

HARIJAN

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TWO ANNAS

RYOTS OR TENANTS

Many of the popular ministries have been attempting to regulate the relationship of the zamindar and the cultivator. Generally speaking, the zamindars are merely rentiers or absentee landlords. They have no immediate contact with the land, neither do they concern themselves with the actual cultivation of crops. The methods suggested to habilitate the cultivating farmer on his own land has often taken the form of either the government buying the land, compensating the zamindar and giving it to the cultivating ryot, or confiscation to the State of large estates and splitting them up into small private holdings.

It seems to us that it is not necessary in the first instance to confiscate the land nor would it seem essential to compensate the zamindar. The course that should be adopted would seem to be to place the cultivable lands in the villages to whomsoever they may belong under a system of balanced cultivation by which the requirements of the village for a balanced diet and other primary necessities will be produced in the required quantities. Under this scheme the land will be licensed for growing the products that are necessary to ensure the needs of a group of villages with a population of about 50,000. Such lands when licensed should be cultivated by the actual owner. If any of the lands so licensed remain uncultivated for a period of 2 or 3 years without adequate reason, such lands should revert to the State and the State can then redistribute those lands amongst the villagers who are willing to utilize the land to produce commodities according to plan for balanced cultivation.

This method would ensure that no land lies idle and at the same time it would also, in the course of a few years, bring back the holdings from absentee landlords to the cultivating peasants and ensure that commodities are forthcoming to meet the needs of the people and that land is not allowed to lie uncultivated merely because of absentee landlordism.

Legislation in regard to this might not meet with much opposition as attempts to confiscate lands might. The latter savours of violence, while the former is *ahimsa*. We commend this suggestion to those provinces which are seriously thinking of meeting the shortage in commodities by increased production.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

BLOWING HOT AND COLD

The present ministry at Madras is dropping one by one the progressive items on the programme of the Prakasam Ministry. The following communique has been issued on their present textile policy:

"In April 1946, the Government of India allotted 352,000 (200,000 coarse and 152,000 fine) spindles to this province under the post-war Development Plan. These spindles were allotted on the recommendations of this Government to nine existing mills and 25 new mills to be started in this province. The Government of India also sanctioned the issue of capital and granted import licences in all these cases. The promoters of the several mills have proceeded with the construction of the necessary buildings, invited and collected share capital and placed orders for the machinery. These mills are at present in various stages of development.

"When subsequently the Government of Madras launched a scheme for encouraging hand-spinning and hand-weaving in the province, they considered that the expansion of the mill industry might impede the progress of the *Khadi* Scheme. They, therefore, revised their policy in regard to the textile mill industry and surrendered to the Government of India the spindles already allotted to this province. The managements of the mills who had secured allotments of spindles were informed accordingly.

"The Government of India, however, did not agree to the cancellation of the allotments already made on the ground that it would amount to a breach of faith on their part and involve them in litigation. This Government urged the Government of India to reconsider their decision; but the Government of India only reiterated the view that they had taken. In view of this attitude of the Government of India, this Government have anxiously studied the whole question and feel that both for moral and legal reasons they should not insist on the surrender of the spindles allotted to this province. They have accordingly decided to withdraw the surrender of spindles already offered by the Government of India.

"The Government wish to make it perfectly clear in this context that the acceptance of the quota of spindles allotted to this province does not mean any departure from their *Khadi* Scheme, the intensive part of which has already been introduced in 7 selected *firkas* and the extensive part of which is proposed to be introduced shortly in 27

firkas. The scheme which has been formulated in consultation with the All-India Spinners' Association will be pursued vigorously and it will give effect to the resolutions passed by that body at Delhi, on 9th October, 1946."

One would like to know what are the moral and legal reasons which have compelled them to take a step advantageous to the vested interests. An appeal to higher values is always commendable but the validity of such an appeal should be made clear.

In this particular instance presumably the moral reason is the sanctity of a promise made by a Government to a citizen. If the fulfilment of such a promise would militate against the welfare of the public, it should be the duty of the State to retract its hasty word and if needed compensate the loss the citizen concerned might have been put to. After all, the considerations in these cases are purely material and, financial at that. No millowner is running a mill for his spiritual uplift or for the purity of his soul! Hence his loss can easily be made good. Such a course should also satisfy any legal requirements. Even if there be other legal obstacles, such, not arising out of the immutable laws of the Medes and the Persians, nor being written on tablets brought down from heaven, but being only man-made regulations, are to be changed to suit the varying needs of everyday life.

Besides, the Government of India Act of 1935, under which it is claimed that the regulation of Textile Mills comes under the purview of the Central Government, will be a dead letter next year when the British quit India. The Textile Policy is a long term consideration. An Act that is to be effaced from the statute book in a few months ought not to be allowed to influence our future plans.

The reasons given in the communique, therefore, are not convincing. It blows hot and cold in the same breath in advocating the *khadi* programme while at the same time promoting new mills and enlarging the existing ones. These two schemes cannot flourish side by side. If the Ministry wishes to toe the mill-owners' line, they should do so openly and whole-heartedly and not resort to subterfuges.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

BOOKS

By J. C. Kumarappa

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NOTES

More "Progress"

We had pointed out in an earlier issue that destruction of nature's supply of food values in our country is an unpardonable crime. In America they destroy potatoes, coffee, etc. to keep up prices. We condemn that and yet we plump for sugar mills which do just the same. White sugar is pure energy like charcoal. This is obtained after removing all nutritive elements from the cane-juice to provide profits to the sugar millowners.

We understand the Central Government has agreed to the setting up of five new sugar mills in Bengal, each mill to have a daily crushing capacity of 600 tons.

When shall we learn to look at things with human interests instead of seeking financial gains?

Will it Bring Peace?

With 7000 tons of high explosives the fortifications of Heligoland were blown up. When the Great Fire of London destroyed its congested, dingy streets, London emerged as a healthier and finer city. Will this blowing up of old fortifications not be an opportunity for the unsuppressible Germans to build better and more up-to-date defences and use them for the future offensive?

This method of approach to ensure peace is short-sighted and treats the symptom rather than the disease. The cause lies deeper in the economic organization based on greed. If we are to assure the world freedom from periodic upheavals, we ought to set right our daily mode of life. Unless we attack the problem at this end it will never be solved.

Nai Talim Teacher Training

Training centres for Basic Education Teachers have been running in several places. The report of the Mysore State centre located at the Gurukula Ashram, under the Principalship of Sri Rajasekharan Gundappa has been received. Twentyone, including six women, underwent the ten months' course. There was a practising school of 24 children.

The successful teachers will be distributed in about ten Basic Schools to be established in the State.

Swami Vishwanandaji of the Gurukula Ashram had been a source of help and counsel to this centre.

In this transitional stage, many such camps are needed to equip the existing teachers of ordinary schools with the requirements of Basic Schools.

J. C. K.

A JAIN, MERCHANT'S SENSE OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

There was a fine city in Kachchha (Cutch) called Bhadresvar.

अस्तीह भद्रेश्वरनामधेयं पुरं वरं कच्छकृतैकशोभनम् ॥

सर्वानन्दसूरि-जगद्भूषित ॥ २-१ ॥

Her temple bells rung by pious pilgrims day and night were a thorn in the side of the devil (*Kali*).

नक्तं दिवं दैवतमन्दिरेषु घण्टारवादतिरमुष्य चासीत् ॥ २-३ ॥

Her young men were so robust and handsome that it seemed as if *Kama* (Cupid) had assumed thousands of forms in order to achieve a final victory over Shiva.

महेश्वरस्यैकजयाय कामश्चकार रूपाणि सहस्रशोऽपि ।

यत्राद्भुताकारविशेषभाजां दम्नेन रत्नतृणव्रजानाम् ॥ २-६ ॥

Her young women sang the sweetest of songs on moon-lit nights so that the moon had great difficulty in preventing his music-intoxicated deer from lingering over her sky-scraping mansions.

निशासु सौधोपरिस्थितानां मृगीदशां यत्र च चारुगानम् ।

आकर्णयन्तं स्वमृगं सुधाश्रुयाय कृच्छ्रात्वरयांभुव ॥ २-८ ॥

In Bhadresvar there lived a number of Shrimali Vaniks (*Baniyas*) who claimed their origin from the garland (*mala*) of the mother of the Universe (*Shri*). Their leader was a merchant named Jagadu (= *Jagat-deva*?) who amassed immense wealth by trading with foreign countries. He visited the sacred places of Jainism such as Shatrunjaya and Girnar at the head of a large body of fellow-pilgrims (*sangha*).

असङ्ख्यसङ्घलोकेन समं यात्रां विधाय सः ।

शत्रुजयं रैवतकं प्राप चात्यपुरं वरम् ॥ ६-३१ ॥

The dust raised by the *Sanghapati's* horses, elephants and chariots reached the sky and the bank of the celestial Ganges was converted into mud, through which the horses of the sun could hardly drag his chariot.

तथा च शुनदीतीरे सङ्घजं पङ्कतां रजः ।

यथात्र मग्नमर्काश्वा रथमुहुः कथञ्चन ॥ ६-३८ ॥

He erected temples of course but he also erected a mosque, as he owed his wealth to Muslims as well as to others.

मसीति कारयामास धीमलीसंज्ञितामसौ ।

भद्रेश्वरपुरे म्लेच्छलक्ष्मीकारणतः खलु ॥ ६-६४ ॥

Jagadu had fresh water wells sunk in every town or village that he visited.

शतशः कारयामास ग्रामे ग्रामे पुरे पुरे ।

सुधास्वादुजला वापीर्जगद्भूः क्षितिभूषणम् ॥ ६-६५ ॥

One day in Samvat 1312 Paramadevasuri, the Jain monk, said to Jagadu, "Beloved of the gods, possession of the wealth implies social responsibility and difficult times are ahead of us, when you will have a splendid opportunity of discharging that responsibility and of serving all living beings out of love for whom Mahavir Swami renounced everything that men hold dear. After 1312 the current year has expired, there will be a famine for a period of three years.

३ १ ३ १
द्वीन्द्राग्निचन्द्रवर्षेषु व्यतीतेष्वथ विक्रमात् ।

दुर्मिक्षं सर्वदेशेषु भावि वर्षत्रयावधि ॥ ६-६८ ॥

"You therefore please send your agents into every nook and corner of the land, and through them store every grain of corn that is available in the markets of the country.

प्रेष्याखिलेषु देशेषु विदग्धानात्मपुरुषान् ।

सर्वेषामपि धान्यानां त्वं तैः कारय संग्रहम् ॥ ६-६९ ॥

"And when famine comes you place these stores at the people's feet and thus earn fame white as the waves of the sea of milk."

क्षारोदवीचिविमलं त्वमर्जय यशोभरम् ।

समग्रजगतीलोकसंजीवननिदानतः ॥ ६-७० ॥

Jagadu thus collected large stocks of grain, and when famine occurred, he distributed them among the needy and the distressed.

प्रचक्रमे कणान्दातुमयं सोलतनूभवः ।

दुर्मिक्षपीड्यमानायै जनतायै कृपानिधिः ॥ ६-७४ ॥

After two years of famine, even the Chalukya Raja Visaldeva of Gujarat felt the pinch, invited Jagadu to his court and asked him for food grains, as he had heard that Jagadu still had 700 godowns full of corn.

सप्तात्र कणकोष्ठौकः शतानि तव निश्चितम् ।

श्रुत्वा मया त्वमाहूतः साम्प्रतं कणकाङ्क्षणा ॥ ६-८४ ॥

Jagadu said, "My lord, I do not own a single grain of corn anywhere.

श्रूये नाथ न सन्त्यत्र मम क्वापि कणाः खलु ॥ ६-८५ ॥

"If you doubt my word, have a look at the copper-plates inscribed and preserved in bricks in the store-rooms".

मद्वाक्ये यदि सन्देहः कणकोष्ठेषु तेष्वपि ।

अष्टिकान्तःस्थ सत्ताम्रपत्रवर्णान् विलोकय ॥ ६-८६ ॥

Visaldeva inspected the plates which carried the following inscription:

जगद्भूः कल्पयामास रङ्गार्थं हि कणानमून ॥ ६-८८ ॥

"Jagadu dedicated these food grains to the service of the poor".

"So my lord," said Jagadu to Visaldeva, "if any person dies of starvation, I would be guilty of having murdered him."

तन्मे पापं ध्रियन्ते चेज्जना दुर्मिक्षपीडिताः ॥ ६-८९ ॥

He then gave 8000 bags of grain to Visaldeva for distribution to the poor.

ददावष्टसहस्राणि स तस्मै कणमूटकान् ।

श्रीमालान्वयकोटीरन्विधा वीरत्वमाश्रितः ॥ ६-९० ॥

He similarly assisted the Rajas of Sindh, Ujjain, Delhi, Benares and Skandhila (=?). He organized 112 *danashalas* (food-distribution centres).

द्वादशाभ्यधिकं दानशालाशतमुदारधीः ।

जगद्भूः सुकृताधारो जगज्जीवातुरातनोत् ॥ ६-९३० ॥

He also placed gold coins inside sweet balls (*ladus*) and sent them at night to respectable people who would rather starve to death than beg.

स्वर्णदीनारसंयुक्तान् लज्जापिण्डान् स कोटिशः ।

निशायामर्पयामास कुलीनाय जनाय च ॥ ६-९३१ ॥

He thus distributed 9,99,000 bags of grain and spent 18 crores of rupees during the famine.

नवनवति सहस्रयुतान्नव लक्षान् धान्यमूटकानां सः ।

अष्टादशरैकोटीरन्विधोऽदत्त दुःसमये ॥ ६-९३२ ॥

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CONTROLS

Speaking at the Convocation of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, the Hon'ble Shri C. Rajagopalachari stated: "Life is now so developed and so complicated that I am fairly convinced that almost all controls will continue to exist in this world." He added that "controls will not be a temporary but a permanent affair." To an ordinary mortal this seems a paradox.

Though the war has been inactive for nearly two years, yet war conditions still prevail in the country in regard to articles of prime necessities. No doubt the scarcity in commodities has called for regulations of some kind to ensure a certain measure of social justice. Rationing is still with us. Black marketing is running rampant. Profiteering seems to be flourishing and the Government is busy with controls. To an onlooker there seems to be something "wrong in the State of Denmark." What that is, many people are not able to tell.

The mechanism of price has as its main spring the law of supply and demand. Therefore, any control of commodities and their prices must take the form of regulating the supply and demand. Rationing attempts to regulate the demand but there is a complete absence of any attempt to regulate supply. The present method adopted by the Government to control the prices is like setting the clock going by constantly turning the minute hand. What we want is to set the mechanism in order and the clock ought to work on its own. This artificial regulation of prices has been largely responsible for black marketing. The prices have to be regulated automatically, not by a fiat of the Government. The Government has been playing King Canute trying to stop the rising tide of black markets and profiteering; but the method adopted has been a total failure. In fact, great many of the dealers in commodities desire to have the controls on a permanent basis because it provides them the opportunity for black marketing. Corruption in high places has also been interested in perpetuating controls. It is high time that these matters are set right by the popular ministries now functioning.

If we wish to avoid black marketing and control the supply and demand in the natural way, rationing will take care of the demand but the supply side has to be regulated in the normal way not by merely setting up the prices artificially but by controlling the supply. The Government can do this by stocking a fair amount of articles that are sought to be controlled and holding them in reserve to be sold at fixed, regulated prices, in case the stockists are in the market attempting to sell their articles at a higher price. Of course, Government will not enter into the market as a seller until the merchants themselves by their actions invite

the Government to take drastic steps. The Government stocks will be held in godowns merely as a stand-by, watching to see that the merchants do not advance the price unduly. The moment the market prices tend to go up, the Government godowns will be opened and the stock dumped on the market to bring down the prices. The Government holdings need not be more than 10 to 15 per cent of the stock required to be able to effectively affect the market.

This is not a novel measure. It has been tried out successfully in the working of the Bihar Central Relief Committee under private agencies without the aid of law or other government powers—basing our appeal purely on persuasion. Again, in finance, this is the method adopted by the central banks to regulate interest rates which are but market prices for money. For some unknown reason the Government has not followed this well-tried path but have taken to the King Canute method of fixing prices arbitrarily and by so doing driving the commodities underground. It is not too late even now for the governments to change over and gradually decontrol the commodities as the market assumes normal conditions. We trust our governments will take immediate steps to relieve the distress the people are suffering from because of the present methods of control.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

GANDHIJI'S BIHAR TOUR DIARY

21-4-'47

This is the translation of Gandhiji's written speech, it being his silence even at the time of the prayer speech.

This evening, too, I must speak to you about *khadi*. The secret lies in hand-spun yarn. From days of yore, spinning had been woman's speciality. Poor soul, she was the slave and man the master who was to pay her the wage that was her due. During the middle ages she had to spin perforce for a mere pittance.

Except for Assam, weaving was considered man's occupation. Hence there is life left in hand-weaving. But there is no room for doubt that it is doomed to extinction if hand-spinning is not revived in all the glory that by right belongs to it. Thus if men and women will not take to hand-spinning as a sacred duty, that is, the same person will not do carding, slivering and spinning, there is little hope for *khadi*. I am not thinking of *khadi*-wear as a fashion. *Khadi* of my conception is that hand-spun which takes the place entirely in India of mill-cloth. It is beyond my power to give an adequate description of the power that this *khadi* would give to the whole of India.

Such *khadi* must remain a dream if the men of India in their millions will not spin if only by way of penance, for the sin they have committed against the women and the women will not do so as a sacred duty. That yarn which may have to be spun for wages will have to bear the same rate per hour that is paid to men for labour. There can be no inequality in wages between the sexes. Lordship

of men over women must cease. The days of this lordship are over. That we do not make this admission is a different thing. It cannot arrest the march of events. God has made of man and woman one complete whole. In the scheme of nature both are equal. It has been the object of *khadi* to verify this maxim of sex equality. The Spinners' Association has not yet succeeded, but the effort is in that direction. Time is coming when a millowner's wife will become a true devotee of *khadi*. Then *khadi* will be supreme to the exclusion of mill cloth in India. May you, women of Bihar, make the mighty effort to bring to an early fruition that happy day.

22-4-'47

After the prayer Gandhiji dealt with the work of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh which was having its sittings for two days. He reminded the audience that the Congress had issued a charter to the Sangh and therefore one would expect that in matters of education the Congress would fall back upon its experts and be guided by them. He could not go into the reasons for the anomaly. He merely pointed it out. Dr. Zakir Hussain was its President. He was a great educationist and was the soul of the Jamia Milia. He was assisted by Shri Aryanayakam and his devoted wife Asha Devi, both of them educationists. It had entered upon its eighth year of existence. It was called the new method of education for it was not a foreign importation or imposition but was consistent with the environment in India which was predominantly made up of villages. It believed in establishing an equilibrium between the body, the mind and the spirit of which man was made. It was unlike the Western type which was predominantly militarist in which the mind and the body were the primary care of education to the subordination of the spirit. This was best done when education was given through handicrafts. The other speciality was that it was designed to be wholly self-supporting. It did not, therefore, demand an expenditure of millions on education. He hoped next evening to expand the idea underlying self-supporting education.

Expressing himself strongly in favour of the use of Hindustani by Indians as against English, in the course of his speech Gandhiji stated that he had deliberately signed his name in the joint appeal (recently issued over the signatures of Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah and Gandhiji) in Hindi and Urdu.

Lord Louis Mountbatten, he added, did not mind this departure from the usual practice on his (Gandhiji's) part because the Viceroy knew that the Britishers would have to quit India shortly.

23-4-'47

According to his promise given the previous evening, Gandhiji dealt again with *Nai Talim*, which, he said, was life-giving, whereas education given by the foreign Government was necessarily life-destroying. The latter drained India's wealth, it impoverished its languages and made of us practically slaves. *Nai Talim* covered the whole life. Experience had shown that it had great possibilities and began with the embryo and ended with life itself. It gave new life to all men and women of India. Except for capital

expenditure it cost nothing. The teachers earned what they took. It stood for the art of living. Therefore, both the teacher and the pupil had to produce in the very act of teaching and learning. It enriched life from the commencement. It made the nation independent of search for employment. Whereas the annual income per head was only rupees sixty *Nai Talim* progressively increased the income.

The villagers would then not be satisfied with mere *sattu* and dirty salt for food and rags for clothing. They would have balanced food including milk, fruit and vegetables which they would produce themselves and wear spotless *khadi* which they would spin and weave themselves. Such was the promise of *Nai Talim*. Its fulfilment depended upon the will and exertion of every citizen of Free India. Without willing support from the citizens, the governments could do nothing and the governments which did not produce the simple facilities required for the whole task were not worth the salt they ate.

24-4-'47

Gandhiji referred to the meetings he had with Harijan *sevaks* and *sevikas* and *khadi* workers. With reference to the former he said that mere touch by the so-called *savarna* Hindus did not mean the removal of untouchability. Society had made very considerable progress since 1920 both among the touchables and the untouchables. There would be no rest until all distinctions between touchables and untouchables were abolished. It would not do for women to be horrified when they saw Harijan girls moving among them on terms of perfect equality. The popular ministers owed it to society that they undertook all ameliorative measures and brought in legislation without delay. Seeing that the meetings of the Charkha Sangh Trustees and the Talimi Sangh were held, he hoped that Bihar would lead the way by being first in restoration of her previous relations between the Hindus and the Muslims, giving *khadi* its rightful place and establishing *Nai Talim* in the manner he had suggested.

25-4-'47

Gandhiji having heard that some Hindus were whispering to one another that Muslims being beef-eaters were the natural enemies of Hinduism and were, therefore, fit to be destroyed. Gandhiji, therefore, devoted his remarks to the topic of cow-protection. He said that nearly forty years ago he wrote about it in *Hind Swaraj* in South Africa. He was from his childhood a devotee of the cow. He believed her to be the natural mother of prosperity. But he had expressed the opinion in *Hind Swaraj* that cow-protection societies were destroyers of the cow and not her protectors. To this view he adhered even today. True devotion to the cow required broad-mindedness and an accurate knowledge of the art and science concerning the protection of the cow. In no country on the earth were the cow and her progeny so ill-treated as in India which, strangely enough, was the only country where the cow was venerated. Their veneration, however, consisted of mere words and deadly quarrel with the Muslims over cow-killing. The very Hindus who quarrelled with the Muslims

because they slaughtered the cow for the beef she gave were not ashamed to accept the mastery of the English who were known to be beef-eaters in a sense in which the Muslims never were. He had no quarrel with the Englishmen because they ate beef and as such he had none with the Muslims either. He was concerned with showing the great inconsistency of the Hindus who for the sake of money gladly served their English masters and quarrelled with the Muslims. Then they forgot that there were Hindus who gladly partook of beef. He had known orthodox *vaishnavas* who ate beef-extract when it was prescribed by their doctors. He reminded the audience of the fact that during the Khilafat days thousands of cows were saved from the Muslim knife. The late Maulana Abdul Bari used to say that if the Hindus helped the Muslims to save the Khilafat, the Muslims were bound to save the cow for the sake of the Hindus. From every point of view, therefore, he held that it was insensate on the part of the Hindus to be angry with their Muslim brethren because they ate beef and slaughtered cows. He quoted numerous instances to show the utterly inconsistent behaviour of the Hindus in this matter. He therefore, asked the Hindus to put their own house in order before it tottered to its ruin.

26-4-'47

There was no prayer speech on this day as Gandhiji had to attend the meeting of the Jamiat-e-Islam.

27-4-'47

Addressing the gathering after prayer Gandhiji referred to his visit the previous evening to the meeting of the Jamiat-e-Islam. He was told that its members were truly servants of God, austere and simple in their habits, with a message of self-purification and self-realization for the Musalmans. Religion was sustained never by the sword but always by men of God. But they should be so not merely in name but by their conduct. The audience had gladly allowed him to go to these friends. If, however, there were some who thought that he was uselessly pandering to the Muslims by giving them undue importance, he would say that it was pride that dictated such foolishness. Such pride ill-became the votaries of Rama about whom the evening's *bhajan* had been sung.

The Muslims formed only 14 per cent of the population. It became his duty, therefore, as a member of the majority community to go to them in all humility whenever they invited him.

The song that had been sung at the prayer taught that only Rama (God, *Allah* or by whatever name one might call Him) was the true object of worship. He was not won over by offerings, except the offering of noble conduct.

Universal love became incumbent on Rama's devotees. That was the only way in which Hinduism or for that matter any religion could survive. Hinduism or any religion that departed from this straight path was doomed to destruction.

28-4-'47

The following is the English version of the written speech of Gandhiji, read before the prayer gathering it being his day of silence.

I am sorry to let you know that I shall have to go to Delhi again, by the morning train on the 30th. There is a call from Pandit Nehru. *Rastrapati* Kripalaniji has also sent a telegram from Rajputana that I should be in Delhi by the first May, as the Congress Working Committee meets on that day. It pains me to leave you at this stage. I do not relish the idea of leaving Bihar unless the Musalmans have completely shed their fear and both the communities allow me to leave with a clear conscience. I felt the same when I left Noakhali. For both these places I have the same motto before me, *Do or Die*. My non-violence bids me dedicate myself to the service of the minorities. It would be like a new birth and give me additional strength if the Hindus and the Musalmans of both these places began to live at peace with each other and shed their animosity. God knows what will come out of this travail. Man can only try and perish in the attempt. God is all in all. We are only zeroes. The same mission takes me to Delhi. I hope to return within a short time and resume duty.

You may be astonished to learn that I continue to receive letters charging me that I have compromised the interests of the Hindus by acting as a friend of the Muslims. How can I convince people by mere words if the sixty years of my public life have failed to demonstrate that by trying to befriend the Muslims I have only proved myself a true Hindu and have rightly served the Hindus and Hinduism? The essence of true religious teaching is that one should serve and befriend all. I learnt this in my mother's lap. You may refuse to call me a Hindu. I know no defence except to quote a line from Iqbal's famous song: *Majhab nahin sikhata apasmen ber rakhna* (मजहब नहीं सिखाता आपसमें बैर रखना) meaning religion does not teach us to bear ill-will towards one another. It is easy enough to be friendly to one's friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy, is the quintessence of true religion. The other is mere business.

29-4-'47

Referring to his brief visit to Delhi for which he would leave the next morning, Gandhiji requested the people not to crowd at the station. It would be a true mark of affection if they abstained from interrupting his rest or work by their shouts which he could ill bear at his age.

Before departing, continued the speaker, he would like to share with them the letter of Major General Shah Nawaz who was helping the Bihar Government in its rehabilitation work in Masaurhi.

"Rehabilitation work is making a steady and satisfactory progress. I feel that a very definite change is coming about in the outlook of the Hindu population of the area. As instances I will give three cases:

"1. In village Atarpura, we had a meeting and appointed a village *Panchayat*; two days afterwards the head of the *Panchayat* came to Patna, met all the refugees in various camps and assured them that they would welcome them back to their village and that they would guard them even with their lives.

"As a result of this nearly fifty Muslim families have returned to the village and are living there very happily. There is no police force stationed there, nor have they asked for any.

"When I sent rations there, the Hindus refused to accept them, saying that the Muslims were their guests and that they would make suitable arrangements for their feeding, harvesting of their crops etc.

"2. In the second case one Muslim of village Bir came to me and informed me that he wished to go back to his village. This was his first chance to go back after the riots. He was crying and was very much frightened to go alone. I gave him my car and sent two I. N. A. soldiers to accompany him. On the way he met a Hindu member of the Bir village *Panchayat* who stopped the car and talked to this Muslim and asked him why he was taking soldiers with him. The Muslim informed him that he was frightened. The Hindu friend then told him that it would be a matter of shame for the whole village if after Gandhiji's assurances it was still necessary to take an escort with him; he also assured the Muslim that he would get killed before any harm came to him (the Muslim).

"The Muslim gentleman, thereupon, returned to me saying that now he no longer required an escort as he was feeling quite safe.

"3. In Masaurhi most of I. N. A. soldiers are Hindus or Sikhs and are doing excellent work. Outstanding among them is one Lieutenant Kartar Singh who himself carries the beddings of the refugees from the station to their homes; and at night he petrols round their houses. Every morning he takes buckets full of milk to the mosque where he personally distributes it to all the children and sick persons.

"About three days ago when a Muslim refugee died Lieutenant Kartar Singh himself dug the grave for his body. All the Muslims are now very fond of him. They invite him to attend their meetings in the mosque."

General Shah Nawaz's report made Gandhiji feel that if the Hindus were true and really befriended the Musalmans the present all-enveloping fire would be extinguished. When it was burning all round they did not attempt to extinguish it at all places. They made a determined attack on the spot immediately before them, and the whole fire came under control. Bihar was not a small province and if the Hindus and the Muslims of Bihar became true to themselves and the latter shed all fear, the speaker had no doubt that what he heard was going on in Calcutta or elsewhere would dissolve.

ANOTHER DELHI INTERLUDE

1-5-'47

There was complete silence during the prayer meeting today evening and Gandhiji congratulated the audience on the exemplary attitude displayed by them.

Speaking after the prayer, Gandhiji referred to the absence of noise at the railway stations when he went back from Delhi to Patna and felt that the effect of the quiet attitude of the crowds at the prayer meetings in Delhi was reflected throughout his journey back to Patna except when he approached Bihar. This time, however, the lesson was forgotten and he had to suffer loud acclamations of the crowd who evidently forgot that the speaker was ill able to bear great noises. He hoped, however, that Congress workers throughout would instil the lesson of discipline into the crowds.

Gandhiji then referred to the violence that was taking place in the Frontier Province, in the Punjab and in other places. The audience might well ask, he said, why in spite of the joint appeal by Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah and himself for peace in the country and the declaration in the appeal that use of force should be eschewed for all time for gaining political ends, the appeal seemed to have been entirely defeated in practice.

In his opinion, the honour, both of the Viceroy who was instrumental in bringing about the joint appeal and of Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah was involved in the failure of the appeal. He held that it was not open to Jinnah Saheb to plead that his followers did not listen to his (Jinnah Saheb's) appeal. That would be cutting the whole ground from under his feet because he was the undisputed President of the All India Muslim League which claimed to represent the vast bulk of the Muslim population of India. Where was the authority of the League, if the Muslims resorted to violence for gaining the political aim which was summed up in the word Pakistan? Was the British Government to yield to the force of arms rather than the force of reason?

The speaker had expressed his doubts as to the wisdom of issuing the joint appeal unless it was certain that it meant for both the signatories all that the words thereof conveyed.

2-5-'47

The prayer meeting began today as usual. When the verses from the *Quran* were being recited a member of the audience objected to the recitation. He was arrested by the policeman but Gandhiji immediately stopped the prayer, and requested the policeman who had arrested him to set him free.

He would be ashamed to pray he said, where a man had been arrested for doing what he had done. He would leave the place, he said only if he were requested to do so by the *mehtars*. He would not wait even to consult the trustees as they were after all the trustees of the *mehtars*.

Shri L. G. Thatte, General Secretary of the Anti-Pakistan Front was arrested today outside the Valmiki Temple just before Gandhiji came out for the evening prayers.

Earlier in the day Shri Thatte had sent a letter to Gandhiji informing him of his intention to object to the recitation of the verses from the *Quran* at the prayer.

Another person was arrested a little later when he took exception to the recitation of *Qurānic* verses during the prayers and shouted *Hindu Dharmaki Jai*. Gandhiji then discontinued the prayers.

Gandhiji requested the police to set the man free as it put him (Gandhiji) to shame if anybody was arrested for objecting to what he did.

Gandhiji deplored such narrow-mindedness on the part of the people. Mere shouting of slogans would not carry Hinduism anywhere, he said. He was at a loss to understand why some Hindus objected to his reading the *Quran* verses in his prayer. If at places the Muslims had not behaved as they should, then it did not mean that the Hindus should retaliate by opposing the reading of the *Quran*.

The verse from the *Quran* that was being recited, Gandhiji said, was a mighty prayer in praise of God. How did it harm the Hindu religion if the prayer was recited in the Arabic language? He who said so knew neither his religion nor his duty. That prayer could also be recited in a temple.

He had been told by a friend that a prayer with the same meaning was also found in the *Yajurveda*. Those who had studied the Hindu scriptures knew that among the 108 *Upanishads* there was one called the *Allopanishad*. Did not the man who wrote it know his religion? It was said that Guru Nanak himself went to Arabia in search of truth during his religious wanderings.

No religion in the world, Gandhiji continued, could live without self-suffering. A faith gained in strength only when people were willing to lay down their lives for it. The tree of life had to be watered with the blood of martyrs, who laid down their lives without killing their opponents or intending any harm to them. That was the root of Hinduism and of all other religions.

The scene that they witnessed, Gandhiji went on to say, was a symptom of the disease that had got hold of India. Intolerance, impatience and retaliation were in the air. They were thinking even of universal conscription. God forbid that India should ever become a military nation, which would be a menace to the peace of the world and yet if things went on as they were doing what hope was there for India and, therefore, for the world? Was Pakistan to be seized by terrorism such as they seemed to be witnessing in the Frontier Province, in the Punjab, in Sindh and elsewhere?

People had suggested that every thing would be alright and non-Muslims in the Muslim majority provinces would be put on absolute equality with the Muslims if not specially favoured as against them. He suggested that it was an impossible dream. If the Muslims were taught otherwise while Pakistan was not established they could not be expected to behave better after Pakistan had become a settled fact. It was up to the Qaid-e-Azam and his lieutenants to inspire trust in the minds of the minorities in the provinces or parts, which were

designed for Pakistan. Then there would no longer be fear of Pakistan-cum-partition.

3-5-47

Addressing today's prayer meeting Gandhiji said that it was wholly wrong to distrust or attribute dishonest motives to the Viceroy unless he was proved to be unworthy of their confidence and appealed to all journalists to play the game at this delicate stage.

Gandhiji again reminded the audience of the woeful state of India today. All eyes were turned on her—in particular those of Asia and Africa. He had sensed that at the Asian Conference. Japan had failed to give the right lead by following the path of imperialism and where was she today? he asked. India had won a moral victory over Britain because she had fought non-violently and that was why the Asian countries hoped for proper guidance from her. It was the duty of every Indian not to belie these hopes.

If Asia and Africa had the right lead given to them by India, it would, Gandhiji said, change the face of the world. Just as water became muddy on the surface when the flood here in the shape of liberty came, but flowed clear and peaceful after the flood, so he hoped would the present communal strife cease and all the scum fade away.

He then complained of the attempted disclosures today in a leading newspaper of Delhi purporting to disclose the decisions of the Viceroy and the decisions of the Congress Working Committee. He said that to act in such a manner was to lower the standards of journalism. Having been himself a journalist of many years' standing, he could speak with authority on what the traditions of good journalism should be. Whatever was in the Viceroy's heart was his business to disclose. Whatever decisions were taken by the Congress Working Committee were for its President or Secretary to give to the press. It was hitting below the belt for newspapers to take such tit-bits as they picked up from here, there and everywhere and dish them up for the purpose of creating sensation. That misled the public and harmed the cause. It was wrong to follow the bad example of some foreign newspapers. Indian journalists should not imitate bad manners for the sake of increasing sale or getting notoriety for scoops.

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