

HARIJAN

Editor: PYARELAL

VOL. XI, No. 8

AHMEDABAD — SUNDAY, MARCH 23, 1947

TWO ANNAS

GANDHIJI'S BIHAR TOUR DIARY

5-3-'47

As this was Gandhiji's first visit to Bihar after an interval of seven years there was a huge gathering to greet him at the prayer meeting on the famous *maidan* of Patna. After the usual prayers Gandhiji, who was driven by Prof. Abdul Bari, President of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, to the prayer meeting in a motor car apologized for having come in a motor car instead of walking to the prayer meeting. This was, he said, a reflection on the Biharis who should know the art of welcoming people in a quiet and dignified manner instead of the present embarrassing manner. They should have had consideration for his old age, he said, and spared him the shouts however well-meant they were but which were too much for his ears. He complimented the vast audience on the exemplary silence which they observed during the prayers. He then referred to the mission which had brought him to Bihar, the occasion being Dr. Syed Mahmud's letter sent through his private secretary. He had flattered himself with the belief that it will be unnecessary for him to visit what he affectionately described as 'his Bihar' by right of service. But Dr. Mahmud's letter led him to think that all was not as well as it should be. He knew that what the Hindus of Bihar had done towards their brethren, the Muslims, was infinitely worse than what Noakhali had done. He had hoped that they had done or were doing all the reparations that were possible and that was in magnitude as great as the crime. That meant that if there was real repentance, they should prove the truth of the great saying, "The greater the sinner, the greater the sin." He hoped that the Bihar Hindus will not be guilty of self-righteousness by saying that the Biharis, who had forgotten in a fit of insanity that they were human beings, were drawn from the *goonda* elements for whom the Congressmen of Bihar could not be held responsible. If they adopted the attitude of self-righteousness, they would reduce the Congress to a miserable party, whereas the Congress claimed, and he had repeated the claim in London at the Round Table Conference he had attended, that of all the organizations in India the Congress was the only one organization which rightfully claimed to represent the whole of India, whether it was called French India or Portuguese India or the India of the States, because the Congress claimed by right of service to represent not only the nominal Congressmen or its sympathizers but also its enemies. Therefore, the Congress had to make itself responsible for the misdeeds of all

communities and all classes. It should be its proud privilege to better and improve the moral, material and physical condition of the whole of India to entitle it to the proud claim it had made ever since its existence. As a matter of fact, it would be wrong even to say that there was not a single Congressman involved in the mad upheaval. That many Congressmen had staked their lives in order to save their Muslim friends and brethren was no answer to the charge that was justly hurled against the Bihar Hindus by indignant and injured Muslims who did not hesitate to describe the Bihar crime as having no parallel in history. If he was so minded, he would be able to show that there were to be found in history examples of human monsters having done crimes even worse than those of the Hindus of Bihar. But he did not want to be guilty of making comparisons and weigh the greatness of crimes in golden scales. On the contrary, a truly repentant man would never want to flatter himself by even thinking that he was not as bad as his predecessors. There was a legitimate place for rivalry in doing good and outdoing one's predecessors and one's own labours in the act of service. He was therefore grieved to find that there were thoughtless Hindus in all parts of India who falsely hugged the belief that Bihar had arrested the growth of lawlessness that was to be witnessed in Noakhali. He wished to remind them in forcible terms that that way of thinking and doing was the way to perdition and slavery, never to freedom and bravery. It was a cowardly thing for a man to believe that barbarity such as was exhibited could ever protect a civilization or a religion, or defend freedom. He was able from recent first-hand knowledge to say that where there was cowardice on the one hand there was cruelty on the other. The way, therefore, to take reprisals upon Noakhali was to learn how not to copy the barbarous deeds such as Noakhali had proved itself capable of but to return barbarism by manliness which consisted in daring to die without a thought of retaliation and without in any way compromising one's honour. He warned the audience and through them the whole of India that if they really wished to see India independent in every sense of the term, they must not imitate barbarous methods. Those who resorted to such methods would find that they were retarding the day of India's deliverance.

6-3-'47

Unlike the previous evening, Gandhiji walked tonight to the prayer ground in perfect peace through a passage lined by lady volunteers. The crowd had also become orderly. Gandhiji began

his post-prayer address by complimenting the audience as well as Bari Saheb, the President of the Provincial Congress Committee, and his comrades for the orderliness which had been successfully maintained during the evening. While the *Ramadhun* was being sung there were some beats out of time. His advice was that they should practise more until both the tune and the time were in perfect unison.

A note had been handed to him reminding him that the *Holi* was on the following day and people would like to hear his opinion as to how it ought to be celebrated. Gandhiji began by saying that he had no doubt in his mind that a religious ceremony like the *Holi* should never be marked by wild revelry, but by a disciplined effort to put oneself in communion with God.

There was a time, he continued, when the Hindus and the Musalmans lived side by side as peaceful neighbours. If things had today come to such a pass that they could not look upon one another as friends, let them at least not behave as enemies. There was fear among the Musalmans that the occasion of the *Holi* might be marked by renewed attacks upon them. It was surprising that he was hearing from them what he had heard from the Hindus in Noakhali and Tipperah and he felt ashamed to have to listen to the same tales in Patna as in Noakhali. He would, therefore, venture to say to his Muslim brothers in Bihar what he had said to the Hindus in Noakhali viz., that they should shed all fear of man and trust God; but he knew that it was a counsel of perfection.

Cries of *Vande Mataram*, *Jai Bharat* or *Jai Hind* frightened the Musalmans today. Were the shouts of *Bharat ki Jai* going to mean *Musalman ki Kshai*? It was a matter of shame that things had been brought to such a pass. He had been meeting several Muslim League friends, who, he felt, had opened their hearts before him and asked him if the Musalmans would not really be allowed to remain in a province like Bihar. The Muslim friends who were in the Congress like Dr. Syed Mahmud had also expressed their uneasiness at the present situation. This terrorization of brother by brother, if it were true, was unbearable for him. Were they really going to return one act of madness by another? In that event India could only be drowned in a sea of blood.

Gandhiji was firmly of the opinion that this could never be our fate if we were determined to have it otherwise. His hope lay more in womenkind who, he had ever maintained, were the living embodiment of *ahimsa* and of self-sacrifice, without which *ahimsa* could never be a reality. Gandhiji wanted everyone to celebrate the *Holi* in such a manner that every single Muslim felt that the Hindus had not only repented for what had been done to them but had also gathered love for them to an extent which outdid their previous sentiments. If the *Holi* was marked by this revival of the old friendly relations then indeed it would be a truly religious celebration.

There was one thing more which Gandhiji wanted to tell his audience in the hope that justice would be done wherever his voice could reach. It had been conveyed to him that there were Muslim women even now kept perforce in Hindu homes. If that were true and if, of course, such women were still living, he would expect every one of them to be restored to their homes. The miscreants should show true repentance and every Hindu should consider it his duty to impress upon them that they should repent and courageously face punishment for their misdeeds. If that were too much for them, he would at least expect the women to be restored to him or to Rajendra Babu in perfect safety.

It was not enough that the Hindus should express lip-repentance or compensate the sufferers by means of money. What was really needed was that their hearts should become pure and, in place of the hatred or indifference which was sweeping over them, love should reign so that under its glow every single Muslim man, woman and child felt perfectly secure and free to pursue his or her own religious practices without the least let or hindrance. Let us all, he prayed, make the *Holi* an occasion for the initiation of this relation between the two sister communities.

7-3-'47

Gandhiji began his address this evening by saying that just before starting for the prayer ground he had taken a brief rest. The whole of his waking hours during the day had been spent in listening to the reports and the accounts brought in by many Muslim and Hindu friends. None of them had been able to assure him that things had completely settled down to complete normality. This had fatigued him mentally and hence the needed rest.

The ideal of the *sthitaprajna* (man whose understanding is secure) described in the second chapter of the *Gita* was always before him and he was ceaseless in his efforts to reach that ideal. Whatever others might say of him, he knew he was yet far from it. When one really reaches such a state, his very thought becomes charged with a power which transforms those around him. But where was that power in him now? He could only say that he was a common mortal, made of the same clay of which others were made, only ceaselessly striving to attain the lofty ideal which the *Gita* held before all mankind.

It was because his thoughts reached tonight only those brothers and sisters who had perhaps no direct influence upon the rioters that he had been seriously thinking if he should not march from village to village in the manner of Noakhali, so that what little power his thoughts contained might be conveyed directly to the most distant villager who had done a wrong to his brother Musalman.

Bihar was the land of Tulsidas' *Ramayana*. However uneducated or poor a Bihari might be, his voice ever rang with the music of that mighty epic. They knew what was sin and what was also meant by religious merit. The misdeeds which had

come out of their hands had been of terrible proportions. Should not then their *prayashchitta* (atonement) be of the same order? There was a saying: "The greater the sinner, the greater the sin." It was in this spirit that they should approach those who had suffered at their hands and try to do the right by them.

He had said last evening that all Muslim women who are alleged even now to be confined in Hindu homes should be returned. It would indeed be a brave thing if the miscreants came forward and openly confessed their sins and were prepared to bear all punishment justly meted out to them. But if such courage was lacking, they could at least restore the girls to him without any fear of harm coming to them. There was however one thing more he would like them to do. It had been reported that property worth about a crore of rupees had been looted or destroyed. It did not matter what the exact figure was. For, if a man was deprived of a couple of rupees when only he had that amount it meant that he had lost his all. It became then the duty of every Hindu to see that the looted property was returned and losses compensated for wherever they had occurred in the province. If the men concerned were no longer living, the restored property or the compensation should at least reach the surviving relatives.

This much he could surely expect from Biharis who lived in the land of the *Ramayana* and who tried to set their lives in accordance with the teachings of that noble book.

1

MAULANA AZAD ON RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

[Extract from Maulana Azad's interview as it appeared in the *Hindustan Standard* of 19-2-'47]

Speaking of imparting religious education in schools, Maulana Azad said that "in India, emphasis on religion has been and is greater than in other countries. Not only the past tradition of India but also the present temper of the people tend to emphasize the importance of religious instruction. If Government decide that religious instruction should be included in education, it seems imperative that the religious instruction offered should be of the best type.

"Religious instruction often imparted in India in private institutions is of a kind which, instead of broadening the outlook and inculcating a spirit of toleration and goodwill to all men, produces exactly the opposite results. It is likely that under State supervision even denominational teaching can be imparted in a more liberal spirit than under private control. The aim of all religious teaching should be to make men more tolerant and broad-minded and it is my opinion that this can be more effectively done if the State takes charge of the question than if it is left to private initiative. I will indicate the decision of the Government on this question at an early date.

"Another point on which I want to express my opinion is in respect of the educational activities of missionary societies. There is no doubt that missionary societies have played a very important part in the

dissemination of modern education and the development of modern outlook. This is true not only of India but of other countries of the East as well.

"With valuable examples of the work done by missionaries in the past, there is no reason why their work on the same humanitarian lines should not receive equal appreciation in the future. It is only in respect of one problem that difficulties arise at times. This is on the vexed question of conversions, and especially conversions *en masse*. World opinion has undergone great changes on the question and responsible missionaries have themselves come to recognize that mass conversions are in reality no conversions at all. Christ himself emphasized the baptism of the spirit rather than formal baptism by water, and missionaries would be true to the spirit of Christ if they preached his message of humanity instead of attempting to convert people to the dogma of a Church. If all missionary societies adopt this enlightened outlook, there is no reason why independent India should in any way hesitate to accept the services which it is theirs to offer."

2

CENTRAL ADVISORY BOARD'S RECOMMENDATIONS

New Delhi, Jan. 27th

"The Central Advisory Board of Education has endorsed the view of the Working Committee of the National War Academy that residential schools, where boys may obtain adequate facilities for developing the character and powers of leadership, should be started by Provinces and States to act as 'feeders' for the National War Academy.

"The Board is of opinion that the new type of schools contemplated in the Scheme of National Post-War Education will provide the necessary training for the leadership, character, intelligence, courage and physical fitness required by the military authorities for the Army, Navy and Air Force.

"It directs the attention of provincial authorities to the necessity of developing their schools on these lines which will actually serve as the kind of schools which the military authorities have in mind" ... A. P. I.

CLIVE TO KEYNES

(A Survey of the History of our Public Debts and Credits)

By J. C. Kumarappa

Price Annas Twelve, Postage etc. Annas One

ECONOMY OF PERMANENCE

(A Quest for a Social Order based on Non-violence)

By J. C. Kumarappa

With a Foreword by Gandhiji

Price Rupees Two, Postage etc. Annas Five

ECONOMICS OF KHADDAR

(Second Revised Edition)

By Richard B. Gregg

Price Rupees Two, Postage etc. Annas Six

NAVAJIVAN KARYALAYA
Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD

HARIJAN

March 23

1947

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION, MILITARY TRAINING AND THE ROMAN SCRIPT

[In a letter to Shri E. W. Aryanayakam of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh Gandhiji has expressed his views definitely on all these three important questions that are exercising the public mind during this period of transition. As all the three points are vital to our growth as a free nation, we reproduce the letter here. The extract from Maulana Azad's interview and the recommendations of the Central Advisory Board are reproduced elsewhere in this number for reference. Ed.]

I was more than glad to have your brief visit and the briefest chat with you on matters of common interest.

You have given me a cutting from the *Hindustan Standard* purporting to report the views of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on education. Assuming the correctness of the report I say categorically that it is inconsistent with the line followed by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh. It is in the villages of India where India lives, not in the few Westernized cities which are the citadels of a foreign power.

I do not believe that the State can concern itself or cope with religious education. I believe that religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations. Do not mix up religion and ethics. I believe that fundamental ethics is common to all religions. Teaching of fundamental ethics is undoubtedly a function of the State. By religion I have not in mind fundamental ethics but what goes by the name of denominationalism. We have suffered enough from State-aided religion and a State Church. A society or a group, which depends partly or wholly on State aid for the existence of its religion, does not deserve or, better still, does not have any religion worth the name. I do not need to give any illustrations in support of this obvious truth as it is to me.

The second point deserving attention in the report in question is regarding the replacing of the Urdu and Nagari scripts by the Roman Script. However attractive the proposition may appear to be and whatever is true of the Indian soldiers, in my opinion, the replacing would be a fatal blunder and we would find ourselves in the fire out of the frying pan. In this connection, I would like you to read my statement on the subject issued to the Press on January 21 last.

The third thing that pained me was the reference to military education. I think that we have to wait a long time before a nation-wide decision on the point is made. Otherwise, we are likely to become a curse rather than a blessing to the world. Leaders are not made, they are born. Should the State be in a hurry over this matter even before full independence is established? Therefore, I am

surprised that the Central Advisory Board should be party to such a sweeping recommendation as they have made.

Kazirkhil, 21-2-'47

KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES EXHIBITION

The National Week will be upon us soon. The Congress is now turning towards constructive work in all earnestness as is seen from the resolutions passed at Allahabad. It will, therefore, be useful to understand how our exhibitions are to be organized.

1. OBJECT

To demonstrate the fundamental ideals underlying *khadi* and Village Industries to the masses of our illiterate, poor country people, exhibition is the one effective medium. By its means they can be made to understand what the Village Movement means and how it can be achieved. Hence it is obvious that such exhibitions should be conducted with the sole and selfless object of educating our village folk on whose co-operation ultimately rests the success of the Village Movement. Exhibitions should not be organized with the object of fleecing the public for monetary gains.

2. GATE FEE

Only a nominal gate fee should be charged.

3. DECORATION

There is no need to be extravagant on this item. Decoration should be simple and effective. It should be in line with village art. Things that are available in the villages alone should be used for decoration. In these days of cloth shortage *khadi* should not be lavishly used for decoration purposes.

4. STALLS

Most of the stalls should be for demonstration purposes.

5. DEMONSTRATIONS

All the processes of an industry, right from the raw material stage to the finished stage, should be shown to the visitors, with all the details of manufacture.

6. SALES STALLS

The kind of articles that are made in the exhibition can be allowed to be sold in these stalls. Books and literature connected with the industries demonstrated and general books explaining the objective of the Village Movement can be allowed.

7. RESTAURANT STALLS

Imparting practical knowledge to the villagers on food reforms, nutrition, etc. is very important. Therefore, restaurants should form an integral part of the exhibition and should not be merely a convenience for the visitors. Hence, such stalls shall have to be run by the exhibition. Cow's milk, butter milk, separated milk curds etc. should be served to the villagers at a nominal cost. Luxurious sweets are out of place. Mill-made sugar, vegetable *ghee*, mill-made oil, mill-ground flour, milled rice and such like should not be allowed in any of the preparations.

8. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DEMONSTRATIONS

All the industries that have to be demonstrated may not be local ones. To organize these, it may be necessary to bring in demonstrators from outside. For such persons adequate and satisfactory arrangements for boarding and lodging should be made. It would be

necessary to run a kitchen for them in the exhibition ground. This kitchen should be ably managed by the exhibition and should be utilized for cheap and nutritive food propaganda. Here too, none of the mill-made stuff should make its appearance. Cow's milk and *ghee* only should be served or supplied. Local workers too, should fall in line with the exhibition kitchen arrangements.

9. STORE PURCHASES

Needless to say, everything should be genuine village made product. Stores Purchases officer should be an idealist who may not go in for things which may appear to be cheap. His sole object is to give encouragement to village industries and *khadi*. In case such things are not available, then the industries to produce them should be first started on the exhibition ground. For instance, if unpolished rice is not available, then paddy husking industry should be started days in advance to cope up with the coming demand. It will be cutting at the root of the exhibition itself if milled rice had to be eaten while carrying on paddy husking demonstration for advocating unpolished rice in the exhibition.

10. WHEN TO START AN EXHIBITION

Considering the importance of the problem, there is no need to rush in for an exhibition with hardly any time for preparation. Exhibitions should be planned beforehand and there should be enough time allowed for collecting the materials and setting up the tools, implements etc. properly. Opening an exhibition for the visitors can even be performed when the industries have got into full swing.

11. BUILDINGS AND SHEDS

There is no need for any *pucca* building. Only the store, kitchen and dining halls should be rain and weather proof, at least till the closing date of the exhibition. Sheds for housing the industries should all be thatched halls. Sides may be protected by some good mats uniformly arranged. For constructing these sheds only village products should be utilized. Zinc sheets only mar the beauty of the exhibition and are not in consonance with our ideals.

12. LIGHTING

Lighting arrangements should be all out of vegetable oils. No kerosene should be brought into the exhibition.

13. SANITATION

The whole ground will have to be swept and kept clean daily. Proper urinals and latrines should be provided. These in turn should serve as models for the villagers who come to see the exhibition. Flush outs etc. are out of place in an exhibition of this type. Movable latrines, trenches and buckets systems should be provided. There should be volunteers to guide the visitors as to how to use them properly. The purpose of such latrines and utilization of the manure should be fully explained to the visitors.

14. POSTERS AND CHARTS

Every process and detail of the industry should be carefully described to the complete satisfaction of the visitors. To this end, posters and explanatory charts have to be provided in local languages. A great deal of lettering does not necessarily give satisfactory results. For the benefit of our illiterate villagers pictorial representation will be more beneficial.

15. DRESS AND UNIFORM

All the demonstrators, workers, volunteers, officers and clerks inside the exhibition should be clad in spotless certified *khadi*.

16. STATIONERY

All stationeries, letter-heads, covers, badges, tickets, passes, registers, record books, handbills, posters etc. should be only of handmade paper.

17. ENTERTAINMENTS ETC.

These should not merely be a pastime. Folk songs, dances and music should be of a high order aimed to demonstrate the high water mark of our culture and art. The lectures etc. should not be political harangues but purely elevating, informative and instructive.

18. THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

The other items on the Constructive Programme should be demonstrated with the advice and aid of the institutions concerned. J. C. KUMARAPPA

RESOLUTION ON THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

The Working Committee of the All India National Congress passed the following resolution at its meeting of the 7th March, 1947:

The Working Committee generally approve of the resolution regarding the Constructive Programme passed unanimously at the Conference of Presidents and Secretaries of the Provincial Congress Committees and representatives of the All India Village Industries Association, the Charkha Sangh and the Talimi Sangh held at Allahabad and direct the General Secretaries to give effect to it in such manner as the Constructive Programme Committee hereby appointed may advise.

Further, with a view to guide and advise the Congress Committees and the public to carry out specially the following items—*Khadi*, Village Industries, Basic Education, Harijan Work, Literacy and Hindustani Prachar—the Working Committee appoint a Constructive Programme Committee consisting of the following persons:

Shri Shankarrao Deo
Shri Prafulla Chandra Ghose
Shri Jugal Kishore
Shri Jairamdas Daulatram
Shri Diwakar
Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani
and one representative each of the Charkha Sangh, All India Village Industries Association and the Talimi Sangh, namely:
Shri J. C. Kumarappa
Shri Jajuji and
Shri Aryanayakam

and suggest that each member of this Constructive Programme Committee, other than the representatives of the above Constructive Work Organizations, should be in charge of such items of the Programme as the Constructive Committee may decide to allocate.

The Working Committee direct the Constructive Programme Committee to submit to the Working Committee every quarter a report of its activities and of the progress of the Constructive Programme. The Committee further direct all Congress Organizations to extend their fullest co-operation to the Constructive Programme Committee in implementing the Programme which the Constructive Programme Committee may lay down from time to time.

GANDHIJ'S WALKING TOUR DIARY

25-2-'47

Gandhiji drew the attention of the audience to the meeting he was invited to attend by the relief commissioner, Nurannabi Choudhury Saheb. He advised them to follow the advice he had given without waiting for knowing what others would do. He said that he wanted the Kingdom of God on earth. Surely we did not want to wait for any one else to do so.

Then he dealt with the questions that were addressed to him.

Q. Do you not think that a strict enforcement of the *purdah* system would improve the moral condition of women?

A. He was warned by some Muslim critics against speaking on the *purdah*. He had therefore some hesitation in speaking about it. But he took heart when he turned round and saw that many Hindu women observed it and that numerous Malaya Muslim women of whom he had many friends did not observe the *purdah*. He also knew many distinguished Muslim women of India who did not observe it. Lastly the real *purdah* was of the heart. A woman who peeped through the *purdah* and contemplated a male on whom her gaze fell violated the spirit behind it. If a woman observed it in spirit, she was truly carrying out what the great Prophet had said.

Q. To those who had lost all their trade your advice is that they should voluntarily turn themselves into labourers. Who will then look after education, commerce and the like? If you thus dissolve the division of labour, will not the cause of civilization suffer?

A. The question betrayed ignorance of his meaning. If a man could not carry on his original mercantile business, it was not open to him but obligatory on him to take to physical labour, say scavenging or breaking stones. He believed in the division of labour or work. But he did insist on equality of wages. The lawyer, the doctor, or the teacher was entitled to no more than the *bhangi*. Then only would division of work uplift the nation or the earth. There was no other royal road to true civilization or happiness.

Spirit giveth life, the letter killeth. A *Ganapati* with an elephant's head was a monster but as a representation of *om* was an uplifting symbol. Ravana with ten heads was a fabled fool but if it meant a man who carried no head about him and was tossed to and fro by the fleeting passions, he was a many-headed demon.

Q. How can the caste-Hindus look after the interests of the Untouchables? How can they realize the feelings of the classes who have suffered so long at their hands? Is it not then better to entrust the interests of the Untouchables to men of their own caste?

A. He was of the opinion that the caste-Hindu owed a sacred duty to the so-called Untouchables. He must become a *bhangi* in name and action. When that happened the Untouchables would rise at a bound and Hinduism would leave a rich legacy to

the world. If that happened, the system of cleaning closets would undergo transformation. In England real *bhangis* were famous engineers and sanitarians. That could not happen in India so long as society was sluggish and slothful.

26-2-'47

Q. When things are all going wrong at the Centre, what can common people do to restore unity?

A. There was a law of science which enunciated that two forces were simultaneously at work: the centripetal and the centrifugal. He wanted to apply the law to life also. The centre, therefore, of the Government attracted us all to it and in good government we would respond to that centripetal force. Similar was the centrifugal force in obedience to which we, the villagers of Haimchar, attracted the centre. Thus, where these forces worked well there would be ordered and orderly government at the centre and the circumference. When, however, the centre was going wrong, it should be pointless to dominate the seven hundred thousand villages. On the other hand, the villagers would live in perfect amity if they were wise in leaving alone the centre to look after its so-called high politics.

Q. A man who sacrifices self-interest for the sake of his community is at least unselfish to that extent. How can the heart of such a man be affected so that he will sacrifice communal interests for the interest of the nation?

A. A man whose spirit of sacrifice did not go beyond his own community became selfish himself and also made his community selfish. In his opinion the logical conclusion of self-sacrifice was that the individual sacrificed himself for the community, the community sacrificed itself for the district, the district for the province, the province for the nation and the nation for the world. A drop torn from the ocean perished without doing any good. If it remained a part of the ocean, it shared the glory of carrying on its bosom a fleet of mighty ships.

Q. In Free India whose interest shall be supreme? If a neighbouring State is in want, what should Free India do?

A. Gandhiji said that the first part of the question has been answered in the above. A truly independent Free India was bound to run to the help of its neighbours in distress. He instanced Afghanistan, Ceylon and Burma and said that the rule also applied to the neighbours of the last three and, thus by implication, they became India's neighbours too. And thus he said that if individual sacrifice was a living sacrifice, it embraced the whole of humanity.

27-2-'47

Gandhiji offered prayer this evening at the prayer house which was destroyed during the riot period and was rebuilt by the Government. He had a paper put in his hands about the prayer house. It showed that the *mandir* itself escaped destruction because its resourceful priest had put away the idol in a safe place. It also stated that some old rusty tins were used in the rebuilding. They hoped and Gandhiji shared the hope that the rusty tins would be well painted so as to prevent further deterioration.

Q. Can a man serve his immediate neighbours and yet serve the whole of humanity? What is the true meaning of *swadeshi*?

A. Gandhiji said that the question had been answered by him on the previous evening. He believed in the truth implicitly that a man could serve his neighbours and humanity at the same time, the condition being that the service of the neighbours was in no way selfish or exclusive, i.e. did not in any way involve the exploitation of any other human being. The neighbours would then understand the spirit in which such service was given. They would also know that they would be expected to give their services to their neighbours. Thus considered, it would spread like the proverbial snowball gathering strength in geometrical progression encircling the whole earth.

It followed that *swadeshi* was that spirit which dictated man to serve his next door neighbour to the exclusion of any other. The condition that he had already mentioned was that the neighbour thus served had in his turn to serve his own neighbour. In this sense *swadeshi* was never exclusive. It recognized the scientific limitation of human capacity for service.

Q. The Government has been introducing schemes of industrializing the country for the maximum utilization of her raw materials, not of her abundant and unused man-power which is left to rot in idleness. Can such schemes be considered *swadeshi*?

A. Gandhiji remarked that the question had been well put. He did not exactly know what the Government plan was. But he heartily endorsed the proposition that any plan which exploited the raw materials of a country and neglected the potentially more powerful man-power was lopsided and could never tend to establish human equality.

America was the most industrialized country in the world and yet it had not banished poverty and degradation. That was because it neglected the universal man-power and concentrated power in the hands of the few who amassed fortunes at the expense of the many. The result was that its industrialization had become a menace to its own poor and to the rest of the world.

If India was to escape such disaster, it had to imitate what was best in America and the other western countries and leave aside its attractive looking but destructive economic policies. Therefore, real planning consisted in the best utilization of the whole man-power of India and the distribution of the raw products of India in her numerous villages instead of sending them outside and rebuying finished articles at fabulous prices.

After the questions had been answered, Gandhiji touched upon the fact that he had a visit from some members of the Scheduled Classes. He had told them that his mission was to teach people how to be really brave. They need not be afraid for their lives because the so-called high caste men had not yet returned to their places. If they shed their fear they would have no enemies. The Muslims would

be their friends when they recognized bravery in them. Cowards were ever exposed to the enmity of all whether Muslims or others. The way to the attainment of that courage lay not in the possession of the sword and the efficiency to kill one's opponent, but in the refusal to recognize in any other human being an enemy, along with the determination to lay down one's life and yet not surrender at the point of the sword.

Gandhiji then referred in detail to some of the abuses current in local society like child marriage, absence of widow remarriage etc. which resulted in lowering the moral stature of the people. If they could shed these weaknesses, they would gain the power to die for their faith and honour.

28-2-'47

Gandhiji took up the thread of his remarks of the previous evening about the *Namasudras*. He had no time to refer to the question of education. The blame for the neglect of education among them must lie solely upon the so-called high caste Hindus. It was preposterous to expect those who were deliberately suppressed by Hindu society that they would themselves take to education. What he, however, deplored was that there were men among them who taught them not to accept good things from the so-called high caste Hindus. He was of the opinion that it was mischievous propaganda. Therefore, he expected the *Namasudras* to give definite assurances about land and the attendance of boys and girls. In that case he had no doubt that there were enough penitent Hindus who would gladly take up the duty of educating these neglected children. He invited the *Namasudras* to send the required assurances to Thakkar Bapa who might be trusted by them to do the rest and he hoped that there were enough local Hindus who would offer their money and ability for the performance of the honourable duty of educating these children.

He then referred to the prospect of his having to go to Bihar and about the atrocities that had been committed by the Hindus of Bihar before which the happenings in Noakhali or Tipperah paled into insignificance. He had enough pressure put upon him by the Muslims in Bengal to go to Bihar. He had refused to listen to the advice because he had the hope that he could work with equal effect among the Bihar Hindus without having to go there. But he had a visit from the secretary of Dr. Syed Mahmud. He had brought a long letter from Dr. Mahmud. They should know that Dr. Mahmud was a valued friend of his. He was himself Development Member of the Bihar Ministry. In answer to his question, Dr. Mahmud had written to him asking him to visit Bihar as soon as he could. He had said that all was not as rosy as it should be and that his presence in Bihar would ease the situation and reassure the Muslims that he was equally concerned about the welfare of the Muslims as of the Hindus. He could not resist Dr. Mahmud's letter. He had, therefore, sent an urgent wire to Bihar and it was highly likely

that he might have to hurry to Bihar. In that case, he would have to interrupt the tour in Noakhali and Tipperah. But the message he would leave for the Hindus and Musalmans here, during the short stay he expected to be absent, was that they should live with one another as brothers. This they could only do if each shed internal weaknesses and were prepared to lay down their lives without retaliation for the defence of what they considered sacred.

Gandhiji then passed on to a question which had been referred to him that evening. It was with regard to the partition of Bengal into two provinces, one having a Hindu and the other a Muslim majority. Bengalis had once fought against and successfully annulled the partition of their province. But according to some, he proceeded, the time had now come when such a division had become desirable in the interest of peace. Gandhiji expressed the opinion that personally he had always been anti-partition. But it was not uncommon even for brothers to fight and separate from one another. There were many things which India had to put up with in the past under compulsion, but he himself was built in a totally different way.

In a similar manner, if the Hindus, who formed the majority in the whole of India, desired to keep everyone united by means of compulsion, he would resist it in the same manner as before. He was as much against forced partition as against forced unity.

Gandhiji then proceeded to say that whatever might have been the history of British rule in the past, there was no shadow of doubt that the British were going to quit India in the near future. It was time, therefore, that the Hindus and the Muslims should determine to live in peace and amity. The alternative was civil war which would only serve to tear the country to pieces. One did not know what the future had in store for them. If the people really and sincerely, and with a pure heart, wished unitedly for a particular thing, speaking in human language, it could be said that God, being the servant of His servants, would Himself carry out that will.

2-3-'47

It was a crowded meeting which contained men and women from Bajapti. They had come to complain that Bajapti was dropped out from the programme. As to this Gandhiji said that he would try to cover Bajapti also on his return. He could not fix the time. He was not leaving Noakhali or Tipperah without the establishment of heart unity. There was time for satisfying all reasonable expectations. He was trying to go to Bihar on Sunday. He did not expect to stay there long. He would not be able to hold the prayer meeting in Haimchar but would like to have it in Chandpur.

Q. You have referred to numerous social abuses prevalent among us. They are there; but then if the men are unwilling to effect the necessary social changes what can we women do about it?

A. Gandhiji said that there was no occasion for women to consider themselves subordinate or inferior to men. Languages proclaimed that woman was half of man and by parity of reasoning man was half of woman. They were not two separate entities but halves of one. The English language went further and called woman the better half of man. Therefore, he advised women to resort to civil rebellion against all undesirable and unworthy restraints. All restraints to be beneficial must be voluntary. There was no possibility of harm resulting from civil rebellion. It presupposed purity and reasoned resistance.

Q. Those who have lost their dear ones, or the homes which they built up through years of patient care, find it extremely difficult to forgive and forget. How can they get over that feeling and look upon the community from which the miscreants came with a feeling of brotherhood?

A. The speaker said the one way to forget and forgive was to contemplate Bihar which had done much worse than Noakhali and Tipperah. Did they want the Muslims to take dire vengeance for the Hindu atrocities there? They could not. From this they should learn to forget and forgive, if they did not wish to descend to the lowest depths of barbarity. Moreover, they must not harbour an inferiority complex. They should be brave. And forgiveness was an attribute and adornment of bravery. Let them be truly brave. True bravery refused to strike; it would suffer all infliction with patient cheerfulness. That would be the truest way of disarming opposition.

Q. Speaking about the proposed partition of Bengal one of the proposals is that there should be only two separate administrative divisions without any exchange of populations taking place. This arrangement would keep each community in its place in peace. What is your objection to such a proposal?

A. Gandhiji considered two administrative divisions to be as impracticable as exchange of populations. That would result in an armed neutrality which was bound to kill all healthy growth. The leaders of both the communities must come together as friends and reduce their differences and suffer them. Any other way was the way of barbarism and subordination to a third power.

CONTENTS	PAGE
GANDHIJI'S BIHAR TOUR DIARY	73
MAULANA AZAD ON RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION	75
CENTRAL ADVISORY BOARD'S RECOMMENDATIONS	75
RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION, MILITARY TRAINING AND THE ROMAN SCRIPT	... M. K. GANDHI 76
KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES EXHIBITION	J. C. KUMARAPPA 76
RESOLUTION ON THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME	77
GANDHIJI'S WALKING TOUR DIARY	78