

(continued from previous page)

for his weekly paper, *Harijan*. As I saw him quoted as saying once, his religion was his politics, and, may I add, his life, too. He held regular prayer meetings twice a day, around 6 a.m. and 4 p.m., and also once every week, from after the prayer meeting on Sunday afternoon to the same time on Monday, observed twenty-four hours of silence. This did not mean that he did any less work, but that he disciplined himself to give his voice a rest. I talked with a man who had travelled down to Calcutta on the train with Gandhi, and there in that third-class carriage, only different in that it was reserved for his party and so less crowded than others, everyone rose at 6 a.m. for the prayers. This would probably be reading of scriptures, mainly Hindu, singing of Tagore songs, and a period of silent meditation. Gandhi himself would not necessarily speak.

Continuing Power

The very presence of such a crowd just to see one man made me realise how very much a power in India Mahatma Gandhi still was. Those crowds had been journeying out to the Ashram all through that Sunday, and

similar crowds went to see him wherever he was. Later in his stay in Calcutta he visited many areas of the city and held his afternoon prayer meetings in different places in turn, all with huge crowds of people present. He used his speeches at these afternoon prayer meetings whether they were public such as the one I attended, or private with only a few friends, to make his statements on current affairs, especially as they affected the common people who, he recognised, are India. They might not have understood all his arguments, nor his high religious motives, but his personal example and exhortation had a tremendous effect on them. It was not flattery that made the Calcutta Press print the full texts of his speeches each day while he was in that city. Conditions were serious and his messages were to the point—constructive suggestions for improving conditions—and addressed to all classes of the population. It was not just the Government, the police, or the violators of the law, from whom action was expected. Everyone had a responsibility and could help towards improving the position. The great improvement in conditions in Calcutta on and after August 15, 1947, can be largely attributed to the efforts of this one man.

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