It would be devoted to the cause of the 'Harijans' or men of God as Gandhiji called the untouchables. He would engage himself fully for eradication of this social evil. The Wizard was again wielding his pen for a great cause.

In a letter dated January 8, 1933 to Shri G.D. Birla the industrialist, Gandhiji wrote "...... I have received my suggestion that the English edition at least should be published in Poona and it can be published, not simultaneously with the Hindi, but on Fridays, if the Hindi is published on Monday, the English edition may then be issued under my supervision ...."¹

"...... In view of consideration stated in Mr. Gandhi's letters of October 18th and October 24th ...... in connection with the problem of untouchability, they (Government) are removing all restrictions on visions, correspondence and publicity in regard to matters which in Mr. Gandhi's own words", have no reference to civil disobedience and are strictly limited to removal of untouchability," thus ran the Government order conveyed to Gandhiji on November 3, 1932, in prison, when he was detained in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement he was now thinking in terms of a new weekly.
The paper Harijan first appeared on February 11, 1933 and was priced at one anna. Shri R.V. Sastry became the editor and the weekly was published under the auspices of The Servants of Untouchables Society. Ten thousand copies were printed for the first issue.

It carried an English rendering, by Poet Tagore of Bengali poem of Shri S. Dutta, entitled "Sea Venger". Tagore's poem on the same theme was also published in subsequent issue of the Harijan. There were news items giving information regarding temple opening for 'Harijans'. The main editorial was devoted exclusively to untouchability. Next there was a column, 'To the reader in which explaining the importance of the newly launched movement, Gandhiji said, "since the movement has a world wide significance and seeks the sympathy, if possible of the whole humanity, it is necessary to keep the world acquainted with its implications and progress". The paper, he made it clear, would be devoted for the service of 'Harijan' and would highlight all efforts for the removal of untouchability.

"You will note", he commented, "that no advertisements are being taken for the upkeep of the paper. It has to depend solely upon the subscriptions received". The page ended with a notice to the subscribers reminding them that "subscription should be paid strictly in advance."
In a signed article in the Harijan dated February 25, 1933, Gandhiji explained that the Hindi edition was to be published first. But as there was delay, the English came out earlier. "I am happy to be able to inform the reader that the Hindi edition will have been out before this is in his hands. Arrangements are proceeding as first as possible for the publication of provincial editions in the provincial language e.g. Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Gujarati," Gandhiji wrote:

Explaining the term 'Harijan' Gandhiji wrote:

"it is not a name of my own coinage. Some years ago, several 'untouchable' correspondents complained that I used the word 'as prishya' in the pages of the Navajivan, 'Asprishya' means literally untouchable. I then invited them to suggest a better name, and one of the untouchable correspondents suggested the adoption of the name 'Harijan' on the strength of its having been used by the first poet saint of Gujarat .... I though that it was a good word 'Harijan' means a man of god. All the religion of the world describe God pre-eminently as the friend of the friendless help the helpless, and protector of the weak. The rest of the world apart, in India, who can be more friendless helpless or weaker than the forty million or more Hindus, who are classified as untouchables....."
Gandhiji was conducting the paper fro the prison in Poona. He was released on may 8, 1933 on may 13, he wrote "all should know that even though I am supposed to be a freeman, Harijan will continue to be edited as if I was in prison. It will still be solely devoted to the "Harijan" cause and will scrupulously exclude all politics."

He was again taken to prison, but was given the facility by the government of sending instruction or contributions to the Harijan editor three times a week. He was released on august 23.

In September, 1933, Gandhiji moved to the Wardha Ashram and developed himself more and more to the 'Harijan' cause. Though still weak, he would contribute regularly to the Journal. he reiterated "Harijan will remain what it has been since its inception. it will vigorously eschew all politics".

The Harijan became the mouthpiece for the 'Harijan Movement' and village industries. There were criticisms for the Gandhiji explained (Harijan, December 21, 1924)" .... Any problem connected with the welfare of villages as a whole must be intimately related to the "Harijan", who represent over a sixth part population. Those who
complained to monotony were perhaps not sufficiently interested in the cause. No doubt, it would be true criticism if I were told that the columns of Harijan were not as interesting as they might be made. There are causes for this which are inherent in the movement itself.

Again he was demonstrating, if it at all needed, that service should be the motto of journalism. He was serving the causes of India's reaching millions. It was much more. He was serving humanity.

There was a complete black out of important political news of the day in the Harijan. It made no mention of the Congress session nor of his retirement from politics. The Government of India Act which got Royal assent in 1935, did not have any place in the journal. On the other hand there were more and more articles on village made 'gur' hand-pound rice, village cleanliness nutritious food, cow's milk vs. buffalo's from waste to wealth through nightsoil. etc.

He started village reconstruction work, particularly the revival of cottage industries, in nearby village, scientific facts were made known on importance of honey, fresh vegetables, tamarind etc. There researches on nutrition and balanced diet. Snakes were divided into poisonous
and non-poisonous ones and treatments for snake bites were explained. Village sanitation was vigorously published.

Books on rural problems were reviewed. useful extracts from book were published for the benefit of all. To enlighten the rural workers, rural uplift programmes in other countries were narrated. Wardha like 'Santiniketan' of Poet Tagore, soon became a laboratory for rural work.

Anything indigenous or country-made was worthy of recommendation. He gave a letter of appreciation a very rate one to a barber. It was dated November 25, 1939 'Ananda Bhavan', Allahabad. He wrote "Munnilal has given me a fine shave, with devotion, His Razor is country-made and he shaves without soap."

In a leading article in the Harijan, Gandhiji in simple lucid style, spoke about the rural development programme in a village.

"Anantpur is a little village in Sangar district, C.P. containing 177 houses with a population roughly of 885. it has no Post Office or telegraph office. There is a weely service from the nearest Post Office, Relly,
twelve miles from Anantpur. It is a typically poor village of poor India. The villagers are occupied not more than four months in the year. There was hardly any supplementary occupation for the villagers as a whole before an event that happened four years ago.

"It was 1929 that a young man, with a simple minded heart, seldom surpassed Anantpur for his experiment, after one year's travelling in search of such village. His name is Jathalal Govindjee. He does not know English. He is a town man, by dogged pertinacity he has injured himself to the hardships of village life and lives like, and in the midst of villagers. He has three companions with him. He is a thorough believer in one thing at a time and, therefore, will not pursue other social service, no matter how tempting it may be. If the spinning wheel is well established in every cottage, he thinks that all other problems that puzzle and drag down villagers will solve themselves. They visit every cottage and offer to touch them with spinning, carding, weaving and dying. They improve their wheels and manufacture new ones for sale only from the material available in the village. This has given extra work to the village carpenter and the village blacksmith. Every item well thought out. They
have an almost complete record of the condition of every cottage and also its dwellers. They have made a fairly accurate study of the villagers' wants and woes, customs and manners, and they have published their report in Hindi. Their workshop is a busy hive; work is being done in a neat and methodical manner. A common log book is kept containing a day-to-day summary of the work done by each worker. I have mentioned only four foundation workers. Needless to say they have raised workers in seventeen villages they are now serving within a five mile radius of Anantpur....". Anantpur was a 'Harijan' village. Anything connected with 'Harijan' was getting due publicity. Sometimes, he would go to the farthest to espouse the cause of 'Harijans'. The earthquake of 1934 he said, was done to the sin of caste Hindus against untouchables. This brought a sharp rejoinder from Poet Tagore.

"It has caused me a painful surprise", wrote the poet", to find Mahatma Gandhi accusing these who blindly follow their own social custom of untouchability, of having brought down God's vengeance upon certain part of Bihar, evidently, specially selected for His desolating displeasure. It is all the more unfortunate, because this kind of unscientific view of phenomena is too reality accepted by a large
section of our countrymen. I keenly feel the indignity of it, when I am compelled to utter a truism in asserting that physical catastrophics have their inediviable and exclusive origin in certain combination of physical facts. Unless we believe in the inexplorableness of the universal law in the working of which God Himself never interferes. We find it impossible to justify. His ways an occasion like the one which has surely stricken us in an overwhelming manner and scale".²

An interview with Mrs. Sangar, he devoted a few articles on family planning. He advocated self-restraint against contraceptives". What has been possible for you is not possible for all youngman. I can restrain myself. But my wife cannot "read a frank letter to the editor. The editor advised : "If he sincerely desirous that his wife should be from the sexual desires, let him surround her with the purest love, let him explain the law to her, let him explain the physical effect of union without the desire for procreation. Let him tell her what the vital fluid means."

It is of interest to note that while in England as a student, Gandhiji had not formulated definite ideas against artificial means for birth control. This was manifest
when Dr. Allinson, who advocated artificial methods, stood for election for the Committee of the Vegetarian Society. Dr. Allinson lost the election because of his views on birth control. Gandhiji resigned from the Committee. "It is to be noted that he himself become a vigorous opponent, in later years, of artificial method of birth control, advocating self control and continence.

Gandhiji was no writing for the Harijan, for a brief period in 1936 due to ill health. On February 29, he resumed writing under the title 'Nothing Without Grace', he wrote,

"I am now able, by way of trial, to resume to a limited extent my letters with the readers of Harijan. I shall not carry on private correspondent with reference to the Correspondents', personal problems or domestic difficulties, except those with which I have already concerned myself, and I shall not accept. Public engagement or attend or speak at the public gatherings. There are positive directions about sleep recreation, exercise and food with which the reader is not concerned and with which, therefore, I had not deal. I hope that the readers of Harijan and correspondents will co-operative with me and Mahadev Desai, who has in the first instance to attend to all correspondence, in the observance of these 'restrictions'.

He wrote in September 24, 1938, issue of the Harijan, "Harijan is not a newspaper, it is a view paper representing those of one man. Even Mahadev and Pyarelal may not write anything whilst I am alive".

He sought the indulgence of readers and correspondents if they were not served in time or at all. "For the time being whilst Mahadev's illness lasts, readers will overlook the gaps they will notice in the editing of the "Harijan". Much later in the July 19, 1942 issue he explained further as to how a view paper differs from a newspaper, "Let it be known to that Harijan is a views paper as distinguished from a newspaper. People buy and read it not for amusement but instructions and regarding their daily conduct. They literally take their weekly lessons in non-violence."

As a protest against the British Government's action involving India in war without consulting her, Gandhiji started 'individual satyagraha' by asking people 'na ek pai, na ek bhai' (not a farting, nor a man) for the ear efforts. On October 18, 1939, the editor of the Harijan and allied weeklies received a notice to the effect that "no account of incidents leading upto 'Satyagraha' by Shri Vinoba Bhave and no aspect of his speeches or any subsequent development "should be given publicity to."
On October 24, he wrote in the Harijan, "I cannot function freely if I have to send to the Press Adviser at New Delhi every line, I write about 'Satyagraha'. The three weeklies have been conducted in the interest of truth and therefore, of all parties concerned. But I cannot serve that interest if the editing has to be done under threat of prosecution. Liberty of the Press is a dear privilege .... I am unable to reconcile myself to the notice which, although in the nature of advice, is in reality an order whose infringement will carry its own consequence".

But I was all the time feeling that he might have to suspend the weeklies. He advised the people to carry the news from mouth to mouth. He blessed these 'Walking newspapers' and thought these more honorable than 'garbled, one-sided news-sheet; these are more honourable than garbles one-sided news-sheet.' 'Binding good bye' to the readers (the Harijan, November 10, 1958) Gandhini sorrowfully remarked, "I shall miss my weekly talks with you, as I expect you too, will miss them ...... ".

The suspension must, therefore, continue while the gagging lasts. It constitutes a Satyagrahi's respectful protest against the gap."

In mid December, 1941, he wrote a 25-page booklet and 'Constructive Programme'. Now that the Harijan and the other two weeklies resumed publications on January 18, 1942.
But things were not normal in the Press World. Government restrictions were being increasingly imposed on papers. As a Journalist, he criticized, under the Caption 'Draconian order' Government instruction against the Bombay sentinel the Jugantar of Bengal, and the Pratab Of Punjab in the Harijan of May 3, 1942. The Central Press Advisory Committee had earlier passed a resolution "viewing with grave concern of action of the three provincial Governments, namely those of Bombay, Bengal and the Punjab against three daily papers." This was it said, "A violation of the spirit of the agreement between the Government and the Press. Gandhiji opened that the Press regulations were of such sweeping character that anything and everything could be brought under their operation. By the time the article was sent to the Press, Government Orders in case of the Bombay Sentinel and the Jugantar were rescinded.

But said Gandhiji "What I have said has reference to the larger questions of publication of news and the Standing Committee should take up a strong stand on the liberty of the Press to disseminate news in a sole and as far as possible accurate manner".

India was watching over a rapid succession of political events in the world after Pearl Harbour culminating in the British Government's proposal, though Sri Staford Crippe.
Gandhiji was now convinced that the British would not leave India of their own. He started with his writings in the Harijan, pleading with the British to let India ('Quit India'). There was urgency and passion in his writings. In his appeals to every British he begged "for a bloodless end of an unnatural domination and for a new era, even though there may be protests and warnings from some of us".  

Correspondents made enquiries whether Gandhiji was making plans for launching a new movement. He said to them: "I have never believed in secrecy, not do I do so now. There are certainly many plans floating in my brain. But just now, I merely allow them to float in my brain. My first task is to educate the public mind in India and the world opinion, in so far as I am allowed to do so. And when I have finished that process to my satisfaction, I may have to do something. That something may be very big, if the Congress is with me and the people are with me. Naturally, I do want to carry the whole of the Congress with me if I can, as I want to carry the whole of India with me. For, my conception of freedom is not a narrow conception. It is co-existent with the freedom of man in all his majesty. I shall, therefore, take no step without the fullest deliberation.

Gandhiji was also keeping the American public informed about the state of affairs in India. To Pueston Gover of
The Associated Press of America, he said "I have every right to expect America to throw her full weight on the side of justice, if she is convinced of the Justice of the India cause".

Gandhiji, it may be mentioned in passing, had been criticized justly or unjustly, by his countrymen, for showing weakness for foreign journalist. Many of his important announcement were released through international news agencies, Much later, in the Harijan of April 21, 1942, he explained the position.

"An Indian journalist complains that our great men have a weakness for foreign journalists to the extent of exluding Indians at their Press Conference, and wonders whether I am myself free from this weakness. For myself, I can say, without fear of contradiction that I have never been guilty of such partiality. Having suffered a good deal for the crime of being an Asiatic I am not likely to be guilty of such weakness. And I must say that I know of no much example as my friend advises to, if only because public men, can ill afford to face a boycott by Indian Pressman. What has happened with me and as far as I am aware, with others too is that they and I have found it necessary at times to give special interviews to foreign
journalists when it has been found necessary in the interest of the common cause to get messages across the seas. It is impossible in the present circumstances to do otherwise. It would be as foolish to invite boycott by foreign journalists and by Indian. An industrious person will find out that Indian Journalists have been preferred by Indian public men again for the sake of the common cause. As a fellow journalist I would urge journalist, whether Indian or foreign to prefer their particular causes to their own or their employer's pockets or to descending to recrimination of personalities.

In July 19, 1942 issue of the Harijan, Gandhiji wrote: "Anxious enquiries are being made as to what I would do if the Harijan is suppressed. The Harijan may be suppressed, its message cannot be so long as I live. Indeed, the spirit will survive the dissolution of the body and some how speak through the millions.

"Let us see what Harijan is today. It is now published in English, Hindi, Urdu (two places), Tamil, Telegu (two places) oriya, Marathi, Gujarati, Kanarise (two places). It is ready to be published in Bengali, only waiting for legal permission. Applications have come from Assam, kerala, Sind. All but one ve a large circulation. Compared to the
other weeklies. I suggest that it is no small matter to suppress such a paper".

"And Harijan", he cautioned, "is not an anti-British paper. It is pro-British from head to feet. It wishes well to British people. It tells them in the friendliest manner wherein its opinion they err".

"The Anglo-Indian papers, I know, are Government favourites. They represent a dying imperialism. Whether Britain wins or losses, imperialism has to die. It is certainly of no use now to the British people. Whether it may have been in the past. In that case, therefore, Anglo-Indian papers are really anti-British as Harijan is pro-British. They are disseminating hatred day by day by hiding the reality and bolstering imperialism which is running Britain. It is in order to arrest the progress of that ruin that, frail as I am, I have put my whole soul into a movement which if it is designed to free India from the imperial yoke, is equally intended to contribute the mightiest war efforts in their behalf."

Gandhiji's slogan of 'Quit India' was following by his call 'Bo or Die' for the country. He told the delegates
to the Congress Committee in Bombay in the first week of August, 1942: "Here is mantra, a short one, that I give you, you may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The "mantra" is 'Do or Die'! We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetration of our slavery. Every true Congress man or woman will join the struggle with an inflexible determination not to remain alive to see the country in bondage and slavery. Let that be your pledge....".

There was a special request to fellow journalist.

"..... A word to the journalist. I congratulate you on the support you have hitherto given to the national demand. I know the restrictions and handicaps under which you have to labour. But I would now ask you to snap the chains that bind you. It should be the proud privilege of the newspapers to lead and set an example in laying down one's life for freedom. You have the pen which the Government can't suppress. I know you have large properties in the form of printing presses, etc. and you would be afraid lest the Government should attach them. I do not ask you to invite attachment of the printing Press voluntarily. For myself, I would not suppress my pen, even if the Press was to be attached. As you know my Press was attached in the past and returned later on. But I do not ask from
you that final sacrifice. I suggest a middle way. You should now wind up your Standing Committee, and you may declare that you will give up writing under the present restrictions and take up the pen only when India has won her freedom. You may tell Sir Frederick Puckle that he can't express from you a command performance that his press notes are full of untruth and that you will refuse to publish them. If you do this, you will have changed the atmosphere before the fight actually begins.

He appealed, as well to princes, to Government Servents, to soldiers to students with the request to help the struggle. But Shri H. Mukherjee, Deputy Leader of the Communist Party in the Indian Parliament criticizes: "No particular role was allotted to the workers and the peasants, and though they formed the overwhelming majority of the people they were expected simply to line up in the manners directed by their superiors. The priority given to journalists in Gandhi's order of appeal is perhaps not entirely accidental, the Mahatma, with all his great courage and occasional sublimity, had throughout his life a shrewed eye to publicity whoever he thought or did."

Gandhiji was arrested on August 8, 1942. The Harijan was closed down and all copies, old and new, confiscated by the Government. When Gandhiji asked for an explanation
from the Government of Bombay, he was informed that:

"The Government instructed the District Magistrate, Ahemadabad to destroy all objectionable literature from Navajiban Press such as the old copies of the Harijan newspapers, books, leaflets and other miscellaneous paper. All the old files of Harijan since 1933 have been destroyed". 8

"If this also is not acceptable to the Government, then those who have been allowed to visit her will be sent always by me and only those who are in the Camp-detenus will attend the funeral."

"This has been as you will be able to bear witness, my great anxiety not to make any political capital out of this most trying illness of my life companion. But I have always wanted whatever the Government did to be done with good grace, which I am afraid has been hitherto lacking. It is not too much to expect that now that the patient is no more; whatever the Government decide - about the funeral will be done with good grace". 9

Gandhiji was released on May 6, 1944 and the Harijan was revived on February 10, 1946, after a lapse of three and a half years, Shri Pyarelal, Gandhiji's Secretary described event leading to the reappearance of the Journal thus:
While in Madras Gandhiji decided to resume publication of the Harijan Weekly which had been suppressed after the commencement of the 'Quit India' struggle. The re-appearance was not without a dramatic touch: Gandhiji had hoped to post of Wardha the matter for the first issue to Ahmedabad, from where the Weeklies were printed and published. It had been Gandhiji's pride that during half-a-country of active journalism, not one issue of his various journals had even failed to come out on time - even when he was roaming over the length and breadth of India, Burma and Ceylon, and even during his visit to Entland. But the special bringing him back from madras, to quote a speaker in the Central Assembly, who compared it to a 'drunken caterpillar in the last stage of inebriety'; reached its destination at midnight seven hours late, when the mail bound for Ahmedabad had already left Wardha, Gandhiji regarded it as beginning 'Let us get the first issue of the Weekly struck in Bombay'. He suggested, 'I once did like that in Phoenix in the case of the Indian Opinion'.

"But us wire the whole thing to Ahmedabad, some one suggested". "But the whole Hindusthani and Gujarati copy would have to be transcribed in Roman script as the system of accepting telegram in Indian scripts had not yet been introduced. That took up the better part of the
morning. Then some one had a brain wave". "Send the English articles by wire and the rest by a special messenger. If they can be thorough with the English earlier, the press will be able to catch up with the vernacular copy".

"And so a special messenger was despatched and all the three weeklies came out in time after all the misadventures."9

In the first issue, Gandhihi explained the reasons for the revival of the Harijan. "why is Harijan revived? This question may have occurred to many as it has to me. I may tell the reader that no special effort was made for its revival. An application for the removal of the ban was made on December 3, 1945, and the ban was removed on January 10, 1946. Many readers, including English and American, had all along felt a void and they began to feel it more after the defeat of the Fascist Powers. The reason for the feeling was obvious. They wanted my reaction in terms of truth and Non-violence, to the various events happening in India, if not in the world. I wished to satisfy this desire." And again in February 24, 1946 issue he wrote:

"I have taken up Harijan at such a critical moment in our country's history that having undertaken to write
I cannot wait in certain matters for publishing my thoughts will the next number of Harijan is out. Then, too, it is published not at the place where I reside but away from me. Thus exacting readers will forget me if they find things in the columns of Harijan which have already been printed in the daily press. The reason for publication is obvious. Harijan goes to many readers who do not read the paper in which my statement may be published and in which accurate publicity can never be guaranteed. Harijan is not a commercial column in any meaning of the expression. It is published purely in the interest of the cause of India's independence."

The next few issues of the Harijan were entirely taken up in discussing the food situation in the country. It was alarming and he felt that his attention should now be concentrated on this. He asked the Government - what he called a Peace time war effort - to engage the army and the navy in helping the production from land and water. He advised people, shake of inertia. He asked for the co-operation of all concerned to meet the calamity and said "Grow more food was not a bad dry during the war. It is a greater necessity now ... Everything possible should be done to draw water from the powels of the earth. Cloth famine can and ought to be averted by telling the millions to spin and weave in their own villages, the State supplying them with cotton, whether it is not grown or available..."
and with the simple instruments of production on hire or on long term purchase).

The Private Secretary to the Viceroy met the rebel and non co-operator and the latter emphasized the need for closest co-operation in the face of the impending crisis. He suggested "...... Food should be grown on all cultivable area, wherever water is or is made available. The flower gardens should be used for growing food crop. All ceremonial functions should be stopped. Women can play the highest part in the alleviation of the present distress by economising in their households. In nine-tenths of our activity, we can manage our daily affairs without the aid of the Government. Panic must be avoided at all costs. We must refuse to die before death actually takes toll.

He also requested people to "confine daily wants regarding food to the minimum." He suggested catching of fish to supplement food. Does it not entail violence?" Gandhiji admitted that it does. "This kind of violence is inherent in all embodied life, therefore, in man too..... The man who another not to eat fish commits more violence than he who eats it. I do not consider it violence to permit the fish-eater to eat fish. It is my duty to suffer it. Ahimsa is the highest duty. Even if we cannot practise
it in full. We must try to understand in spirit and refrain as far as humanly possible from violence."

Great political changes were in the offing. Independence of the country could be announced any time, but Gandhiji as long as with his own programme. He came to Bengal to tour round villages where, like in some other parts of India, Hindu-Muslim religions tension was continuing. He found his non-violence theory at stake and wanted to test it in Bengal's interior villages. He decided to stop all work in connection with the Harijan and other weeklies. Time permitting he agreed to send occupational contributions for the weeklies.

He came back to Delhi in April, 1947. His mind was full of tales of woe of what he saw or heard in Bengal. He cautioned the newspapers against his leading news. He even wanted to the extent of advising people not to read newspapers.

On June 2, 1947, Gandhiji wrote in the Harijan. "Readers must have noticed that last week I started writing for the Harijan. How long I shall be able to continue it, I do not know. God's will be done, in this as the other things .... the circumstances under which I had stopped writing for the Harijan have not altered. Pyarilalji is far
reports were mostly false. The local Muslim leaders admitted, through a wire to Gandhiji that there had been much exaggeration about communal riots. Gandhiji narrated this in his prayer meeting on December 5, 1947. "The proper thing", he said, "is to trust, truth to do conquer untruth". Later on, in his prayer speech, gave a practical suggestion as how to report on communal disturbances and avoid exaggeration. There should, he said, be a joint board to which reports about communal troubles would be submitted for scrutiny. The board, it necessary, may refer such cases to State Ministers before giving publicity"

For sometimes past he was thinking of closing down the Harijan. In a letter to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, in July, 1947, he wrote: "I also feel that Harijan should now be closed. It does not seem to me to be right to give contrary guidance to the country." He was sick at heart when he did not see eye to eye with the activities of some of his colleagues.

To the Manager of the Harijan he wrote: "Perhaps we may have to decide close Harijan. My mind rebels against many things that our leaders are doing. Yet I do not feel like actively opposing them. But how can I avoid it if I am running a paper? You do not want to run it without me, nor does the Sardar."
away from me and, in my opinion is doing every important work in Noakhali. He is taking part in what I have called the 'Mahayagna'. Most of other helpers are also unable to help under the stress of circumstances or other causes. To resume writing for the Harijan under these adverse conditions would be ordinarily considered madness."

There were continual disturbances at places. The newspaper he felt, where though irresponsible reporting, helping increasing panic. They were not at all serving the community. On the other hand, government was trying to suppress information. He did not like that either on March 20, 1947, he wrote to the Prime Minister Shri Nehru, "I would like you......... to tell me what you can do about the Punjab tragedy. I know nothing about it save what is allowed to appear in the Press which I thoroughly distrust. Nor am I in sympathy with what may be termed by the old expression of hush hush policy, it is amazing how the country is adopting almost the very measures which it criticises during British administration. Of course, I know the reason behind it. It makes no appeal to me".

India was divided and the communal frenzy was at its height. Pakistan press was exaggerating reports of riots. One such regarding Kathiawad. Gandhiji sent his workers to investigate the matter. It was found out that
Addressing the readers of the Harijan Gandhi said "It occurs to me that now that freedom from the British rule had come, the Harijan papers are no longer wanted." He was for the last few months contributing on an average only one and half columns for a week. The columns of the paper were filled with his prayer speeches. This to him, was "hardly satisfactory". He, therefore, asked his readers frank opinion as to the need of the publication.

Some correspondents wanted him to retire and close down the weeklies. "I detect anger in this advice .... My life line is cast in public service. I have not attained the state when is known as 'action in action'. My activity, therefore, seems at present to be destined to continue till the last health. Nor is it capable of being devided into water tight compartments. The roof of all lies in Truth, otherwise, known to me as non-violence. hence the papers must continue as they are, "one step enough for me". Thus he wrote in the Harijan of September 28, 1947.

Under the caption, 'My Duty', he summarised the replies and wrote in the Harijan. "A fair number of replies have been received in answer to my query. The majority of the readers with only a few exception, want the papers to bve continued. The purpose of these letters is that the
leaders desire my views on the present day topic. This means that probably, after my death these will no longer be required.

Soon Gandhiji had to got to Noakhali, now in Bangladesh on a peace mission, to restore confidence among the Hindus who lost lives and properties at the hands of the Muslims. The change of the Harijan was temporarily vested in two of his colleagues. They soon resigned. In spite of the heavy burden. Gandhiji was prepared to take up the full responsibility provided the trustees agreed. earlier they expunged some of his remarks in a prayer meeting from the text reproduce in the Harijan. he wrote to one of the trustees: "I fully realise Harijan does not belong to me. it really belongs to you. Who are conducting it with such diligence. Whatever authority I exercise in moral".

It reads like a pathetic confession from one who not only built up the morale of the people through his writings but let the nation to Independence.

To colleagues in whom he had explicit faith, followers, whom he made national leaders, people whom he made ministers were on many occasions disagreeing with him on fundamental
issues on which he felt his theories were based and his life principle dedicated. He was noticing the change and silently withdraw from the active field.

Gandhi came to Delhi in May, 1947 and resumed writing for the Harijan after a lapse of over six months. He wrote till the end, which came on January 30, 1948. He was killed by an assassin's bullet while going to conduct a prayer meeting in Delhi. The frail voice which moved and inspired millions of people stopped suddenly.

The next issue of the Harijan dated February 3, 1948 carried a photograph of Gandhiji on the front page. In a signed editorial out of the articles: Dr. Rajendra Prasad late elected President of the Republic of India, wrote:

"Mahatma Gandhi is no more in flesh and blood to speak to us, to console us to guide us. But did he not tell us often that the body is mortal and transient, that the 'atma' alone is immortal and imperishable? Did he not tell us that God would keep his body so long as he had any use for it? May be that his spirit freed from the limitations of the body with work all the more freely and create instruments to complete and fulfil what unaccomplished."
May be that out of the ashes on the banks of the Jamuna will arise force that will blow off all the mist and cloud of misunderstanding and distrust and establish the kind of peace and harmony for which he lived and worked and alas at last victim to the assassin's bullet......"

"My life is my message", said Gandhiji. The life was gone; so how messages could be poured through the columns of the Harijan? The journal announced the following item on February 15, 1948, under the signature of C. Rajagopalachari, the then Governor General of India.

"The Harijan was Bapu's voice. And when his body has been consigned to the elements, the Harijan cannot go on. Any attempt to continue it must take a different shape".

If continued for some time. But the journal ceased publication soon.

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