

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

VOL. XVII. No. 24

AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, 1953

TWO ANNAS

A LIFE OF DEDICATION

(By Rajendra Prasad)

Shri Mahadev Desai's life was a life of dedication. He lived as he died literally in harness. His life was as enviable as his death to every person who devotes himself to a particular ideal and works for it. It should inspire many young men who have many many years to live and serve.

New Delhi,
4th August, 1953

DEAR MAHADEV

(By C. Rajagopalachari)

The death anniversary of dear Mahadev falls on 15th August. It looks like yesterday. I first met him thirty-four years ago and how much we have shared with one another since then! — grief, joy, fun and philosophy — all that has just disappeared as in a dream. Truly 'life is but a walking shadow.'

Madras,
28th July, 1953

BHOODAN YAJNA

[By Vinoba Bhave: Pub. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-9; Price: Re 1-8-0, Postage etc. As. 6.]

It was more than two years ago that Shri Vinoba got the idea of Bhoodan — land-gift — to provide the landless with land and so put them on their way to rehabilitate themselves in our decadent economy. He was then touring Hyderabad. Since then, he has till now covered a fairly large part of North India by his walking tour, delivering his message; and it has been very well received by our people all over India. And more: it has caught the eye of the outside world also. People outside are wondering at seeing that in India land could be had for mere asking for it, that here in India Shri Vinoba has thought of a non-violent way of resolving the land question peacefully and without State intervention or legislation. Constructive workers and political parties in India have also been deeply impressed by this silent revolution slowly taking shape and gathering pitch and volume as also meaning and significance under the unique leadership of Shri Vinoba. It has created a common platform for all those who would like to work among the people and for them, in a silent and non-partisan manner.

The story of this work is continuously being reported in our daily and weekly Press. The *Harijan* weeklies have been its avowed organ. It was thought, it is high time now to put in the hands of the reading public an authoritative statement about this great movement. Hence this book. It is a selection of articles of Shri Vinoba, that appeared in the *Harijan*. It is hoped the book will present to the reader the case for the Bhoodan movement in the words of its author.

5-8-53

JIVANJI D. DESAI

IN MEMORIAM

(By Morarji Desai)

If man, in the daily rush of things, would not care to remember his life's ideal, he would be lost like a rudderless ship which will be carried away by winds or be wrecked on a rock. Fifteenth August is a memorable day for us in two ways: Firstly, it is our Independence Day; we remember it for being free by having broken the bonds of slavery. Secondly, it was on that day that Shri Mahadevbhai suddenly went away from our midst. For 25 years he became one with the life and work of his Guru, our Father of the Nation; such a dedicated life will inspire us for long time to come. He so merged himself in the great life of his illustrious Guru, that we could hardly know his own personality fully well.

The deep intensity and fervour with which Shri Mahadevbhai gave 25 years of his life to the fight for Swaraj are worthy of our imitation at present when we have Swaraj. I am sure specially if students, young men and social workers study his life and learn from it, it will greatly help us in rebuilding our country. Gujarat raised a fund in his memory. It is at present being used to conduct the M. D. Social Service Mahavidyalaya under the aegis of the Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, over and above maintaining some social workers. This institution aims to train workers with a high ideal like that of Mahadevbhai before them.

Mahadevbhai would have made a world-wide name for himself if he had taken to any one field of activity. He was a man with great capacities. He chose to dedicate them at the feet of his master and gave his all in a silent and unassuming way. I believe none who knew him will have forgotten his calm and sedate figure working incessantly even in the thick of the Satyagraha fights, Gandhiji's fasts unto death, and his long all-India tours full of crowded programmes. Those who might have seen him at the spinning wheel will have surely heard the silent note of the deep music of the Charkha that Gandhiji wanted us to heed to. We know how marvelously he wielded the pen. The clock-like regularity of the *Harijan* papers and their sure effect on the reader were due to his labours. Gandhiji

insisted that the copy for these papers must reach the Press in time, even if he might be on tour or in train. Mahadevbhai therefore drudged on even in trains keeping late hours in the night.

This is not the occasion to go on eulogizing him. Let us learn from his self-immolation and immense contribution of love and labour that he gave to the cause of our country. That way only can we pay our due of humble tribute to him.

(From the original in Gujarati)

URDU NOT ANTI-HINDI NOR ANTI-NATIONAL

Dr. Zakir Hussain, President of the Anjuman Taraqi-e-Urdu (Hind) and Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, today (Lucknow, Sunday, July 26), declared that the struggle for official recognition of Urdu, in U.P. was in essence a step for the redress of a wrong done to the total concept of a secular and democratic order in India. "This struggle", he added, "should not be regarded as anti-Hindi or anti-national, but an assertion of the right to live and let live, of free existence for mutual benefit."

Dr. Zakir Hussain was presiding over the opening session of the U.P. Urdu Conference held here this morning. The Conference was held at the successful culmination of the campaign launched to secure two million signatures on a petition praying the President of the Indian Union to recognize Urdu as the regional language of U.P. according to the provision of the Indian Constitution.

Dr. Zakir Hussain said that Urdu was an all-India language with U.P. as its home. The supporters of Urdu did not desire that a separate zone or region be demarcated for Urdu, nor they aimed at parity with Hindi.

Proceeding further he said:

"It is distressing to note that the simple and essentially democratic demand for securing a proper place for Urdu in this State is deemed communal and separatist. This issue was no doubt confused and coloured by politicians as well as religious fanatics in the past. But let bygones be bygones. Harping on old jealousies can benefit only those who are enemies of our secular State and unfaithful to our Constitution. It is nothing short of calumny to call Urdu communal, or to style it as foreign, imposed or artificial. It is the fruit of common endeavour in our struggle for existence. It has been blessed by our sufi and saints and moulded and perfected by trade, commerce, the market place and the meeting hall. It is the language of those who were not tied to any one tradition but were prepared to change and develop and readjust themselves. It embodies the intellectual and emotional urge of the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs of the State to come together. The names of non-Muslim writers is legion and even today they make a formidable list. All religions of India, all our political struggles, our history and culture and destiny are recorded here. To deny it due to ignorance or dishonesty is a disservice to our common heritage.

"Urdu is neither a foreign language nor the language of foreigners. Linguistically all its verbs, prepositions and nouns of every day use are Hindi. Phonetically it has no relation with Arabia or Iran. Majority of its sounds is Indian and even in its script which is so loudly proclaimed as foreign there is considerable number of purely Indian sounds.

"Some people have called our move disruptive to Indian unity. Ever since Hindi has been accepted as the language of the Union we have never opposed it and have always urged on the speakers of Urdu to learn it although Gandhiji's suggestion that those who know Hindi should also learn Urdu has been completely ignored. Urdu had claims as one of the languages of the country and the

campaign for its recognition as one of the official languages of U.P. can by no stretch of imagination be called disruptive to national unity. Our unity has such diversity that we have recognized 14 major languages in the country. Hence an additional official language in U.P. is not likely to create any fissiparous tendency. Switzerland is a small country but it had three official languages so far, now it has recognized a fourth which is spoken by only 50,000 people. National unity does not suffer by a variety of languages. National unity is strengthened by magnanimity towards all languages not by the imposition of one language.

"It is loudly claimed that Urdu is not a separate language but only a style of Hindi. On the one hand it is regarded as a weapon of communalism and separatism and on the other it is called a style of Hindi. This is bad logic and worse linguistics. Urdu and Hindi have a common source but they branched out into different literatures. They are now two currents which greatly differ from one another. It is not honest to ignore Urdu by merely dubbing it as a style of Hindi.

"People ask where is a separate region for Urdu?

Urdu has no separate region in the sense in which Bengali, Marathi and Tamil have regions of their own. It is an all-India language with U.P. as its home. We do not desire that a separate zone or region be demarcated for Urdu nor do we aim at parity with Hindi at every step. It is a fact that from 25 to 30 per cent of the literate population of this State uses Urdu for all its requirements and very few of them know Hindi. Hence the present attitude of the U.P. Government about the exclusive use of Hindi is causing great handicap and hardship to the Urdu-speaking people. They have been rendered illiterate. There is no question of a rivalry between Urdu and Hindi. Both can flourish side by side. Naturally Hindi will be used all over the State for all official and non-official purposes, but the State should also look to the convenience of that section of the population which speaks Urdu so that it is not barred from participating in the life of the State.

"Now a word to writers of Hindi: I feel that most of you have misunderstood our demand. The Urdu-Hindi controversy has for a long time been given a Hindu-Muslim angle. It is not easy to forget this history. But we are now a free people and we should try to bury the past; otherwise we will fall to discharge our duty towards the building up of new India. This freedom beckons us to new endeavours. We want to shape our new life in a particular mould, a glimpse of which can be seen in our Constitution. This life is based on tolerance, common endeavour and absence of exploitation of one section of the people by the other. Might is not right but right is might. Hindi is the language of the Union and the language of the State. If other languages flourish Hindi will also be enriched. The campaign for the recognition of Urdu has been very much maligned. I have never said a word against anybody. This is not my way. But I feel I have a complaint to make. You are the defenders of national values. You illumine the darkness of our life. You create a sense of dissatisfaction with the baser elements in our life and raise our vision sky-high. You are not confined to the present but look to the future and through your dreams in songs, poems and writings you are busy shaping the India of tomorrow. It has really pained me that you regard our demand as disruptive and separatist. Try to see the justice of the demand and if you feel that it is wholly or partly correct insist on its acceptance. Your co-operation will lend weight to our demand. If you insist on justice being given to Urdu nobody will call you communal or separatist and your sympathy will create similar trends amongst the Urdu writers. No language can be imposed on anybody. It has to be accepted and loved and taken to heart. With the joyful contribution of the writers of Urdu both Hindi and India will gain."

(From the National Herald, July 27, '53)

LÊT US PROBE DEEP

(By Vinoba)

When Gandhiji introduced the spinning wheel in the year 1920, people had very little idea of its potentiality. But as time went on, the Charkha movement gained momentum and eventually brought us freedom. It took us 27 years which might seem to be a long period. But if we care to see the history of freedom struggles of other nations, we shall have to admit that we attained independence in a comparatively shorter period. Thus Khadi developed extensively and in the form of Swaraj we even realized a partial manifestation of its potentiality. Little effort was made during that period for its intensive development. As a result we see today that we are still far from the economic revolution which Khadi was expected to bring about. It secured us political power; and though it had in it the potentiality of creating an economic revolution also, we failed to bring it out because we did not dive deep and catch at its core. There are several reasons why we could not do so.

I always kept these deeper aspects of Khadi in my view. Therefore programmes for extensive production and propagation of Khadi had little attraction for me. My main concern was how Khadi should be made to enter and find a lasting place in every home and how our people adopt spinning as a form of sacrifice to be performed daily. My suggestion for donating a yarn hank every year in memory of Gandhiji has at its root the same deeper cause. These deeper implications of Khadi still remain to be worked out and achieved.

The study of the working of Bhoodan movement during the last two years reveals its satisfactory progress. It has spread well in the country. It has brought life and hope in the constructive workers. Taking into account the gloom and dismay that pervaded the atmosphere two years ago, the results of Bhoodan Yajna have certainly surpassed expectations. And I hope it will spread still further. But if we ignore to dive deep and understand its fundamentals, Bhoodan Yajna will also meet with the same fate as that of Khadi. I therefore emphasize the need of deep and profound thinking.

People sometimes ask me to use a motor car instead of walking on foot from place to place for Bhoodan. For they think it will help the extensive propaganda of Bhoodan. In ancient times the only known method of propaganda was walking on foot from place to place. But now motor cars are easily available and so people think of using them for propaganda. Granting that it helps propaganda at a quick pace, it cannot compare favourably with walking in many other respects. The latter affords a close contact with the masses and occasions for exchanging views and sentiments thus helping one to dive deep and do right reflection. It is close contact with the masses followed by calm reflection that has yielded the

idea of Sampattidan as also Shramadan — labour donation, I have recently suggested.

We have fixed 1957 as the date before which five crore acres of land should be collected and made over to the landless. But the basic aim of Bhoodan Yajna is propagation of *dharma vichar* — right thinking. Supposing a donor donates land not out of pressure but out of faith, but if a corresponding change does not take place in his principles of life, that donation will be said to be a good deed only of temporary value. Though it is useful in a way as it brings self-satisfaction to the donor and creates good sentiments in him, it will have little use in our mission.

As I said the other day in Palkot, if real conversion took place in the process of donation, it will have a lasting effect only if the donor changes his ways of life in the wake of his donation. We came across some such persons. They are however only a handful. But they alone are our true earnings of the Bhoodan Yajna. Such conversions are possible only if we purify our hearts and bring more and more purity in our word, deed and thought. Then only can we hope to see a permanent change of heart of the donor. And the act of his donation can be expected to transform his course of life.

In this light my programme of taking a hoe in hand for digging should be considered and pondered over. For years together I have done the work of digging in the manner of devotion. My faith in it is so firm that I have no doubt about it that it will help forge the power of the people by inspiring in them the spirit of self-help and self-confidence. Though after walking a distance of about ten miles a day, we feel fatigued and a little energy is left for further exertion, we do digging work as part of daily programme at least for a few minutes. We should however see that it does not become a mechanical ritual though it should be performed daily. Without restoring the dignity of labour — productive labour, neither will Bhoodan succeed nor will the poor be raised, nor the difference of the rich and the poor abolished nor Sarvodaya established. We have to bear all these deeper implications in our mind in carrying out this programme of digging and dressing the earth so as to make it cultivable.

We have taken up another programme — the boycott of mechanized industries in respect of food and clothing. There too we should not get caught in its surface aspects. The boycott of the mechanized industries has got to be integrated with the Bhoodan work and to be realized in due course as Bhoodan work progresses.

The Bhoodan is a vast revolutionary programme including many and varied items of work and I hope that through this programme we will succeed in achieving all that we could not in the Khadi movement.

(From Hindi)

HARIJAN

Aug. 15

1953

THE AUGUST WEEK

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Ninth to Fifteenth of August is a memorable week for our people. More than a full generation ago, on August 1, 1920, the Great Lokamanya, Father of Indian Nationalism, gave the reins of national forces into the noble hands of Gandhiji and went away. The Mahatma, with his wisdom and strength of truth and non-violence, mobilized the forces of our whole people within a period of two decades. As a result, it was on August 9, 1942, that we launched the 'Quit India' movement under his unbreakable leadership. Six days after that day, five years later, we got our freedom and the last English ruler left our land.

This was undoubtedly a great achievement for our people; history has not seen such a thing before. As the events of consequent few years even have shown, India made history thereby, and none will grudge us legitimate pride for it. On this day, when we are celebrating its sixth anniversary, may we remember Him Who only is great and glorious and Who was gracious enough to give us His glory; and we pay our homage to all those patriots, great and small, who worked and died for it. It is also meet that we specially remember one of them, Shri Mahadevbhai, even for the simple reason that he fell on this glorious field of non-violent fight on the same day that saw its victory five years after.

Late Shri M. D. gave his whole working life to the noble cause and in utter personal devotion to and service of its magnificent leader. The nation owes much to this unique self-immolation and his rare abilities of head and heart, all of which he unstintingly offered away at the altar of the nation.

It is also well to remember on this day the great exodus of a band of our Mussalman countrymen under the leadership of late Quaid-e-Azam Shri Jinnah, who inaugurated and constituted Pakistan, an independent new State on our eastern and western borders. Six years of its aftermath, unfortunately none too pleasant for both of us, are over; and we have the first good fortune of entering into a new era of Indo-Pakistan relations. Rays of inescapable neighbourly friendship are piercing through the thick veil of misty clouds of bitterness and misunderstandings. May the new year that dawns today August 15th, see the rising of the Sun of good neighbourliness, amity and friendship between the two countries, to the greater glory of both and the world as well.

Our home front is also slowly but surely turning the corner. From tall talks of big things we are being dragged down to the brass tacks

of our real situation by the sheer force of its circumstances. We are a poor people; we are an unemployed population; we want honest work; we live, most of us, in villages and far off from the immediate reach of modern technology however efficient and capable it might be to deliver the goods. Ours is therefore a problem that the Father of the Nation understood in its full implications and requirements. Thank God, Governments of the day have begun to feel the truth of this basic question.

On this day, we are called upon to remember Khadi and Bhoomidan, which together typify and symbolize the urge of our people in a constructive and active manner. Let us hope the Government proceeds further on these lines and devises our home policy also as original and far-sighted as our foreign policy of promoting peace and security for the whole world. As Shri Jawaharlalji so beautifully put it, "the idea is to make the man in the street feel that he is a partner in the whole game. . . . We have to make the masses feel they are all partners in a great enterprise. It is only then that they become interested in the stability of the country. But, as it is, today the unemployed is not a partner in your scheme. By its very nature unemployment is a disruptive trend. . . . The great task is to make them partners through work and through intellectual appeal." (*A.I.C.C. Economic Review*, August 1, 1953).

During the seventh year of our freedom which we enter now, let us harness all our energies to this great task, forgetting foreign slogans and shibboleths that often seem to confuse and befog our minds and beguile us by their easy appeal of the beaten track of the Western Way. 8-8-53

AN EXAMPLE FOR INDIA'S YOUTH

(By Jairamdas Doulratram)

My first contact with Mahadevbhai was at the Elphinstone College in 1910 where I was studying for my Arts course and he, two years my senior, was studying for Law. His tall, springy, active, bright figure drew my attention as we crossed each other in the verandahs of the College. His intelligent and honest face was an index of the qualities of head and heart which developed so magnificently under Bapu's loving care. When we were at the College, it never struck me that he would grow so wonderfully and play such a vital part in the life and work of the greatest personality of modern times. A strong sense of duty, an ever-present smile on his face, complete self-abnegation, attention to details, affectionate approach to everybody were some of the qualities which attracted me so much to him when I came into contact with him after a lapse of 8 or 10 years. His life was interwoven with Gandhiji's and he daily grew in his company. His industry was a matter of envy for us all. It was extraordinary how much work he could put through in a day and attend to how

many things, big and small. He slaved for Bapu with an attachment and affection which seemed to be inborn with him. It looked as if it was an inheritance from an earlier life, if we believe in continuity of life. He had a great command over English, Hindi and his mother tongue Gujarati. He struck me as one who had a natural linguistic gift. He developed a very effective style in his English articles. He had a keen discrimination of what is important and what is trivial. His sense of publicity marked him out as an able journalist. His anxiety for Bapu's health was pathetic. I remember an occasion in Sevagram when, myself a patient, I used to share Mahadevbhai's room for part of the day. One day I found him utterly restless and worried, with his usual smile dashed off his face. When I asked him what was troubling his mind, he said, "Bapu's blood pressure has risen very high. He is utterly overworking. I have pleaded with him repeatedly this morning but he would not listen and is keeping at his pace of work. You also please go and plead with him." There was no question of my succeeding where Mahadevbhai had failed. But Mahadevbhai was so cut up and uneasy that I was led to make the venture. It was Bapu's silence day. He scribbled a brief reply to my appeal and simply wrote: "I am not really over-working and my blood pressure has nothing to do with heavy work." As I was reading his reply, he took it back from me and added another sentence: "If I had complete control over my temper, there would be no high blood pressure." It was pointless for me or Mahadevbhai or anybody else to plead any more. But when I went to Mahadevbhai and told him what had happened, his mental distress had in no way abated. The tie between Bapu and Mahadevbhai was deeper than that between father and son. Mahadevbhai gave his all to Bapu and his causes. He never lived for himself, nor did he work for himself in a real sense. His life was a great *yajna* and he himself an *ahuti*. And that is how he lived and that is how he died! Mahadevbhai's devotion, industry, courtesy, affectionateness are a great example for India's youth.

MAHADEV DESAI'S EARLY LIFE

By N. D. Parikh

This booklet lets us have a peep into intimate details connected with Mahadevbhai's early life and into the forces that shaped his life and career.

Pages, vii, 71 Price Re. 1 Postage etc. As. 5

A RIGHTEOUS STRUGGLE

By Mahadev Desai

A Chronicle of the Ahmedabad Textile Labourers' Fight for Justice.

Pages vi+97 Price Re. 1-8-0 Postage etc. As. 4

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD-9

MARTYR MAHADEVBHAI

(By Sushila Nayyar)

On the 9th of August I was asked by the Pradesh Congress Committee to unfurl the flag in Sadar Bazar, Barათოოti Chawk. At 7 a.m. eager faces of men, women and children, including policemen, were looking up at the Tricolour as it unfurled on the high flagmast. There was pride in their eyes and patriotism in their expressions. A thrill passed through my whole being. Before my mind's eye was the picture of 9th August 1942. On that fateful morning, there were crowds gathering in every part of Bombay with lathi charges and tear-gassing on the part of the police to disperse them. The news of Gandhiji's arrest early that morning had spread like wild fire. The 'Quit India' resolution had been passed on the previous evening followed by about 2½ hours' speech by Gandhiji. In that speech, he had explained the significance of the 'Quit India' resolution as well as the negotiations he proposed to carry on with the British Government, before launching on Satyagraha. As he went to bed at about 12 o'clock on the 8th night, some friends came and told him that there were very strong rumours of his impending arrest. Gandhiji did not believe it. "The British are not such fools that they should have let the A.I.C.C. Session pass off, allow all the enthusiasm to be generated and arrest me their best friend after my last night speech narrating the steps I have in mind for carrying on the negotiations."

However, the events proved him to be in the wrong for once. At about 5 a.m. the next morning, Mahadevbhai came panting in, "Bapu, they have come." Bapu was in the bathroom. On hearing the news, he quietly asked, "How long will they give me to get ready?" "Half an hour" replied the police officer. There was a short prayer followed by quick packing of a few belongings and a brief leave-taking from Ba and the rest of us. The arrest had come suddenly. We asked him for some guidance. His only message was that every soldier of non-violence who fell on the battle-field should be found wearing a motto of 'Do or Die'. A mighty struggle for Independence was set afoot. The struggle had been going on for a quarter of a century and this was its final phase.

Many have fallen on the battle-field whose names are unknown and many others who were well known in their time are being fast forgotten except by their closest friends and admirers. A prominent member of the latter group was Mahadevbhai Desai who accompanied Gandhiji to the Aga Khan Palace Detention Camp on 9th August 1942, never to come out of those gates again. Mahadevbhai was 25 when he had joined Gandhiji soon after the latter's return to India from South Africa. He served the master for 25 years with rare devotion, so much so that Bapu had come to call him his spare body. In Bapu's household, the duties were varied and manifold, ranging from domestic chores—looking after

the physical needs of Gandhiji — to representing him at high-power conferences. The one ambition of Mahadevbhai's life was to interpret Gandhiji to the people and help him in every way possible to carry on his great work. He could not imagine a world without Gandhiji.

Mahadevbhai was not an ascetic by temperament. He was an artist and a poet but he sublimated those qualities and utilized them in writing beautifully in the weekly journals *Young India*, *Navajivan* and later *Harijan*. The articles were biographical sketches at times, at others there were exposition on Gandhiji's philosophy on various matters, political or otherwise. His hand-writing was beautiful and his mind was well-balanced. With every breath he served the master who had come to look upon him as a son, but the relationship was better than that of a father and son. There was a spiritual bond between the two men and when Mahadevbhai breathed his last on the 6th day of incarceration in the Aga Khan Palace Detention Camp, Gandhiji was heart-broken. He had faced many blows but perhaps this one was the hardest. "Mahadev was to be my heir and complete my unfinished work. Now I have to do it for him," he remarked with deep sorrow. Everyday he went to the Samadhi of his disciple, and placed a few flowers and held a short prayer. Some people wondered whether it was idol worship. "I am restless unless I visit Mahadev's Samadhi. I go there in order to imbibe the great qualities of Mahadev. From being my disciple, he has become my Guru."

Mahadevbhai passed away on the 15th August 1942. Five years later, on August 15, 1947, came the Independence. Was it a coincidence? Or, was it a tacit recognition of the silent sacrifices of martyrs like Mahadevbhai who became the foundation stones for the edifice of free India? They lived true to the message of the master — "Do or Die". Those of us who have passed through the struggle for freedom have yet to live up to that message. We must make a firm resolve to do or die in order to make our freedom full in every sense of the term. There are many shortcomings in it. The mere departure of the British power from India could not possibly change things overnight and result in all-round prosperity. All that it has done is to give us the opportunity to shape our own destiny. Many of us will have to become the foundation stones for the edifice of prosperity and economic freedom in our country. May we have the courage to take a lesson from martyrs like Mahadevbhai!

GANDHIAN TECHNIQUES IN THE MODERN WORLD

By Pyarelal

Pages v+69. Price Re. 1 Postage etc. As. 4
NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD-9

CENT PER CENT SWADESHI *

(By Gandhiji)

Early in the year, if not immediately after my convalescence last year, I was called upon by those who were interested in Swadeshi to frame a definition so as to answer the many difficulties that faced them. I had to bear in mind the various shades of Swadeshi in textiles. I put together the definitions that were suggested. I had correspondence with Shri Shivrav and Shri Jalbhai Naoraji as well as others. I failed to frame a definition that would suit all cases and found that it was impossible to frame an exhaustive definition. As I was travelling far and wide, I had the opportunity of observing things and of seeing how Swadeshi organizations were functioning. I came to the conclusion that the existing practice was an unconscious fraud upon the public and that many workers of ability were wasting their energy in a vain effort. They were practising self-deception. This strong language, whilst it correctly describes my mental attitude, is not intended to cast any reflection whatsoever upon the workers in Swadeshi organizations. They were doing their best without realizing that they were moving in a vicious circle and labouring under self-deception.

Let me explain what I mean. We were holding exhibitions of things that were in no need of special help or of advertisement for their sale. In their case, our interposition can either stimulate the prices of their wares or set up unhealthy rivalries between flourishing but competing firms.

We may profess to gratuitously help textile, sugar and rice mills and, respectively, kill the village spinning wheel, the handloom and their product, Khadi, the village cane-crusher and its product, the vitamin-laden and nourishing *gud* or molasses, and the hand-pounder and its product, unpolished rice, whose pericarp, which holds the vitamins, is left intact by these pounders. Our clear duty is, therefore, to investigate the possibility of keeping in existence the village wheel, the village crusher and the village pounder, and, by advertising their products, discovering their qualities, ascertaining the condition of the workers and the number displaced by the power-driven machinery and discovering the methods of improving them, whilst retaining their village character, to enable them to stand the competition of the mills. How terribly and criminally we have neglected them! Here there is no antagonism to the textile or the sugar or the rice mills. Their products must be preferred to the corresponding foreign products. If they were in danger of extinction from foreign competition, they should receive the needed support. But they stand in no such need. They are flourishing in spite of foreign competition. What is necessary is protection of the village crafts and the workers behind them from the crushing

* Pub. Navajivan Publishing House; Price: Rs. 2, Postage etc. As. 9.

competition of the power-driven machinery, whether it is worked in India or in foreign lands. It may be that Khadi, *gud* and unpolished rice have no intrinsic quality and that they should die. But, except for Khadi, not the slightest effort has been made, so far as I am aware, to know anything about the fate of the tens of thousands of villagers who were earning their livelihood through crushing cane and pounding rice. Surely, there is in this work enough for an army of patriots. The reader will say, 'But this is very difficult work.' I admit. But it is most important and equally interesting. I claim that this is true, fruitful and cent per cent Swadeshi.

But I have as yet merely touched the fringe of the question. I have merely sampled three big organized industries and shown how voluntary Swadeshi agencies need to concentrate their attention solely on the corresponding unorganized village industries that are dying for want of voluntary and intelligent organized help.

There are numberless other village, and even town, crafts that need public support, if they are to live and thus maintain the thousands of poor artisans depending upon them for their daily bread. Every ounce of work in this direction tells. Every hour given to this work means the sustenance of some deserving workers.

It is my certain conviction that, if work is done on a systematic basis in this direction, the department doing it will become self-supporting, new talent will be stimulated, the educated as well as the uneducated unemployed will find honourable employment without displacing anyone, and crores will be added yearly to the wealth of this country which is getting progressively impoverished.

Here is enough profitable and entertaining work, and to spare, for all the Swadeshi Leagues put together. The recent resolution of the Working Committee on Swadeshi * means all this and much more. It provides limitless work for the creative genius in the country.

Harijan, 10-8-'34

* The following resolution was passed by the Working Committee at Banaras on 30th July, 1934:

"Doubts have arisen on the Congress policy in regard to Swadeshi, it has become necessary to reaffirm the Congress position on it in unequivocal terms. Notwithstanding what was done during the Civil Resistance struggle, no competition is permissible on Congress platforms and in Congress exhibitions between mill-made cloth and hand-spun and hand-woven Khadi. Congressmen are expected to use and encourage the use of only hand-spun and hand-woven Khadi to the exclusion of any other cloth.

"In regard to articles other than cloth, the Working Committee adopts the following formula for the guidance of all Congress organizations:

"The Working Committee is of opinion that the activities of Congress organizations relating to Swadeshi shall be restricted to useful articles manufactured in India through cottage and other small industries which are in need of popular education for their support and which will

TO MISSIONARY FRIENDS

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

At the present time when there is going on a long discussion about conversion, foreign Christian Missions and their work, etc. it is worth while knowing how one of the Nation's honoured senior servants feels about it. The following letter reproduced with his permission — I need not mention his name — was written by him in response to a retired missionary friend:

"You wrote to me something about missionaries and their visas. You know I owe personally a great deal to my own college, the Forman Christian College at Lahore (1901-1905), and I realize what wonderful help India has drawn from missionaries from abroad. We Indians in our own Constitution have guaranteed perfect freedom of conscience and perfect liberty to propagate one's faith. Being myself a devoted reader both of the Old and the New Testaments and realizing the essential unity of all religious thought, I am becoming more and more convinced that the propagation of one's faith in these modern days can best be made not by preaching but by example of a life spent in the service of one's fellow-beings. India welcomes the assistance of those who will come to this ancient land for help in a variety of ways, just like yourself, for showing us how to improve our standard of living in the field of agriculture, medicine, education and other spheres of human activity. The light of the Gospel shines and illuminates through such action rather than by mere evangelistic effect. Conditions in India are rapidly changing and freedom has brought about strong national consciousness. We have all to adjust ourselves to the new surrounding."

The letter speaks for itself. It shows that, as some Christians, foreign as well as Indian, wrongly seem to believe and allege, it is no way an ingratitude on our part when we say, as our very strong belief and opinion, that while everybody in India is at perfect liberty to preach and propagate his or her own religion, we do not need nor welcome anybody from abroad to come here to do any evangelical work. Work in fields of social services like education, medicine etc. is another matter and it is all welcome. Done in a spirit of pure service, it is its own reward. Therefore it should no way be confused with evangelical work, nor should it warrant its doer to convert or proselytize its beneficiary. The latter is quite a different activity, and is not necessary nor desirable in free India. This is true for all religions that believe in proselytization or institutionalized conversion.

And we say this because we believe that it is not a matter of *tolerance* of religions other than our own, but we recognize the basic truth of the accept the guidance of the Congress organizations in regulating prices and in the matter of the wages and welfare of labour under their control.

"The formula must not be interpreted to mean any modification of the unbroken policy of the Congress to promote the Swadeshi spirit in the country and to encourage the personal use of only Swadeshi articles. The formula is a recognition of the fact that the large and organized industries which can or do command State aid are in no need of the services of Congress organizations or any Congress effort on their behalf."

equality of all professed religions. It must also be noted that we have none as State religion. Tolerance implies a superior's condescension; it is irritating to individuals as well as groups towards whom it is shown. It implies subtle superiority of the tolerating religion, which no man has on God's good earth. Therefore tolerating suffering militates against man's innate spiritual brotherhood under God, our Creator. India, when it stands for no evangelical work, stands on this basic principle of our religious and spiritual freedom which is not mere toleration but is equality. This is our cultural tradition, which Christian missionary friends might well begin to understand now, even in their own interests, temporal and spiritual.

23-7-53

MAHADEVBHAI

(By Amrit Kaur)

August 15th is Independence Day and our hearts go up in gratitude to Almighty God for having given to this country that political independence for which she had struggled so long and during the last 30 years struggled with valour and honour under the incomparable leadership of one of the greatest men the world has ever seen. In returning thanks for Indian Independence we naturally remember with gratitude those names also who laid down their lives in the cause of freedom. One such is Mahadev Desai. I had the great privilege of working in close collaboration with him for many years. He had a fine intellect and a still finer character. Mahadevbhai was incapable of thinking a mean thought, much less of doing a mean deed. His whole-hearted devotion to Gandhiji, his intellectual appreciation of him, his deeply religious nature which enabled him to understand the foundations on which Gandhiji's philosophy of life rested, made him in his day one of the best interpreters of Gandhiji. Whenever he was at the helm of *Harijan* his articles in it compelled attention and there was never any thought in his mind other than that he should be enabled to place Gandhiji's views before the Government as well as the public in as forcible and convincing a manner as possible. In other words Mahadev lived and dreamt of nothing but the propagation of Gandhiji's ideology. No wonder that if ever Mahadev was absent from Gandhiji, he felt (he said so himself) as if his right hand had been cut off. But his understanding of and his devotion to Gandhiji apart, Mahadev's was a very lovable character for he was very affectionate, a man to whom one could open one's heart and, above all, he had grasped the essence of non-violence inasmuch as he was an emblem of humility. Mahadev could have shone in any sphere of life, but he preferred to devote his great talents to the cause of his master in an unobtrusive way, always

keeping himself in the background. I myself believe that were he alive today, as indeed he might have been because he died at a comparatively young age, he would certainly have been occupying a very high place in the government of this country.

In any event those of us who knew him well will always cherish his memory and his name will be treasured by all who render homage to the fighters for Indian Independence.

NOTES

All-India No-Slaughter Day

The Honorary Secretary, Humanitarian League, Mysore, writes to give the following good news:

"The Madhya Pradesh Government has directed that all slaughter-houses in the State should be closed on August 15."

As usual, there will be military parades, march pasts etc. on this day. It is really welcome if Government finds such ways also of celebrating the Independence Day. We may well have such an all-India day when all slaughter-houses will remain closed.

8-8-53

M. P.

Hindi=Urdu=Hindustani

To those who ask me whether I want Hindi or Hindustani or Urdu, I ask a counter-question, "Do you love 'mata' or 'ma'?" I do not feel any difference between Hindi and Urdu. Or we might say there is only as much difference between them as between growing a beard and shaving it. We may liken the beard to Urdu and its removal to Hindi, because you can feel strands of hair on the chin growing up again in fifteen minutes after a clean shave. To put it in another way, the difference between Hindi and Urdu is about the same as between Milton's language and Wordsworth's. A language will never change its character by using either a little more of Urdu words or a little more of Sanskrit words.

(From Hindi)

VINOBA

* Both 'mata' and 'ma' mean mother. 'Mata' is Sanskrit, 'ma' is a derivative.

CONTENTS	PAGE
A LIFE OF DEDICATION ..	Rajendra Prasad 185
DEAR MAHADEV ..	C. Rajagopalachari 185
BHOODAN YAJNA ..	Jivanji D. Desai 185
IN MEMORIAM ..	Morarji Desai 185
URDU NOT ANTI-HINDI NOR ANTI-NATIONAL ..	Zakir Hussain 186
LET US PROBE DEEP ..	Vinoba 187
THE AUGUST WEEK ..	Maganbhai P. Desai 188
AN EXAMPLE FOR INDIA'S YOUTH ..	Jairamdas Doulratram 188
MARTYR MAHADEVBHAI ..	Sushila Nayyar 189
CENT PER CENT SWADESHI ..	Gandhiji 190
TO MISSIONARY FRIENDS ..	Maganbhai P. Desai 191
MAHADEVBHAI ..	Amrit Kaur 192
NOTES:	
ALL-INDIA NO-SLAUGHTER DAY ..	M. P. 192
HINDI=URDU=HINDUSTANI ..	Vinoba 192

Subscription Rates—Inland: One year, Rs. 6; Six months, Rs. 3; Foreign: One year, Rs. 8 or 14s. or \$2.

Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad 9.