

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

CONVERSION *

(A Discourse with Gandhiji)

Gandhiji's insistence on a member of the Fellowship not even secretly wishing that a member of another faith should be converted to his own, led to a general discussion on the question of conversion. Gandhiji again defined his position more clearly than before :

'I would not only not try to convert but would not even secretly pray that anyone should embrace my faith. My prayer would always be that Imamsaheb (an old Mahomedan associate of Gandhiji) should be a better Mussalman, or become the best he can. Hinduism with its message of *ahimsa* is to me the most glorious religion in the world,—as my wife to me is the most beautiful woman in the world;—but others may feel the same about their own religion. Cases of real honest conversion are quite possible. If some people for their inward satisfaction and growth change their religion, let them do so. As regards taking our message to the aborigines, I do not think I should go and give my message out of my own wisdom. Do it in all humility, it is said. Well, I have been an unfortunate witness of arrogance often going in the garb of humility. If I am perfect, I know that my thought will reach others. It taxes all my time to reach the goal I have set to myself. What have I to take to the aborigines and the Assamese hillmen except to go in my nakedness to them? Rather than ask them to join my prayer, I would join their prayer. We were strangers to this sort of classification — 'animists', 'aborigines', etc., but we have learnt it from the English rulers. I must have the desire to serve and it must put me right with people. Conversion and service go ill together.'

The next day early morning the friends met for an informal conversation with Gandhiji when again the same question was asked by many of them.

'Would you have a ruling of such a character that those who had a desire to convert should not be eligible for membership?'

* From Shri M. D.'s report of the Proceedings of the International Fellowship Convention held at Ahmedabad in 1928. See Gandhiji's book *Christian Missions — Their Place in India* — Navajivan, Ahmedabad-9.

'Personally,' said Gandhiji, 'I think they should not be eligible. I should have framed a resolution to that effect as I regard it as the logical outcome of Fellowship. It is essential for inter-religious relationship and contact.'

'Is not the impulse to proselytize God-given?' inquired another friend.

'I question it,' said Gandhiji. 'But if all impulses are God-given, as some of our Hindus believe, He has also given us discrimination. He will say, I have given you many impulses so that your capacity to face temptation may be tested.'

'But you do believe in preaching an economic order?' inquired one of the fair sex.

'I do, as I believe in preaching laws of health.'

'Then why not apply the same rule in religious matters?'

'It is a relevant question. But you must not forget that we have started with the fundamental principle that all religions are true. If there were different but good and true health laws for different communities, I should hesitate to preach some as true and some as false. I am positive that with people not prepared to tolerate one another's religious belief there can be no International Fellowship.'

'Moreover physical analogies when applied to spiritual matters are good only up to a certain point. When you take up an analogy from nature you can stretch it only to a certain point. But I would take an illustration from the physical world and explain what I mean. If I want to hand a rose to you, there is a definite movement. But if I want to transmit its scent, I do so without any movement. The rose transmits its own scent without a movement. Let us rise a step higher, and we can understand that spiritual experiences are self-acting. Therefore the analogy of preaching sanitation etc. does not hold good. If we have spiritual truth, it will transmit itself. You talk of the joy of a spiritual experience and say you cannot but share it. Well, if it is real joy, boundless joy, it will spread itself without the vehicle of speech. In spiritual matters we have merely to step out of the way. Let God work His way. If we interfere we may do harm. God is a self-acting force. Evil is not, because it is a negative

force. It requires the cloak of virtue before it can march forward.'

'Did not Jesus Himself teach and preach?'

'We are on dangerous ground here. You ask me to give my interpretation of the life of Christ. Well, I may say that I do not accept everything in the gospels as historical truth. And it must be remembered that he was working amongst his own people, and he said he had not come to destroy but to fulfil. I draw a great distinction between the Sermon on the Mount and the Letters of Paul. They are a graft on Christ's teaching, his own gloss apart from Christ's own experience.'

Young India, 19-1-28

THE ETHICAL PROBLEM FOR SCIENCE

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists of November 1952, has given major portions of Prof. A. V. Hill's Presidential address to the British Association on the subject of the 'Ethical Dilemma confronting the Scientist' today. The lecture was summarized by the *London Times* Educational Supplement and it wrote a leading article on it, wherein it remarked at the end to point out a very grave danger facing scientific studies today :

"The 'rank and file' of the laboratories and field stations have all too often in the past been careless of humane considerations or shown a presumptuous confidence in the adequacy of their own limited outlook. This is a risk inherent in scientific training of which schools, technical colleges, and universities are becoming more and more aware. But to correct it will need more ingenuity and determination than most of them have yet been able to display."

The risk and danger noted above are there in our own country as well. As Prof. Hill said, all will admit that "the improvement of man's estate by the application of scientific knowledge is one of the loftiest adventures ; but a belief that it can be achieved by scientific methods alone, without a moral basis to society, is a perilous illusion."

Unfortunately, the 'perilous illusion' is commonly held as a true belief by average scientists. They forget that science is one of the branches of human knowledge and what is called the spirit of inquiry or the scientific method is no prerogative of the natural sciences only, and that science is not the sole discipline we have, making others redundant or superfluous and superceding them. The learned professor is well aware of this danger and spoke at some length about it. It will interest the reader if I quote the following from it :

"Today when the public importance of science and its popular esteem may turn some people's heads, it is well that scientists should realize that the prestige of science is not their personal property, but a trust which they have an obligation to pass on uncompromised to their successors.... but to use the general prestige of science as a bait to attract attention to pronouncements on other topics, for example, on politics or religion, is a disservice both to science and the public. As a citizen

I need no more justification than any other citizen in saying what I like about such things ; but I have no right to pose as a representative of science in discussing them...."

He also told his hearers that,

"Scientists for the most parts are quite ordinary folk. In their particular scientific jobs they have developed a habit of critical examination, but this does not save them from wishful thinking in ordinary affairs, or sometimes even from misrepresentation and falsehood when their emotions or prejudices are strongly enough moved."

Therefore he was definite that scientists, like all good citizens, cannot absolve themselves from taking account of ethical considerations, and according to him, "the chief of these — as with other good citizens — are of integrity, courage, and goodwill."

What then is the special or peculiar ethical dilemma which science as science has to meet? This was the main theme of the address, which briefly is that the dilemma for science arises from its own vocation of bringing to light knowledge which has its bearing, for good or evil, on human society :

"Much scientific and technical advance has led to unexpected dangers and difficulties. Without our present knowledge of bacteriology and preventive medicines gigantic armies could never be kept in the field and land war on the recent scale would be impossible. Is medical science, therefore, to be blamed for twentieth century war? The indiscriminate use of insecticides, by upsetting the balance of nature, can quickly do more harm than good. Radio communication may be used for spreading lies and disorder as well as truth and goodwill. Developments in microbiology, in many ways beneficent may be used in the future for biological warfare, with effects at present unpredictable...."

"In many parts of the world advances in public health, improved sanitation, the avoidance of epidemics, the fighting of insect-borne diseases, the lowering of infantile death rates, and a prolongation of the span of life have led to a vast increase of population.... (leading to) shortage of natural resources, particularly of food."

"The list need not be multiplied ; all are aware that every new benefit to mankind provides also its own dangers, either as unexpected consequences or by deliberate misuse."

Prof. Hill admits that "there seems to be no simple answer to the riddle" and also notes that there have been two extreme types of answers :

"All knowledge, not only that of the natural world, can be used for evil as well as good ; and in all ages there continue to be people who think that its fruit should be forbidden.... There are others who hold the contrary opinion that more and more of science and its applications alone can bring prosperity and happiness to men. Both these extreme views seem to me entirely wrong — though the second is the more perilous as more likely to be commonly accepted.... Both seem to me just as mistaken as those who hold that the scientific and the religious spirit are necessarily opposed. Co-operation is required, not conflict ; for science can be used to express and apply the principles of ethics...."

But Prof. Hill argues,

"Science is not alone in this : liberty may lead to licence, religion can be used to inflame passions, laws

can be exploited to protect wrong-doing.* If scientists feel called upon to examine their consciences so much the better: but they need not imagine that in this they are exceptional!

And he concludes that,

"It is true that scientific research has opened up the possibility of unprecedented good or unlimited harm for mankind; but the use that is made of it depends in the end on the moral judgements of the whole community of men. It is totally impossible now to reverse the process of discovery; it will certainly go on. To help to guide its use aright is not a scientific dilemma, but the honourable and compelling duty of a good citizen."

Such a purist attitude is surely not convincing. Does not every human act have an ethical meaning as well? Is science above ethics? Is discovery the result of an aimless or absolute inquiry, of an innocent or unmeaning curiosity? Is it an accident always? In short, should not scientific activity also have an ethical code and has it no significance in values, taking it even as factual? Prof. Hill did not go into this vital aspect of the question and left it at that. Sir Josiah Oldfield took up the gauntlet and replied to it in the *Anti-vivisectionist* of Nov.-Dec. 1952, as follows:

"Professor A. V. Hill in his Presidential address to the British Association on September 3, 1952 recognized that utilitarianism is not the final basis of scientific living, and rightly held up to the scientific world that it must take into consideration the problem of ethics.

"He inferred that it is not sufficient to say that such and such a thing is practical, or is advantageous, or is the solution of a problem, but that science must recognize that its most important basis is that of ethics and that therefore there can be no scientific progress unless we can recognize that such progress is ethical in its nature.

"Professor Hill rightly said that, 'all the impulses of decent humanity, all the dictates of religion, and all the traditions of medicines insist that suffering shall be relieved.

"We come therefore to face the question: shall we inflict suffering under the guise of the relief of suffering? The foundation laid down is wise and correct, but when it is applied to the facts of life we must ask how it is to be interpreted.

"Humans seeking to take up certain branches of science are sooner or later faced with the problem: shall we inflict pain, suffering and agony in order to obtain knowledge, or shall we recognize that the only knowledge worth having is that which can be obtained on ethical lines? Those of us who want to be scientists in the highest sense of the word must face this problem which Professor Hill ignored.

"Let us take this practical instance. It is a scientific problem of great importance as to how long life will remain in a man or an animal in the absence of all nutriment with or without drink. Is science justified in obtaining the answer to this question by taking a hundred different animals, putting them under strict conditions and gradually starving them to death and then gathering from the result of the experiment the answer to the question? I personally, as a

student of science, deny to take any animal and subject it to such experimental suffering as gradual starvation in order to obtain the answer to a scientific problem. Quite apart from the varying results that may be obtained by a dozen students, each taking a score of animals and starving them all to death, I would lay down that it is non-scientific to forget the laws of humanity and to assume that utilitarian answers are of paramount importance. I feel that Professor Hill should have faced this serious ethical problem.

"Where progress in ethics and the development of an ethical character would be interfered with by any series of actions, these actions could not be justified by saying they are done in pursuit of science.

"We who oppose cruel experimentation upon animals do so on the basis that it is non-scientific to break an ethical law in order to obtain a utilitarian answer. I hope that Professor Hill will take the opportunity, during his Presidential year, of dealing with this great problem in order that there will be an interpretation laid down by a leading scientist.

"To me, the highest form of science has been for all time sought for by students of theology in their quest for the meaning of God in the Universe; and it is this differentiation between scientific and unscientific principles which creates the difference between a Godlike and a Devilish interpretation of the world and its evolution."

Surely the world as it stands at present requires that science also must be made to subserve the ultimate good of the human world; it is not any way a privileged activity in the world of knowledge and wisdom. As the Duke of Edinburgh asked, "Of what use is science if man does not survive?"

20-5-53

COMMODITIES AND PROFITS

[A friend has sent the following cutting which I think will interest the readers. As he has not mentioned the source, I am sorry it is reproduced without its due mention. —Ed.]

Workers in the industries are organized into a crew by the boss or his accessories, and the purpose of the organization is not so much to produce commodities as it is to produce profits for the owner. Greed is the driving force. Commodities are merely incidentals and if the profits could be had without the commodities, commodities would be dispensed with.

But since commodities cannot be dispensed with, they are permitted, even encouraged, to the point of saturation where all profits stop.

Profits cannot come without commodities, but commodities can come without profits—this statement is sufficient unto the day. Commodities are a sure fire hit on any shooting gallery, but profits are uncertain even when hooked into commodities.

Commodities can be maintained without profits, so I cannot well see why profits should not be dispensed with. Excuse me: Profits subtract from the value of a commodity and put an addition to its price—it sounds like Oscar Wilde but it's so however.

*But then licence is not liberty, passions are not religion, and wrong-doing is not law. The moment these are abused and degenerate, they cease to be law or liberty or religion. Not so for science. —Ed.

HARIJAN

June 13

1953

"GUILTY OF SUBTLE MATERIALISM"

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Dignitaries of some Christian institutions in India have issued a joint statement expressing their categorical disagreement with and deep concern over Dr. Katju's recent statement in Parliament about the role of foreign missionaries in India. He said that they should have no need to do their so-called evangelical work henceforth in India. The joint statement in effect says in reply that we should rather feel grateful to these foreign missions who did so much humanitarian work in the past; and secondly that there should be no objection on mundane grounds, because "in recent years they have transferred all authority into the hands of the Church in India and steps are being taken to transfer the ownership of all property" to it.

But their chief contention is that "such an unreasonable demand cuts at the very nerve of missionary work of all religions." I think it does, but not on unreasonable but on very sound, legitimate and reasonable grounds. I regret to remark that these signatories and others who have written to the Press in protest against the well-considered statement of the Home Member have missed to note its deep meaning and significance.

If we only care to see what Gandhiji wrote on conversion and proselytization, *tabligh* and *tanjim* during the last generation, we will easily realize that what Dr. Katju said is mere paraphrase of what Gandhiji repeatedly said to "Christian Missions in India". If we read his writings again, we can see that he held these missions themselves as really "guilty of subtle materialism" in their act of institutionalizing propagation of things spiritual in the form of Mission Societies. Is not such institutionalization a mundane and material thing? Such one cannot bring forth conversion, but may well aid proselytization. And he will be really a bold man who will deny that these missions had no eye to proselytization. Conversion is a matter of the spirit, and the laws of spirit are all its own, requiring no mundane or subtly material aids or attractions like hospitals, dispensaries, colleges, schools, leper asylums etc. Like the lilies in the field which do not spin nor weave, the roses also do not need to propagate their fragrance; and so too the enlightened soul. Matters of faith and spirit are not for wordy propagation nor need mundane attraction or aid like humanitarian works even. They are to be lived and discovered in our own innermost being. This has the strongest and the most irresistible appeal to

kindred souls. All else becomes mere vexation of the soul and the spirit indeed.

I may not go here into the history of Christian missions in India. However it must not be forgotten that they came to India as aids to the European campaign of Colonialism since the 15th century and not as early Christians who went proclaiming their faith without a bayonet or a loaded barrel. Thank God, all that is past history now and we are restored back our freedom to live as one people — as brothers and sisters living their own faith and belief freely and without any airs or presumptions of one's own superiority or uniqueness; — not merely tolerating its diversity and difference from one's own faith, but heartily recognizing the fundamental equality of all faiths.

And it is here that the meaning of Dr. Katju's remark is lost on its opponents. A secular State cannot recognize the assumption of superiority on the part of any one faith over others, which is obviously implicit in or underlies any active or passive evangelical or missionary work. It must also be realized that there can be no such superiority really, as every faith really lived and experienced is a way unto God and no creed or belief may claim to be all true or unique or without unavoidable human frailties. The spirit is a matter of one's own realization; it is not one of certain creed or belief whatsoever it may be. This unique element of the wisdom of India's religious experience has a deep social and human meaning also, which should now be realized by all communities in India. This is really the basis of our secular State. Secularism is not a denial or negation of any faith, but is a positive recognition of the spiritual principle that every one has the right to live his own faith and may even hold it as unique *for himself*; but no one shall hold himself superior in faith only because he has it from a certain Book or a certain Prophet. Humility is the first virtue of any spirituality *worth* the name.

I may well end this note by quoting from the speech of Shri Rajagopalachari, which he gave the other day to the Patna University. He spoke about this very thing and said, that "the Gita had a positive philosophy to offer and it said that all paths led to the same goal. 'This is a positive doctrine of catholicity. All religions teach tolerance, but none of them says there is one goal though paths might differ. In Hindu philosophy it is not just tolerance of others' errors, but a common goal is recognized. We are told that it is not open to any Hindu to deny the gods of others. This philosophy has a great bearing on community life and in a country like India inhabited by more than one community this doctrine which transcends even the spirit of tolerance has a great merit. In my opinion it is the brightest jewel in our great inheritance.'" (*The Hindu*, 13-5-53)

The Church in India, thank God, free as it is now from the tutelage of European culture and history, is expected now to realize and make its own this great inheritance of our people of which it is surely an important part.

20-5-53

CAPITALISM AND TRADE UNIONISM

(By M. P. T. Acharya)

Shri Khandubhai Desai writes in the *A.I.C.C. Economic Review* asking workers not to become co-partners of capitalists in looting. But the fact that they are engaged and employed as wage-earners makes them co-partners with those who employ them, whether they are private capitalists or the State. Otherwise they cannot get jobs, cannot be engaged and cannot earn wages and therefore cannot live even badly. It is therefore useless—meaningless to tell them that they should not help the capitalists unless it is also told that the employment system is also a looting system. We must lay axe at the root!

Trade unions in all countries are not there to abolish the employing system. They are adjuncts of that system. Whatever form of wage struggle they may carry on if trade unions have to abolish looting they must work for the overthrow of the employing system. But that is the object only of revolutionary anarchist—syndicalist unions. They want to take over the works and run the industries themselves for the benefit of society, instead of allowing the private owners or the State to run production and distribution to suit themselves i.e. to loot others. But that is not the object that Shri Khandubhai or any other trade unionist in India wants. Otherwise they must stand for the abolition of the employing and wage system and to *take over all works and run them for the benefit of society.*

In Russia, trade unions are organized by the State to help looting by the State. Their officials are only nominally elected, for only those who are approved by the Government are allowed to stand as candidates for office. And anyone who votes must vote for them. Not to vote for them would be considered as treason to the State, will land even the non-voter in trouble, or entail refusal of job. The trade union officials are there only to enforce discipline and hard work upon the employees and are watch-dogs and informers against workers. Of course, there is no right to strike in the workers' fatherland—as that would be considered as treason even if the right to strike may be claimed to be "guaranteed" on paper and constitution.

Shri Desai says that Western economic thought is utterly out of date and "we have to think of our own contribution in the making of New India". He does not tell what is the difference between Western economic fundamentals and our own. We have also the same employment, wage and looting system as in the West.

Colonialism and Imperialism which we condemn are only extensions of the looting system of the successful looters. If we have to conduct the looting system at home, we will have to loot other countries also if there is any chance. That we are not allowed to do it or it is too late for us to start on that career does not mean that we have given up looting at home. In fact all economic systems up-to-date including the Russian and Chinese are fundamentally the same—from China to Peru. We are no exception so long as we want to maintain the employing and wage system. If we want to abolish looting we must abolish all systems which make looting necessary and therefore inevitable.

TRUE CONVERSION

To

The Editor, *Harijan*.

Sir,

It is satisfactory to read a newspaper report recently published that the Government of India has wisely forbidden foreign Christian missionaries to convert into the Christian religion poor Hindu villagers living in Indian villages by force or bribe as they have been now doing. Anti-proselytizing ban is also applied to Indians living in the cities.

Sir, the proper place for missionary zeal is among nominally Christian nations of Europe who are living unchristian life of selfishness and mad greed of money contrary to Christ's noble teaching of "love thy neighbour (which is all mankind) as thyself."

The missionaries should convert nominal Christians of Europe to be true and sincere Christians who will abandon fighting and war and who for peace, prosperity and happiness of the world should be in common life, in their daily dealings with fellow creatures, in business, in politics, in national and international affairs, honest, truthful, upright, just, righteous, sober, temperate, merciful, living in plainness and simplicity as true religion requires.

Conversion only really means conversion from evil life to a good life; conversion ought not to mean conversion from religion into which God gave us birth into another religion.

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THE THREAD OF LIFE

By Dorothy Wilkinson,

Principal of London School of Weaving

Crosspatch, Crosspatch, sit by the fire and spin — the author of those lines was a psychologist and occupational therapist if ever there was one, for it is hard to think of anyone remaining mentally ruffled while spinning. The very action of the wheel gives a sense of calm and rhythm, qualities which seep down into the mind of the spinner and are incompatible with evil or troubled thought. So Crosspatch may well be considered one of the earliest patients on whom occupational therapy was practised.

One of my spinning students of some twenty odd years age came to me from a brain specialist, who recommended some use of hand and foot which would bring back co-ordination to those limbs, impaired after a serious brain operation. The patient, a Scot and a very brave and determined lady, suggested spinning for this remedial purpose and I was lucky enough to be chosen to help her. I spent hours with her while she patiently wrestled with the problem during several short visits, since continued work of more than twenty minutes or so was too tiring. The task seemed well nigh impossible till at last we evolved a system which succeeded so completely that the wheel and hands were controlled simultaneously. Her joy can be imagined and she has often told me that her spinning wheel saved her life.

I have taught all my pupils by this method ever since and the normal student usually gets hand and foot co-ordination and spins within an hour's tuition. But I always take very good care to impress on them that to spin well entails long and patient practice, and that no one will spin well and easily unless they are carefully taught to analyse what is happening in each part of the mechanism of a spinning wheel.

For the practised spinner I believe there are few things more conducive to a calm and balanced mind than spinning. One of my students told me that during the London Blitz she always got her wheel. She lived in a big block of flats and at first, as all the inhabitants went to the shelter in the basement, she went too, and hated it. One evening, when the sirens went, she happened to be spinning and she continued to spin. After that evening she made a practice of getting her wheel as soon as the raids began and, instead of waiting in the shelter for a direct hit or for the danger to pass, she was calmly and happily spinning at the top of the building. There is no better way to keep one's head than to use one's hands, of this I am sure.

To talk of the things one loves is always to risk being thought sentimental, but the time that I spend in spinning gives me some of my greatest happiness and spinning wheels have come to be

some of life's most priceless possessions. As the yarn travels from my hands onto the bobbin it seems to conjure up thoughts of beautiful things that I have known — thoughts of those I have loved who are no longer with me in this life, music, mountains, downs and hills and flowing rivers, the ebb and flow of tides and the sound of the sea. Perhaps flowing water, of all things in nature, comes most to mind, for the flow of fleece to the wheel instinctively suggests it. I always tell my pupils to keep the fleece 'fluid', so that it goes as running water towards the spindle eye.

Spinning gives to me wonderful feelings of Eternity. As I cast my mind backwards to the countless thousands of years that mankind has spun and forward to the time when my last length of thread will be spun, as I watch the little bridge of fleece travelling ever onwards to become thread, it seems symbolic of that tiny step which we all shall take from this world to the next. When my own time is up and my wheel is still and I shall spin on it no more, I can only hope that others will find in it the joy that I have found and that on and on, for still thousands and thousands of years, yarn will yet be spun by one of God's best gifts — the human hand.

(From *Journal of Spinners, Weavers and Dyers*, Vol. I, No. 1. U.K.).

NOTES

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	(In Acres)
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till 5th May, 1953	12,24,737
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The Drink Scourge

[The following by Evengeline Booth, once head of the Salvation Army, is quoted in *Prohibition and Socio-Economic Good*, a pamphlet by G. C. Hallen, Saharanpur, from where it is reproduced below.]

"Drink has drained more blood, hung more crape; sold more homes; plunged more people into bankruptcy; armed more villains; slain more children; snapped more wedding-rings; defiled more innocence; blinded more eyes; twisted more limbs; dethroned more reason; wrecked more manhood; dishonoured more womanhood; broken more hearts; blasted more lives; driven more to suicide; and dug more graves than any other poison scourge that ever sent its death-dealing waves across the world."

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TO THE WORKERS *

II

The third major defect which we suffer from is the lack of co-ordination in our work, to which I have already referred in my first speech. We have enough capacity and people expect much from us. But our institutions carry on their work almost in isolation from one another. The tendency is so far advanced that one does not know what the other is doing, and this is why we have failed to show much in the way of concrete result. We cannot produce light if one man has the lamp, another oil and a third the match-stick. These different factors have to be brought together for producing light and destroying darkness.

Let us, for instance, consider the *Katai Mandals*—spinning clubs—to see how the absence of this unity between different items of our activity leads to frittering away of our energy. These *mandals* are started and the members gather together for spinning once a week and disperse after it is over. So it goes on and gradually their own inspiration weakens. About fifty *mandals* were started, twenty-five of them are defunct. The remaining twenty-five are working, but few care to know about them. The Gramodaya Sangh does not bother where they are and what they are doing. In the same way the Charkha Sangh does not think it any of its responsibility to feel concerned if Gramodaya Sangh fails in any of its ventures. This is how we are working at the present time. This is wrong. Every one knows that this is totally ineffective and yet it has continued for the last four or five years. I have thought it fit to draw your attention to this once again because we have now embarked on something which is very big and would require all our concentrated efforts for success.

However the question is receiving serious attention now and I am glad to inform you that all the different institutions will merge themselves in the Sarva Seva Sangh and the Sarva Seva Sangh will introduce homogeneity in the working of the different institutions. Centres of work run by these institutions will not only carry on their special activity but represent all other constructive activities also in due proportion—due proportion being determined by the qualifications and the aptitude of the worker in charge of the centre, as also by the demands of the local conditions.

In the end I will draw your attention to one thing more. I have come to the conclusion after a great deal of observation that the morning and evening prayers we hold have become a formal observance. I have seen that they are carried on in many institutions as part of the routine—as a matter of good manners. Good manners are all right. But prayers offered as a matter of good

manners cannot yield the experience which is the pleasant fruit of the prayers sincerely offered. Bapu taught us much in this regard through his life and also through his death. At the time he departed from here his mind was intent on prayer and merged in prayer did he leave his mortal frame. He uttered the Lord's name when the bullet struck him. This was not anything accidental. He was always wakeful and his prayer twice a day was not a formal affair; he put his heart into it. He used to say his prayer continued with every breath that he took. This was not an expression of egotism or fancy but a central fact of his life. In our prayers while we observe the form we do not enter into the depth.

Not that one needs to do much in the way of outer work in order to be able to pray well. All the preparation is done within and that does not take much time; it may well be done even in a minute's time. This we should do and I need not tell you that it will give us great strength. We should know that in the difficult tasks which lie ahead of us we can count upon no other strength than that of the support of God. If we do not put sincere faith in God we cannot hope to follow truth and other disciplines that we have accepted unflinchingly.

Yesterday Shankar Rao said that while we were working for the actual betterment of life in this world *yatras* and *yajnas* in olden times were aimed at the attainment of heaven beyond this world. He was right in pointing out this difference between our attitude and that of the people in olden times. But we should consider the point as to why they linked their efforts at virtue with the heaven beyond this world a little more closely. Suppose we ask a man to observe truth and tell him that this will also serve his interests more than dishonesty. He, however, points out to a situation under which he is sure to die if he opts for truth whereas he can easily save himself by telling a lie. Now what will they, who advocate unflinching loyalty to truth and forbid lying even in the interests of one's country or one's life, say to him? It was this difficulty which led the people of old whose approach was different from ours to link moral conduct with one's well-being in the other world. They said, if you tell a lie you may seem to gain in this world, but you shall lose a great deal more in the other. Besides, while the other world is permanent, life in this world is merely transitory. One should not then risk what is of permanent value for the sake of a transitory gain. One might say that this conception of the other world as the reason for unflinching loyalty to truth was rather immature. The correct explanation would be to say that recourse to lying, whatever the circumstances, cannot give inner satisfaction. However the main thing is to remain loyal to truth, and though we may hold that the inner satisfaction offers a more potent motive force for a steady devotion to truth, we cannot yet find fault with those who pinned their faith in the

* This is the second half of Shri Vinoba's concluding speech at the Chandil Conference on the evening of 9-3-'53.

other world, because their aim was the same as ours.

The point is that we need support from within in order that we may remain steadfast in our devotion to truth and duty, and prayer can be of very great help in finding such support. I therefore want that we should strengthen our faith in God and put heart into our prayer so as to make it more living.

Finally we need workers who will work full time for at least a year in order to carry through the task which lies before us. Those of you who can do so will please send in their names to the Sarva Seva Sangh.

(Abridged from Hindi)

WHISKY AS A PRIZE !

To The Editor, *Harijan*.

Sir,

In *Harijan* dated November 29, '52, appeared a note by V. G. D. under the caption "Commerce Ministry Progress". The note stated that according to the information supplied by the Press Trust of India the Commerce Ministry was buying more liquor abroad than before. It further stated, "If this note is lucky enough to catch the eye of some good members of Parliament, will they ask the Minister for Commerce, if this.... progress is calculated to lead us to the nation's cherished goal of prohibition which Gandhiji described as one of the four pillars of Swaraj"?

The answer given by the Minister for Commerce and Industry to unstarred question No. 774, asked in Parliament on 28-3-1953 by Fulsinhji B. Dabhi, M.P. shows that whereas the quantity of foreign liquor imported in India during the year 1950-51 was 10,40,798 gallons, in the year 1951-52 it was 14,48,165 gallons, an increase of 3,07,363 gallons.

In this connection the following piece of news, which appeared on page 5 of *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, dated 22-2-53 would be interesting to the readers of *Harijan*.

"The National Stadium in New Delhi presented a gay appearance yesterday with paper flags, festoons, bunting and fancy stalls for the two-day army, navy and air-force.... There were the usual games.... which were as attractive as costly. Those whom luck favoured no doubt knocked off precious prizes from anything like a leaf of pins to three bottles of whisky (Italics are mine)."

'PROHIBITIONIST'

[Is it proper for the Army and the Navy to use liquor as a prize? Albeit, Delhi is not under prohibition. It is very unfortunate that the capital of India disregards the Constitution so long. However for a Government department to behave in the manner reported above is, to say the least, flouting the spirit of the Constitution in an open manner. Drink is surely no prize; at best it can be a necessity as medicine, allowed under the Indian Constitution. Will Government see that such a thing as reported above will never happen again?

15-5-53

— M. P.]

LAW AND OFFICIAL OPINION

To

The Editor, *Harijan*.

Sir,

I have read with deep interest your article on "Bhoodan Movement and Exploitation" (*Harijan*, 9-5-'53). You say there, "If the Government and the workers in co-operation with each other continue to work patiently among the peasants this (implementation of Tenancy Act) can be made possible." But alas, my experience for the last six years in this field is disappointing. Government includes Mamlatdars and other Revenue officials. These people almost always sympathize with the landlords. Tenants on this side have applied for purchase of lands according to the Tenancy Act. The landlords are putting all sorts of obstacles in their way, by not attending the courts, refusing to give correct information regarding acreage of lands etc. The tenants' documents are misplaced. Cases are purposely postponed by the officials. I can give as many proofs as you like.

I am convinced that as long as the lower officials do not work honestly the tenants' lot is not going to improve. The Act by itself cannot act.

V. N. KHANOLKAR

[The heading of the article will, I think, attract notice of the reader, as it is not 'law and public opinion,' but is 'law and official opinion'. In a democracy it is public opinion which governs law; the official can have no effective opinion apart from executing the law that exists, in the most efficient and expeditious manner. But unfortunately in our new democracy things do not sometimes seem to go in that manner, and we often hear of complaints like the one published above. The bureaucracy which ruled under the orders of their old British masters had been trained in another manner, and perhaps the habit still persists to the great irritation and worry of honest reformers and social workers. An efficient Civil Service for a Democracy has still to grow and come about.

There is another side to the picture as well: the people also carry the legacy of the old rule; their behaviour has to be really democratic still further. As they are, so their rulers the officials. But as the adage goes, the sovereign, who are the people now, can do no wrong; it is the officials who stand to be blamed. They have to implement, with all good faith and honesty, what laws the State has and see that nothing that they do gives or creates an impression in the mind of the people that they sometimes act as if they sabotage the policies of the State which they as citizens might not be in agreement with.

2-6-'53

— M. P.]

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