

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

THE BHOODAN MOVEMENT AND
EXPLOITATION

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The reader is requested to refer to my article, 'The Bhoodan Movement' in *Harijan* dated April 4, 1953, in which I had replied to a question by Shri Nargolkar. My reply, he now writes to me, has not satisfied him. And he draws my attention to the following para of his question:

"Having _____ to play except that of a silent spectator and a passive receiver, he (i.e. the donee) has no sense of achievement and no joy therefrom. He is not called upon to make any effort to recover what he has been wrongfully deprived of. Anything that is acquired without any effort on the part of the donee not only loses part of its value in the donee's eyes but robs him of an opportunity for self-expression and the development of personality."

And he adds that he feels keenly that none has satisfactorily met his objection that in the efforts that are being made at present for freeing the land from the possession of the big land-owners there is no room for the active association of the landless. And he illustrates this remark of his as follows:

"What a great role did our people play in our struggle for freedom. This was made possible because there was scope in that movement for them to play such part."

He adds:

"I was in Bombay in 1942. When the police tear-gassed the crowds, women from upper floors of adjacent buildings poured bucketfuls of water on the people below. In itself it was a tiny little act—as nothing when measured against the vastness of the movement. Yet it gave them joy and satisfaction of participating in the Satyagraha,..... I am sorry I do not see any such scope for participation by the landless in the Bhoodan Movement."

I have put down above Shri Nargolkar's query at some length so as to make his point clearer to the readers. I think I had grasped his point correctly and had also tried to reply to it in the article referred to above. I wrote, "If Bhoodan Movement is mere giving and receiving surely the landless would function as a dumb recipient and naturally he cannot be anything else." But as I had tried to show in my reply, both giving and receiving are equal components of this *yajna* and both are therefore necessary for its fulfilment in equal measure. The donor must realize that his giving land is no grace nor favour, but is atonement — *prayaschitta* — for him. And the recipient has to prepare himself for using the

land received for his own good and in the general interest of society as a whole, — which means that he must also undergo self-purification. Taking for granted, as Shri Nargolkar says, that land was unjustly snatched away from the landless, the question remains, how are we going to effect a just distribution of land now? How are the landless to be restored to their due share of the land? How can such transfer of land be brought about through truth and non-violence? It is from our quest for an answer to such a question that we find that if the landless refuse co-operation in their own exploitation, exploitation would come to an end. After all, the land-owners stick to their possessions in land in the hope of the produce which the land offers them. For exploiting land to their advantage they need the co-operation of the peasants and labourers. And they are enabled to continue exploiting these landless toilers since such co-operation has been forthcoming. If the poor could be made to understand that the landowners cannot exploit them without their co-operation and that they can therefore stop it if they like, we will have obtained the non-violent solution of this question. As Gandhiji pointed out in his article on 'Equal Distribution' (*Harijan*, 25-8-'40), "the rich cannot accumulate wealth without the co-operation of the poor in society. Man has been conversant with violence (but) the knowledge (of the strength of Ahimsa) has (also) grown within him slowly but surely. If this knowledge were to penetrate to and spread among the poor, they would become strong and would learn how to free themselves by means of non-violence from the crushing inequalities which have brought them to the verge of starvation."

This would show that the Bhoodan Yajna is the only non-violent solution of the land-problem in India and it provides the landless also with an active programme of organizing themselves into a united force. Workers should undertake to do so as a part of their constructive activity. They should be able to see from this its vast potentiality for bringing about a non-violent revolution. It was in this context that I had said that the *bhoodan* had a message for the landless as well that he too should rise and be ready to become an intelligent and co-operating partner in the decentralized and self-reliant agro-industrial

economy which the movement aims at bringing about in India.

But either Shri Nargolkar did not approve of my reply or he did not grasp it. He may perhaps be of the mind that they should be given some such programme as would enable them to compel the land-holders to part with their lands. If this be so, I must say that it is improper. Shri Vinoba has made it clear on numerous occasions that so far as he is concerned he does not seek the help even of legislation. As for any violent force to achieve his purpose, there can be no question. And this is the beauty of his programme. This is why people of all parties have approved of it and expressed their support for it.

After his letter, I had a chance also to meet Shri Nargolkar and have a talk on the matter. He told me — and he was feeling much concerned about it — that in the Bombay State landowners were evicting the tenants from their lands under the specious plea that they would like to cultivate those lands personally. He added that while on the one hand they were earning praise for their donation of land in the Bhoodan Yajna, on the other they were taking, as they used to do before, more than the one-sixth share of the produce which is legally due to them. Such complaints have come from Surat and Kheda districts also. These may be true. Bombay State has passed a law giving certain rights to the tenants. For example, they cannot be evicted except when the land-owner wants to personally cultivate the land in question. Then there is a limit to the land which a person can have for personal cultivation. If the Zamindar wants to sell his land, the tenant will have the first right to purchase it. The peasants should certainly exercise all these rights and make good use of the advantages which the legislation was intended to confer on them. They must certainly insist on paying no more than the one-sixth share of the produce to the zamindar and they can do so if they organize themselves into a united group and become strong. As in the case of untouchability, though we have the law for its total abolition, we are still far from having achieved its full implementation in the remote villages; so also here, for some time to come, there will perhaps be a lag between law and actual practice. The rich are not going to abandon exploiting poverty and unemployment to their advantage as long as they can. But this is no excuse for any slackening of efforts to achieve the full implementation of this beneficial measure. If the Government and the workers in co-operation with each other continue to work patiently among the peasants, this can be made possible. The organized strength of the peasants exercised peacefully can certainly sweep away every obstacle from its path. As I said in my previous article on the subject, this constitutes a vast programme in which the landless can and should play a great role.

Let the workers carry forward their work with this purpose in view and they will realize the far-reaching revolutionary potentiality of the Bhoodan Yajna. Only we should not forget that this revolution has to be truthful and non-violent.

26-4-'53

(From the original in Hindi)

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISEMENTS

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

A reader-friend draws my attention to a few editorial observations in *The Times of India* of 28th April, 1953 on the question of the 'Privileges of the Press'. One of these touches the point I had referred to in my article 'Two Questions' in the 25th April issue of the *Harijan*. I had suggested therein that just as an individual advertiser has discretion, so also as an advertiser Government would have it as well even though it is a popular institution. And I had added as a proviso to it that:

"Government will exercise it as a trustee of the people for the social good; that is, it will exercise it with due consideration of the public good and in the interests of social security, good taste, decency, decorum etc. As every act of a State, it must be free from any injustice. Therefore, it is not an unrestricted right of a paper to get Government advertisements. Those papers which go down in the necessary standard of good taste, decorum etc., or so conduct themselves as to jeopardize the security of the State and its people will naturally incur displeasure of the people; so also of the Government as well; and if it be so needed Government might have to proceed against them in a legal manner as well. Thus a Government may not move because of any criticism, good or bad. As we saw above, honest criticism must be free. But if a paper goes out of the bounds of requirements of general social taste, decency, decorum etc. it will not be liberty but licence. Both the State as well as the people should surely show their displeasure at it. Freedom of the Press is a responsibility; to see that it is not misused is always a function of the State and Society also."

The Times of India ignores the proviso quoted above and objects to my suggestion by saying that the "analogy of a private advertiser is utterly untenable, for there is an essential difference between the two. The private advertiser's money is all his own. In the case of Government advertisements it is public money that is involved." In my article quoted above I have already noted this distinction. But the distinction does not make any essential difference. Not even a private advertiser can have absolute discretion. None in society, either individuals or corporations, can have such absolutism. All will agree that as the trustee of the people the State and its Government have to be responsible for the public good. And surely Government cannot abdicate this without detriment to the interests of good Government. This is not the privilege of the Government but its responsibility. The private advertiser also has a similar responsibility, though on a smaller scale, as he is no absolute owner of his money in the sense in which *The Times of India* appears to take him. He can also use his money as a trustee unto the corporate good of the people, although for his own

little benefit. The private good must subserve public good. It would be a wrong social philosophy or a dangerous doctrine to propound that an individual's money, as also for the matter of that, his property, land and even his mental gifts are absolutely all his own and he is privileged to use them as he likes. As Gandhiji tried to teach us, a man in society, for all that he does with his possession, is a trustee unto the society in which he lives and has his social being. It is not an exclusive possession in the sense that he can use it in any anti-social manner. The privilege of possession conferred by the society is a responsibility and a trust. This principle applies to all, whether individuals or corporate institutions. No one in society can have an unlimited or exclusive privilege. Surely public money is not a patronage in the hands of the Government; it is a responsibility and the State as trustee of the people has to see that the money it collects from the people is put to the best use. No one says that it must be spent on a partisan basis.

It must also be noted that the principle of Trusteeship described above applies to the Press also. It should understand that advertising by it is not a mere gainful activity for it; it is a trust and a responsibility. As such it must also discriminate between good and bad advertisement with a view to helping, educating and directing rightly the general public. It is very unfortunate that the Press as it is at present does not consider advertisement in this way. Let us hope the Press Commission has something to give us on this vexed question.

One more point regarding Government advertisements, I may well add at the end. Generally speaking, Government advertisement is not of the nature of private commercial or trade advertisements. It is more or less public announcement or public information. The Press may well consider it so and suitably insert it in its columns as items of public news and without any gainful eyes at it as a commercial bargain. That will entirely change the question of Government advertisement from sordid consideration of money-making etc. which, I fear, vitiates clear thinking about the privileges and freedom of the public Press vis-a-vis advertisement.

2-5-'53

Flouting the Constitution

In Mysore as well as New Delhi the retreat from Congress principles is in full swing. Mysore has re-opened 150 liquor shops which had been closed before, and Delhi is importing beef and bacon as well as more and more foreign liquors, (about 3 lakh gallons more in 1951 than in 1949), such as beer, whisky, gin and brandy which constituted the largest items and champagne which registered the biggest increase.

V. G. D.

LIFE AND DEATH IN KOREA

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)



The above picture named *Crucifixion of Korea* is reproduced from the *Peace News*, London of February 27, 1953. The painting was brought into the pulpit of Mount Hollywood Congregational Church, Hollywood, U.S.A., in aid of a collection for Korean relief. The Minister of the Church asked the sergeant who had just come back from Korea to come up to the pulpit and comment on the painting. "That is just how it is over there," he said after looking at the background of blazing ruins. It is to be noted that in spite of 'blazing ruins', life as embodied by the eternal mother and the child persists with pathos of its own and a grimness that can be seen on the face of the Korean mother in the picture. The child is all innocence secure in the lap of the mother which is life itself.

The following poem (THE VOICE OF MAN, by B. K. M.) is also reproduced from the same issue of the *Peace News*. It tells us the same story of man and his civilization today :

The joyous hope of birds ;
The breathing peace of country scenes ;
Poetry ; the solace of jewelled words,
All are shattered. Hope, joy, peace, and
light,
The voice of man breaks in—
"We made another bombing-raid last
night."

17-4-'53

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1953

ANDHRA AND PROHIBITION

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The *Indian Republic*, Madras, in its issue of April 22, 1953, has editorially taken objection to my suggestion (Vide *Harijan*, 18-4-'53, 'The New State of Andhra') that Andhra should not be off prohibition even after separation from Madras and that Justice Wanchoo should have better not raised the question offhand. I still feel that Justice Wanchoo should have, even from the legal and economic or financial point of view, seen the wisdom of our national policy of prohibition if at all he chose to touch the question of finance for the new State in the manner he did in his report to the Union Government; and I hold that Andhra should take itself to be the same as the parent State so far at least as the policy of prohibition goes. The all-India directive is there for it also, and it should rather thank itself that the endeavour to prohibit drink and drugs has already been started for it and that it has the good fortune of proceeding further in the noble cause.

The objection is also taken by that paper on the point of wisdom of this policy even and, I must say, on the most astounding plea of what the paper describes as the "moral aspect of prohibition". According to it this aspect consists in the following:

"First the compulsion which it enforces has a deleterious effect on the mind. (whose mind? *Ed.*) The natural revulsion to compulsion, the subtrefuges and surreptitious ways it engenders, mitigates and militates against moral stamina of people."

Not merely moral, there is, according to the paper, the intellectual aspect of prohibition also, and the paper tries to show it in the following manner:

"In India most people are ignorant. Their intellectual level is low. (Is it so? They may not be so learned as to argue in the manner, for example the paper does; but that is different from being intellectual. *Ed.*) The moral principles or the social doctrines implicit in prohibition are hard to understand. Therefore what is required is the raising of the standard of mental understanding."

The paper further goes on to add the health aspect of prohibition also in the same strain:

"Again what is also required is the promotion of the health of the people which is admittedly at a low ebb. If these are secured in a high measure, people by themselves would realize the evils of drink and stand aloof from it."

From this specious pleading is shown the following Q. E. D. which the paper gives as follows:

"The State has to pool all its resources, (is drunkenness and what follows from that scourge any resource for a State? *Ed.*) make itself financially strong, and by providing education, medical aid, proper housing and raising the standards of life, prevent the evils of drink, in the normal course, which is possible by the intellectual understanding that flows out of knowledge."

A fine way of improving the lot of the people and raising the 'standard of their mental understanding' also through debauching, stupefying and ruining them by supplying drink and drugs at public cost! Is this the standard of "intellectual understanding" that is sought to be flowing from education? The truth of the matter is that the middle and upper classes who have been profiting by what goes on today in the present order of our society in the name of education, health, and such other welfare services so-called, want them to be paid as much as possible by the poor, by defrauding them and fleecing them of their hard-earned money through the device of a drink-and-drug shop. It is really pick-pocketing them and using the money so 'intellectually' secured for the interests of the upper classes. This is really robbing Peter to pay Paul. The fancied dangers of corruption, illicit distillation etc. are mere dialectical bug-bears raised in their own minds and by these classes themselves to lull themselves to vain self-conceit and pseudo self-righteousness. Otherwise the masses have intuitively known and experienced that prohibition is a Gandhi-given boon to them. Let us therefore be warned betimes before the masses realize to their great fury about the upper class intellectuals that they do not want prohibition as they want easy money from the poor for their selfish ends. If the State in India wishes to progress, which it should, and if it stands for the poor and the down-trodden in the land, it has not to be drawn away by such specious sophistry as that of the Madras paper. Let it be noted that drink revenue is only a misnomer; it is not revenue, but economic drain and worse. As Mr Robert Pierson, President of the International Temperance Association, Southern Asia Division, broadcasting from A. I. R., Bombay, said, "Liquor revenue is a mere trifle compared with the economic costs and social waste of the traffic.... The 'returns' of liquor revenue are illusions, more startling than any mirage that mocks and deceives a desert traveller." As the reader will find the broadcast talk reproduced elsewhere in this issue, I refrain from quoting it further. Let us so-called intellectuals beware that prohibition is one of the chief acid tests of our *bona fides* and the earnest of our good intentions that we who today happen to dominate the State in India stand and work for the poor masses in India.

LIQUOR REVENUE A MIRAGE

[From a talk of Mr Robert Pierson, President of the International Temperance Association, Southern Asia Division, speaking on "What About Liquor Revenue?" from the Bombay Station of All India Radio on Sunday, April 26, 1953.]

During the past three months, I have travelled over most parts of India. On this tour, it has been my privilege to meet many very interesting people. Naturally, I have been interested in learning their reactions to the great cause of temperance and especially their attitude toward the issue of prohibition. My quest brought me into contact with men and women of all walks of life. I talked with college professors, businessmen, white-collar men and hardy peasants. From the lush emerald paddy fields of South India to the snow-crowned peaks of your incomparable Himalayas, I find among the people one outstanding question regarding prohibition—"How can we make up the loss in revenue we are experiencing, or would experience, as the result of adopting prohibition?"

I find the question of prohibition and the loss of revenue very closely associated in the minds of many in all walks of Indian life today. For instance, I was making a purchase in a prohibition area. When the clerk handed me his bill, he called my attention to the tax included. 'If we were not losing so much money from prohibition, we would not have to add all of these taxes to purchases,' he informed me.

On another occasion, recently, I was riding on the train with a well-educated gentleman who introduced himself as an author and former professor in a large Indian university. Our conversation soon turned to the use of alcoholic beverages and the prohibition issue. 'Prohibition is too expensive an experiment for a country like India', he said; 'We are endeavouring to become adjusted to our new status as an independent nation. We find ourselves confronted with many pressing needs to better the lot of our people. We need to develop large irrigation schemes to make more of our lands productive so we can grow more food. We need to develop our industries. We need to expand and improve our transportation and communication facilities. We need more and better schools and hospitals. But all of these projects require revenue. States where prohibition is in effect are losing crores of rupees every year through loss of revenue on liquor. We cannot afford to lose this large amount of money so urgently required for our national development!'

Over and over again, I have heard similar arguments. The loss of revenue appears to be one of the greatest objections to prohibition in India today. But now let us face the facts. Does any nation lose more through the loss of liquor revenue than it would pay out to heal the wounds it is bound to inflict upon its citizens as the result of legalized liquor? In other words, is the loss of revenue greater than will be the increased costs to the State that will inevitably come as the result of increased crime and greater demands on welfare funds?

Legalized liquor brings more drunkenness; drunkenness means increased crime, more accidents, more broken homes, greater poverty, increased juvenile delinquency. The State cannot ignore these problems. Increased crime means more necessary funds for law enforcement and penal institutions. More accidents mean that more hospital facilities are required. More broken homes, increased juvenile delinquency and greater poverty demand State funds to cope with such problems. Do not ever forget it—these and other demands that inevitably follow legalized liquor will come, and the experience of other nations reveals that the cost to Government of legalized liquor far exceeds the amount realized through liquor revenue.

A close-up of the phrase, 'liquor revenue,' involves an understatement, almost a contradiction so startling as to challenge the accuracy of such a title for the subject. According to Webster, the meaning of the word 'revenue'

is, 'the return of yield from any kind of property (as a source of revenue).'

'But a glance at the public statistics of the liquor trade reveals how completely inadequate and deceptive are so-called revenue figures. So far as comprising any adequate returns to the State from the day-by-day transactions of the liquor trade, it is a brazen understatement.

Here is a fundamental truth that must not be forgotten:

Liquor revenue is a mere trifle as compared with the economic costs and social waste of the traffic.

Take my own native country of the United States for example. Every day, the liquor traffic is costing the American people in money value alone, nearly \$33,000,000 or nearly \$1,400,000 an hour! Just multiply these figures by five and you will have some idea how many rupees that would be. Just think of it. 165 crores of rupees a day or nearly 70 lakhs an hour that the liquor traffic is costing the American people. And our country, far from safeguarding youth or warning adults, continues to take three billion dollars of revenue from the liquor trade each year, while permitting it legally to lure between nine and ten billion dollars every twelve months from the purses of the people it dupes with glamorous sales appeal in the press, through the radio, and, in more recent years, through the televised invasion of American homes.

In a report filed with the legislature in the State of Massachusetts, an Investigating committee headed by a prominent judge disclosed that the direct cost of alcoholism to their State totalled more than \$80,000,000 (30 crores of rupees) while the total revenue received from taxes on the liquor industry amounted to about \$13,000,000 (6 crores 50 lakh rupees). This committee further pointed out that if the cost of the indirect effects were taken into consideration, the losses of the State would be astounding. There is evidence that, in general, the cost to the State from alcoholism is about six or eight times what it receives in taxes from the liquor industry.

Careful surveys in this same State revealed that 42 per cent of cases brought before one domestic relations court were directly due to alcoholism, and that 47 per cent were due to causes directly or indirectly due to drunkenness on the part of one or both parents. Here lies the chief cause for under-privileged and delinquent children. To care for this problem costs the State money.

Again in Massachusetts it was found that drunkenness is the cause of 50 per cent of crimes punishable by death or imprisonment and 85 per cent of misdemeanours or lesser crimes. Alcohol is directly responsible for 25 per cent of mental cases in the State and indirectly the cause of at least 15 per cent more of such cases. To care for the criminal and the mentally ill is a tremendous drain on public funds! Remember, my friends, legalized liquor costs a country money. For each rupee it receives in liquor revenues it will pay six or eight rupees to meet the cost of alcoholism to the State.

The 'returns' of liquor revenue are illusions, more startling than any mirage that mocks and deceives a desert traveller. Take any economically legitimate business. Its products or its service renders a real or tangible benefit to the society that sustains it. The food products, the clothing, the building materials made available to the public, make lasting contributions. They add to the wealth of society, conserve its health and promote its well-being. All the wages paid to the millions employed in these industries are a part of that contribution to public welfare. Even its advertising is, by and large, informative, illuminating and constructive.

This is not so with the liquor traffic. Let us once for all reject the widely disseminated notion that money received by or through the liquor traffic can be regarded as on a plane of economic values similar to the outlay in any legitimate wealth-producing industry.

The wages paid to labour by liquor may help sustain the lives of the workers who receive them, but they do

not contribute to the public welfare. Rather, they are a constant drain upon the public and a waste of the public wealth, without any commensurate return. In view of the underspread effects and evils which flow from use of liquor we may as well legitimize and seek to capitalize upon many other evils prevalent today. It would sound ridiculous to suggest that theft and embezzlement be legalized in order to boost the national income. Yet while these constitute an invasion of property rights they do not involve the physical, mental, and social demoralization of their victims which the liquor traffic generally does.

We could go even further and point out that labour employed by liquor is thereby withdrawn from the field of legitimate production and to that extent it diminishes the potential market for wholesome products whose manufacturer would otherwise need to employ a larger number of workers.

Alcoholism costs a nation a great deal more than we have already pointed out that appears on the surface. Surveys in the United States reveal that alcohol is the primary cause of at least eleven per cent of absenteeism in industry—this loss it is estimated runs close to a billion dollars a year. One Survey figured how man workers loafed, the amount of time they loafed, and the wages lost as the result of use of alcohol. From this survey it was estimated that alcoholism costs the United States about one billion dollars a year in lost time and inefficient work. That is what it amounts to in ordinary language. Worker-drinkers have two or three times as many accidents on Monday to an average of two on the other days. Monday is the day on which drinkers still have some of the 'hangover' in my country. They are not as accurate as they should be, so accidents come.

Absenteeism and worker inefficiency caused by alcohol cost any nation plenty.

Who said loss of revenue? Legalized liquor costs the State many times what it receives in liquor revenue! Liquor revenue is a begatelle as compared with the economic costs and social waste of the traffic. Instead of additional funds for irrigation projects and better school facilities, so-called liquor revenues will go to meet greatly increased costs of crime and law enforcement, the upkeep of mental hospitals and for meeting the more accentuated problems of juvenile delinquency and poverty that will inevitably follow legalized liquor!

Do not ever forget it, experience reveals that liquor revenue is a misnomer! Legalized liquor costs governments as well as individuals plenty!

OUR UNIQUE MISSION

[This is the second instalment of Shri Vinobaji's opening speech on 7-3-53 in the Chandil Sammelan.]

II

I will give you another example. The Government has recently constituted a Khadi Board with a view to helping Khadi. Pandit Nehru remarked he was surprised that what should have taken place four years ago was happening after so much delay. Whatever may have caused the delay, now that the Board has been constituted and the Government wants to raise the production of Khadi, it becomes our work, — the work of the Charkha Sangh to help the Government, especially because the Charkha Sangh has long experience in that line. And yet I feel that though as citizens and experts we must offer whatever help we can to them, we cannot lose ourselves into it completely. Because, we cannot serve Khadi as we want to do in this way. We must keep our conception and our aim of Khadi

pure and unsullied and render help to the Government in promoting the production of Khadi only secondarily while continuing to work for Khadi in our own way. We should seek ways and means to put an end to the violence of war and yet be prepared to go to serve the wounded soldiers, in case war still breaks out. We cannot refuse to do that, though we cannot forget that it is not our real work. Our Khadi-work will have for its aim the establishment of the village-raj. This time, a few days ago, when Pandit Nehru came to see me he asked me for my views. I told him that if there is anything we want from the Government for Khadi and village industries it is this that just as we believe that the knowledge of reading and writing is an essential part of a citizen's equipment and therefore undertake the responsibility to provide facilities for educating all our people in this regard — it is granted that circumstances may prevent the Government from fulfilling this responsibility in full but then there will be this sense of failure and the consequent urge for greater striving in the right direction — so should the Government agree, at least in principle, that every Indian citizen must be trained in spinning. It may not find it possible to give effect to this responsibility, but then it should accept the view that those who do not know spinning are not educated. We do not want the Government to help us with money. Acceptance of this demand will be enough help for us. You will note that I made only this demand of him and no more. Had I gone further and asked that the Government should undertake to impose Khadi on the people, I would have transgressed the limits of my position. Because it would mean that I have forgotten my mission which is to build up *loka-shakti* — popular power, as distinguished from *danda-shakti* — the coercive power of the State.

I have given you these two examples, one of *bhoo-dan* and the other of Khadi, to illustrate the difference between our method of work and that of the Government. A democratic government may use its *danda-shakti* in solving these problems, and none can object to it. But that will not create *loka-shakti*, though it may succeed in creating wealth and prosperity. Such is the outlook behind our work. Naturally our method of work must accord with it. It is clear that the way we will proceed about our work will be marked by a certain distinction in so far as it will help the people develop freedom from dependence on the State. Look at it from this point of view and you will see that our work should proceed on the basis of — one, *vichar-shasan* or peaceful conversion of people to our view by making them think about it, and two, *kartritva-vibhajan* or distribution of work among the individuals without creating an administrative authority.

Vichar-shasan means the readiness on our part to understand the other person's point of

view and to explain ours to him. In no case shall we seek to impose our view on anyone. We will rather insist that they accept it only after they are convinced of its correctness. The peculiar set-up of the Sarvodaya Samaj has led some people to describe it as a loose organization. But it is not true. Such a thing cannot work. It is rather an organization, in which we rely only on the power of thought as our sole instrument for our work. We neither give orders nor take orders. On the contrary we hold friendly consultations. The Koran says of the devotees of the Lord that they do their work by mutual consultation. I will rejoice if a person refuses to act on my advice because he does not approve it. If however he acts on it without understanding it I will be sad. This is the way we will work for our objective, and I am sure that the organization that will build itself up in this way will far surpass any however efficient and disciplined. I do not deny that a disciplined organization using authority to enforce its will has some power. It certainly has power, but not the power to produce good. If this is borne home to us we will realize the high importance of the propagation of thought as a part of our programme. This makes it clear why the Buddha started the institution of the *bhikkhus*, and Shankaracharya that of the *yatis*. They were expected to carry on a ceaseless campaign for the propagation of right thought. But the creation of *sanghas* also led to some evil results. So while we are not going to set up any *sanghas*, we must have workers who will move about among the people — even as an ever-flowing stream of water — and carry to them thoughts and ideas inspiring them to nobler life. People may perhaps ignore us or not listen to us in the beginning. But that need not depress us, rather it should spur us to greater effort. Such must be our zeal to preach our mission and such our faith in it. I am sorry to say this aspect of our work is not receiving the attention it deserves. Many of us are imprisoned, so to say, in the various institutions where they work. The institutions are quite important, but the proper attitude towards an institution should be one of regard and respect and not of attachment. The institutions should carry on their work but some of the workers should always be moving among the people while some stay at the centre and work. If we do not build up our work after this pattern, the thought we stand for will lose its active power, and *vichar-shasan* i.e. winning over people to our view and way of life, will become impossible.

The Bihar people say with a sense of pride to which they are perfectly entitled that it was the Bihar Congress which first took up the *bhoo dan* work. The All India Congress at Hyderabad took it up only afterwards. But let us see how exactly it works. It all begins with a circular letter from above urging on the Committees below that Congressmen must co-operate

with the *bhoo dan* work. The Ganga arises in the Himalayas and flows down to Haridwar and then to Garhmukteshwar and it remains the same Ganga, however far it may flow. In the same way this circular letter which arises from the A. I. C. C. office goes first to the provincial committees and from there to the district committees and so on and it remains the same paper circular. A species can only produce its like. In the same way, I once humorously remarked about it, circular letters can only bring forth circular letters. After all some one must come forward to take up work and go to the villages. We have got to collect 25 lakh acres and though it comes only to five acres per village which looks quite easy, yet there must be workers to go to the villages and explain our mission to them.

But this we hesitate to do. We shrink from the prospect of having to go round so many villages and in our impatience we develop a liking for the short cut to our objective. We then want that there must be legislation for it. But though legislation would be welcome, it is not for us to raise that cry. Our own natural duty (स्वधर्म) would be to keep faith in the power of thought to move the people and to go from village to village explaining and convincing the people of the truth of our mission. We cannot complain — how long shall we go on explaining? Because as devotees of Ahimsa that is the only way open to us for achieving our ends. I think I have made sufficiently clear the importance of *vichar-shasan* to us as an instrument of our work.

The other instrument of our work, as I said earlier, is *kartritva-vibhajan*, or the distribution of work among the individuals. There should be no concentration of the power to act and execute at any one centre. Every village should be enabled to develop it. I therefore want that the village must have the power to decide what things it will or not import. If a village decides that they will use *ghani*-oil and mill-oil should not therefore be allowed into its area, it must have the power to enforce its decision. The Government, however, will object to this suggestion on the ground that they cannot allow a State to grow within a State.

But there can be no freedom from dependence on the military if we refuse to do so. Freedom from dependence on armed might can come only by following the policy which God has adopted in regard to creation. He has distributed intelligence to each one of His creation — to the scorpion, the snake, the tiger, and the man. And He has advised them to seek guidance from their intelligence and act. And so the world goes on without His having to worry Himself about it. Indeed He has so far removed Himself from the scene that some of us are led even to doubt His existence. In the same way we should strive to create a State whose very existence may be in doubt because it will not need to exercise its

authority. Then only will we be said to have a non-violent State.

So with this end in view we make the demand for investing the villages with the power to manage their affairs so as to convert them into village republics. We also want that the villagers should equip themselves for shouldering this responsibility. This again raises a problem which would need the building up of *loka-shakti*. The villagers must wake up to the realization of their duty and decide what things they will produce in the village and then ask the Government to ban the import of those things which thwart their efforts. If the Government does not come to their help, they should be bold enough to stand up against the Government. Such resistance by the people against the Government will be of great help to the latter because that would pave the way for doing away with the need for the military. The centre can never develop enough intelligence for governing all our numberless villages well and wisely. It is simply impossible. Therefore instead of a body of planners, howsoever competent, for the whole nation, every village should be enabled to become its own planner. The Central Government would only come in to help this village planning wherever and whenever it is approached to extend such help. This is what we mean by *kartritva-vibhajan* or the decentralization of work.

Let me illustrate the point further. In regard to the problem of redistribution of land, suggestions are often made to fix the ceiling. It would be noted that these suggestions are themselves an outcome of the awakening brought about by the Bhoodan Movement. But as in the case of a building the flooring comes earlier and is more important than the ceiling, so also in regard to the distribution of land we must first fix the lowest limit of the land that a cultivator should own. And why do I want this first? — because I want *kartritva-vibhajan*. The labourers today labour at their jobs but they have no *kartritva* e.g. the initiative and the power to act. They work like lifeless machines. We want that they should work not only with their hands but also with their intelligence. Others, the capitalists for example, may have more intelligence than these poor labourers. But we cannot forgo all the vast store of intelligence of our numberless peasants and labourers for the greater good of our country. We should therefore provide for the utilization of all this intelligence of our toiling population and plan accordingly. Land-distribution is a part of this plan to train the people in the use of their intelligence and in shouldering their individual responsibilities in the social whole. This is an instance of the *kartritva-vibhajan*.

(To be continued)

(From Hindi)

STATE LANGUAGE OF KASHMIR

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Recently Sheikh Abdulla, Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, has declared that Urdu in both Nagari and Urdu scripts will be the official language of the State. He said that the Indian Constitution provided for the development and enrichment of regional languages of India and Urdu was the regional language of Kashmir. It was understood by the people throughout the State and had been the official State language for centuries. He also said that as Hindi in Nagari script was to be the official language of the Union, it must also have due consideration. It is probably from that point of view that he declared that the State language Urdu would be simple and in Nagari script also. Gandhiji repeatedly told us that if Hindi which is highly Sanskritized and Urdu which is equally highly Persio-Arabicized were both simplified so as to be understood by the common man in the north, the undesirable and artificial distinction between Hindi and Urdu brought about by extra-linguistic causes would begin to disappear and we will have a simple language which is Hindi or Urdu or Hindustani, whichever name we prefer. The Kashmir experiment can be a welcome experiment to prove this thesis of Gandhiji. Anyway it is good that Nagari script will also be used for Urdu. If in a similar manner Delhi, U. P., Bihar, etc. decide that simple Hindi to be written in Nagari or Urdu script will be the official language of those regions, as Urdu is a regional language there, it will be a fine thing for the advancement of the national language in terms of the Constitution of India. Working that way, it will pool all the literary and cultural resources both in Urdu and Hindi to make up and enrich a national Hindi which will be simpler and easier for the common man in the North and more accepted as a national language as well.

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