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TWO ANNAS

BAPU AND LAND-PROBLEM

(By Suresh Ramabhai)

The land-problem is perhaps the largest and most intricate problem facing our country. Bapu was very much alive to it and frequently he gave expression to his views on the same, as occasions demanded it.

Writing in *Young India* of February 6, 1930, he observed :

"The greatest obstacle in the path of non-violence is the presence in our midst of indigenous interests that have sprung up from the British rule, the interests of moneyed men, speculators, scrip-holders, landholders, factory-owners and the like. All these do not always realize that they are living on the blood of the masses, and when they do, they become as callous as the British principals whose tools and agents they are.... It must not be difficult for them to see that the holding of millions is a crime when millions of their own kith and kin are starving and that, therefore, they must give up their agency. No principal has yet been found able to work without faithful agents."

Then followed the Dandi March, Salt Satyagraha, Gandhi-Irwin Pact and came the Karachi Congress where was passed the resolution on Fundamental Rights. All this disturbed the ages-old peace of the land-holding fraternity whose members met Gandhiji and placed their anxieties before him. He disarmed their fears saying :

"Let me assure you that I shall be no party to dispossessing propertied classes of their private property without just cause. My objective is to reach your heart and convert you, so that you may hold all your private property in trust for your tenants and use it primarily for their welfare...." (*Selections from Gandhi*,* p. 88).

But he also added a note of warning :

"I would tell you that *ownership of your land belongs as much to the ryots as to you*, and you may not squander your gains in luxurious or extravagant living, but must use them for the wellbeing of ryots. Once you make your ryots experience a sense of kinship with you, and a sense of security that their interests as members of a family will never suffer at your hands, you may be sure that

there cannot be a clash between you and them and no class war." (Italics mine). (*Selections from Gandhi*, p. 89).

In the words of Bapu, a model zamindar could easily turn India's dung-heaps, miscalled villages, into 'abodes of peace, health and comfort', provided :

"He would come in intimate touch with the ryots and know their wants and inject hope into them in the place of despair which is killing the very life out of them.... He will reduce himself to poverty in order that the ryot may have the necessaries of life. He will study the economic condition of the ryots under his care, establish schools in which he will educate his own children side by side with those of the ryots. He will purify the village well and the village tank. He will teach the ryot to sweep his roads and clean his latrines himself by doing this necessary labour...." (*Young India*, 5-12-'29).

Thus he wanted the landlord to treat the peasant as one of his own family. As regards the ownership of land, Bapu was quite clear. While addressing a gathering of peasants at a public meeting in May 1939 at Brindaban, Bihar, he said :

"I believe that *the land you cultivate should belong to you*, but it cannot be your own all at once, you cannot force it from the zamindars. *Non-violence is the only way*, consciousness of your own power is the only way." (Italics mine). (*Harijan*, 20-5-'39).

At another place he remarked :

"Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught.... *All land belongs to Gopal*; where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can therefore unmake it.' Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, i.e., the people. That the land today does not belong to the people is too true." (Italics mine). (*Harijan*, 2-1-'37).

Now, how should the people recover their ownership of land? Bapu was quite confident that they would do so:

"I have no doubt that we can make as good an approach to it as is possible for any nation, not excluding Russia, and that without violence.... *Land and all property is his who will work it....*" (Italics mine). (*Harijan*, 2-1-'37).

* Price Rs. 4-0-0, Postage etc. Re. 1-0-0.

A glimpse of this approach can be had from the talk he had with Shri Mirabehn in the Aga Khan jail. Shri Mirabehn one day asked Bapu, "How will land be distributed after Swaraj?"

Bapu answered:

"Land will be owned by the State. I presume the reins of Government will be in the hands of those who have faith in this ideal. A majority of zamindars will give up their lands willingly. Those who do not do so will have to do so under legislation." (Italics mine). (Harijan, 29-12-'51).

In short, the above very clearly shows that Bapu desired a solution of India's land-problem on three principles:

- (i) All land belongs to Gopal;
- (ii) Land and all property is his who will work it, and
- (iii) The zamindars will give up their lands willingly. The aim of the non-violent worker must ever be to convert them.

Curiously and happily enough, these are the three basic tenets of Acharya Vinoba's Bhoodan Yajna movement. Perhaps this is why that Vinoba says that Bhoodan Yajna is Bapu's work and that it is nothing but Bapu's work that he has been doing all along. On this Gandhi-Jayanti day let we, constructive workers, turn the searchlight inwards and ask our own self, "Do we love Bapu's name or his work? And if we love Bapu's work what are we doing for Bhoodan Yajna?"

Allahabad, 21-9-'53

A CURE FOR CITY-ULCER

Gandhiji used to describe cities as ulcers in the body social. Professor Toynbee, the great British thinker, in a similar strain says: "The transfer of population from countryside to town has produced the same cancer in the Western as in the Hellenic body social, the cancer of an urban proletariat which has lost its roots in the country and has struck no roots in the town."

City life has similarly been condemned by the Australian philosopher Dennis Jackson in a paragraph which Professor Colin Clark quotes in his article on the Future of the Proletariat in *Diogenes*, No. 2 (Spring 1953):

"It is the community of families which is required for the making of 'whole' men and women. Today the life of that community has broken down almost entirely in the world of the great cities—the home, the neighbourly associations, the cultural traditions no longer exist, but all has been resolved into a chaos without beauty, significance or stability through which 'the masses' move to and fro like leaves before the wind, each unit jostling an unknown, looking into strange faces which mean nothing in his life. In such a world the home life is held together almost by violence, and at great sacrifice: the framework of 'neighbourhood' in which it should exist is absent."

Professor Colin Clark is of the opinion that the existence of a proletariat is an unmitigated evil. How then is it to be remedied? The professor sums up his remedial programme in one word—dispersal, or decentralization as Gandhiji would phrase it:

1. Dispersal of property so that in place of a few enormous capitalistic concerns or nationalized industries, we have a host of working proprietors, family business and small employers.

2. Dispersal of political power.

3. Geographical dispersal of population.

"To what extent is it necessary to have concentrations of economic power....? Only where the technical

conditions of production require it. And where does this happen? *Par excellence*, in certain forms of transport (railways, shipping and airlines), in heavy industry, and in forms of manufacture requiring very extensive equipment; in other forms of manufacture in a moderate degree; in banking and insurance; in armies and navies and other activities organized by central governments.

"Having enumerated these, our list is complete. In other fields the large-scale organization is not only unnecessary but is generally at a positive disadvantage;... It is not needed in agriculture, in road transport, in wholesaling, in retailing, in education, in building, in hotels, cafes, laundries, and other personal service industries. Unlike manufacture, these industries are not dealing with a steady routine of production. As soon as the organization becomes at all large, the supervision and co-ordination of the work of a number of employees becomes both difficult and costly.

"Many will be surprised to learn what a small proportion of the labour force in a modern community need be occupied in industries requiring large-scale organization; and not only a small proportion, but a diminishing one. In an advanced community, the demand for manufacture tends to settle down at a level of only some twenty per cent of the entire national income; and the proportion of the labour force required at an even lower percentage (because productivity in manufacture tends to rise faster than in other activities). The proportion of the labour force required for transfer in a modern community may fall as low as 6 per cent; and an increasing proportion of these are road transport workers who can work in small units. A large part of the remainder are those transport workers who are required in every big city merely to move the inhabitants to and fro; with the disappearance of big cities, the proportion of the labour force required for transportation would fall very low.

"If banking and insurance occupy 2 per cent of the labour force, that is a high figure.

"We are left with government departments, and... so strong is the itch for large-scale organization in the modern world that... we set to work to create useless government departments.

"On the concentration of political power there is little more to be said... All public authorities should be organized on a small scale until the need for large-scale organization can be proved, and the *onus probandi* should always be placed on the would-be centralizer. Schools and hospitals for instance will probably be run better by a multiplicity of small organizations than by attempting to concentrate.

"The case for political concentration in the past has arisen from the shortage of educated men... This reason, we hope, will soon be obsolete. In the future we should expect an abundance of such men.

"Geographical dispersal to small communities will not come at all of its own accord. It must be planned from above and carried through by a strong political authority. We could build in the modern world communities with populations as small as 2,500. These would be able to have a shopping centre, medical service, municipal government, more than one primary school and an active social life....

"Such communities would have to be grouped for higher educational, cultural and commercial services. A grouping in triads with populations of 7,000—8,000 would enable many of these needs to be supplied. For universities, specialist medical services and the more specialized forms of commercial activity, a population up to 2,50,000 would be required. But with modern method of transport and communication, there is no need to have all these living in a single city.

"It may in the end turn out to be the case that the invention of the atom bomb was a blessing in disguise because for the first time it has really made people think hard of the dispersal of our overgrown industrial cities."

V. G. D.

WORLD GOVERNMENT IS NO SOLUTION

[The following is adapted from Shri Wilfred Wellock's *The Orchard Lea Papers* No. 8 on "Local, National and World Government". At a time when we are on the crossroads of progressing industry and culture, democracy and world peace, the following is something that requires serious thought from us. It raises very great and fundamental issues, which free India and her governments cannot evade without ostrich-like closing their eyes.

21-7-'53

—M. P. J

At a time when the trend of thought and action is towards the super-State, huge power blocks and world government, it will surprise many to encounter an argument in favour of a return to the small community and to the decentralization of political power. But extremes have a habit of meeting. When a "way of life" or a civilization begins to disintegrate, as that of the West is doing today, the human mind breaks away from its moorings, repudiates all limitations and looks for truth in new directions.

Today international economic and political life is a riot. Many Western nations, and small minorities in all nations, are wallowing in senseless luxury, in self-indulgences which do not satisfy the spirit, while the greater part of mankind is unable to satisfy its basic needs. The colossal waste and demands of this way of life breed arrogance and greed, enmity, fear and discontent, communism and counter-revolution, and finally war. In the meantime military expenditures rise to a level which, spent otherwise, might place the entire human race beyond the reach of want, and achieve the world unity and peace we now seek in vain.

It is demonstrable that a quantitative civilization produces a vicious cycle of over-production, struggle for markets, unemployment, economic breakdown, communism and counter-revolution, expanding armaments and war. As time advances, the cycles occur more frequently, the economic breakdowns are of larger dimensions, while the military preparations are on a vaster scale, until finally we enter the era of permanent war. It is then that the people, in despair, call for a world government. Yet were it to come, it would be as helpless as they, since it would inherit the impasse which produced it.

It follows that if we are to achieve world peace and freedom we must turn from power to culture, from self-indulgence to social, neighbourly living, locally; nationally and internationally. At root our problem is moral and spiritual. It must, therefore, be solved at the cultural, not the power, level, thus in each nation and not by the edicts of a world government. Schools and colleges, the church and the homes of the people, must come under the influence of a finer thinking, and Christian truth be made manifest in the work-a-day life of the community.

For the Eastern, and indeed all the underdeveloped nations it means something rather different, since large-scale industrialism has

made few inroads into their territories. They should try to avoid our mistakes and build according to better patterns, such values and ends as Gandhi outlined in his constructive programme. Gandhi's aim was human and social wholeness, to be achieved by every person pursuing a self-chosen vocation with a social connotation within a self-governing, largely self-sufficient small community, or Village Republic. What new horrors would be in store for mankind were the vast populations of the East and of Africa to be harnessed to the aims and instruments of Western industrialism!

Materialism and power clog our progress towards a world society. The nations must work their way out of them as rapidly as possible. It will be no easy task.

The road to that society should be voluntary, as no real advance will follow compulsion, either of U. N. O. or a world government, while nothing is more difficult to procure than a world authority with coercive powers. The League of Nations and U. N. O. clearly prove that the preservation of sovereignty is the most treasured right of nations, the final means of protecting the things they most highly treasure.

A world society will come slowly, and not by way of power, and thus of a world government. It will come by voluntary effort, joint schemes of aid where aid is needed in any part of the world.

A world government cannot govern without power, and U. N. O. has taught us that such power would never attain its objectives, and would in fact, never be given to any world authority.

World unity and peace must ultimately depend upon the achievements of creative, neighbourly habits among the people in all lands, at home and in their international transactions. They must begin at home and then spread out to the whole world. The springs of social strength, national stability and world peace are local. Were they by culture made universal, the world society we seek would be here, for humanity is one, and advances by the same spiritual laws.

All healthy social growth is from the bottom upwards, never from the top downwards. History proves conclusively that where the social units are small, and responsibility for their developments, socially, politically and economically, is most widely shared, wisdom, genius and enlightenment reach their zenith and issue in the works and the social norms that are most to be desired, and that are consonant with the needs of all mankind.

I therefore contend that the international order for which we now look in vain will not come by power from above, but by culture and enlightened personal and social action from the

people; not from Dinosaur States or power-blocks, but from nations that have distributed power to a vast network of small communities which, nurtured in a spiritual culture, have learned the art of living, discovered the truth of man's nature and the sources of his contentment and peace. Everything which extends the domain of personal and local responsibility, of creative living and local self-sufficiency, will help to build the world structure of peace.

HARIJAN

Oct. 10

1953

UNEMPLOYMENT

(By Bharatan Kumarappa)

A great deal of talk is being indulged in on this topic lately. The problem, as a matter of fact, is nothing new. Indigenous production, or Swadeshi, was put forward as a solution by the Congress at the beginning of this century. But what form exactly Swadeshi was to take was left to the genius of Gandhiji, who saw clearly that industrialization of the Western type was absolutely no solution. He set about to tackle the problem of unemployment on a countrywide scale, and organized hand-spinning and weaving all over the country as a symbol of what required to be done. Gandhiji was convinced that unless village economic life was revived, and village industries were restored to their central place in the life of the nation, India must perish.

His thought in this respect was revolutionary, and still is. Everywhere in the world people imagine that industrialization is the need of every country which sets out to abolish poverty and unemployment. Gandhiji was the first to go contrary to this assumption, to caution us against industrialization, and to direct us along the line of village industries.

Why? Not because he wanted us always to be poor; not because he did not want anything new; not because he was an ascetic. These are superficial criticisms levelled against him by those who do not relish his views and have not studied them. If Gandhiji was opposed to industrialization it was only because he saw that, though industrialization had undoubtedly brought phenomenal prosperity to some countries, it could not help us, because industrialization is not suited to a country like ours where labour is over-abundant, and where industries have to be carried on as far as possible alongside of agriculture in the villages during the time when there is no work on the fields; and also because he felt that industrialization led, on the one hand, to a dangerous concentration of power in the hands of the capitalist, the expert

or the State making the worker but more or less a work-slave, deprived of freedom and of the joy of creative work, and, on the other hand, it led to a scramble for raw materials and markets and thus contributed to international conflict and war.

These are weighty objections to industrialization, and no one has so far effectively met them. Moreover, public opinion in our country seems, more especially after Gandhiji's death, to be veering round to his view that we should concentrate as much as possible on village and cottage industries if we wish for full employment of our man-power, and that we should not resort to large-scale factory production except where it cannot be avoided.

As against this, strangely enough, Shri T. T. Krishnamachari, Minister of Commerce and Industry in a Congress Government, which, one would think in an important matter such as this would strive to follow the lead of Gandhiji, is reported to have stated a few days ago in a debate in the Council of States that he was more and more convinced that only industrialization could tackle the problem of urban as well as rural unemployment. An extraordinary view indeed, considering the indisputable fact that machines curtail labour, and that industrialization on a scale large enough to employ our population would require control over raw material sources and world markets, which cannot be had except by unrivalled military might, imperialism and war.

If then, in spite of the pronouncement of the Minister of Commerce and Industry, we are of the opinion for reasons such as those given by Gandhiji that industrialization is not the remedy, what, it may be asked, is the way to find full employment for our people? In principle, it would seem that the only remedy is to adopt such methods of production as employ men rather than mammoth machinery. One has only to walk down the streets of cities like Bombay, Madras or Calcutta, to see scores of people loitering with nothing special to do. What could help them, it would seem, is not large machinery which not many can afford, and if procured can employ only a few of them, but some means whereby they could be organized into small working groups manufacturing useful articles with the aid of inexpensive equipment. This seems fundamentally what requires to be done. It also fits naturally into the general pattern of our national life, which is not centred in cities, but lies scattered in innumerable villages. What is necessary, it would seem, is to build up both in towns and villages small co-operative units of production which will use for the most part human labour aided by simple machinery. This need not spell primitivism and inefficiency, for all the inventiveness of modern science and engineering skill could be used to devise

machinery which will lighten work and make it pleasant for the cottage producer.

The part of the Government in relation to these ventures should be to assist them in various ways. For example, it could help initially by providing some capital, training, facilities for securing the necessary raw materials, and equipment. It could conduct research to improve cottage methods of production. It could see that such small co-operative industries are not killed by competition from large-scale manufacturers, Indian or foreign. Let us take, for example, the shoe industry, which could well be carried on in cottages. In the period of transition, when cottage shoe production is being organized, training given and improvements effected in the cottage industry, large-scale shoe manufacture may be permitted only for a specified period of years. During that time the price of the hand-product and the factory product could be made even, by imposing a levy on the factory product and subsidizing thereby the hand-product. A similar policy could be followed in regard to all foreign manufactured articles except such as cannot be manufactured in India.

Furthermore, prices should be controlled to make cottage and village production remunerative. Today our educated middle class are thrown more and more into the ranks of the unemployed, not only because their education has been purely literary, but also because they cannot make a living out of small-scale industries. If they are to return to the villages, agriculture and village industries have to be made to be more paying. A Government interested in directing our educated youth back to the villages must therefore rigidly control prices so that rural products might provide a livelihood to them. It seems strange that in a country where so few have received education, there should be lack of employment amongst the educated. This is only because the educated do not find, as in the U. S. A. and in the U. K., means of independent gainful occupation. If they did, they would certainly not be looking for jobs in the Government or in business firms.

Moreover, the Government being a large consumer, it can aid small-scale production greatly if it followed a policy of using as far as possible products of village and cottage manufacture.

Above all, the Government must be manned by persons who have complete faith in village and cottage industries. It must strive to build the entire economic life of the nation on village and cottage industries as the base. To do this it may have to put up an iron curtain in the way of an exclusive wall of protection till this new economy is well established. Unless it takes such revolutionary steps there seems little hope of our ever securing full employment for our people.

A REQUEST TO ACHARYA KRIPALANI

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

I am obliged to Acharya Kripalanji for his long personal letter of 30-9-'53 from New Delhi. He encloses therewith a press statement which he issued in Bombay on the 25th September, embodying what he said at a Press Conference in that city regarding the Pardi Khed Satyagraha in Surat District. He writes to me that "it represents the true position of the Satyagrahis". And he adds, "In that statement I have not mentioned one point. It is that Morarjibhai has offered lands at Dharampur. Supposing the land is good enough, I submit that it is easier for a few zamindars to have grass-lands in a neighbouring taluk than that some three thousand families should move themselves, their hearths and homes from one taluk to another."

Shri Kripalanji in his statement has tried to put the whole case of Khed-Satyagraha. This was necessary, and it is a matter of joy that he has done it. The Press Conference has been reported in the daily press; therefore I need not reproduce it here. Leaving off the language of controversy, I summarize below the chief points that Acharyaji has made in it:

1. It is said that the Adivasi Kisans in Pardi want to invade the rights of private property and want land to be redistributed. This is utterly and entirely wrong.

2. The tenants merely want that the big zamindars turn a portion of their grass-lands to food crops cultivation, and they want permission to cultivate this portion of land. They are prepared to pay the zamindars their customary share of produce as rent. The ownership of the land will remain as now, with the zamindars.

3. Thus, the demand is that out of a total of 50,000 acres of grass-lands, only one tenth, i.e. 5,000 acres be rented for food crops cultivation. There is no question of invading the right of private property.

4. After all most of this land before the onrush of money economy in these villages belonged to the Adivasis. The zamindar is a recent creation. What the Adivasis want is not the original right to their landed property, but the right merely to cultivate lands which in most cases originally belonged to them. And for that they will pay the customary rent to the zamindar.

5. Moreover, those who are directing this Satyagraha want a commission of enquiry to go into the whole question.

6. This demand of an inquiry has been endorsed by Shri Vinoba. And he does not say that the Satyagraha in Pardi is against the principles and practice of Bhoodan.

7. However, it is up to the advocates of Bhoodan to join hands with the members of the P.S. Party and approach the zamindars for Bhoodan of 5,000 acres, to be cultivated on rent. And to quote from Shri Kripalanji's statement,

"So far as I know, the Bhoodan variety of approach has been made by the P. S. P. workers including their leader Jayaprakash Narayan. I have also heard that Shri Ravishankar Maharaj also made this approach without effect."

8. Therefore, on the whole, it is felt that the margin of contention is very narrow and if there is no question of prestige on either side this question can be amicably settled.

These in short are the chief points made by Shri Kripalaniji's statement. The reader will see from it that there are two main points of contention:

1. 5,000 acres of grass-land must be made available to be rented for food crops cultivation;
2. The whole question must be inquired into.

Of these, the question of inquiry is such that the P. S. P., if it so wishes, can take it up on its own and report its conclusions both to the public and the Government. It need not be mentioned that for such an inquiry to be popularly reliable, it must be scientific and impartial. But if it is to be undertaken at all, the terms of reference for it must be clearly defined. What exactly will be the matter for such inquiry? Will it be the working of the Bombay Tenancy Act during the last four or five years? Or would it be the inquiry into the claim of the original right to the Adivasis' landed property in land? Or what else will it be? Whatever it be, the question for the inquiry must be explicitly formulated.

But, the main and important demand is that of land: viz. that the poor Adivasis should have 5,000 acres either as Bhoodan or in another manner, and the Bhoodan workers and the Government might get that by joining hands with the P. S. P. workers. I understand this is the substance of the P. S. P. demand.

If this is the object of the Khed-Satyagraha — to place the above matter before the public and Government — then it must be taken to have been well served by now. I hope the Bombay colleagues of the leader of the all-India P. S. P. agree with him here.

If so, then it might be said that the margin of difference in the contention narrows down very much. If 5,000 acres of land should be obtained for tenants, then efforts in that direction must begin, which means that Bhoodan work should start again. But the atmosphere created by the Khed-Satyagraha in Pardi is not proper nor helpful for such efforts. And as Shri Vinoba said in one of his latest prayer meetings, "it is not right to say that Bhoodan movement bore no fruit in Pardi. It cannot be said that a single tour of Shri J. P. Narayan afforded the movement full opportunity to be effective." The Government also is ready to make land available in its own way. Some one like Shri Kripalaniji should talk

over the matter with the Government and know how far that source would be helpful.

To begin to do all this, it is immediately necessary that the leaders of the Pardi Satyagraha should call it off. It is the first step to a peaceful solution of the problem. Questions of prestige should no way hamper the P. S. P. to act in this manner. If I can request Shri Kripalaniji, I hereby in all humility request him to call off the Khed-Satyagraha and open negotiations with Government. That will restore proper atmosphere to revive the Bhoodan work also in that area, so that the P. S. P. and other Bhoodan workers might join hands and work.

If this happens, then the unhappy situation that has come about could be remedied and work for the good of the poor in that taluka, which all wish to do in their own respective ways, might begin in proper atmosphere.

Shri Kripalaniji writes to me in his letter: "I would like friends to forget personalities and parties. Can we not come together and see that the poor Adivasis do not suffer injustice? ... I would, therefore, request friends in the Congress and those who once worked with Bapu to forget me and my worth, my past and my present, and find out a way of settling this matter." I request Shri Kripalaniji to help, in the manner suggested above, to find out such a way. Shri Vinoba has built up the Bhoodan movement on such an all-party and all-comprehensive basis. I request Kripalaniji to help restore this right and all-acceptable basis of the Bhoodan way of approach.

3-10-'53

(From the original in Gujarati)

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COMMON SENSE ABOUT MEDICINE

To

The Editor of *Harijan*.

Sir,

Since national health service will shortly be introduced in all Indian Provinces the Government and Indian people will be interested to read one of the most sensible pronouncements we have ever seen from a medical officer of health which appeared in a report in the London *Daily Graphic* newspaper. The report consists of extracts from a speech written by Dr. Denham, Health Officer of Birmingham, England, and read at a Rotary Club meeting :

"The national health service has tended to encourage the belief in the minds of people that health is now available to them through the medium of medicine. This is a great mistake and I feel sure we as a profession would be doing a much greater service to mankind by emphasizing the fact that medicines are seldom necessary in the treatment of ill-health in a healthy community. The sane view should be to take all available measures in our power to prevent disease and not to accept its periodic visitations as inevitable. I am convinced that one of the main functions of the medical practitioner should be the giving of advice as to the best measures which should be taken to avoid illness and thereby maintain a state of positive physical and mental health. A very considerable part of minor illnesses from which we suffer year after year is due entirely to our own way of living and is in many cases completely preventable. An outstanding example of this at the present time is food poisoning. The vast majority of these cases are entirely preventable if any one connected with the preservation and handling of food took ordinary sensible precautions against contamination. In the same way if each individual took similar sensible precautions regarding his own health and avoided over-indulgence in eating, drinking and smoking and took proper exercise, how much of the minor illness to which we are so prone might be avoided ?

"Of course this type of advice is not popular with the average patient who feels that the doctor is putting the responsibility back on him of curing himself when in fact the doctor should be doing it through the medium of bottles of medicine and pills!"

The Editor of London *Daily Graphic* says :

"Get a few people together and sooner or later they will talk about their illnesses — or their children's. Note they do not discuss how to avoid disease. It is symptoms and treatments that interest them, not health and how to keep it. One of the aims of the national health service is to prevent illness. But prevention should begin in the home, not in the doctor's surgery. Its secret is simple — sensible living and wise precautions. Dr. Lord Moran drew attention to the need for educating the public in health matters. That need is urgent. The warm weather is bringing increased risks from infected food. How many people realize the importance of absolute cleanliness in handling food stuffs ? Dr. Lord Moran suggests an inquiry to discover what people are thinking about health. The real trouble is that they don't think. Otherwise they would not invite illness by their own carelessness and folly and then imagine that a bottle of medicine prescribed by an overworked doctor will put things right. Here to start them thinking are rules for healthy living given by a medical leader: Plenty of fresh air, simple, adequate diet, sufficiency of sleep, physical exercise and bodily and mental cleanliness....."

The Government here should teach all school boys laws of good health from Gandhiji's excellent book entitled *Key to Health*.†

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THE SAMPATTIDAN YAJNA — ITS IDEOLOGY AND TECHNIQUE*

(By Vinoba)

It should be clearly understood that the Sampattidan Yajna is not intended for collecting or creating a fund. There is not only a difference in its purpose but also in the technique of its collection work. If there were the usual way and idea of a centralized fund, it would not be called Yajna or Sacrifice. The Sampattidan movement has been named as a Yajna deliberately and with mature thought about it, and the Yajna is a religious duty which applies to all without exception. It has a universal character in that nobody can escape it. It is of the nature of what are called man's *prathamani dharmani* i.e. man's basic duties, such as truth etc.

It is thus that the Sampattidan Yajna differs vitally from other usual collections. We do not ourselves receive the gift of money or anything else, we only take from the donor the gift-deed, that is, the promise to give. The donor himself undertakes to administer his gift in the service of the poor. He too does not give any money to the poor, for money may be misused. The use of money in Sampattidan will be generally forbidden, except for purposes of a social nature. For example, we may ask for money for purchasing cement for the construction of wells, or for purchasing a pair of bullocks for co-operative use by two or more peasants jointly. One may still entertain the fear that the peasant in question might sell away the bullocks and the money would be lost. But that would be going too far. Such distrust will not help us. We have to act on the faith that our goodwill will produce similar goodwill in others. And this is not a superstitious faith, it is a faith based on long experience of human psychology. As the movement goes ahead, we hope to go to every village and ask every man to give his bit — a sixth, an eighth or a tenth portion of his produce for the common good of society. They will naturally give what they have. The peasant will give grain while the artisan will give things he manufactures. For example, the carpenter will contribute his labour and make us, say five ploughs. All these contributions will go to the entire village, to build the people's store of wealth. We will do the same in the cities. We will ask the rich to shed off the sense of ownership and share their wealth with the needy. We will make them realize that their interests and those of the society are and should be identical.

After all, there is no reason for any clash of interests between the employers and the employees. Can we conceive of an All India Sons' Organization and an All India Parents' Organization each seeking to safeguard its interests

† Price Re. 0-10-0, Postage etc. As. 4.

* Speech at Khadigran, Jamui on 3-9-53.

against the other? It is really amazing that today we find teachers and students organizing themselves into separate bodies in the belief that their interests are different and even contradictory to each other. This is an indication of a perverted mentality — of the increase of demoniac psychology fast overtaking the mind of modern society. We have to fight this evil tendency and bring in genuine co-operation where there is conflict. We want rich to see and appreciate that those who do physical labour are also entitled to a due share in the wealth produced.

Why should not there be the same partnership between the owners of an industry and its workers as there is between different owners? Of course, I am speaking of real partnership — that of the equalist. I will tell the city-dwellers: You have received amply from the villagers; it is now time that you give a share to them in your wealth. And it will not do to give what you can once only and regard yourselves as free from any further obligation in this regard. It will not do for a man to want to free himself from a religious obligation. He must want to get rid of an evil habit, but not of a meritorious one. I therefore ask the Sampattidan donors if it is a sin that they should want to be released from its obligation after they have done their bit once. They have to accept it as religious duty to be done continuously all their life.

It is said this is difficult to do. I say it is not. A friend expressed his readiness to contribute twenty-five rupees every month for the whole of his life. I explained to him that this was more difficult. He might become poor and then he would be compelled to break his promise. On the other hand if, instead of a fixed sum of money, he decided to contribute a fixed portion of his income, he would be able to keep his promise more easily. In that case if he gets only half a loaf of bread, he may yet part with a sixth of it in favour of the poor. This is why I insist not on a fixed sum of money but on a portion of the income or produce. Viewed thus, the Sampattidan should not appear burdensome to anybody. A man does not feel the burden of his body, nor should he feel that of duty enjoined by true religion. Far from being burdensome, the acceptance of religious truth is a source of inspiration, it adds to our feeling of life.

There is one thing which we will demonstrate through Sampattidan: that non-possession is a force for social good. We have long known that non-possession brings about individual purification. We have now to realize that it can also serve as a powerful means of social wellbeing. We have to prove that it is not only spiritually efficacious but it can help us in constructing a better and a richer worldly life. The Gandhi Memorial Fund collected ten crore rupees. But not even hundred crores will suffice for all we want to do. The need of the hour is to mobilize all our wealth in every form and press it into the

service of the society. The Sampattidan way will turn every house into a bank on which the society can draw freely for all its wants. And because what is offered will be used locally, it will make a very easily workable plan. It will directly lead to the building up of the collective strength of the people. It will unite them with one another and release tremendous energy for constructive effort. We know that practice of equality and renunciation are good, but we have to look at them afresh and see them as forces for promoting social welfare. The little that we have done is enough to show its vast potentiality in this direction. Even at the rate of hundred rupees for an acre, on an average, the land we have received so far would amount to twenty crore rupees. Had I set to the collection of money, instead of land I would have had to face numerous difficulties, — all leading to many undesirable things tarnishing the purity of the work.

Referring to the Samattidan Yajna, a newspaper man recently said of me that Vinoba wanted neither land nor money; he only wanted some bits of paper, the gift-deeds. Just as one propitiates a deity with flowers, even thus one can please Vinoba by putting a paper-garland round his neck. It is like 'Repeat the Lord's name, one does not need to spend anything in it', — as the Hindi adage has it. The comment was meant as a taunt, but it is substantially true. We do honour the word of the donor more than his money. For the time being, there is this safeguard provided in the Sampattidan pledge that I will instruct the donor regarding the use of his gift. But this will not be possible when the movement gets into swing and we begin to receive not hundreds but thousands of such offers. Then we will have to proceed on absolute trust in the sincerity of the donors.

So we have now reached a stage when we have to set to the problem of the distribution of wealth. The Government cannot do much in this task. The Government is after all only a bucket, while the people are like a well. If there is no water in the well, how can there be any in the bucket? We will therefore go to the source of water — the people. What the Government cannot do, the people can. We have discussed the idea of Sampattidan long enough; I now want that in the coming two or three months a beginning should be made to put it into practice.

(From Hindi)

	CONTENTS	PAGE
BAPU AND LAND-PROBLEM ..	Suresh Ramabhai	249
A CURE FOR CITY-ULCER ..	V. G. D.	250
WORLD GOVERNMENT IS NO SOLUTION ..	Wilfred Wellock	251
UNEMPLOYMENT ..	Bharatan Kumarappa	252
A REQUEST TO ACHARYA KRIPALANI ..	Maganbhai P. Desai	253
COMMON SENSE ABOUT MEDICINE ..	Sorabji R. Mistri	255
THE SAMPATTIDAN YAJNA — ITS IDEOLOGY AND TECHNIQUE ..	Vinoba	255