HARIJAN

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TWO ANNAS

FISHERY AS A BASIC CRAFT

[Shri Manjrekar is a teacher devoted to the cause of National Education. He is deeply interested in Basic Education. Here is a suggestion from him which is worthy of consideration by schools in the coastal regions. Fishery cannot be called a handicraft but the same objection can be raised against agriculture. Both agriculture and fishery are basic crafts indispensable to human existence, rich in possibilities of correlation with almost all the subjects included in the Basic Curriculum.

The writer has expressed a doubt whether catching fish would be consistent with Gandhiji's doctrine of ahimsa.

Ahimsa, doubtless, does mean reverence for all life and a votary of ahimsa would set no limit to this spirit of reverence for and oneness with life in all its forms. But we cannot grow beyond ourselves in a trice. Mankind, as a whole, has not accepted vegetarianism as a code of conduct. Millions would have to starve if they have to eschew fish or flesh from their diet.

The doctrine of non-violence, as it is placed before the world today, seeks to eschew all violence in human relations. Anger, hatred, greed, heartless exploitation that leads ultimately to strife, bitterness and war have got to be controlled and subjugated. Mankind will have made the greatest stride in its history if we succeed in eschewing violence in relations between man and man. Once this is achieved, it is an easy step—kindness to animals and reverence for all sentient life. Let us not try to run before we can walk. The spirit of non-violence, once established, is sure to grow. It is wrong to suppose that people who eat fish or flesh are wedded to violence.

— K. K.]

The Zakir Husain Committee has recommended spinning and weaving, carpentry, agriculture and leather work as basic crafts for imparting basic education to children. With the exception perhaps of leather work, the other three crafts are being tried in various parts of India. The Committee while recommending these crafts has clearly opined that any other craft for which local and geographical conditions are favourable may be selected, provided it satisfies two essential conditions: educational and economic. Here I would make bold to place before the Wardha Educationists for their favourable consideration and acceptance Fishing as a basic craft.

Fishing is a premier industry which can supply nourishing food to our underfed millions. Those of us who live by the seaside and have observed the fisherman at work with his various implements will not fail to see its educative value. A basic craft to be chosen as a medium of education must fulfil

one of the fundamental human necessities. Fishing supplies one of the primary needs of man viz. food to the people living near the sea, as much as agriculture does. It has its own place in the scheme of national economy.

The syllabus as outlined in the Zakir Husain Committee's report can be covered through the medium of and in correlation with fishing which is a productive activity. The takli whose educative possibilities have now been widely recognized, is used universally for spinning yarn from hemp for purposes of net making by fishermen even today. Growing of hemp, spinning yarn from it, takli and net manufacture may be carried on in the first five grades. Even fishing with such nets as the pupil can handle may be taken up. Making nets of various kinds for catching fish of different varieties will call for a knowledge of measurements and geometry so that the course under mathematics may be easily covered in correlation with this craft. In no craft - not even in spinning and weaving - will be found so many natural points of correlation with such subjects as Geography (which is included under social studies) and General Science as in fishing. Fishery would also inspire the method of teaching other subjects like the Mother Tongue, Drawing and Music. Actual fishing with projects like boat making, scientific methods of fish curing, fish preservation, and manufacture of fish products, fish culture and fish technology may be taken up in the last two grades.

Coming now to the self-supporting aspect of the fishing craft, I may say, without fear of being contradicted, that it is economically as much sound as, nay even sounder than, spinning and weaving. Hemp yarn, nets of various kinds, fish-fresh, smoked, canned, pickled and salted, fish products like fish guano, fish meal, fish oil and collection of biological specimens for sale to colleges and schools will command a ready market and will cover the running expenses of the school if conducted on right lines.

In short, fishery as a basic craft will (a) be a sound vehicle of education, (b) serve the pupil as a means of livelihood after going through a seven years' course of basic education, (c) contribute towards the current expenditure of the school, (d) train the pupil in the habit of disciplined cooperative activity, (e) give fishing a social status and (f) bring about the general uplift of the fishing communities which are backward educationally and economically.

The only doubt I have is as to how far this craft would fit in with Gandhiji's basis of non-violence for the Nai Talim.

India has a vast sea coast running over 3000 miles in the provinces of Bombay, Madras and Orissa where Congress Ministries wedded to Basic Education and also development of fisheries are ruling today. It is up to them to explore the possibilities of fishery as a basic craft and start such schools all along the coast. The Hindustani Talimi Sangh also would do well to carry on experiments in this direction without confining itself only to spinning and weaving and agriculture.

Karwar H. M. MANJREKAR

A. I. R. LANGUAGE POLICY [It is common knowledge that for the last few years the language policy of the A. I. R. has been a matter of bitter controversy between the protagonists respectively of literary Hindi and Urdu; and the association for the promotion of literary Hindi, namely, the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, had to go to the extent of boycotting the A. I. R. Thanks to the wise and statesmanlike decision that the Interim National Government have now arrived at regarding this vexed problem, we may hope, this avoidable controversy will now cease, and Hindustani, which is an all India medium of expression, will prosper through the A. I. R. Lovers of this all India language will be pleased to read in the Government Statement of policy given below that "a great body of listeners does not wish that Hindustani should be smothered in the controversy between the protagonists of literary Hindi and Urdu. Government, therefore, consider that a beginning should be made in the matter of the organization of programmes in simple Hindustani as distinct from literary Hindi or Urdu." The Statement of policy, as reported by the A. P. I., is given below. Ed.]

Government accept the unanimous recommendation of the Standing Advisory Committee that the following principles should guide the choice of vocabulary for Hindustani:

(a) The words to be found in the basic fund of Hindustani vocabulary should, irrespective of their origin, be the first to be employed as far as possible, either as they stand or for coining new words; (b) where the basic fund does not provide enough material for the vocabulary required, preference should be given to indigenous words and indigenous inflexion forms; (c) when tapping indigenous sources the guiding principle should be wide intelligibility.

In regard to the choice of Hindustani equivalents, the best course in Government's view is for a permanent Standing Advisory Committee for Hindustani to be constituted, in the first place, to examine the A. I. R. lexicon and suggest, in the light of the opinions already obtained, the Hindustani equivalents of the words covered by the lexicon and subsequently to advise the Director-General in all matters connected with the bringing up to date of the lexicon and on measures to promote and encourage Hindustani through the A. I. R. The constitution of this Committee will be announced separately.

Government feel that a great body of listeners does not wish that Hindustani should be smothered in the controversy between the protagonists respectively of literary Hindi and Urdu. Government, therefore, consider that a beginning should be made in the matter of the organization of programmes in simple Hindustani as distinct from literary Hindi or Urdu and from this point of view they have decided that in the programme broadcasts some proportion must be allotted to Hindustani programmes.

In the light of these decisions Government have accepted the following other unanimous recommendations of the Standing Advisory Committee:

- 1. That spoken word items other than news must be either from standard Urdu and Hindi literature or should be contributed by recognized Hindi and Urdu writers and scholars subject to the modification that there should be some items in Hindustani as well.
- 2. That programmes for women and children and other special audiences should be given separately in Hindi and Urdu according to the proportions fixed for Hindi and Urdu for different stations; further, that attempt should be made to increase the time allotted to such educative programmes subject to the modification that a large portion of these programmes should be in Hindustani.
- 3. That the language of the rural programmes was not suitable for villagers for whom it was intended and that stations should have advisory committees consisting of public men from the districts concerned to advise on all matters concerning rural programmes.
- 4. That *kavitas* (poems) of standard Hindi poets should be set to music and sung just as gazals of standard Urdu poets are being broadcast in the music programmes.
- 5. That there should be a Standing Advisory Committee for each of the two languages to advise the A. I. R. on all questions connected with various types of broadcasts in Hindi and Urdu. Government propose that there should be a similar committee for Hindustani also.
- 6. That the pronunciation of Hindi and Urdu words in classical songs should be carefully checked and the original correct pronunciation should be adhered to.
- 7. There should be adequate Hindi and Urduknowing personnel in all catagories of the staff concerned with the programmes.
- 8. That the staff concerned with Hindustani broadcasts should know both Hindi and Urdu.

Government consider that the opening and closing announcements should be in simple language with a bias towards Hindi or Urdu according to the language of the items to which they relate, and salutations or greetings should follow the general popular salutations and greetings current in the region covered by the broadcasting station. Government consider that the equivalent of decimal should be dashamalava from which, quite clearly, the word decimal itself is derived.

As regards the proportions between the different languages Government have come to the following conclusions:

PESHAWAR: The programme of spoken word items should have a definite "Pushtu" bias but so as not to exceed 50 per cent including the rural programmes. The balance should be allocated between Urdu and Hindustani in the proportion of nine to one.

LAHORE: Items of mass interest and appeal should be in the local language *Punjabi* but the total proportion of *Punjabi* including the rural programmes, should not exceed 25 per cent and the balance should be allocated between Urdu, Hindi and Hindustani in the proportion of 75 per cent, 15 per cent and 10 per cent respectively.

LUCKNOW: Hindi 70 per cent, Urdu 20 per cent, Hindustani 10 per cent.

BOMBAY: Hindustani, Hindi, and Urdu should be allocated equal proportions.

CALCUTTA and DACCA: Same as above.

DELHI: Hindi 40 per cent, Urdu 40 per cent, Hindustani 20 per cent.

The aim which Government, in the larger interests of the country, have placed before themselves is to promote and encourage Hindustani, which is defined as the common language generally spoken and understood in Northern India and written in Devnagari or Urdu script. Government feel that the conclusions which they have reached would generally be acceptable to the public at large, even though they may not entirely satisfy the two parties to the controversy. The conclusions, of necessity, keep in view the general objective and strike a balance between the needs of the general body of listeners and the requirements of those among them with literary tastes.

FRAUD OF VEGETABLE GHEE

When Dr. Hasan, the Minister for Public Health, Central Provinces and Berar, was asked the other day in the Provincial Assembly, whether the Government intended to impose restrictions on the sale of vegetable ghee, the Minister replied: "The Government is advised that it will not be in the interests of public health to prohibit the sale of 'pure' vegetable ghee or to tax it to raise its price."

I was extremely surprised to read this report. Only a few weeks back Mahatma Gandhi, in the columns of the *Harijan*, emphatically condemned the sale of vegetable ghee (vanaspati ghee) and described it as a great "fraud" on the public. Even from the scientific point of view, it has been now established beyond doubt that vegetable ghee is injurious to health. It is, therefore, astonishing that the Minister for Public Health should not realize the gravity of the situation.

In this connection I cannot do better than quote the following portions of a symposium on the subject of vegetable *ghee*, held during the Science Congress week at Bangalore last year:

"The problem of the nutritional value of vegetable ghee was discussed in all its bearings and it was felt that the widespread and unrestricted employment of vegetable ghee in the Indian dietary, in the absence of an authoritative and trustworthy pronouncement of its nutritional value or at least its innocuousness, was fraught with danger to the national health. As Professor Damodaran of Madras pointed out, it is curious that in spite of the growth and prosperity of the industry, there was little information regarding its nutritive value. Powerful vested interests have no doubt conspired to ignore certain facts about vegetable ghee since they would adversely affect their industry.

"It is fortunate, however, that a few scientists in this country have interested themselves in the problem of determining the nutritional values of the product. Dr. V. N. Patwardhan (Bombay) who spoke at the symposium revealed that vegetable ghee adversely affected the growth and the reproductive function of animals. His researches have demonstrated that litters of rats bred and maintained on vegetable ghee as the only source of fat, suffer from infantile mortality and the few survivors do not grow well. Dr. Patwardhan said that of the fats he investigated butter stood out as the fat par excellence viewed from any angle - growth, maintenance, reproduction and lactation. No particular nutritional advantage was derived by hydrogenation of a vegetable oil since the untreated oil was equally nutritive. On the other hand, information available from other sources indicated that the ill effects of hydrogenated oils may manifest themselves in the second or third generation of animals brought up and bred on diets containing hydrogenated fats.

"The refining and the hydrogenation of oils—the two essential processes involved in the production of vegetable ghee—are probably responsible for 'devitalizing' the oil and for depriving it of all the essential vitamins, unsaturated fatty acids and other growth-factors. Insect feeding experiments, conducted by Miss De Souza in the Section of Fermentation Technology, Indian Institute of Science, support this fact.

"From the nutritional standpoint, the refined and hydrogenated vegetable ghee, whose popularity is reaching dangerous proportions, is not only inferior to ghee made from butter but possibly harmful to the consumer. The verdict of the scientists who participated in the discussion was clear and unambiguous. Consume butter if you can afford, otherwise take any of the ordinary edible oils, without any treatment, as the next best."

The production of vegetable ghee is indeed one of the worst forms of capitalistic exploitation of the masses and it is high time that the Congress Ministries realized the need for restricting its sale without loss of time. In fact the hydrogenation of vegetable oil should be immediately banned altogether. Advertisements deceiving the public into the belief that vegetable ghee is beneficial to health should be legally stopped. Those who cannot afford to purchase ghee should be induced to use pure vegetable oil and not 'ghee'. It is, therefore, necessary for popular governments to educate

public opinion on this point. The enlightened public should also raise its powerful voice against this crime against society.

S. N. AGARWAL

HARIJAN

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FIELDS AND PASTURES NEW

The Working Committee of the A. I. C. C. has accepted the unanimous resolution of the Presidents and Secretaries of the Provincial Congress Committees held at Allahabad in regard to constructive work. We are happy to note that in so doing the Working Committee is alive to its changing responsibilities. A few months ago, when Mr. Churchill was thrown out and Labour was ushered into power in Britain, the world was amazed at the alertness of the British public to the needs of the peace time activities. The present resolution of the Working Committee in regard to constructive work, which has been published in the previous issue, calling upon the Provincial Congress Committees to implement the recommendations of the Allahabad Conference is no less revolutionary in its character.

The qualities needed for constructive work are very different from those required in a programme of political agitation. It calls for sustained effort, concentration and training in the service of the villages in several fields of usefulness, such as social, economic, dietetic, health and hygiene and educational. If the resolution of the Allahabad Conference is to be implemented in all earnestness, erstwhile Congress workers will have immediately to seek the necessary training before they attempt to shoulder the hard and trying responsibilities of constructive work. We hope short courses in theoretical subjects and effective practical training will be arranged for by the Committees concerned without any loss of time.

Hitherto the constructive bodies kept out of their membership active political workers. Now that the Congress is switching over to constructive work, it would seem that active membership of these organizations must be thrown open to all who wish to work for the betterment of the villages. Hence forward training in democracy in an Independent India will also have to be construed as constructive work. Up to the present, as the country was engaged in a fight for freedom, most of our selfless workers were drawn into the political arena. We hope, now that other fields are open for the activities of these proved patriots, they will come in with the same zeal and spirit of service to improve the condition of the life of our people.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

GANDHIJI'S BIHAR TOUR DIARY

8-3-'47

Gandhiji said at the prayer meeting that he hoped the audience would forgive him for speaking always and exclusively on the theme which had brought him to Bihar. It had become his duty to listen to the tale of woe that the Muslim sufferers unfolded before him from day to day. One of them had come to him and complained that, even so recently as two days ago, things were pilfered from Muslim houses. If such was the case, it was most unfortunate and if it was at all general, it betrayed a lack of the spirit of repentance without which there was no possibility of concord between the two communities in Bihar, indeed in the whole of India.

The speaker, therefore, expressed his surprise that he had received a telegram warning him that he must not condemn the Hindus in Bihar, for, what they had done was purely from a sense of duty. He had no hesitation in saying that the writer did no good to India or to Hinduism by issuing the warning. He spoke as a Hindu having a living faith in his own religion and he claimed to be a better Hindu for claiming to be a good Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew even as he was a Hindu. He invited everyone of his audience to feel likewise. And as such, he would forfeit his claim to be a Hindu if he bolstered up the wrong-doing of fellow Hindus or any other fellow being.

He claimed to do them a service by opening their eyes to their wrong-doing. They must not be carried away by the mischief, for instance, which was being done in the Punjab. If they were qualifying themselves as free citizens of India become free, they must not resort to wrong-doing on hearing of the wrongs perpetrated in other parts of India or anywhere else. Their and his duty was to imitate and assimilate whatever was good, no matter where found.

Now that he had been four days among them, he ventured to draw their attention to the duty they owed to themselves and to the distressed Muslims, viz., that they should pay whatever they could towards the relief of the sufferers. He. therefore, invited them to give whatever they could towards that cause by way of a token of repentance. It was unfortunate that he had to remind them of the obvious thing. Many Hindu donors sent him donations for the sufferers in Noakhali, which he thought amounted to nearly three lakhs of rupees. Having received the reminder, he hoped that they would come forth with handsome donations. Naturally, every pie spent would be accounted for. They should not deceive themselves into the belief that now that they had a representative Government, they would do everything in the way of finances.

The more democratic a Government, the more it laboured under disadvantages in making use of public funds. Therefore, in a well-ordered society, the legitimate limitations which Government suffered from were only crossed by wise public donations. 10-3-47

As the audience took some time to settle down during this evening's prayer Gandhiji remarked at the beginning of his address that it would be difficult for him to tell all that he wanted to do if they continued in the same manner. He expected that they had come to the prayer ground with an earnest desire to pray and then do the work of God, not for mere sight-seeing.

Several correspondents had complained to him that he was utilizing his prayer meetings for the propagation of his favourite political ideas. But the speaker never suffered from any feeling of guilt on that account. Human life being an undivided whole, no line could ever be drawn between its different compartments, nor between ethics and politics. A trader who earned his wealth by deception only succeeded in deceiving himself when he thought that his sins could be washed away by spending some amount of his ill-gotten gains on the so-called religious purposes. One's everyday life was never capable of being separated from his spiritual being. Both acted and reacted upon one another.

Indeed, it might even be said, continued Gandhiji, that the Law which held together the universe was indistinguishable from the Law-Maker. Speaking in human language, one might even go so far as to say that God Himself was subject to the Wheel of the Law. We were used to the saying that "the king could do no wrong." But in God's universe even such a distinction was hardly permissible. One could only say that "there could be no wrong in the Law, for the Law and the Law-Maker were one and the same." There was no scope for even the least little blade of grass to be free from the operation of God's laws.

Gandhiji then referred to a certain letter he had received from a very frank and honest friend. The letter had reminded him that the efforts for religious toleration that he had been making were all in vain for, after all, the quarrel between the Hindus and the Musalmans was not on account of religious differences but was essentially political in origin; religion had only been made to serve as a label for political distinctions. The friend had expressed the opinion that it was a tussle between United India on the one hand and India Divided on the other. Gandhiji confessed that he did not yet know what the full meaning of dividing India really was. But what he wanted to impress upon the audience was that supposing it were only a so-called political struggle, did it mean that all rules of decency and morals should be thrown to the winds? When human conflicts are divorced from ethical considerations, the road can only lead to the use of the atom bomb where every trace of humanity was held completely in abeyance. If there were honest differences among the people of India, should it then mean that the forty crores should descend to the level of beasts, slaughter men, women and children, innocent and guilty alike, without the least compunction? Could they not agree to settle their differences decently and in a comradely spirit? If they failed, only slavery of an unredeemable type could await them at the end of the road.

At this stage the audience near the dias became rather noisy and Gandhiji had to cut short his speech. Unlike other days he stayed on for the collection for the Muslim sufferers. He made a fervent appeal to the audience to untie their purse strings generously and contribute all that they possibly could towards the fund. Referring to the question whether the Muslims had contributed similarly for relief in Noakhali, Gandhiji said that it was indeed true that little had come to him from that quarter. But the reason, he believed, had been that he was now looked upon as enemy No. 1 rather than friend by the majority of the Muslim community in India. Yet even in Comilla, there had been a case where some Muslim and Christian friends had contributed more than Rs. 800 along with a parcel of conch-shell bangles and vermilion for distribution among the Hindu women from whom such ceremonial signs had been forcibly removed during the disturbances.

11-3-'47

In the beginning of his address, Gandhiji said that that was perhaps his last evening prayer for the time being in the city of Patna, because his tour was going to begin on the following day. For the next few days, he would tour with the city as the centre and return to it every night for rest, the prayers being naturally held elsewhere. He expected, however, that the spirit in which the previous evening's contributions to the fund for the Muslim sufferers had been made would continue unabated. The collections had amounted to nearly Rs. 2,000, besides there were some ornaments which yet remained to be auctioned. He was glad that women had given their ornaments, and he reminded them in this connection that the true ornament of woman was a pure heart, the place of which could never be taken by any physical adornment.

Then Gandhiji referred to a letter from a correspondent which had lately reached him. It was in answer to that letter that he wanted to say that if a man abused him, it would never do for him to return the abuse. An evil returned by another evil only succeeded in multiplying it, instead of leading to its reduction. It was a universal law, he said, that violence could never be quenched by superior violence but could only be quenched by nonviolence or non-resistance. But the true meaning of non-resistance had often been misunderstood or even distorted. It never implied that a non-violent man should bend before the violence of an aggressor. While not returning the latter's violence by violence, he should refuse to submit to the latter's illegitimate demand even to the point of death. That was the true meaning of non-resistance.

If, for instance, proceeded the speaker, someone asked him under threat of violence to admit a claim, say, like that of Pakistan, he should not immediately rush to return the violence thus offered. In all humility he would ask the aggressor what was really meant by the demand and if he was really satisfied that it was something worth striving for, then he would have no hesitation in proclaiming from the housetop that the demand

was just and it had to be admitted by everyone concerned. But if the demand was backed by force, then the only course open to the non-violent man was to offer non-resistance against it as long as he was not convinced of its justice. He was not to return violence by violence but neutralize it by withholding one's hand and, at the same time, refusing to submit to the demand. This was the only civilized way of going on in the world. Any other course could only lead to a race for armaments interspersed by periods of peace which was by necessity and brought about by exhaustion, when preparations would be going on for violence of a superior order. Peace through superior violence inevitably led to the atom bomb and all that it stood for. It was the completest negation of nonviolence and of democracy which was not possible without the former.

The non-violent resistance described above required courage of a superior order to that needed in violent warfare. Forgiveness was the quality of the brave, not of the cowardly. Gandhiji here related a story from the Mahabharata, when one of the Pandava brothers was accidentally injured while living in disguise in the home of King Virata. The brothers not only hid what had happened, but for fear that harm might come to the host if a drop of blood touched the ground, they prevented it from doing so by means of a golden bowl. It was this type of forbearance and courage which Gandhiji wished every Indian to develop whether he was a Hindu, Musalman, Christian, Parsi or Sikh. That alone could rescue them from their present fallen condition.

The lesson of non-violence was present in every religion but Gandhiji fondly believed that perhaps it was here in India that its practice had been reduced to a science. Innumerable saints had laid down their lives in tapashcharya until poets had felt that the Himalayas became purified in their snowy whiteness by means of their sacrifice. But all that practice of non-violence was nearly dead today. It was necessary to revive the eternal law of answering anger by love and violence by non-violence; and where could this be more readily done than in this land of King Janaka and Ramachandra?

12-3-'43

Gandhiji held his prayer by the side of the Mangles Talao in Patna city this evening. On his way, he had visited the village of Kumrahar where a prosperous Muslim family had been ruined by wholesale plunder. All books, furniture and other belongings had been destroyed, while a neighbouring masjid had been stripped of its wood work and then left practically in ruins.

Gandhiji referred in the beginning of his address to the decision of the British Government to quit India. The latter were a nation with a strong sense of reality; and when they realized that it did not pay to rule, they did not hesitate to withdraw their power over a country. This had been the course of British history in the past. If the British were going, as they surely were, what should be the duty of Indians at the same time, asked Gandhiji. Were we to

return blow for blow among ourselves, and thus perpetuate our slavery, only to tear up our Motherland, in the end, into bits which went by the name of Hindustan and Pakistan, Brahministan and Achhutistan? What greater madness could there be than what had taken place in Bengal and Bihar, or what was taking place in the Punjab or the Frontier Province?

Should we forget our humanity and return a blow for a blow? If some misdirected individual took it into his head to desecrate a temple or break idols, should a Hindu in return desecrate a mosque on that account? Did it any way help to protect the temple or to save the cause of Hinduism? Personally, said Gandhiji, he was as much an idol-worshipper as an idol-breaker, and he suggested that the whole of the audience, whether Hindu, Muslim or any other, were also so, whether they admitted it or not. He knew that mankind thirsted for symbolism. Were not masjids or churches in reality the same as mandirs? God resided everywhere, no less in stock or stone than in a single hair on the body of man. But men associated sacredness with particular places and things more than with others. Such sentiment was worthy of respect when it did not mean restrictions on similar freedom for others. To every Hindu and Musalman, Gandhiji's advice was that if there was compulsion anywhere, they should gently but firmly refuse to submit to it. Personally, he himself would hug an idol and lay down his life to protect it rather than brook any restriction upon his freedom of worship.

That required courage of a higher order than was needed in violent resistance. Gandhiji then narrated the story of Badshah Khan's conversion to non-violence. The latter came from a tribe whose tradition was to return a blow for a blow, there being cases where blood feud had been handed down from sire to son. Badshah Khan himself felt that such endless reprisals only served to perpetuate the slavery of the Pathans. When he took to nonviolence, he realized a kind of transformation coming over the Pathan tribes. It did not mean that every Pathan had undergone the transformation or that Badshah Khan who was endearingly called a fakir because he had won the heart of everybody by love and service, had himself reached the highest goal of non-violence. As far as he, the speaker, knew he (Badshah Khan) was every day nearing the goal because he realized the truth of it. It was this type of brave non-violence which Gandhiji wished the audience to imitate.

Gandhiji continued that he had come to Bihar in order to help the people in realizing the extent of the madness to which they had stooped. His object was to induce them to repent and thus undo the wrongs which had been perpetrated. The ruined houses of the Muslim family, he had just visited, had almost brought tears to his eyes. But he had steeled his heart and had come to teach the Hindu his duty towards his Muslim brother. True repentance required true courage. And Bihar, which had risen to great heights during the satyagraha in Champaran and which was the land over which the Buddha had roamed and taught, was surely capable once more

of rising to heights from which it could radiate its effulgence over the rest of India. Only unadulterated non-violence could raise it to that status.

Gandhiji added that, in his opinion, the departure from the straight path of non-violence they had made at times in 1942 was very probably responsible for the aberration to which he had referred. He instanced also the spirit of general lawlessness which had seized them inasmuch as they dared to travel without tickets, pull chains unlawfully or in senseless vindictiveness, burnt zamindari crops or belongings. He was no lover of the zamindari system. He had often spoken against it; but he frankly confessed that he was not the enemy of the zamindars. He owned no enemies. The best way to bring about reform in the economic and social systems, whose evils were admittedly many, was through the royal road of self-suffering. Any departure from it only resulted in merely changing the form of the evil that was sought to be liquidated violently. Violence was incapable of destroying the evil root and branch.

Lastly, Gandhiji referred to a letter he had received from the Harijans asking him to visit their quarters and to live with them. He would have loved to do both the things; but he had to restrict himself to the mission that had brought him to Bihar. But having made himself a bhangi in thought and deed, he could never forget the Harijans. He was sorry to say that the latter were still suffering from any disabilities at all and that they did not get ready redress of their grievances.

13-3-'47

Gandhiji visited the ruined Muslim homes of the village of Pasa before he reached the prayer ground at Ebbadulah Chawk. He began his address by a reference to the sight which had just greeted his eyes and he expressed surprise at the madness which had temporarily swept over the otherwise peaceful inhabitants of Bihar. To anyone who felt that Bihar was avenging Noakhali by what it did, he would firmly say that this was not the way of vengeance. The mentality which made one section of Indians look upon another as enemies was suicidal; it could only serve to perpetuate their slavery. In the end, such a mentality might even lead a person into the parochial feeling, when he would prize the freedom of his own village above everything else, if that were at all possible. What he really wanted every Indian to develop was the sense that an evil deed committed anywhere in India was the concern of every other Indian. Each should hold himself personally responsible for it and share the burden of undoing the wrong. Any other course could only lead them to happenings which the Punjab was witnessing today.

Invitations had come to him to leave Bihar in charge of the people's representatives and proceed to the Punjab for the restoration of peace. But Gandhiji did not consider himself so vain as to think that he could serve everywhere. He considered himself to be an humble instrument in the hands of God. His hope was to do or die in the quest for peace and amity between the sister communities in Bihar and Bengal. And he could only go away when both the communities had become friendly

with one another and no longer needed his services. In spite of the fact that he could not see his way of going to the Punjab, he hoped that his voice would reach the Hindus, the Musalmans and the Sikhs of that province, who should try to put an end to the senseless savagery which had gripped them in its hold.

Gandhiji then appealed to the local villagers to restore all the property looted from Muslim homes. They should also clean up the debris that had been created by their mischief and make it possible for their Muslim neighbours to return home quickly and safely. Incidentally he drew the attention of the audience to the fact that the village he had visited was as filthy as could be imagined. He wanted all villagers to volunteer their services, set the paths right, fill up the ditches and replace them by gardens for the recreation of the inhabitants and, in short, convert the dung heaps into abodes of peace and happiness. They could at least begin with those villages which had been laid waste by their insane anger against their Muslim brothers. 14-3-'47

Khusrupur is one of the small towns where the comparatively prosperous Muslim residents were subjected to concentrated attack. Prior to arrival at the prayer ground Gandhiji visited several such ruined homes and, when he began his address after the prayer, he appealed to the audience to lend him not only their ears but also their hearts as well.

His aim was the restoration of the old feelings which formerly prevailed among the Bihari Hindus and Musalmans. Then it could be said of them that they did not merely live like brothers, but were veritably as brothers and sisters to one another. Now and then there might have been differences and even quarrels, but it never went to the point when heart was rent from heart, as it seemed to be now. Painful things had happened which it was even difficult for him to relate; but then he wanted them to keep such happenings in the back ground and think of what their duty was in the present context.

There were only two ways lying before the country: the course that the Punjab seemed to have taken of returning a blow for a blow, and the other of unadulterated non-violence. Referring to the method of violence, Gandhiji said that some sort of peace might perhaps be established in the province by means of force. He would hope, but it could never be said with confidence, that the evil would not spread throughout India, as it happened in the case of 1857. Similar things, as we know, had happened during the Sepoy War when it was quelled by means of superior arms. Outwardly, things quieted down but the hatred against an imposed rule went deep underground, with the result that we were even today reaping the harvest of what was then sown. The British Government took the place of the East India Company. They established schools and law courts and Indians took to these with enthusiasm; they even cooperated in the diffusion of Western culture; but, in spite of all this, they could never bear the insult or the degradation involved in political subjugation. Similarly, but in a worse manner, if the Punjab quietened

down by reason of superior force used against the people of the Punjab, the seed of further quarrel and bitterness between brothers and sisters that the Hindus and the Muslims were would go still deeper.

Violence, continued Gandhiji, thus could never be ended by counter-violence. The only effective alternative to it was the way of non-violence. Bihar has had a lesson of it in Champaran in 1917, but he could perhaps say at this distance of time that although the farmers who were responsible for the movement were soon disciplined to stay their hands while non-cooperating with the English planters, their non-violence was the non-violence of the weak. Now that Indians were fighting violently as between brother and brother such non-violence could be of no avail, only non-violence of the strong could prove really effective.

That required, as the first step, that there should be true repentance, based not on bravado but on the genuine feeling that right had to be done by those who had suffered from our momentary madness. Gandhiji wished everyone not to be swayed by his personal influence or by reason of his past services but think calmly and with sufficient detachment; and, if they felt that the way of non-violence appealed to their head and heart, then they should come forward for the reparation of the injury done to the Muslim brother.

The Secretary of the Provincial Muslim League who had been good enough to come to him had complained that although the Government had made arrangement for repatriations, the mental attitude of the Hindus was not sufficiently reassuring. Gandhiji firmly said that the reality had to be faced and a determined effort made by everyone of them to root out the least trace of the feeling of hostility and make it possible for their Muslim neighbours to live in brotherly love once more.

He proceeded by saying that if the Bihari Hindus did not honestly feel like it and imagined that the way of violence alone was the proper answer to the challenge of the times, then let them say so frankly and truthfully. He would not be hurt by the truth but would prefer not to live and see the day when the method of non-violence was thus beaten. It did not matter where he laid down his life for bringing about his cherished aim; anywhere in India would still be India for him. But he still hugged the hope that non-violence would surely be crowned by victory in the end; for in the example which Bihar might set in this line today, lay future hope of peace and progress for our unhappy land. 15-3-'47

Gandhiji had gone on a visit to the Governor about an hour before prayer time from where he returned five minutes too late to the prayer ground. When he began his address he first referred to that visit and said that people might naturally be interested to learn why he had gone there. For him it was a courtesy call because he could not go expecting any favours or services from "the Governor as of yore. Under a responsible Government, which theirs was, services and favours he could expect

only from the ministers who were the representatives of the people. The Governor had undoubtedly powers with reference to the minorities but these too he could exercise only with great restraint. What he discussed was for him to communicate to his ministers. One thing, however, the speaker was free to tell them. To his agreeable surprise the Governor had said that those who were responsible to the people had to begin with themselves. If they did not begin with their individual lives and showed relative perfection, they could not be real reformers or servants of the people.

Gandhiji wanted people also to disabuse themselves of any thought that they had usurped any power from the British. Non-violent non-cooperation did not admit of any such assumption. What they performed was a simple duty. The result undoubtedly was that the British naturally and voluntarily divested themselves of much authority and powers and it was up to them to do their duty along the lines of non-violence, if they were to have complete power in and for the people. The late events in Bihar were a departure from that right conduct and, if the truth was not recognized and the infection of the Punjab spread, he had not a shadow of doubt that they would lose what was within their grasp. He, therefore, expected Bihar to recognize the fact and do its duty honourably and well.

Gandhiji then proceeded to relate his experiences during the three short visits which had been paid to the neighbouring villages. It was painful for him to find the homes in the same condition as when the rioters had left them. If they wanted their Muslim neighbours to come back, it was necessary that the proper conditions should be restored and the debris completely cleared. Every individual who felt it was his duty to make the return of the refugees smooth, could at once lend a hand in rendering the broken homes habitable once more.

Gandhiji then referred to the healthy competition which had been noticed among the rural people for contributing towards the relief fund. In quantity the collections might have fallen short of what went to the credit of the inhabitants of Bankipore; but quantity was there made up by quality, for most of the rural contributions were made up of very small sums of money.

Gandhiji then told the audience what promises he had made on their behalf to the Muslim sufferers who had come to him in the course of the day. He had assured them, in their name, that a repetition of the recent tragedy was impossible in Bihar. He had assured a flourishing Muslim merchant that he should not be afraid of restarting his business in full confidence, for he was sure that the Bihari Hindu would honour that pledge.

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