

HARIJAN

12 Pages

Editor: PYARELAL

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TWO ANNAS

WANTED ACCURACY

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A correspondent from Malabar writes:

"The confidence with which Shri Dev Prakash Nayyar has written on the 'Intellectual' Content of the 'Takli' in the *Harijan* of 21-12-'47 takes one's breath away. He has made out that all knowledge is contained in the *takli* or can be derived from it or it is the quintessence of knowledge. I am myself a spinner of long standing and a believer in the Gandhian philosophy of life, but I got the shock of my life in the said article. To say that the *takli* is the "end all" of knowledge and every conceivable subject can be derived from it is just like the proverbial pill of the quack which is claimed to cure all ills. Even Gandhiji does not claim such magical powers for the *takli*. No doubt, the *takli*, *charkha* and spinning have a place in the proper scheme of education especially *Nayee Talim*, but to say that the *takli* naturally takes you to mathematics, physics, economics etc. is but 'sentimental nonsense'. To exaggerate the virtues and usefulness of the *takli* in the sphere of education is as bad or worse than denying its rightful place by others. It is very amusing to read that the *takli* enables one to study the scientific laws of physics etc. Gandhiji brought in the *takli* and *charkha* to serve an economic cause and as a palliative for poverty which, when put into use by masses of men, would result in moral uplift. Gandhiji thus claims for the *takli* economic and moral virtues only. (which I need not discuss further). And that is enough. But why claim more for the *takli*? Where is the need? The *takli*-enthusiasts need not carry their arguments in favour of spinning to a ridiculous extent. The cause of spinning cannot be advanced that way."

The correspondent evidently has not read, as carefully as necessary, Shri Dev Prakash Nayyar's contribution on the *takli*. As I read it, he has advanced no such claim as the correspondent imagines. The author has not said that "all knowledge is contained in" or that "it is derived from" the *takli*, nor has he said that it is "the quintessence of knowledge". His thesis simply is that much knowledge that we derive from books can be better given by competent teachers through crafts. The fact that the correspondent who is a practised spinner of long standing is "shocked" at Shri Dev Prakash Nayyar's claim and calls it "sentimental nonsense" proves that education does not reside in the *takli*, but it does in an educationist who, like

Shri Dev Prakash Nayyar, having tested the possibilities of the *takli* is entitled to make the claim above mentioned.

I fear I must deprive the correspondent of the smug satisfaction that not even I have attributed to the innocent looking *takli* more than "economic and moral virtues". Even the modest claim, I am sorry, has not found universal acceptance. I was probably the first in India to ascribe what may be termed extravagant virtue to the *takli* and the like. Practical teachers along the line have found many more possibilities in handicrafts than I had mentioned. All honour to them for it.

I would strongly advise the correspondent humbly to accept Shri Dev Prakash Nayyar's cautious claim and seek more information from him as to how in the course of his giving his pupils lessons in *Nayee Talim*, he came upon his discovery. If the discovery is only imaginary, the correspondent will soon find it out to Shri Dev Prakash Nayyar's discomfiture. The fall of an apple from its branch is said to have enabled Newton's rich mind to discover the law of gravitation.

New Delhi, 2-1-'48

IS IT DESERVED?

(By M. K. Gandhi)

In the course of a long letter which Reverend Dr. John Haynes Holmes had written to me before leaving the hospitable shore of India, he writes:

"Of course you have been sad, well nigh overborne, by the tragedies of recent months, but you must never feel that this involves any breakdown of your life work. Human nature cannot bear too much — it cracks under too great a strain — and the strain in this case was as terrific as it was sudden. But your teaching remained as true and your leadership as sound as ever. Single handed you saved the situation, and brought victory out of what seemed for the moment to be defeat. I count these last few months to be the crown and climax of your unparalleled career. You were never so great as in these dark hours."

I wonder if the claim can be proved. That much more than Dr. Holmes observed can be proved of *ahimsa*, I have not the slightest doubt. My difficulty is fundamental. Have I attained the requisite qualifications for exhibiting the virtues of *ahimsa*, even as Dr. Holmes has said? Knowing as I do the working of *ahimsa*, however imperfectly, I see every reason for the utmost caution in advancing claims that cannot be proved beyond doubt.

New Delhi, 3-1-'48

THE PILGRIMAGE OF PENANCE

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REHABILITATION

As regards rehabilitation, except Nawadah where the work had been practically finished due to the initiative of local Congress workers, it had not progressed appreciably in the Sadar and Jehanabad Sub-Divisions. Roofless houses filled with debris and broken walls still disfigured beautiful landscapes with their ugly yawn. An idea of the present state of rehabilitation can be had from the official figures mentioned at Annexure A.

CAUSES OF DELAY

In the beginning due to the League propaganda people refused to go back to their villages. Other applications when they did arrive kept on piling, thanks to red tape. Then came the rains making the villages inaccessible and delaying reconstruction by a number of months. Thus neglected, the roofless walls gave way to the depredation of the rains which immensely added to the damage already done.

CONTRACTORS

Some houses had been built by contractors. They were very badly built. But the Government was being bled white. If the owners had themselves built them they would have done so much more cheaply and more to the purpose. That attention to details which is so essential for the repair of a village house cannot be expected from a contractor.

THE WAY TO BUILD

The best thing would be to explain to the house-owners how it would be in their interest to build the houses themselves. The Government should have provided materials. The ideal thing would have been to persuade the villagers to build the houses of the sufferers as a mark of penitence. Failing that the house-owners could have been given labour charges in instalments.

Another hitch was that estimates of damage and the building grant to be given were held up due to the lack of engineering staff. It is an instance how formalities create bottlenecks in Government departments. Everybody in the village knows how much the repair of a particular house would cost. So, if a member of the Peace Committee and the Relief Officer working in co-operation with the local Hindu and Muslim inhabitants had been authorized to do the job, they would have been able to do it fairly and accurately. If any loss occurred to Government on account of any error, it would have been more than made up by quicker emptying of camps.

THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE

The general atmosphere was not ideal but favourable to rehabilitation. There was no genuine repentance amongst the Hindus. Those who had looted property or to whom it had been sold very cheaply by the Muslims in panic, were not willing to return it. Since my visit, however, some progress has been made in this direction.

They were, however, no longer in a mood to be aggressive. The results of what they had done, had been bad even for themselves. Many of them were rotting in jails. Their children, their crops etc. were unattended to. Some had been killed. So it seemed they would never repeat what they had done.

Some apprehension still by the Muslims may naturally be expected. But many visited their homes and their land. At such times they were entertained by the Hindus of the locality, and very often they stayed with them even singly at night. But the lure of free rations drew them back to the refugee camps.

This was beginning to embitter the Hindu masses. They felt that what had been 'procured' from them at the point of the bayonet was being used to feed these 'idlers' or 'deceivers'.

But both the Hindus and the Muslims were beginning to realize their common interests. Peace was essential for both. Even before the League leaders issued an appeal regarding the withdrawal of cases, the parties were compromising cases on their own.

All this was due to the horse sense of the masses, unaided by their leaders most of whom I found apathetic. The Congress was busy with its own decay, the League held aloof, simply critical of the Government as a face-saving device and not very willing to face the masses. It is in this final, inevitable assertion of the commonsense of the masses that the hope of humanity lies.

APPENDIX A

DAMAGE AND RECONSTRUCTION IN THE GAYA DISTRICT Figures (Official)

Name of Sub-Division	No. of villages affected	No. of persons killed	No. of houses burnt	No. of houses damaged	No. of houses already built	No. of houses — estimates ready
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Sadar	11	248	120	62	25	44
2. Jehanabad	49	232	185	561	84	—
3. Nawadah	14	74	—	202	122*	43

Name of Sub-Division	Reconstruction Grant †	Relief Grant	Families receiving it	Total number of refugees in camps
	8	9	10	11
1. Sadar	Nil. (Reconstruction charges : Rs. 14,802/11/-)	6,600	47	651
2. Jehanabad	Rs. 510/ (apart from the cost of houses built by Government)	24,365/11/-	74	3,107
3. Nawadah	Rs. 56,663/2/- (apart from	30,841	188	—

materials received
from the Relief
Commissioner)

* Of the remaining 80 houses, 15 are under construction besides 2 mosques. 1 mosque and 45 houses are pending for want of estimates by Rehabilitation Engineer. Of these 45 houses, 43 have been inspected by R. E. recently. These are only partly damaged houses. 17 house-owners have not yet turned up and their intention, whether they will go back or not, is not known.

† Houses are either built by contractors or a house grant is given to the owners, and sometimes building material is also supplied.

Note: Sadar figures are correct up to 13-10-'47, Jehanabad up to 25-9-'47 and Nawadah up to 1-10-'47.

Patna, 4-11-'47

DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR

A MUCH NEEDED ADVICE

As a carry over from British Imperialism we still have an illogical demand for foreign imprimatur even in matters in which intimate knowledge of the people and their environment is called for as in economics. We can grant that in any technique that foreigners may have developed expert advice of those skilled in that special line may be indented for. It takes time to outlive inferiority complex—a child of imperialism.

The services of Mr. Colin Clark, an Australian economist, were obtained to advise on industrial planning in our country. He observed: "If I were an Indian Minister, I should say: 'Have as much of your development in the form of cottage industry as possible. Regard the factory as a necessary evil'."

This, of course, was not what was wanted. So he has been sent off with a "thank you".

BY SUFFERANCE

The Industries Conference at New Delhi was only able to think of cottage industries as deserving patronage in so far as large scale industries wanted their help in repairs etc. Cottage industries would be allowed to live by sufferance. We have yet to realize that the position is just the reverse. We may resort to large scale industries only where village industries call for them. They are allowed to exist as necessary evils to cater to the needs of the industries of the people. If the blacksmith wants steel for cart tyres, the steel mills will have to provide the material. Village industries are the staple food of the masses while large scale industries are poisons that are sometimes used as drugs. We cannot live on morphia and quinine *ladus*, but these latter may be used in strictly limited doses when the condition of the patient needs them.

WHICH POWER?

The industrialists are full of schemes to harness power, to produce more and more. To do this they want the Government to help in securing congenial circumstances and for obtaining machinery worth crores from abroad. They are thoroughly oblivious

of the fact that millions of engines are standing idle at our doors unused. These have to have fuel whether they are used or not. Every human being is an engine that demands work and has to be kept alive by being fed. Is it better economy to use this engine or to leave it idle while feeding it all the while and at the same time importing mechanical devices to do the work? It does not require much business acumen to answer this question. Yet, the best of our men are guilty of taking the wrong decision. We can understand self-centred businessmen wanting to make profit for themselves by the use of machinery while the nation has to bear the burden of supporting the lives of millions of unemployed and under-employed. Unfortunately, recent public speeches of our Ministers show that even our public men are carried away by the vociferous industrialists.

CONSUMPTION

One of the most important functions of the Government in supporting village industries is practically forgotten. Government has to consume such articles as villagers make. The bulk of Government finance and power is derived from the masses and so it is but bare justice that these must be returned to the givers. The stores and supply department has to fall in line with the production policy of the Government.

WANTED A POLICY

The need of the moment is not hydro-electric schemes calling for astronomical calculations to determine their cost but the production of food, clothing and shelter for the masses. Government should focus all its resources on these. Governmental powers and their finances should be hypothecated to this end. To use these powers vested in them to help the industrialist is a betrayal of trust. Shri G. D. Birla's call to the Government to definitely declare their policy is not a moment too late. The people want to know whether they are entities in themselves or are mere pawns in the game of industrialization.

Addressing the Associated Chambers of Commerce at Calcutta Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru declared his policy which we hope will be implemented by the Government of which he is the head. He asked, "What opportunity for growth is there today for the vast number of Indians, whether they work in the fields or elsewhere? I entirely agree that the peasants and ryots must have their first claim on us." Our present struggle, he pointed out was for the economic wellbeing of the masses. He said, "The first thing to be considered was the good of the masses. Everything should be judged from that standard." May we hope that this criterion will rule Governmental action in all the schemes that are now before the country? These are crucial days. A government based on democracy must justify its existence by the service it renders to the people and not by the number of millionaires its policy creates.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

HARIJAN

January 11

1948

AHIMSA NEVER FAILS

The following correspondence between a European friend and Gandhiji is published for general information:

The European friend writes:

"After carefully studying Roy Walker's thrilling story of your admirable work (*Sword of Gold*) I was satisfied that, lifelong as your struggle for non-violence had been, your unlimited devotion had met with success, at least as far as India's leaders and masses were concerned, and the fact that Britain retired from India in apparent goodwill and friendship, seemed to bear out the hope that appreciation of non-violence was no longer restricted to your own country. The first breach into the thick walls of violence seemed made, and the prospects for humanity seemed to have grown more lucid than ever.

"All the more depressing were your recent confessions, as reported in the last edition of *Peace News* by George Ll. Davies. It grieves me to the heart to read that you had never experienced the dark despair that was today within you. And though it is certainly true that God does not demand success but truth and love from a man, it is a sad sight to behold mankind as deeply entangled by violence as not to yield to the vast extent of soul-force and self-sacrifice given by you and your few friends during a long life.

"However, willingly admitting as I do that you are in a far better position to look into the heart of things than I am, I cannot believe that your heroic efforts should be lost upon mankind, that the good seed you have so untiringly sown in all your surroundings, by your words as well as by your example, should be wasted.

"Be that as it may, I for one (and I am sure I speak the heart of untold millions) feel it my bounden duty to express my deepest gratitude to you for giving the whole of your life to what you felt to be the one way to salvation for mankind."

Gandhiji's reply runs thus:

"I have not seen the report you refer to. In any case, whatever I have said does not refer in any way to the failure of *ahimsa*, but it refers to my failure to recognize, until it was too late, that what I had mistaken for *ahimsa* was not *ahimsa*, but passive resistance of the weak, which can never be called *ahimsa* even in the remotest sense. The internecine feud that is going on today in India is the direct outcome of the energy that was set free during the thirty years' action of the weak. Hence, the proper way to view the present outburst of violence throughout the world is to recognize that the technique of unconquerable non-violence of the strong has not been at all fully discovered as

yet. Not an ounce of non-violent strength is ever wasted. I must not, therefore, flatter myself with the belief — nor allow friends like you to entertain the belief — that I have exhibited any heroic and demonstrable non-violence in myself. All I can claim is that I am sailing in that direction without a moment's stop. This confession should strengthen your belief in non-violence and spur you and friends like you to action along the path."

New Delhi, 1-1-'48

CERTIFIED AND UNCERTIFIED KHADI

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The same friend, who suggests that *khadi* can remove cloth shortage, writes that India having attained independence, there is little difference now between certified and uncertified *khadi*, mill-cloth and foreign cloth. *Khadi* may have significance for him who spins and weaves to clothe himself, but people are unable to do so or even to spin the minimum quota of yarn prescribed for the purchase of *khadi* from the *bhandars*. No improvement is noticeable in the quality of pure *khadi*, while many useful varieties of uncertified *khadi* are available. Moreover, it is difficult nowadays to give what can be termed a living wage in the *khadi* industry. On these grounds the writer observes that the purchase of uncertified *khadi* should be permitted. He proceeds to argue that having regard to the acute shortage of cloth all over the country and to the fact that the Union Government itself imports foreign cloth, there should be no objection to the purchase of such cloth either.

That such questions can be raised shows the change in the times. My answer is that only "certified *khadi*" should be used. Let me indicate the meaning of this term. Even the Charkha Sangh's definition is incomplete. The term really implies that a reasonable wage is given to spinners and weavers and the price of *khadi* fixed with an eye on public good and not with a profit motive. Certification of such *khadi* by the Charkha Sangh becomes necessary, as people have as a rule, to fall back upon the purchase of *khadi* in addition to self-made (स्वावलम्बी) *khadi*. Any other *khadi* is uncertified and open to objection and should not, therefore, be used. It is open to the public to suggest improvements in the conditions presented for the certification of *khadi*, but it would be definitely wrong to abolish the distinction between certified and uncertified *khadi*.

Again, how can one shut one's eyes to the distinction between *khadi*, mill-cloth and foreign cloth, or justify the import of foreign cloth because foreign rule has ended? We must remember that we opposed foreign rule because it involved the economic ruin of the country. The first fruit of freedom should, therefore, be to put an end to this curse.

In fine it follows that pure *khadi* alone has place in *Swaraj*: in it lies the well-being of the people as well as true equality.

New Delhi, 6-1-'48

QUESTION BOX

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Q. 1. It does not matter whether the lingua franca be called Hindi or Hindustani; in any case the common language in actual use will remain Hindustani. It cannot, however, be gainsaid that in advanced literature and science certain words will be necessary which can only be derived from Sanskrit. Where is the harm in making this clear to the public?

A. The first part of the question would be correct provided the name adopted were accepted by all in the same light. The controversy arises not over the name but what it is meant to convey. In advanced literature and science we should not draw exclusively from Sanskrit. A small committee can be appointed to prepare a dictionary of current words irrespective of their original source.

Q. 2. With regard to the script, it would be burdensome to have to use two scripts in the conduct of the affairs of the nation. Why not then adopt the Nagari script which is current in all provinces? Does the two-script proposal mean that the Central Government should use both the scripts in its correspondence and publications? Would telegraph and other offices also have to use both the scripts?

I do not subscribe to the view often put forward that the two-script proposal is meant to appease the Muslims. Our concern should be to select the script which might be advantageous to the nation as a whole without wishing any injustice. It would not be correct to hold that the adoption of the Nagari script would be harmful to Muslim interests. As far as I can see, it would be necessary to adopt both the scripts, but only as a temporary measure—ultimately one script should be acceptable to all. How can this be disputed?

A. With the adoption of the two scripts, the easier one will ultimately survive. All that is wanted is that the Urdu script should not be boycotted, as such boycott would imply discrimination. A controversy arose over such discrimination and this has now been accentuated. With this background, we who believe in unity and are opposed to civil strife are bound to adopt both the scripts. Again we cannot forget that many Hindus and Sikhs are ignorant of the Nagari script. There is no question of all people having to learn both the scripts, but only of those liable to serve outside their province. Nor is it suggested that all notices should be issued by the Central Government in both the scripts—but only those meant for all.

Having regard to the present communal antagonism, the boycott of the Urdu script would be regarded as an anti-democratic measure.

The question whether telegraph and other offices would also have to use both the scripts is a minor one. When we get rid of the incubus of the English language and the Roman script, our minds will be clearer and we shall realize the futility of such controversies.

While we must always refrain from an improper course with the object of appeasing others, there is no harm in conciliating when the course itself is intrinsically proper. If all accepted our script willingly, it would be so good, but even to achieve this end it is necessary to retain both the scripts at present.

New Delhi, 4-1-'48

KHADI CAN REMOVE CLOTH SHORTAGE

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A friend writes that *khadi* can help to remove the shortage of cloth is a matter of six months. For this two conditions will be necessary, viz. (1) that the Central and Provincial Governments should adopt the policy of encouraging spinning and weaving in every village, and (2) that provincial and all-India leaders should put forth greater efforts to popularize *khadi*.

In my opinion it should be worth while and it is the duty of the Congress to fulfil these conditions for the sake of remedying cloth shortage. Our undoubted indifference in this respect shows that we have failed in our duty. The price of cloth having risen so high, the present is the most opportune time to get over this indifference. This can be done by the example and conduct as well as the wisdom of those who have unshakable faith in *khadi*. When the Government adopts the policy of promoting the cause of *khadi*, control over cloth and other commodities will automatically go. Meanwhile also, cloth should be decontrolled in the interests of the poor.

New Delhi, 6-1-'48

Harijans in Hostels

Apropos the recent legislation enacted by the Government of Bombay extending to the Harijans the right of admission to temples, wells, *dharamshalas*, schools, hostels etc. Shri Parikshitlal writes that though this automatically covers undenominational hostels as well, school and college hostels have not in actual practice been thrown open to the Harijan students. His experience has been that the school and college authorities have not adapted themselves to the spirit of the times to the extent the hostel students have. As the academic year will soon be over and fresh admissions will be made shortly, he has advised the authorities to do the needful before the Harijan students are forced to assert their legal right in the matter and has also suggested to me to recommend the throwing open of the hostels in Bhavanagar and other Kathiawad States to the Harijan students.

I endorse his suggestion and would add that if the students in the hostels are sincere, they are sure to succeed in the matter. In the present age the autocratic will of the managing committees cannot prevail, particularly when, as in this case, they are in the wrong and the students are in the right. Be that as it may, the Harijan students should unquestionably be admitted to hostels with honour.

New Delhi, 6-1-'48

M. K. G.

GANDHIJI'S POST-PRAYER SPEECHES

Birla House, New Delhi, 29-12-'47

HAKIMSAHEB'S MEMORIAL

Yesterday was the anniversary of the late Hakim saheb Ajmalkhan, the beloved of all the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and Jews of India. A staunch Muslim, he served equally all the inhabitants of this fair land. The best monument of his labours he left was the famous Tibia College and Hospital, which catered for all classes of students and provided for tuition in the *Unani*, *Ayurvedic* and Western systems of medicine. Communal frenzy has suspended even this non-communal activity, I suppose, simply because the originator and founder of the college was a Muslim, however great, good and universally respected he was. How I wish the late lamented patriot's memory could at least give a new life to the college, if it could not bury the present Hindu-Muslim feud!

OPEN AIR MEETINGS

I touched yesterday upon the desirability of having our public meetings and functions in the open under the canopy of the heavens. If this were to become an ordinary custom, it would require a well thought out lay-out. There would be open squares, in big cities and small, designed for such uses. It must radically change our habit. Noises and disorder would give place to stillness and order. Under the new habit, we would talk when we must and then in a low enough voice, never beyond the pitch required for a given moment. We would respect our neighbours' rights and model individual or group behaviour so as not to encroach on others. This would mean, at times, exercise of great self-restraint. Under such social behaviour we would not have the disgraceful noises and dirt in the busiest parts of Delhi. Large crowds would then move without jostle or jar. Let us not consider this to be impossible of achievement. Some group has to make a beginning in right earnest. Think of the saving of time, energy and expense under this rule of life!

KASHMIR AGAIN

I have been taken to task for daring to say what I have said about Kashmir and the Maharajasaheb. Those who have done so have evidently failed to read my statement carefully. I have simply tendered advice which, I suppose, the lowliest can do. To do so sometimes becomes a duty as was the case with me. What was it for? It was, if accepted, designed to raise the Maharajasaheb in his own and the world's esteem. His and his State's is today a most unenviable position. He is a Hindu prince having under his sway a very large majority of Muslims. The invaders have called their invasion a holy war for the defence of Muslims reported to be ground down under Hindu misrule! Sheikh Abdullasaheb has been called by the ruler to his task at a most critical period. He is new to the task and deserves every encouragement if he is considered fit by His Highness. It must be evident to the outsider as it is to me that Kashmir must be lost to the invaders, otherwise called raiders, if the Sheikh-saheb's effort to hold together the Muslims, and the minority fails. It would be a mistake to think that the Union army could do it. It was sent in answer to the combined importunity of the Maharajasaheb and

the Sheikh-saheb in order to help ward off the attack. Is it any wonder that I have advised the ruling authority to rise to the occasion and become like the King of England and, therefore, use his rule and his *Dogra paltan* in strict accord with the advice of the Sheikh-saheb and his emergency Cabinet? The instrument of accession stands as it is. It confers or reserves certain rights on or for the ruler. I, as a private individual, have ventured to advise that he should waive or diminish the rights and perform the duty pertaining to the office of a Hindu prince. If I am wrong as to my facts, I should be corrected. If I err in my conception of Hinduism and of the duty of a Hindu prince, I am out of court. If Sheikh Abdullasaheb is erring in the discharge of his duty as the chief of the Cabinet or as a devout Muslim, he should certainly step aside and give place to a better man. It is on the Kashmir soil that Islam and Hinduism are being weighed. If both pull their weight correctly and in the same direction, the chief actors will cover themselves with glory and nothing can move them from their joint credit. My sole hope and prayer is that Kashmir should become a beacon light to this benighted sub-continent.

So much for the Maharajasaheb and the Sheikh-saheb. Will not the Pakistan Government and the Union Government close ranks and come to an amicable settlement with the assistance of impartial Indians? Or, has impartiality fled from India? I am sure it has not.

AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I have a money order for Rs. 50 from a sister in Mathura for blankets for the refugees. She does not wish to disclose her name, not even to me. She will be satisfied if I acknowledge the receipt in a prayer speech. This I thankfully do now.

STRANGE PROTESTS

It is strange that I receive telegrams from the ryots of the States, whose chiefs have declared their wish to merge in the Union. If a prince or a semi-prince feels too isolated to carry on efficiently, who can compel him to do so? Those who waste money on telegrams are advised not to do so. There seems to me to be something wrong about the senders of such telegrams. Let them approach the Home Minister for light and guidance.

ADVICE TO UNION MUSLIMS

Many Muslims, principally from the Postal and Railway Departments say that they had opted for the sake of propaganda. Therefore, they would now like to reconsider their view. There are Muslims who have been discharged from their posts, I presume, on the ground of suspected anti-Hindu bias. My sympathy goes out to all such men. But I feel that the right course is not to resent pardonable suspicion, although it may be unjustified in individual cases. I can only prescribe my old, well-tried remedy. Only very few can be accommodated in the various government departments. To get a government job should never be the aim of life. Honest living is the only worthy aim. This is always assured when and if one is ready to do any labour that comes to hand. Until the dominating and corroding communal poison is eliminated, I think it is necessary and dignified for Muslims not to aim at the loaves and fishes in government employ. Power comes from sincere service. Actual attainment often debases the holder. To fight for

it is unseemly. At the same time it is surely the duty of a government to ensure bread labour for all unemployed men and women, no matter how many they are. To do so intelligently pays the State instead of costing it, assuming of course that the unemployed are physically fit and are not shirkers but willing workers.

Birla House, New Delhi, 30-12-'47

MASS DISCIPLINE

Gandhiji in post-prayer address this evening began with an admonition to those who crowd round him at the end of the prayer and make it impossible for him even to have his evening walk in peace. Mass discipline was an essential condition for a people who aspired to be a great nation. If the people learnt to behave in a disciplined manner, there would be no noise or confusion even in a gathering of lakhs. He wanted all to inculcate the virtue of 'military discipline'.

HINDUS AND SIKHS IN BAHAWALPUR

Gandhiji then referred to a letter which he had received and in which he had been requested to reiterate and re-emphasize what he had already said, namely that such Hindus and Sikhs or any other non-Muslims as wanted to go out of the Bahawalpur State should be freely permitted to do so. The Nawabsaheb of Bahawalpur had declared that he made no distinction between his Muslim and non-Muslim subjects, but held them all in equal regard. He welcomed that declaration. He hoped that the Nawabsaheb would insure safe passage to them to leave his territory. They should be free to carry their belongings with them and in fact the State ought to provide them railway facilities for the purpose. What was done was done and could not be undone, remarked Gandhiji, but if the Nawabsaheb did that much, he would deserve the congratulations of all.

NON-MUSLIMS IN SIND

And what he had said about Bahawalpur, proceeded Gandhiji, applied equally to Sind too. From the reports which he had received, it seemed clear that no Hindu or for that matter any non-Muslim could today remain in Sind, and feel safe. Even educational institutions were being requisitioned and respectable, well-to-do people were being asked to vacate their premises to make room for in-coming "refugees" from the Union. Members of the so-called depressed classes were not permitted to leave Sind. He would appeal to Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah and the Prime Minister of Sind and his Cabinet to remedy this state of affairs. All those who wanted to go out of Sind should be free to do so. That was the only way of retaining or regaining the confidence of the minorities. With the return of normal conditions in Sind, even those who had gone away might feel like returning to their homes. Compulsion, on the other hand, would have just the opposite effect and defeat its purpose. It would not redound to the credit of Pakistan if it was made impossible for non-Muslims to remain in it as free citizens and they could remain there only as serfs and helots.

THE VITHOBA TEMPLE

A telegram to Gandhiji stated that although the trustees of the Vithoba temple of Pandharpur in Maharashtra had decided to throw it open to the Harijans, some members of the priestly class — whose number was by no means small — had taken exception and had even

started a hunger strike in protest. He would tell these friends, remarked Gandhiji, that theirs was a very unbecoming attitude. It was un-Hindu. The Vithoba temple was one of the most sacred shrines in Maharashtra. The decision to throw it open had been taken by the trustees after due deliberation. Nobody had opposed it then. If his voice could reach the hunger strikers, he would tell them in all humility but with firmness that by what they were doing they were ill-serving Hinduism. In the all-embracing shrine of Vishnu there was room for all. Even the impure became pure in His sacred presence. How could the admission of the Harijans defile it? In his opinion it was a blasphemy to regard the Harijans as impure. There were black sheep and white in all communities and it was just the same with the Harijans. So long as a single Hindu, irrespective of his caste or creed, was excluded from the Vithoba temple, it was an inert, lifeless shrine. The real *pran pratishtha* was performed only when the temple was thrown open to all — including the Harijans. The present hunger strike by the priestly class, therefore, said Gandhiji, was not a pious act, but an impious one — it was a sin. Gandhiji hoped that they would realize their mistake and give up their hunger strike.

RATIONING IN BOMBAY

Lastly, Gandhiji referred to a complaint which he had received in connection with some rationing order that was said to be in force in Bombay. Under it, it was alleged that one could get only one pound of rice in a week. This entailed great hardship on the Madrasi and the Maharashtra communities residing in Bombay. If, driven by desperation, they obtained the necessary supply of rice for themselves from outside, they came in for heavy fines and even imprisonment. Gandhiji was of opinion that food rationing in the cities ought to be abolished forthwith. He was sure that if they did that, stringency in the matter of foodgrains would disappear and food prices come down, as had happened in the case of other articles that had been decontrolled. That would put an end to the black market in food which had become one of the biggest headaches of the administration.

Birla House, New Delhi, 31-12-'47

NO RETURN WITHOUT CHANGE OF HEARTS

Gandhiji began his post-prayer address this evening by answering a few questions. In reply to the question as to how he could advise the refugees from the West Punjab to return when even in Sind the Hindus and Sikhs could not live in peace and honour, Gandhiji observed that the question did not arise since he had already made it clear at a recent meeting that he was unable at present to advise the refugees to return to the West Punjab, though some Muslim friends had brought this suggestion. He had been informed that there were 251 persons awaiting evacuation from Chitral and the surrounding parts as in Sind thousands were awaiting it. The Union Government could not rest content until those who wished to do so were enabled to migrate. He agreed with the questioner that there could be no return without change of hearts. Unless the Dominions turned a new leaf, both were doomed. The trouble had no doubt started in West Pakistan,

but some parts of the Indian Union had resorted to retaliation. The question, therefore, of time and extent was now beside the point. If either Dominion behaved correctly, the other would follow suit and both would be saved.

NO REAL PEACE WITHOUT RETURN OF THE REFUGEES

Gandhiji could never bring himself to accept the proposition of a permanent exchange of population. Even if the refugees were well settled, they would hark back to their old homes. Therefore, he could not envisage real peace without the parties returning to their homes.

REFUGEES AND HONEST LABOUR

The same questioner had suggested that the refugees should be provided with work so that they might not become beggars. Gandhiji would welcome such a demand from all the refugees. The Government could desire nothing better, if only to save the crores spent on feeding and clothing the refugees. Gandhiji invited the questioner to propagate his view. If the refugees took to honest labour, there would be a decided improvement in the present disturbed condition.

Here the speaker gave an instance of a sister who had complained that during her absence during the day, her house had been broken open and occupied by some Sikhs. All the culprits but one were taken into custody. Gandhiji advised all to live by the sweat of their brow, as honourable citizens, even if this involved a degree of discomfort.

BROADCASTING THE WHOLE PRAYER

Proceeding Gandhiji read from a letter suggesting that not only his speech but the prayer songs too be recorded for the benefit of the wider public. The Broadcasting Department had offered to record his speech in the public interest, but he would be pleased if it were found possible to record the verses and songs as well, though these might not be as melodious as cinema songs. He selected only such persons to recite and sing who, he thought, were imbued with a prayerful spirit. Gandhiji, however, wanted his speech itself to be regarded and listened to as an integral part of the prayer.

EXAGGERATION DEFEATS PURPOSE

In conclusion Gandhiji referred to the exaggerated accounts sent to him of the atrocities perpetrated in Ajmer and Junagadh. He had already dealt with the Junagadh exaggerations. It was true that there had been murder, loot and arson in Ajmer but the *Durgah Sharif* was regarded as quite safe. No harm had been done to it. Exaggeration defeated its own object. They hurt the Muslim cause and made amity much more difficult than it was.

Birla House, New Delhi, 1-1-'48

SPIRITUAL FOOD

In his post-prayer address on the New Year's day, Gandhiji expressed pleasure at the large size of the gathering, but regretted that seven minutes had to be lost in making seating arrangements for women. Even one minute lost by a meeting meant so many minutes lost to the nation. Men should learn to give place to women and a community or country in which women were not honoured could not be considered civilized. Having attained independence, all of us should from

now on behave as citizens of a free and proud country. Gandhiji hoped that the gathering would be even larger in future, if all who attended would come in a prayerful mood, for prayer was the food of the spirit. He hoped that those present would not only maintain silence, but would carry *shanti* with them to their homes.

HARIJANS AND LIQUOR

Gandhiji next referred to a Harijan Conference recently held in the U. P., where a Minister is said to have counselled the Harijans to give up dirty clothes and liquor. Upon this came a spontaneous retort from a Harijan that the Government could burn all dirty clothes, if they would cut off the toddy trees root and branch, and close all liquor dens. Gandhiji admired the courage of this Harijan brother, but he would advise the Harijans and the general public that the remedy lay in their own hands and that even if liquor were being sold, they should avoid it as poison. Indeed, liquor was worse than poison. While the latter killed the body, the former destroyed the awareness of the spirit and all that was noble in man including the sovereign quality of self-control. At the same time Gandhiji advised the Government to convert liquor dens into restaurants for the supply of clean and wholesome refreshments and to provide instructive literature and other recreation to wean the addicts from the lure of intoxicants. From experience gained in many a country, reinforced by his own observation in India and earlier in South Africa, Gandhiji was confident that abstinence from intoxicants would materially enhance the physical and moral strength of the workers as well as their earning capacity. Prohibition was therefore included in the Congress programme since 1920 and now that freedom has been won, the Government should proceed to implement that pledge and be prepared to renounce the tainted revenue. In the end, in fact, there would be no loss of revenue, and the gain to individuals would be very great. That way lay the path of progress for our nation.

Birla House, New Delhi, 2-1-'48

THE NOAKHALI HAT

It was raining on Friday evening when Gandhiji arrived at the prayer ground, wearing his now famous Noakhali hat to the amusement of the audience. So he began his post-prayer talk with a humorous reference to his straw hat — of the type worn by the *kisans* in Noakhali as shelter against the sun — which he valued both as a present from a Muslim *kisan* and as a cheap substitute for an umbrella, all made of local material.

THE BHAJAN

Gandhiji next commended the melodious tune of the song sung at the prayer. This song was, however, more appropriate to the morning time, being an appeal to the Lord to wake and grant *darshan* to the waiting devotees. God of course never slept but the song voiced a devotee's feelings.

DISTRUST DENOTES COWARDICE

Proceeding Gandhiji referred to a letter recently received from Allahabad. According to the writer, barring a few honourable exceptions, no Muslim could be trusted to remain loyal to the Indian Union, more specially in the event of an inter-dominion war and

the majority of Muslims, with the exception of a few nationalists should, therefore, be turned out. Gandhiji observed that it behoved man to trust the word of his fellow men in the absence of any evidence to the contrary. Only last week, nearly a lakh of Muslims had met in Lucknow and made an unequivocal declaration of their nationalism. If a man was demonstrably disloyal or dishonest, he could even be shot though that was not his way. But needless distrust was a sign of ignorance and cowardice and it had led to communal hatred and bloodshed and migration on a colossal scale. Its continuance would only result in perpetuation of the division of India and the eventual destruction of the Dominions. If war broke out, which God forbid, he would not like to live but if the people shared his faith in *ahimsa*, there would be no war and all would yet be well.

Wavell Canteen, New Delhi, 3-1-'48

TRUE PEACE RESIDES WITHIN

On Saturday evening Gandhiji held the prayer at the Wavell Canteen where a large crowd had assembled to listen to his post-prayer address. Gandhiji expressed pleasure at being able to fulfil an old engagement and address the refugees at this Camp. He was happy that the audience included as many women as men and invited all his hearers to join him in the prayer that peace and amity may return to our land and the universe. Peace does not come from outer possession such as wealth or palaces but from within. All religions have proclaimed this truth. When a man attains such peace, his eyes, words and actions bear witness to it. Such a man is content to live in a cottage and does not care for the morrow. God alone knows what tomorrow will bring. As a man, like us, Sri Ramachandra had no knowledge that he would be exiled just when it was expected that he would ascend the *gadi*. But he knew that true peace was independent of externals and was supremely unaffected by the prospect of his exile. If the Hindus and Sikhs had known this truth, this wave of madness would not have swept over them and they would have remained in peace, irrespective of what the Muslims had done. If these words went home to the Hindus and Sikhs, the Muslims would assuredly make an automatic response.

IDEAL OF CAMP LIFE

Proceeding Gandhiji observed that he had heard that this Camp was run satisfactorily, but he could not quite endorse this claim until and unless the refugees co-operated to maintain better order and sanitation in the Camp than one noticed in the streets of Delhi. He was aware of the sufferings they had undergone. Some of them belonged to the higher strata of society but for them to hope for the same standard of comfort here would be futile. They should all learn to adapt themselves to the new conditions and to improve them as far as possible. Gandhiji recalled the migration of Englishmen from the Transvaal to Natal on the eve of the Boer War in 1899. They knew how to make the best of the situation and all lived as equals. One—an engineer—lived and laboured as a carpenter with him. We lack such training, having remained subject to alien rule for centuries. Now that we were free—and what a priceless gift is freedom!—Gandhiji

expected the refugees to turn their misfortune to good account and to transform the Camp into an ideal one—such that visitors from all over India, if not the world, would be proud of it. The *mantra* recited in the course of the prayer called upon us to dedicate all we had to God and to draw only what we really needed. If we translated this *mantra* into our lives, not only this Camp but Delhi, which had of late acquired a bad name, would be renovated and our lives would be filled with inner happiness.

Birla House, New Delhi, 4-1-'48

IMPLICATIONS OF WAR

In his post-prayer address on Sunday evening Gandhiji expressed pleasure at the fair attendance despite the rain and hoped that so many had come with a sincere desire to join the prayers and not through idle curiosity. Unhappily people were talking everywhere about the possibility of a war between the two Dominions. Gandhiji was amazed to see that the Government of Pakistan disputed the veracity of the Union's representation to the U. N. O. and the charge that Pakistan had a hand in the invasion of Kashmir by the raiders. Mere denials cut no ice. It was incumbent upon the Indian Union to go to the rescue of Kashmir when the latter sought its help in expelling the raiders and it was the duty of Pakistan to co-operate with the Union. But while Pakistan professed its willingness to co-operate, it took no concrete steps in that direction. Gandhiji would like to impress on the leaders of Pakistan that partition having been conceded, there was no justification for animosity. Partition was demanded on religio-communal grounds and it was therefore the duty of Pakistan, as its name implied, to remain clean in all its dealings. Both Hindus and Muslims had resorted to cruel acts and made grievous blunders but that did not mean that this mad race should go on, culminating in war. A war would bring both the Dominions under the sway of a third power and nothing could be worse. Gandhiji, therefore, pleaded for amity and goodwill which could enable the Union's representation to the U. N. O. to be withdrawn with dignity. This the U. N. O. itself would welcome. He invited all to join in this prayer. The understanding should however be genuine. To harbour internal hatred might be even worse than war.

WORSE THAN COWARDICE

The speaker next referred to an incident which had occurred in Delhi the previous night. A party of refugees had tried to effect unauthorized entry into vacant Muslim houses. The police arrived on the scene and had to disperse the crowd with tear gas. Today we had our own Government. How could it function satisfactorily if the public behaved lawlessly? What was worse, women and children were placed in front of the party to evade remedial action by the police. This amounted to an affront to womanhood and cowardice on the part of men, possibly worse than a similar use of cows by the Muslims in bygone times in their fight with the Hindus. Gandhiji again appealed to the refugees to maintain peace and order, particularly at the present time when the relations between the two Dominions were strained, and thus help in the preservation of our new-born freedom.

NOTES

The Aligarh Urdu Magazine

In an article published elsewhere, under the caption *Mahmood Ghaznavi* we have referred to a couplet printed in the *Aligarh Urdu Magazine*. Under Gandhiji's advice the attention of Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan, the Vice-Chancellor of the University was drawn to the couplet in question. We give below the English translation of the relevant portion of the reply received from the Nawabsaheb. He writes:

"I am sorry that the rhyme, which grieved Mahatmaji and patriots like you, appeared in the magazine. With God's help we shall be careful in future. Please convey my sorrow to Mahatmaji and assure him, on my behalf, that we do not in the least sympathize with such views, nor do we in any way regard them as justifiable. I hope you know that Rashid Ahmad Siddikisaheb is himself a staunch nationalist, and can never tolerate a thing of this type. It appears there has been some oversight or mistake."

Gandhiji was pleased when he heard Nawab Mohammadsaheb's reply. Any of us can be guilty of oversight or even mistakes, especially in the present atmosphere. We believe that with a little care, the *Aligarh Urdu Magazine* should be able to render useful service to the country. In the present atmosphere, such mistakes are unpardonable.

New Delhi, 4-1-'48

SUNDARLAL

Public Conveyances

A news item states that the Madras Government desire to ban rickshaw pulling on humanitarian grounds. We have come to such straits that man has had to compete with beasts of burden to eke out a living. We hope the other provinces will follow suit.

Local transport is one of the occupations that should be open to the masses. Replacing *tangas* and *jutkas* by buses is a bad economy. *Tanga* building is a flourishing industry in Lahore, Peshawar and many such cities. Every bit of the money spent on these circulates in the country bringing food and clothing to thousands of homes. Similarly, the maintenance of horses also helps to bring employment to thousands of persons including women and children. The running of buses on the other hand exports employment abroad. Lakhs of rupees are spent on the vehicles, the fuel and accessories and only a few drivers and cleaners find occupation. Petrol being a commodity in demand internationally, it forms the main bone of contention between nations and forms the focal point of global wars. Hence, we would do well to take note before we plunge headlong into mechanized means of transport.

Even in this short time a great many transport services have developed into monopolies. This is a danger to be guarded against before it overwhelms us.

J. C. K.

MAHAMOOD GHAZNAVI

In an Urdu quarterly published from the Aligarh University a poem has appeared under the caption *Farzandan-e-Qaum Se*, i. e. 'To the Sons of the Community'. The following is the English rendering of one of the lines in that poem:

The voice of Somnath is again resounding in the air. Therefore, produce another Mahamood of Ghazni from some modern Ghazni.

Evidently the poet is referring to the news that appeared in the Press that it is proposed to resuscitate the temple of Somnath. Whether Mahamood ever reached Somnath or not is a separate question, but we must confess we were pained to read this line.

Our questioning the history of Mahamood's invasion of Somnath may astonish some of our readers. But who could suspect fifty years back that the story of the Black Hole of Calcutta was a pure myth? How many will suspect even now that the story of the massacre of Bibigarh in 1857 and of the 'well' in Cawnpore may after all be a 'shameful fabrication'. The words in commas are from the statement of a responsible Englishman in the *Times* dated 25th August, 1858. So-called recorded history may yet give us many such occasions for astonishment. We quote the following from Shri C. V. Vaidya's well-known *History of Medieval Hindu India*. Referring to Mahamood's invasion of Somnath he says:

"Unfortunately, we have no mention of this expedition, the highest achievement of Mahamood, in the work of Utbi though he lived up to 420H (1029 A. D.) as stated before, i. e. four years after this event. Nor does Rashiduddin, who wrote more than two centuries later, mention the Somnath expedition, or Hamidullah Mustafi who followed him twenty years later (E. II. p. 430-431). The first description is found in Ibn Asir, and later writers have only embellished his account (*ditto* p. 468). And there is no mention whatever of this great calamity which overtook Gujarat in the palmy days of the Solanki rulers whose account is fully given by many Gujarat Jain and Hindu chroniclers from the time of the founder Mulraj who came to the throne of Anhilwad, as will be shown later on, in 961, sixteen years before Subuktigin. We do not also find the slightest hint about this calamity in any inscription found up to this time. Under these circumstances one is disposed to doubt whether this expedition was actually undertaken by Mahamood in distant Gujarat where he must have arrived after traversing a wide desert." (p. 87)

Even after this Shri Vaidya is of the opinion that there must be some truth in Mahamood's invasion of Somnath. His argument is as follows:

"Hindu writers would be lothe to mention this disaster to one of their greatest gods and kings and that writers though writing centuries after the event had certain Muslim accounts before them and are not likely to invent a wholly imaginary story."

After this Shri Vaidya gives a brief English rendering of the account by Ibn Asir. But before

doing so Shri Vaidya again says concerning Ibn Asir's account :

"We may at the outset state that this account, exaggerated as it must be, still more increased in the marvellous element in later writers who added imaginary stories to it, chiefly from a desire to heighten the religious greatness of Mahamood. The story, for instance, — a story told by even Gibbon — that immense treasure was concealed within the idol of Somnath, that *brahmanas* offered as ransom several crores of rupees to Mahamood which his generals advised him to accept and that Mahamood refused saying that he would like to be known on the Judgment Day as an idol-breaker and not as an idol-seller — is a fabrication of some one, if not of Farishta himself. Wilson, as quoted by Elliot, (II. p. 476) commenting on this embellishment of the story of Somnath, observed: 'The earlier Mohamedan writers say nothing of the mutilation of the features of the idol, for in fact it had none; nor of treasures it contained, which, as it was solid, could not have been within it. Farishta invents the hidden treasures of rubies and pearls with quite as little warrant.' This story is plainly absurd, as the *linga* of Somnath must have been a solid block of stone. Similarly the story that Mahamood was led into a waterless desert by a treacherous Hindu guide and that Mahamood eventually by prayer was able to find water, as also the story that Mahamood wished to remain in Gujarat as it was a fertile country possessing gold mines, but was induced to give up this idea on the representation of ministers that Khurasan was the country inherited from his father and the best for him to live in, are incredible."

Similarly, Shri Vaidya questions the truth of some other anecdotes current in connection with this expedition. Most of these are embellishments of the story given by Ibn Asir, and Shri Vaidya regards Ibn Asir's account also as exaggerated. Every student of the history of medieval India knows that most Muslim writers of the period, whenever they describe the exploits of Muslim kings, greatly exaggerate stories of the demolition of temples, of the breaking of idols and of forcible conversions by their heroes, in order to demonstrate their zeal for the spread of Islam. Even if the story of Mahamood's invasion of Somnath be true and there are valid reasons to doubt it — there can be no doubt that most of the incidents mentioned in that connection are not historical.

We would now like to describe the character of Mahamood as depicted by Shri Vaidya in his own words. He says:

"We, indeed, think that Mahamood was one of those great men whom nature produces at intervals, men of exceptional qualities and unparalleled capacities, men who like Akbar or Shivaji, Napoleon or Peter the Great create new epochs in the history of the world and change the destinies of nations. As a man Mahamood was a person of strict discipline and stern conduct. In all his expeditions we do not read, along with the plunder of towns and temples and even slaughter and enslavement of fighters, the slaying or ravishing of women.

And he loved justice and hated oppression so thoroughly that he was ready to destroy his own son if caught in the act of adultery. He was a good ruler and administrator and laboured to promote the wellbeing of his people in every way, protected commerce by the suppression of robbery and kept the communications between distant provinces free of danger so that 'caravans passed freely between Khorasan and Lahore' (Utbi). He appointed good governors to the provinces and exercised strict supervision over them so that they did not oppress the people. Utbi is not a flatterer when he praises Mahamood as 'the glorious lord of the poor who displayed the face of level equity between the widow and the wealthy so that the door of boasting and oppression was closed'. 'And he charged an examiner of weights and measures to go among the market people and guard the standard of weights and measures, . . . formerly the streets of the bazaars were not covered and the market people were vexed by dust and rain. He ordered the roofs of the bazaars to be connected, . . . the city was entirely covered with roofs, with light-affording devices inter-woven, so that all may be gladdened by the penetrating of the rays of the sun' (p. 486). 'He expended yearly nearly one hundred thousand *dinars* in promoting justice and gladness for the people and in honourable and pious liberalities.' . . . Mahamood did not perpetrate those inhuman massacres of innocent and helpless human beings which Changis and Timur perpetrated . . . He spent every year vast sums on the encouragement of letters and had founded a well-endowed college with salaried professors where students were fed at State expense . . . The story told about Firdausi . . . shows the great encouragement which Mahamood gave to literature and the preservation of the ancient history of Persia. The fact that Firdausi, though a *Shia* and perhaps a heretic, was entrusted with this work of immortalizing the history of fire-worshipping Persian kings, brings out Mahamood's unalloyed love of letters. 'Mahamood, himself a *Sunni*, still extended patronage to Persian literature and learning and developed it even at the expense of Arabic institutions' . . . Mahamood's patronage of Alberuni shows that he did not object even to the study of Sanskrit literature, philosophy and science. At any rate, the galaxy of learned men, poets, and philosophers of unique ability, like Firdausi and Albaruni which illumined the court of Mahamood should make him as renowned as Akbar of modern and Vikramaditya of ancient fame . . . Mahamood himself, like Babar, wrote memoirs in the midst of his wars and sent them home . . . Mahamood's civil and military administration was well-ordered and strong . . . To sum up, we think that Gibbon is right when he says that Mahamood was one of the greatest kings of the world. He was an intrepid soldier and a consummate commander, a lover of justice and a patron of learned men, a sovereign who laboured for the peace and prosperity of his people and strove to extend education and commerce. As a man, Mahamood was a person of strict disci-

pline and was not by nature cruel or avaricious but was temperate and generous."

Shri. C. V. Vaidya also says:

"The story that Mahamood removed the Sausal gates of the temple of Somnath to Ghazni has not been credited by modern scholars and the gates which were brought by the English in 1843 after their conquest of Afghanistan are lying unnoticed in the Fort at Agra (Sardesai)."

Mahmood's army included a good number of Hindus who followed their own religion. One of his Hindu generals was Tilak by name. With the help of Tilak and his Hindu soldiers Mahamood defeated several of his Muslim opponents outside India. In his invasions of India whenever he could get a good amount as tribute from the worshippers of a temple, he protected the temple instead of demolishing it. In trying to extend his empire he did in India mostly what he did in Tatar, Khorasan, Balkh and Isfahan.

Yet it has to be admitted that in his invasions of Hindustan Mahamood demolished temples and forcibly converted people, specially prisoners of war. Neither Akbar nor Shivaji was ever guilty of such behaviour towards people of other faiths. This makes no small difference in their character. All that we have said above is intended to bring out two things. Firstly, that we may not give credit to every story that may be found in so-called recorded history. Secondly, that in the character of so many individuals their vices conceal many virtues and vice versa. History should be studied with a good amount of circumspection, sympathy, patience and freedom from bias. Thus alone can we reach truth and derive real benefit from such study.

Again, any form of compulsion in the matter of religion is against the precepts of the *Quran* and the life and example of the great Prophet. The *Quran* unequivocally lays down: "There should be no compulsion in religion" (2-256). As for those whom some people worship besides the one God, the *Quran* expressly lays down the following for the guidance of the Musalmans:

"Do not speak ill of those (gods, goddesses or idols) whom they worship besides the one God" (6-107). How can the *Quran* permit the breaking of the objects of another's worship when it does not permit even speaking ill of such objects? No sentence from the *Quran* can be quoted against this clear injunction. The *Quran* enjoins upon its followers the duty of propagating its religion, but, as for the method of propagating it, it again clearly says: "Explain to those of other faiths with good sense and in a sweet manner and whenever you discuss things with them do it in all sweetness" (16-125). The whole life of the Prophet of Islam was an example to those who want to live up to these principles. During the first thirteen years of his career as the propagator of Islam, the Prophet lived in Mecca and during all that period whenever it was possible for him to do so he said his prayers within the precincts of the Kaba, which was then full of idols. The Prophet was against idol worship

and preached accordingly. Yet not once during those thirteen years did he in any way insult any of those idols nor did he ever lay his hands upon any of them, nor did he permit any Musalman to do so. Even long after these thirteen years, when he performed his second pilgrimage to Mecca, all the three hundred and sixty idols were present inside the Kaba. Neither the Prophet nor any of his two thousand followers did anything derogatory to the honour or respect of any of those idols, or anything which could injure the feelings of any of the worshippers of those idols. It was just this tolerance and this consideration for the feelings of others which within the next few years brought the whole people of Mecca within the fold of Islam. No doubt, Islam permits the breaking of idols. The Prophet himself got all the idols of the Kaba uprooted and thrown away. But it was done only when not one person was left who still believed in the worship of those idols. Only those who had become converts to Islam could throw away after conversion their erstwhile objects of worship. Whenever the Prophet sent out missionaries to preach the worship of one God to other people, he gave them the same instructions with regard to the objects of those people's worship. Similarly, instructions were given to Ayash when he was sent out to preach Islam to people of Yaman. We need not add other illustrations.

In spite of his other great and good qualities, Mahamood's use of compulsion in the matter of religion, while dealing with peoples of other faiths whatever its extent, could be justified neither by the principles of Islam nor by the code of ordinary human morals. It would be good if we concentrate our attention on the good points in the character of all great leaders of humanity, to whatever period or country they might have belonged. We can well ignore the failings of others, great or small, with profit to ourselves. The editor of the Urdu magazine, while publishing this little poem, has ignored his responsibility as a journalist, nor has he taken into consideration the present atmosphere in the country. We must all be much more cautious, more rational and much more regardful of each other's feelings if we want to solve our country's difficulties.

New Delhi, 29-12-'47

SUNDARLAL

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