

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

MAHATMA GANDHI — THE LAST PHASE

[The readers of *Harijan* are aware that Shri Pyarelalji was engaged for the last few years on writing a book on Gandhiji's last years. The book is now ready. It is in two volumes. The first volume is of nearly 800 pages with 44 pages of photographs. It will be released on the 12th February next — the anniversary day of the immersion ceremony of Gandhiji's mortal remains 8 years ago. The second volume will be released in the next few months. Each volume is priced at Rs 20-0-0, postage extra. The readers can book their orders with Navajivan for one volume or for both. The first volume will be sent as soon as possible after its release, to be followed by the second in due course. Those who book orders for both the volumes together will naturally get priority.]

We publish below the author's Preface to the book. The next two issues will carry the Introduction by Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

24-1-56

J. D. Desai]

Mahatma Gandhi — The Last Phase has a fortuitous history. I had intended to follow up my earlier publication *A Pilgrimage for Peace*, which describes Gandhiji's mission to inculcate non-violence amongst the North-West Frontier Pathans, with a companion volume of about the same size covering the story of his "do or die" mission in Noakhali as a preliminary to his full biography. But two English friends, who saw the manuscript, were decidedly of the opinion that unless the story of his mission in Bihar also went between the same covers, the picture presented would be incomplete and lop-sided. I saw the force of their argument and decided to include the story of his mission of peace and healing in Bihar also in the proposed volume. As I proceeded with my task, however, I became, for the first time, aware of certain facts and developments of which I had so far only a very dim and second-hand knowledge, as I was at that time away from Gandhiji in Noakhali, where Gandhiji had left behind all his old companions to carry on his work of re-establishing communal harmony, when he himself had to go to Bihar, and then to Delhi. The inner significance and poignancy of the picture thus revealed was so overwhelming

that it made everything else appear trivial in comparison, and so abandoning the earlier title *The Lonesome Way* that had been suggested for the story of Gandhiji's peace mission in Noakhali and Bihar, I decided to extend the scope of the book so as to present to the readers a full, detailed and authentic story of the last phase of Gandhiji's life in which his spiritual powers are seen at work at the height of their maturity and which provides glimpses of the farthest reaches of his mind and spirit in pursuit of the quest for the secret of the power that could control power and provide an answer to the challenge of brute force and the contradiction between democracy and abundance, equality and individual freedom, progress and peace with which the present-day world is confronted. And so pages in the earlier draft grew into chapters and paragraphs into pages and sections. The book itself had to be divided into two volumes. The first volume deals with the period from his release in 1944 up to the time of Lord Mountbatten's arrival in India; the second volume carries the story to the end of his life.

I must confess that I was hardly aware of the colossal nature of the task and the tremendous difficulties, abysses and pitfalls in the way when I launched on this venture. If I had known beforehand, I might well have hesitated or at least proceeded differently. There were serious gaps in the information; many phases of delicate and intricate discussions between Gandhiji and his colleagues and negotiations with the representatives of the British Government that preceded and followed independence-cum-partition were unrecorded. Sometimes the record existed but was either inaccessible or else withheld; at times the actors in the drama, as they put it, were so "terribly discreet" that later they themselves were unable to explain cryptic references in their recorded correspondence, or recall the events and happenings to which they referred. To interpret the record correctly and fully in the absence of those who alone could have done, full justice to it, to fill in the gaps, to make disjointed bits of information fall in their proper places and yield a clear, coherent meaning, and unravel the tangled skein of the story with the help of clues hunted up from collateral sources of evidence

called for Job's patience, a faculty of divination (to which I could lay no claim) and some deft sleuth-work — very interesting but extremely time-consuming. It was only by a reckless expenditure of time coupled with some providential chance contacts and the pointers provided by Gandhiji's letters to me during the period under review and what he had shared with me during the last two months of his earthy sojourn when a merciful Providence again enabled me to be near him that the work could be completed.

Soon I discovered, too, that there was hardly a comment of importance on men and events in this crucial period or a conclusion based thereupon that I could record but provoked a challenge. That made it necessary to cite appropriate chapter and verse in every case in support of my statements and conclusions. Hence the close documentation which the reader will find in these pages, which to my deep chagrin has added to the bulk of the volume.

In preparing these pages, I have drawn upon, in the first instance, on Gandhiji's office records, his own writings in *Young India* and *Harijan*, and statements and interviews to the Press, and his personal correspondence including jottings, instructions and scribbles, when he was observing silence, on odd bits of paper which I had carefully preserved. As he sometimes humorously put it, Gandhiji was a very "fiend of destruction" so far as papers and documents — which he classed with "earthly possessions" — were concerned. Important correspondence, if one side of the paper was blank, was often promptly turned to use as scribbling paper, or treated as "matter out of place" if it did not lend itself to that use, unless somebody removed them to safety in time or rescued them from the waste-paper-basket. But in Noakhali and after, knowing my passion for collection and preservation of scraps of paper having a bearing on his life and activities, and knowing that others might be free from that addiction, he sometimes used to pick out choice morsels and send them to me as "love tokens" in Noakhali. I had, besides, my own notebooks and diaries as well as notebooks and diaries of some other members of his party and my own first-hand information either from him or from others to go by. Last but not least, I have relied on his own journal which he began specially to keep for me to make up for my absence from him when, to "throw himself on God alone" at the time of the second Simla Conference in May, 1946, he sent away his entire secretarial staff to Delhi. This journal was continued right till the 25th July 1947. It used to accompany him wherever he went. But unfortunately after his passing away, the original notebooks could not be traced and so never reached me. The portion from the 6th October, 1946, onwards, however, was made available to me in copy by Manu Gandhi, who had taken it

down from the original which used to be in her charge. The earlier portion and the original notebooks seem to have been irretrievably lost.

In giving quotations from Gandhiji's speeches and oral interviews, I have taken liberty to amplify or revise the language of the published version with the help of the original notes when the published version, prepared in the hurry of the moment either by me or by some other member of Gandhiji's staff, was slipshod or inadequate. I have spared no pains to check up and verify reported information by reference to the actors in the drama concerned wherever possible or to some other reliable source, to ensure accuracy. This took a lot of time, involving as it did inter-continental correspondence with people who were each and all preoccupied with their own public duties.

After great deliberation I have given as full a treatment as was possible in the circumstances to the delicate and difficult issue dealt with in the chapter on Brahmacharya as being fundamental and integral to Gandhiji's philosophy of life, and on account of the great importance he himself attached to it and his own injunction to me in that behalf. I have included, too, in the discussion on Brahmacharya a brief description of the mortificatory and spastic techniques for the attainment of sublimation to contra-distinguish them from Gandhiji's way and to bring out the latter's distinctive significance.

This book is not a verdict on men and events — though men and events are discussed in it — but only an attempt to understand and explain certain events and the actions of the men who made those events and in the process were themselves made by those events, in the context of Gandhiji's great experiment to discover the Law of Love and how it could be applied to solve the problems that face the present-day world.

A word to the Indian reader, to whom this book is primarily addressed. We invoke the name of the Father of the Nation on all important occasions. In crises we instinctively ask ourselves what he would have done or expected us to do in the circumstances. It is vital for us to know the road on which he set us and that by which we arrived and where the two bifurcated. We must understand where we are today and whither bound and whether that is the goal which the Father of the Nation had envisaged for India of his dreams, and if not, what that goal was and what we must do to reach it. Almost the first thing a foreign visitor does on arrival in India is to visit Rajghat — if he happens to be an official guest or otherwise an important personage, he is escorted there — to pay homage to the Father of the Nation. Before he leaves India, he invariably ends up by asking: Where is Gandhi in India of today? That is a question which everyone of us owes it to himself, to India, for whom Gandhiji

lived and died, and to the world to ask and answer. This book is an attempt to help us turn the searchlight inward and find the answer.

Town Hall,
New Delhi
January 5, 1956.

Pyarelal

SHRI VINOBA IN ANDHRA

Shri Vinoba is a votary of science. It has become his second nature to undertake fresh experiments off and on. Since he has entered Andhra only the *shlokas* describing the characteristics of the *sthitaprajna*, the man of the steady intellect and of the eleven *ashrama* vows are recited at his evening prayer meetings. Before the recitations he asks the audience who have joined him in the prayers to observe silence for five minutes. It is a matter of wonder indeed to see the gatherings of thousands, in which even small children are present, whether at a small village like Saravakota or at a big city like Shrikakulam praying in utter silence for five minutes on his behest. Shri Vinoba advises the gatherings to contemplate in unison the infinite qualities of the Highest by the silent prayer. He brings it home to them that knowledge is as essential to human beings as taking food and drink. God, he says, has endowed us with intellect and we should acquire knowledge by employing it. And he assures the hearers in the end that the daily recitation of the characteristics of the *sthitaprajna*, the man who has attained such knowledge, cannot but have its effect.

Sometimes it rains during the prayer meeting with the result that dust turns into mud, people become restive in between and the organizers of the meetings try to restore quiet. But Shri Vinoba points out to the organizers that he does not need them to keep order at his prayer meetings. He then addresses the common people who have assembled in the meeting as follows: "Do you have faith only on the power of coercion? If it is not so please sit down again quietly. Otherwise, these men who pin their faith in coercion or violence will taunt us that we men of non-violence have been defeated for once!" On hearing the words the common people accept the challenge and become quiet at once. There is no need then in the meeting for organizers who use force. One feels convinced by the experience that the common people naturally recognize and understand the idea of freedom from government.

One often hears it said that students of the present day have lost all sense of discipline and have become insolent. But Shri Vinoba who loves discipline went deeper into the question and said at Shrikakulam: "It is my experience that meetings where more students are present are more peaceful. The experience proves that the students of India know well how to be peaceful, and are very loving, well-mannered and respectful. But there is nothing in the education they receive which can induce in them respect for their teachers. Indeed, I feel surprised that they remain quiet and respect their teachers in spite of the fact. On the day India attained independence I had said that just as a new flag necessarily followed in the wake of the establishment of a new State new education or Nai Talim should also follow in its wake in the same manner. I do not see anything but want of sense in now maintaining here the same system of education which suited those who kept this country under slavery. Now after eight years the Congress has adopted a resolution to start, all over the country, the system of education which had been started under the name of Nai Talim by Gandhiji. I would propose that the system of instruction which prevails in the country be discontinued forthwith and another be started wherein the poor and the rich, the aristocrat and the plebeian are thought in the same manner. Education, besides, should be independent. Do we not want the mind to be free? But if the mind and intellect

of man are not allowed to remain free freedom would turn into a mere name. I do wish there should be discipline but discipline enforced by coercion does not remain discipline but becomes slavery. That is why I stand for the discipline of love or natural, spontaneous discipline. This discipline of love should begin with the home. And coercion should also be discarded from the home." Shri Vinoba, in his speech, also referred to another important subject besides Nai Talim. He said, "Cinemas are in vogue everywhere. Pictures shown at them are not conducive to the establishment of peace. Mothers had held a meeting at Delhi. They prayed to the Government by a resolution to save their children from the evils of these films. I would like to ask on whom the responsibility of the indiscipline which is evident among boys and girls rests when cinemas are in vogue and as a consequence the minds of boys and girls are filled with evil thoughts before they go to sleep. I am certainly not opposed to the cinemas. There can be good films. But, surely, everything has its limitations."

Music is made out of different tunes. Even so we can produce harmonious music out of the various different languages we have in our country. Referring to this difference of languages Shri Vinoba said at Saravakota, "I believe all the languages that we have in our country are so many of its various ornaments. I know what peculiar sweetness, beauty and power each one of them has. This is because I have tried to learn them all. We need not, however, have pride about our languages though we may and should love them. The field of the difference between our various languages should not be and is not a field of quarrels and controversies but should be one to cultivate synthesis, harmony and love. I believe the reorganization of our States on the basis of language is essential for developing the power and strength of our nation. If we do not have our States reorganized on the basis of language Swaraj itself remains meaningless. But the reorganization has to be, not for pride or jealousies but for the convenience of the common people, for the development of the languages and for their synthesis. There is enough of unrest in our country on account of language. I do not propose to go into its causes here. But I see no cause for unrest or disturbance. What we need is to consider the question peacefully and with equanimity."

Referring to the work of the States Reorganization Commission Shri Vinoba said, "People should not quarrel over small differences but should give their minds peacefully to the report of the Commission when it is published. If, however, there is a big difference it should, of course, be expressed. There is no harm in expressing our difference of opinion and, surely, everyone has the right to express it. But let all expression of opinion be for mutual consultations, mutual discussions and not for quarrelling between ourselves. Most of the languages of India are powerful ones. And under freedom it is necessary to develop fully all of them. Indeed, such development should be deliberately undertaken."

Out of the Himalaya of cotton that is in India the Ganga of Khadi has begun to flow. In the district of Shrikakulam this white, pure Ganga is seen everywhere. The residents of the village Pandur expressed their desire to give yarn to Shri Vinoba in gift by weighing him against it. Gently refusing the offer Shri Vinoba said, "In times gone by kings were weighed against precious metals or jewels and the gold weighed was distributed to the people as gift. But we do not set any value on gold. Weighing yarn against someone is surely thousand times more sacred than weighing him against gold. But it is wrong to glorify the physical body. Besides, I do not consider myself a king, nor do I recognize anyone as such. I am, friends, merely your humble servant."

24-10-55

(From Hindin)

K. D.

HARIJAN

Jan. 28

1956

LANGUAGES STUDY IN SCHOOLS

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The A.-I. Council of Secondary Education is reported to have unanimously resolved that all pupils in secondary schools should be required to study three languages in accordance with the following formula :

- (1) (a) The mother-tongue or (b) the regional language or (c) a composite course of the mother-tongue and a classical language, or (d) a composite course of the mother-tongue and the regional language;
- (2) Hindi or English;
- (3) A modern Indian language other than the one taken under (1) or (2)."

The formula may be studied from various standpoints. Firstly, what are secondary schools? Under the present set-up these begin their work after 4 or 5 years of primary or elementary education and continue for 7 years, i.e. up to the S.S.C. Examination. Does the above formula mean that at the 6th year of schooling, a child would begin to study 3 languages, of which one can be English to the exclusion of the all-India common language Hindi? And when — at which year of schooling will the 3rd language begin? It is not clear whether secondary school will be a post-compulsory primary-stage one, i.e. one teaching from the 8th year of schooling of a child.

Viewed from the standpoint of Hindi-speaking areas, the formula may be expected to include the study of (i) Hindi, (ii) English and (iii) another modern Indian language like, say, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu or Gujarati etc.

If we examine the formula from the standpoint of a non-Hindi area, it might mean exclusion of Hindi even! This is surely another fundamental drawback of the formula.

Without discussing any further, we may well put down below a few fundamental considerations that must inform a formula for the new set-up of language study in our schools :

1. It must be laid down that the secondary stage will begin after the compulsion period of primary education prescribed (article 45) by the Constitution — i.e. 7 or 8 years of schooling.

2. The languages study formula for these 7 or 8 years will be : (i) first 4 or 5 years shall have only one language — mother-tongue and/or regional language, followed by (ii) the next 3 years in which the common A.-I. language Hindi will be added to be studied compulsorily. That is, every child in India between the age of 7 to 14 will study his own regional language for those 7 or 8 years and Hindi for the last 3 of them. Provided here that children in

Hindi-speaking areas will take any Indian language other than Hindi for compulsory study under 2 (ii) above. A South Indian language may be preferable.

3. The above two points show that in the lower secondary or middle schools (as they are termed today) there will be two languages and not three ; and of these two English will be normally for those only whose mother-tongue may be English and not for others.

4. In the upper secondary or really secondary schools, a third language will begin at the age of 14 or the first year of the schooling after the free and compulsory primary course under the Constitution.

5. This third language will be English. It may optionally be another modern Indian or foreign language, though generally English will be mostly preferred, looking to its present need and importance for higher educational studies.

Thus the formula for secondary schools should better be — (1) a mother-tongue and/or regional language (2) the all-India common language Hindi, provided that those who have Hindi under (1) will take any other of the 8th Schedule languages of the Constitution ; and (3) English at the post-basic or post-compulsion stage.

Under this plan a boy will learn his regional language for 11 years, Hindi (for non-Hindi areas) for 7 years, and English for 4 years.

In the last 3 or 4 years a course in Sanskrit or other classical language may be bracketed with that of the regional language. That is, some time from the latter might be given to the former.

Now that we shall have almost linguistic States, it is necessary for, and incumbent upon, every State to undertake to teach Hindi, the all-India *Antar-bhasha* compulsorily to all children in its schools and colleges from the 5th year of schooling. The Centre must see to this as its duty under Article 351 which enjoins upon it 'to promote the spread of Hindi.' Surely this is one of the most legitimate and inevitable ways for the fulfilment of that constitutional obligation. The Centre can take up this only after assuring to every language area free and unhampered use of its regional language for all its intra-State purposes of administration, education, legislation, justice, etc. The Constitution entitles every language area to freely decide this. Hindi comes in — and it does and should come in — for inter-State and all-India purposes. It is therefore, that Hindi assumes the form of an objective test and token of a State's acceptance of India's unity and its earnest to implement it by introducing compulsory teaching of Hindi in its schools and colleges. Such a uniform step must now begin to be taken on an all-India basis. This is utterly necessary for a basic plan of India's new educational and cultural development.

INDIA'S SECULAR POLICY

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The *Vedanta Kesari* monthly of Madras has forwarded to me an article published by it and drawing my attention to it has asked me to discuss, if I wished, the issue raised therein. The article relates to the proposed celebrations of the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha. The reader is aware that the Government of India have resolved to celebrate the *jayanti* on the 23rd of May this year. They propose to spend about a crore of rupees on the occasion. Commemorative stamps will be issued by the postal department to mark the day. Governments at the Centre as well as in the States will organize meetings in their capitals on the 23rd of May, 1956. The *Tripitaka*, the sacred books of the Buddhists will be published in three volumes in the Devanagari script. Books, picture albums, and cinema films on the Buddhist religion, its history, art etc. will be prepared and exhibited. A big Buddhistic World Conference will be organized in November and a symposium to discuss the peace message of the Buddha will be held along with it. A varied and large programme for the celebration on these lines has been proposed for the occasion.

The Buddhist States and followers of the Buddhist religion from the world over will take part in the celebrations. In short, the religious teachings of Lord Buddha will be revitalized by the occasion all over the world and especially in India.

The Government of India will take the lead in the celebrations and spend millions of rupees on it. The author of the article in the *Vedanta Kesari* raises a question on this account as to how one is to understand a secular Government pledged to an attitude of tolerance or neutrality towards all the denominational religions of the world, showing such special favour or partiality to the Buddhist religion alone.

The question raised deserves consideration. The secular policy of India consists in tolerance of all religions and not in a denial of, or lack of faith in, religion. Though India is the birthplace of the Buddha's religion, it is not being followed to any very appreciable extent in our country. The places of pilgrimage of the religion, though, do exist here. The religion is spread far and wide outside India in Asia today. Of course, the Hindu religion has given it an asylum in its fold in that Lord Buddha is recognized as an incarnation of God in its traditions. But the average Hindu has hardly any knowledge of or information about it. It is in the fitness of things that the occasion provides an opportunity to spread its knowledge in the country and by organizing the celebrations India makes a friendly gesture towards the Buddhist States of the world.

One point remains to be considered. Like the Christian and the Islamic religion the

Buddhistic creed believes in a particular person as its prophet, in a particular work as its holy book and in converting men and women to itself. Under the guidance and leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar persons of a certain class seek to convert themselves to and join the Buddhist creed. If the step proposed to be taken by the Indian Government fosters this movement of conversion in some manner or helps it, the policy of the Government has to be wary or cautious regarding it.

There is no harm in our properly understanding the Buddha's teachings here in India; indeed, it will be all to the good. Why, let us understand and appreciate the teachings of the prophets or the great saintly men of all the religions of the world. The Hindu tradition approves of our doing so. But religious conversion does not mean only such understanding or appreciation of another religion's teachings; such conversion involves a change of society and social life for the converts also. In the present day circumstances of the world religious conversion takes the form of a social and political agitation. If Associations like the Mahabodhi Society of India and persons like Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who, refusing to see and understand the inner meaning of Hinduism, not only entertain feelings of disgust and enmity to it but also incite them, were to take advantage of the Government programme for the celebration of the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha in order to convert people to the Buddha creed and society, it would mean an exploitation of the Government's gesture of goodwill and nothing else.

We have not given proper attention to one thing in India. It is this that if peace and true resurrection of religion are to be established in the world we will have to learn to look at religious conversion from a new point of view. Gandhiji has taught some fundamental truths to us and this is one of them. We as a nation are forging a new type of foreign policy or a policy of relations with foreign nations. In the same manner, too, the task of planning a new type of economic policy has begun. In the same manner also we are consciously or unconsciously cultivating a new type of religious point of view. Of the many ingredients that go to make the revolution of the Gandhian era of world history the one of the religious or spiritual view of life is indeed a very essential one. And this element of the revolution is worth understanding and appreciating more clearly.

Some enthusiasts believe it to be a revival of the ancient Aryan religion and Bharatiya culture; but it is a sad mistake. That is not Gandhiji's religious point of view. His point of view is as new and scientific as the modern age and as *sanatana* — eternal and permanent as the ancient age. The point of view seeks to correct the error which lies at the bottom of the blood-stained history of the religions of the world.

He described the point of view by calling it *sarva-dharma-samabhava* — tolerance or rather appreciation of and sympathy for all religions. According to the point of view the Hindus of India have to learn that their being Hindu means their also being Christian, Mussalman, Shikh, Baudha etc. in the best sense of those terms. Gandhiji himself was such a broadminded and eclectic Hindu that followers of all other religions recognized in him their ideal co-religionist. But some of them gave evidence of their sorrow at Gandhiji not formally converting himself to their denominations! Hinduism does not believe in or allow such formal conversion. That happens to be its peculiar characteristic as a religious creed. Gandhiji, out of his own deep spiritual and religious experience, revealed the meaning of this peculiarity of Hinduism by saying that no one need change his or her creed and convert himself or herself to another denomination and that if everyone endeavoured to follow his or her own creed he or she was sure to reach the one God. With such broad-minded religious sentiment is our nation informed. And if our State is secular it can be so in that sense only. If our Government follows the sentiment and determines its policies accordingly it can become secular in the best and truest sense of the term. Secular means belonging not to any one denominational religion; but secular does not mean atheist or areligious either, because in this age of science atheism or lack of religion has also become a sort of religious creed!

(From Gujarati)

4-1-56

WHAT IS AMBAR CHARKHA

[Continued from the previous issue of *Harijan* of 21-1-1956.]

II

The Ambar Charkha

12. Of the many different types of models that were constructed during the period, the most successful was the two-spindle wooden Charkha, invented in 1949 by Shri Ekambaranathan of Papankulam in Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nad. It was small Charkha, embodying the ring-spinning technique, with a special apparatus for drawing tubular slivers. It was equipped with two-ring spindles and was fitted with two-horn rollers, which were weighted by springs. The rotation of a large hand-wheel, linked to the smaller wheels by cotton bands provided the drive. The productive capacity of this early model was slightly more than one hank per hour. Although the yarn spun on it was satisfactory in strength, it was not uniform. The mechanism of the Charkha, its productive capacity as well as the ease of its manufacture led the A.I.S.A. to consider that as a first attempt it was good and deserved to be taken up for further research. Shri Ekambaranathan was rewarded for his enterprise, and was also provided adequate research facilities to improve his model. He worked on this model first at Kovilpatti and afterwards at Tiruppur.

13. In 1950-51, Shri Ekambaranathan, assisted by Shri Nandlal Patel, constructed a considerably improved model Charkha. Wholly made of wood, it was a four-spindle Charkha. The main hand-rotated wheel was linked to quite a large number of small-sized, grooved pulleys that provided the drive to the self-winding spindles. The

introduction of the multi-grooved pulleys was to regulate the counts of yarn spun from tubular slivers of cotton, which were to be made separately. In the hands of an expert spinner, this four-spindle wooden Charkha yielded 16 hanks of good quality yarn in 6 hours. Although, from the point of view of productivity, it was an altogether satisfactory model, operational problems were many: the number of multi-grooved pulleys was large, and the number of both cotton and leather bands that needed adjusting prior to operation was equally large. Moreover, to get the Charkha ready for operation took, on an average, two hours due wholly to the number of bands that needed accurate adjustment.

14. To reduce the number of hands and pulleys, and to avoid the loss of time involved, gear-wheels were introduced. The introduction of machine-made metal parts for one purpose gradually led to the construction of a wholly-metal made Charkha in August 1953, demonstrating thus that the search for an efficient Charkha suffered from no prejudice and was motivated wholly by technical consideration.

15. Among the many, wholly metal-made Charkhas the most satisfactory was the four-spindle Charkha, based on the original model of Shri Ekambaranathan, constructed at Bombay by Sarvaswari Varkedi and Keshaval Gandhi at the instance of Sarva Seva Sangh. The Charkha was first tried with only two spindles and the operation was easy and the output averaged two hanks an hour, during a continuous operation of 24 hours. The yarn was good in quality and strength. But when all the four-spindles were fitted, operation of the Charkha was found to be hard and physically strenuous. Moreover, the price of the Charkha estimated at Rs 300/400, was too high for the conditions in the country. Once again the search was towards a wooden model, which at once eliminated the defects of the metal Charkha and the very first wooden model of Shri Ekambaranathan.

16. Based on the first wooden model Charkha, Shri Nandlal Patel constructed in December, 1954, another four-spindle wooden Charkha with one pair of gear wheels and a few bands. The Charkha was easy to operate, cheap to manufacture and satisfactory in performance and consequently was taken up for further development.

17. Of the many improvements made on Shri Nandlal Patel's model, the most important from the point of view of efficient spinning was the evolution of the paper bobbin. The primary difficulty in the operation of most multi-spindle Charkhas was the standardization of spindles to obviate oscillation. Ordinary spindles could not be efficiently operated on wooden bobbins. The substitution of the wooden bobbin by a paper bobbin, devised by a workshop assistant in November 1954, provided an effective solution of the principal problem. The operation of the Charkha with paper bobbins yielded $3\frac{1}{2}$ hanks of yarn per hour.

18. There were several similar improvements which were effected through patient research and trial. These were all motivated by the need to ensure ease of operation and efficiency of performance and production. Thus, the Ambar Charkha, on which the Board has based its development programme, is the result of sustained and continuous research to evolve an instrument, cheap, efficient, productive and easy of manufacture by the village artisan in the village.

Description of Ambar Charkha

19. The Ambar Charkha, which the Board desires to introduce on a large-scale throughout the country, is a four-spindle, hand-operated wooden spinning wheel, 21 inches long, 16 inches broad and 21 inches high, weighing 26 lbs. Apart from the frame made of seasoned wood, there are three wooden multi-grooved pulleys, one with four grooves, another with three and the third with two, each of which is connected with the main hand-operated wheel by cotton bands. The iron parts of the Charkha consist of four-spindle rings, four fluted rollers, one pair

of gear wheels, harwar boss, travellers and springs. Besides these, there are four pairs of rubber rollers over the metal-fluted rollers, about 1½ inches broad.

Spinning Process

20. The specially made tubular slivers, which are kept in a bundle on the off-side of the Charkha, are delivered through the fluted rollers into a small wire ring, and get twisted due to the fast-revolving spindles. The winding of the yarn is made automatic through the traveller and the spinning ring. The revolutions of the spindles average between 7,000 to 9,000 per minute depending on the number of revolutions of the main wheel, which is linked to the spindles through cotton bands. The counts of yarn can be varied by shifting the band from one groove to another of the grooved pulleys and also by variations in the size of the tubular slivers used for spinning.

21. The present rated capacity of the Ambar Charkha is to spin counts of yarn from 12s to 40s, although counts of 40s and above can be spun, depending on the types of cotton and slivers made therefrom. In fact counts of 130s have been spun on the Charkha as an experimental measure. Though high count yarns have thus been spun on it, the Ambar Charkha is mainly directed to produce coarse and medium counts of yarn. The record of spinning shown in the table below brings out its potentialities:

Spinning Data

Cotton	Time Hrs.	Count	No. of hanks	Remarks
Surti	6	19	24	Only spinning
"	8	19	12	Cotton to spinning
Jarilla	10	23	25	Only spinning
"	2-10	21.5	12	— do —
Rosia	8-30	13.3	22.5	— do —

Though winding in each case was separate productivity per working day has considerably exceeded 20 hanks of yarn, as shown above, the rated or average capacity of the Charkha is taken at 8 hanks per day of 8 hours from cotton to spinning, or 16 hanks of yarn taking only spinning. Winding of yarn in each case is separate.

22. The Ambar Charkha, as it has been evolved, is simple in structure and mechanism, and all its parts, except the traveller, are either locally available or can be easily made locally. Experience in its manufacture shows that after initial training, the village carpenters are capable of assembling the Charkha and servicing it efficiently. While the wooden frame can be easily made to standard size, all iron and rubber parts need to be made at factories. Arrangements have already been made for the large-scale manufacture of those replaceable parts and their distribution to the manufacture-cum-assembling centres in the country. The price of the Ambar Charkha today is estimated at Rs 40.

(Continued)

By Mahatma Gandhi

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LINGUISTIC REVOLUTION WE NEED

(By B. G. Kher)

[From an address delivered by Shri B. G. Kher, Chairman, Official Language Commission, at Madras on the 12th January, 1956.]

I

Fundamentals of Language Problem

Both the Commission and I as its Chairman, maintain for the present a wholly open mind.... Nevertheless, there are certain fundamentals of the problem which appear to me quite evident. I have had occasion to state some of them and in general to set out my approach to the problem of languages in our country in an address* which I delivered at Poona in October last at the inauguration of the Autumn School of Linguistics at the Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute, Poona.

My view of the fundamentals of the problem as I saw them at the time of this speech has since been strongly reinforced in the course of the Commission's tour of seven or eight States during the last three months or so. I have had an opportunity of discussing these matters with quite a few hundred persons drawn from all walks of life from different regions, most of them, I might add, non-Hindi areas.

The discussions that have taken place regarding the reorganization of States in Parliament as well as elsewhere have clearly brought home to all of us the necessity of very careful handling of this question of the relative position of languages in the country and of the common medium of expression.

I would like to mention very briefly some of the points that have impressed themselves on my mind in these recent months.

India's Unity and Integrity

First and foremost, I am greatly impressed by the paramount importance universally attached by large numbers of responsible people to the necessity of maintaining the unity and integrity of the country. This feeling informed the evidence which we received at Madras in these last few days as much as anywhere else.

This unity, as you will agree, is not a matter merely of the constitutional unity of the country as a single unit of governance. It touches upon manifold other aspects of life including, above all, the cultural and emotional unity of the Indian nation.

We of this generation have had the singular good fortune of witnessing the political emancipation and unification of the entire sub-continent of India. Our destinies hereafter are for us to make or mar as we may choose. I submit that the largest single purpose for this generation of Indians to set before itself is the consolidation of this unity which the country is enjoying now for the first time after a couple of thousand years. I am, therefore, deeply impressed, though by no means surprised, to witness that the one great concern and consuming passion of all thoughtful Indians at the moment should be the unity and integration of the country not merely in a political sense but, and indeed more vitally, in other aspects including the cultural one.

A.J. Means of Communication

Coming down from the level of "emotional integration", as the Prime Minister has felicitously called it, to the pragmatic consideration of the linguistic apparatus for its sustenance, it cannot be denied that there has to be a means of communication between the different regions of our country for all purposes of mutual contact into which they are brought.

Hitherto, this means of communication was furnished by the English language which, as the language of our erstwhile rulers, was uniformly employed by them as the language of administration and the law courts, of education and of public life generally over all the States comprising the country. It will also be conceded that in the altered circumstances with which we are now confronted, a simple solution like this one is no longer available to us.

* Reproduced in the *Harijan* of 29-10-55 and 5-11-55.

Displacement of English

The pre-eminent position which the English language enjoyed at all top layers of governmental, public and social activity resulting in equal suppression and neglect of regional languages all over, can obviously not be accorded to any existing Indian language which we may adopt for purposes of Union and State intercourse, official and non-official. Part of the place vacated by the displacement of the English language must obviously be taken by the great regional languages of the country for their respective regions. Yet, in certain other respects the Union language might well be expected to have potentially an immensely wider coverage than could be attained in India by the English language or than could ever be attained by any foreign language which would be primarily the instrument of a foreign authority, and (from the democratic point of view) an irresponsible system of Government.

Demands of the New Age

There is a fundamental difference between the system of governance under which we lived until 1947 and the system that we have forged for ourselves in the Indian Constitution since then, apart from the fact that the official governing authorities previous to 1947 were a foreign power. The British Government had a different relationship with the masses of India and as a foreign occupying power they had a much narrower range of objects, interests and activities as compared to what we witness today.

Our Constitution has enfranchised the entire adult male and female population of the country, thus bringing into being the largest political electorate ever witnessed throughout history. We are also committed by the directives of the Constitution and the policy that we have enunciated, to adopt the principles of a democratic welfare society in which each citizen will have a share and an equal share with all others. The Indian citizen of today has a far greater voice and stake in the affairs of the Government of the country than he had under the foreign and non-democratic Government in the past. It did not matter to the British Government that the language of administration in those days was not understood by the vast masses of the country. However, now, when every citizen is a potential beneficiary of our welfare State and has a vote to exercise, it is manifest that the business of the Government can be carried on only in a language which admits the possibility of each citizen taking an intelligent interest in the affairs of the State.

I would like you to reflect for a moment on the fact that, despite a century and a half of State patronage, the 1951 Census records that the number of persons with the educational qualifications of S.L.C. or its equivalent, that is to say, persons who may be supposed to have some comprehension of the English language, was only 21,56,558 out of the entire population! This is just about 1 per cent of the total population as against the general average of literacy percentage of 16.6 per cent.

After so many decades of official patronage and even imposition English has not permeated beyond a small fraction and a limited cross-section of our society. If we are to envisage the entire Indian electorate being in a position to take interest in the governance of the country, then this can be conceived of only in terms of literacy in an Indian language adopted for the purpose of the Union. Due to the vast size of the country and to geographical compulsions it is imperative that the Indian citizen should make himself at the minimum at least partially bilingual.

Constitutional Provisions

The Constitutional provisions about languages have already embodied these requirements of the situation into the Statute of the country. These Constitutional provisions are not rigid but admit of a great deal of viability subject to adherence to certain fundamental essentials. Thus the Constitution empowers the President by order to authorize the use of the Union language in addition to the English language during the period of 15 years

after which the Official Language of the Union shall be Hindi instead of English. It also empowers Parliament by law to provide the use of the English language for specific purposes even after the said period of 15 years. The Constitution recognizes the difficulty of change-over in the language medium in respect of legislation and law courts, and therefore the automatic 15 years period does not apply in these cases and it is laid down that until Parliament by law otherwise provides these shall be in the English language. Further, the Constitution also provides that the Legislature of a State may by law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi, the Union language, as the language for all or any of the official purposes of each State. Furthermore, in Article 351 it is provided that the Union language, that is to say, the Hindi language shall be so developed as to serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and should be enriched by the forms, styles and expressions used in the various regional languages including Sanskrit.

If I may say so in all humility, these are extremely wise and comprehending provisions and make due allowance for all the complexities of the situation. It has been recognized in these provisions that the Union language, and indeed this is true for that matter of the other regional languages of the country also, are presently not in a state of development wherein it or they could forthwith replace the English language for all purposes. It provides for the employment of the Union language, that is the Hindi language, to be progressively effected for certain purposes *pari passu* with the development of that language; realistically enough, it also provides for the contingency of English having to be continued for specific purposes of the Union even beyond the period of 15 years, although one may hope that everything possible would be done before then to avoid having to avail of this provision. Furthermore, the Hindi language in question is a language to be enriched by the assimilation of all forms, styles and expressions used in the other regional languages of the country, that is to say, it has to be made into a true "Bhasha Bharati" so as to serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India.

Need of Supreme Effort

I submit therefore that the Constitutional provisions fix, so to say, the channels of development, progress within which would depend wholly on our own efforts in the meantime. I want to emphasize that the efforts in question will have to be not only those of persons whose mother-tongue is Hindi but of all other Indians, like you and myself, whose mother-tongue is some other great Indian language and not Hindi, but who still have a duty of enriching with terms and expressions from our own languages, this language which we have adopted ourselves as the Official Language of the Union. Indeed, notwithstanding the great variety and shades of opinion with which we have met so far, the vastly overwhelming consensus of opinion, as we have found it, is for working out the details within the framework of the provisions of the Constitution as they exist. Whether or not we are able to achieve the objectives within a period of 15 years or to a greater or lesser extent earlier than this limit or subsequently thereafter, all depends upon the quality and earnestness of our effort in the meantime.

(To be continued)

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