, Khansahib did not take long to be persuaded to contest the Assembly seat from Peshawar, no one would have dared to make the suggestion to the younger. The elder would not hesitate to go on a diplomatic mission, the younger would instinctively shrink from it. Each is the complement of the other and they make a unique pair—so different and yet so similar in their transparent sincerity, stern, unflinching loyalty, doggedness of purpose, and warmth and tenderness of attachment. Both love to call themselves *Khudai Khidmatgars*—servants of God—and the lives of both are a serious endeavor to deserve that difficult name.

## **CHAPTER X**

### **IN THE REAL HOME AGAIN**

THIS chapter is going in as a postscript to the chapters which are already in the press. The Khansaheb's arrest on a charge of sedition tempts me to bring the book up-to-date.

Ever since their release from Hazaribagh jail the Brothers had, on the cordial invitation of Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, made his house in Wardha their home. The fact that Gandhiji had already been staying in Wardha as the good Sethji's guest decided them in their choice, for they had come out of prison with the determination to place themselves at Gandhiji's disposal and to be guided entirely by him. They visited some places in the Central Provinces, also Bengal and a few places in the United Provinces, during the interval, but all these programmes were practically arranged for them by Gandhiji. And I am giving no secret away when I say that every time the Khansaheb went out of Wardha, he did not do so without talking detailed instructions as to what he should say and how he should say it. The elder brother would not have cared to contest the Assembly seat for his province but for Gandhiji's advice and when during the election campaign one of the brothers felt that perhaps permission might be asked for Dr. Khansahib to visit the Frontier for the restricted object of the election campaign, it was at Gandhiji's advice that the plan was dropped. The Khansaheb would not even consent to open the All-India Swadeshi Exhibition without Gandhiji's approval, and the Bombay friends had to appeal to Gandhiji to make him accept the invitation. I

may even say that the Khansaheb would not have accepted the membership of the Working Committee of the Congress but for Gandhiji's insistence. He is never tired of repeating that he is no good for offices and for politics, and he would be content to be a humbler worker. He was free to attend the sittings of the Working Committee in Patna, but he stayed away saying that his presence was no way necessary for the discussion of the agenda that had been fixed. Quiet, speechless work in the villages is after his heart and when Gandhiji decided to have him on the executive of the All-India Village Industries Association he had no hesitation in agreeing.

As for the elder brother, he has perhaps made more friends than even the younger, because of a wonderful geniality and playfulness of spirit that would seem almost foreign to the stern, ascetic nature of the younger. Dr. Khansahib, without the slightest ceremony or fuss, took upon himself the task of treating and nursing the patients in Jamnalaji's household which is ever widening with the numerous friends coming to Wardha to meet Gandhiji and to attend various meetings. He then offered his services for the women's and girls' Ashrams in Wardha which were gratefully accepted, and quite recently he began going out to the villages in the vicinity on a medical and sanitary mission, tramping ten to fifteen miles a day. And no job is too humble for this ex-I. M. S. I have seen him sitting down at the bedside of his patients fomenting them, and sometimes cutting vegetables for a vegetable soup which is his special prescription for a convalescent. Of an early morning he would come to the Ashram to join Gandhiji in his morning walks. He would

follow him unobtrusively without even exchanging a word and walk back home after a visit to the Ashram patients, if any.

In the history of the Congress it would be difficult to find two greater instances of steadfast loyalty and spontaneous allegiance.

Even in their domestic affairs the Brothers have not heisted to take Gandhiji into their confidence. During his brief stay in Wardha as jamnalaji's guest, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan had opportunities to see the women's and girls' Ashrams at work. The simplicity of life there, the atmosphere of peace, purity and freedom and the insistence on manual labour, captured his heart and he expressed his desire to ask his little girl who was in London in charge of her aunt to return to India and take her training in the girls' Ashram at Wardha. It was a brave and noble decision, but if a Pathan girl could be sent out to England and could be educated in an English school, why would she find any difficulty in making the Wardha Kenya Ashram her own school? And where could the father find better people than the Head of the Ashram and Miraben to look after his girl? That was how the Khansaheb argued, and Gandhiji had no hesitation in cabling to Miraben to bring little Mehrtaj with her. Both travelled deck on an Italian boat and reached Wardha on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November. 1934.

The girl saw her father after a year and a half, but there was her younger brother in Col. Brown's school in Dehra Dun who had not seen his father for four year now. Little Abdul Ali met his father during his U. P tour and came to Wardha with him on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December.

Imagine the wrench that these little children must have experienced when the news reached their ears on the evening of the 7<sup>th</sup> December that their father had been arrested. The little lad of twelve asked Jamnalaji, as the letter broke the news to him: "But why should my father be arrested, when you and Mahatmaji and all the rest are free?" " Because," said Jamnalaji, consoling the sobbing boy, "he is said to have made a seditious speech in Bombay"—which reply landed Jamnalaji in an explanation of sedition simple enough for the boy to understand.

But the father had no tears to mix with the children's tears. He knew that he had been blessed with a friendship which would grow with increasing tests and trials and would never diminish—the friendship with Gandhiji and Jamnalaji to whom he could entrust his children without the slightest anxiety. These few days in Wardha have brought the two brothers and their two hosts, Jamnalaji and Gandhiji, so close together that both the guests and the hosts have developed spiritual kinship and brotherhood. There have been hardly any political talks between them, but spiritual communings—prayerful and silent—there have been quiet enough, and it has been an ennobling experience for everyone here to see the Khansaheb coming daily to the Ashram to attend the Tulsi Ramayana reading that Gandhiji has every morning, and very often to attend the morning and evening prayers. "The music of that *bhajan* fills my soul," he said to Pyarelal, one of these days, "please put the words down in the Urdu script and give me an Urdu translation of it." Essentially of a retiring disposition, he likes nothing

so much as quiet prayer and silent work, and it decided to bury himself in the villages of Bengal. He had an ocular demonstration of the potency of *khadi* when he visited the poor Musalman peasants in Bengal in their humble cottages a couple of months ago, and he had wanted to carry the message of revival of village industries to them. He was to have left for Bengal on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December, but Jamnalalji insisted on his staying for the first meeting of the shortly-to-be-created Board of the Village Industries Association, and so his departure was put off until the 15<sup>th</sup>. We were really thinking and talking of his work in Bengal when the District Superintendent of Police appeared on the evening of the 7<sup>th</sup> with a warrant of arrest for him. Always prepared for such summons, the great Pathan said he was ready the very minute the warrant came. But he was allowed some time to meet his friends, brother and children. As he was preparing to go, Gandhiji said: "Well, Khansaheb, this time we are going to offer defiance unlike previous occasions. "The khansaheb was rather taken aback. He said he was loath to take a course different from the one he had been taking since 1919. "I see your feeling in the matter," said Gandhiji, "but this is not the occasion. We do not want to go to jail, if we can help it." And straight came the reply: "Just as you wish, then." Another instance of his beautiful allegiance.

It was a wrench to the elder brother to be torn away from a brother who had shared his joys and sorrows for over three years in jail and during the hundred days of their restricted freedom. But the younger had no sorrow on this personal account. He asked the little children to be

brave and to learn the lesson of simplicity and self-discipline under the kind care of their adopted parents, Gandhiji and Jamnalaji.

But one sorrow seemed to cast a paint shadow over his face. "How I wish I had been able to fulfill my promise to the poor Musalmans in the Bengal villages! I had promised to live and work amongst them, and I may not now do even that little service. "And, pausing a while, he said in accents of deep pathos: "As regards the Frontier, I do not know what to say. Let my arrest not provoke my people into acts of rashness. Let them take it calmly and with cool courage sit down to the quiet work of ending their internal dissensions and uniting themselves. I am grieved that, while all sorts of aspersions are cast on us, we are allowed no opportunity to prove that they are wrong. A government report describes my province as a 'murderous province.' But what opportunities have they given us for even the non-political work of education and social reform among the simple ignorant Pathan?

But as the moment for departure for Bombay approached even this sorrow had disappeared, from the mind of this true servant of God. "I am quite certain," he said to Jamnalaji and his good wife, Janakidevi, as he took leave of them, "I am quite certain that it is all God's doing; He kept me out just for the time he wanted to use me outside. Now it is his will that I must serve from inside. What pleases him pleases me."

The End