

HARIJAN

12 Pages

Editor : PYARELAL

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TWO ANNAS

LEST WE COPY THE BRITISH

August 15 has come and gone. The people all over India celebrated the deliverance day with wild joy and enthusiasm. They had rightly thought that all the trials and tribulations that they had to undergo under the imperialist regime would become a relic of the bygone age. The sunken eyes of the lowliest *kisan* in the village flashed with joy for the first time. The depressed heart of the *mazdoor* in the city began to rise with hope on this occasion. Every down-trodden man and woman in this sub-continent celebrated the day spontaneously, as at long last there came a glimmering of hope for the Indian underdog—a whisper of better times and lighter burdens.

But no sooner had the joy of this day died out, than came a communique from New Delhi announcing the salaries and emoluments fixed for the heads of the provinces. The public had fondly cherished the hope that along with imperialism will also go the top-heavy administration which was created to maintain the imperial hold on a slave country. Time and again in the past every political leader, every reputed economist, had criticized in unmistakable terms the fabulous salaries and emoluments paid to the heads of the administration. This topic formed the subject of several resolutions of the Indian National Congress. In the famous resolution passed at the Karachi session of the Congress, the target for the highest head of the Government was fixed at Rs. 500 per month. But perhaps all that is forgotten now and the salaries of Governors are fixed at the high figure of Rs. 5,500 per month.

Let us first of all see as to what is the remuneration attached to the office of such high dignitaries in other countries. The richest State in the richest country in the world, viz. New York, pays its Governor \$ 10,000 a year, which works out at less than Rs. 3,000 per month. The salary of the Governor of Idaho, a State in the U. S. A., comes to less than Rs. 1,500 per month; that of Maryland, another State in the U. S. A. comes to a little over Rs. 1,000. The Governor of Illinois, the population of which is equal to that of Orissa or Assam, gets a little over Rs. 3,000. The salaries of administrators of provinces in the Union of South Africa, who are the counterparts of Governors in India, range between Rs. 2,200 and Rs. 2,700 per month. The pay of the Governor of Queensland in Australia is a little over Rs. 3,000 per month. It is well-known that Stalin used to be paid Rs. 350 per month. The salaries of the

Cabinet Ministers of the United Kingdom cannot be compared with the salaries of Governors, as the former rule over the entire country of theirs. And yet the salary of a British Cabinet Minister is not more than that of the Indian Governor. It is instructive to note that none of these salaries are free of income tax and other taxes of their respective countries. Hence, it can be safely remarked that the salary of an Indian Governor is the highest in the world.

Let us look at these facts from another angle. A Governor is servant No. 1 of his province and so let us compare the income of the servant with that of his masters. The annual per capita income of an Indian was computed at Rs. 65 per annum before this war. If we take the average income of an ordinary peasant or a labourer it will be much less than this. Prof. Kumarappa estimated it at the unenviable figure of Rs. 12 and Principal Agarwal fixes it at Rs. 18 per year. Taking these averages into consideration, we find that the income of an Indian Governor is 1,000 times more than that of his master. And if we take the annual average income of the lowest class who constitute the bulk of the population, the disparity of incomes between the servant and the masters, increases to 4,000 times. Even in the U. S. A. which is called the greatest capitalist country and the land where the greatest economic inequality prevails, the income of the Governor is not more than 20 times the average income of the American citizen.

Another comparison may throw further light on the problem. At the lowest rung of the ladder of the provincial administration stands the peon in Government Offices whose salary is Rs. 11 per month in the C. P. and may be a little more or less in other provinces. How can the entire administrative machine work as one man with enthusiasm towards the social and ameliorative legislation for the benefit of the masses when there is such a colossal difference between the salary of the peon and that of the Governor? In short, whether one takes our lowest national income or the salary paid at the base to the peon or at the top to the Governor, India stands without a parallel throughout the world.

When such high sums are paid to the heads of the provinces, with what face can we think of reducing the salaries of the other highly paid Government servants? And if the reduction of the high salaries and the raising of the low salaries cannot be done, wherefrom is the provincial Financial Minister to have money for undertaking

vast schemes of universal education or medical facilities etc. ? Let us 'not be under the illusion that with the advent of freedom, the nation of the grinding poverty of yesterday will become a rich and prosperous nation in a short time, so that it can afford such high salaries for gubernatorial functions. The Soviet Union required three five-year plans to increase their national income. Even the optimistic framers of the Bombay Plan have envisaged a meagre income of Rs. 130 per annum at the end of fifteen years with a capital investment of Rs. 10,000 crores. Hence, sooner the rosy dreams of India becoming rich overnight are got rid of, the better for all of us. Reality is hard and we should squarely face it. We cannot afford to pay these fabulous sums.

T. K. BANG

[Whilst I cannot vouch for the figures given by Prof. Bang, there is no hesitation in endorsing his remarks about the high salaries he refers to and the gross disparity between the highest and the lowest salaries paid to their servants by our Governments.

New Delhi, 2-11-'47

—M. K. G.]

FUTILITY OF ARMS

[Advocate Venkatarama Shastri of Madras sends me some relevant verses from the Mahabharata with his brief comment. They are reproduced below with his comment and English translation. I have omitted from the comment what was meant only for me.

—M. K. G.]

Having won the great Mahabharata War and attained his supreme end, Yudhishtira (धर्मरत्नम्) deeply affected by the death of those near and dear and by the general havoc and destruction wrought by force of arms, reflected thus:

आत्मानमात्मना हत्वा किं धर्मफलमाप्नुमः ॥
 धिगस्तु क्षात्रमाचारं धिगस्तु बलमौरसम् ।
 धिगस्तु चार्थं येनेमाम् आपदं गमिता वयम् ॥
 साधु क्षमा दमः शौचम् अविरोधो विमत्सरः ।
 अहिंसा सत्यवचनं नित्यानि वनचारिणाम् ॥
 वयं तु लोभान्मोहाच्च दंभं मानं च संश्रिताः ।
 इमामवस्थां संप्राप्ताः राज्यक्लेशवुभुक्षया ॥

"Having destroyed ourselves by our own hands, what righteous result can we obtain ?

"Fie upon military practice,

Fie upon physical force.

Fie upon the purpose in pursuit of which we have been led into this calamity.

"Good is forgiveness, self-restraint, clean life, no enmity, no quarrel, *ahimsa* and true speech—virtues obligatory to forest-dwellers (retired from life's conflicts).

"But we in our greed and folly inspired by vanity and pride, have landed ourselves in this situation, in our desire to enjoy a kingdom's sorrowful burden."

Thus wailed युधिष्ठिर (Firm-in-battle) who was also धर्मपुत्र (Son of Righteousness).

The ideal of realizing both freedom and justice under equal laws is the ideal for countries like India—and that is, or should be, the ideal of the world.

HARIJANS IN RATLAM

[The following is the text of the Ratlam Proclamation to which I referred in one of my post-prayer speeches. It was issued on *Vijayadashami* day, i. e. the 2nd September, 1947. —M. K. G.]

1. All State temples be thrown open to Harijans for *darshan* and *pooja* just as they are open to any one of my caste Hindu subjects.

2. All existing public wells and wells constructed by the State hereinafter, tanks, water taps etc. shall be invariably open to Harijans.

3. All public places such as *dharmashalas*, hotels, restaurants, shops, theatres, cinema houses which have not been for the exclusive use of any one section of the community before the passing of this Order shall be thrown open to Harijans and they shall be given the same facility or service as any other caste Hindu is given. They are hereby allowed to make use of public conveyances licensed by Government or the Municipality.

4. Harijans shall have unrestricted admission to State educational institutions and no tuition fees shall be charged from them.

5. There shall be no restriction in the matter of recruitment of Harijans to State services.

6. All State public offices, courts, hospitals and other State buildings are open to Harijans for entry.

7. There shall be no restriction on the wearing of ornaments and good clothes, the taking out of processions and performance of ceremonies by Harijans.

8. There shall be no restriction on Harijans owning lands and houses in any part of towns and villages of the State.

Whoever contravenes the above Order or prevents Harijans from enjoying the rights conferred upon them hereby shall, on conviction before a Magistrate of the First Class, be liable to a fine which may extend to Rs. 50. The offence under the above Order shall be cognizable and bailable but not compoundable.

Propaganda will have to be carried on to implement the above Proclamation. Habits of cleanliness have to be inculcated amongst Harijans. A Committee consisting of both officials and non-officials will soon be formed for the purpose of helping Harijans to educate themselves and to improve their standard of living. A non-lapsable grant of Rs. 500 p. m. will be sanctioned for this Committee which will be authorized to administer the funds kept at its disposal.

All the State Departments, particularly Education, Police and Revenue, are hereby directed actively to co-operate with this Committee for the speedy removal of untouchability and the restrictions which follow in its wake.

I have great pleasure in announcing a donation of Rs. 2,000 to the Harijan Sevak Sangh, Indore, for the excellent services they have rendered in connection with Harijan work in this and in the neighbouring States.

MAHARAJA OF RATLAM

GANDHIJI'S POST-PRAYER SPEECHES

Birla House, New Delhi, 27-10-'47

FORCED TO LEAVE ?

Complaints are being repeatedly made that Muslims are being forced to leave their ancestral home in the Union and migrate to Pakistan. Thus it is said that in a variety of ways they are being made to vacate their houses and live in camps to await dispatch by train or even on foot. I am quite sure that such is not the policy of the Cabinet. When I tell the complainants about this they laugh at it and tell me in reply that either my information is incorrect or the services do not carry out the policy. I know that my information is quite correct. Are the services then disloyal? I hope not. Yet the complaint is universal. Various reasons are given for the alleged disloyalty. The most plausible one is that the military and the police are largely divided on a communal basis and that their members are carried away by the prevalent prejudice. I have given my opinion that if these members, on whom depends the preservation of law and order, are affected by the communal taint, orderly government must give place to disorder and if the latter persists, to disruption of society. It is up to the upper ranks of these services to rise superior to communalism and then to infect the lower ranks with the same healthy spirit.

MORAL FORCE v. PHYSICAL

It is suggested with much force that the popular Governments established in the country have not the prestige that the ability to overawe the Indian members of the services gave the foreign bureaucracy. This is only partly true. For, the popular Government wields a moral force which is infinitely superior to the physical force that the foreign government could summon to its assistance. This moral force presupposes the possession of political morale that popular support would give to an indigenous government. It may be lacking today. There is no means of checking it save by the resignation of the Ministry at the Centre. What we are examining specially this evening is the condition of the Central authority. It must never be and, what is perhaps more important, never feel weak. It must be conscious of its strength. Therefore, if it is at all true that there is the slightest insubordination among the services, the guilty ones must go or the ministry or the minister-in-charge must resign and give place to the one who would successfully deal with official disorderliness. Whilst I voice, not without hesitation, the complaints that persistently come to me, I must cling to the hope that they have no bottom to them and that if they have, the superior authority will satisfactorily deal with them in so far as they have any justification.

DUTY OF CITIZENS

What is the duty of the affected citizens of the Union? It is clear that there is no law that can compel a citizen to leave his place of residence. The authority will have to arm itself with special powers to issue orders such as are alleged to have

been given. So far as I am aware, there are no written orders issued to anyone. In the present case thousands are involved in the alleged verbal orders. There is no helping those who will be frightened into submission to any order given by a person in uniform. My emphatic advice to all such persons is that they should ask for written orders whose validity in case of doubt should be tested in a court of justice, if appeal to the final executive fails to give satisfaction.

The public in this case representing the majority community, (that hateful expression), should rigidly refrain from taking the law into their own hands. If they do not, they will be cutting the very branch on which they are sitting. It will be a fall from which it will be difficult to rise. Let wisdom dawn on them while there is yet time. Let them not be swayed by ugly events even when the report thereof happens to be true. They must trust the representative Ministers to do the needful for the vindication of justice.

Birla House, New Delhi, 28-10-'47

HONEST DEALING

In his post-prayer speech Gandhiji referred to a letter from a member of the audience. In it the correspondent stated that he had hired on payment some screens and tents from a Muslim tent merchant. The shopkeeper had now gone to Pakistan. The correspondent did not know to whom he was to deliver the hired articles in the absence of the owner. Gandhiji said that the matter should be referred to either the Sardar or Shri Neogy.

ALIGARH STUDENTS

Gandhiji then referred to a visit from an Aligarh College student who told him that many students from Pakistan had not returned to Aligarh. But those who were in the college had decided that they would like silently to do whatever they could to promote communal harmony. The best way his visitor suggested was for some of them to go to the Hindu and the Sikh refugee camps and distribute blankets etc. among the refugees. Gandhiji, while he appreciated the desire to serve their Hindu and Sikh brethren, said that that kind of aid was unnecessary at the present stage. It was likely to fall flat. What he advised was that the students should go to Pakistan and ask the Muslims why the Hindus and the Sikhs had left their homes. They should also induce those whom it concerned to go to the refugees and ask them to return to their homes as he expected the Hindus and the Sikhs to do likewise for the Muslim evacuees. As a general rule nobody would care to leave his home without just cause. In Gandhiji's opinion peace between the two was not possible without this restoration.

EVIL OF TICKETLESS TRAVELLING

Gandhiji next referred to the ticketless travel which had become a common disease these days. People evidently thought that under independence travelling by trains or buses was free for all. As a result of the ticketless travel Government had already incurred a loss of nearly 8 crores of rupees.

(Continued on p. 405)

HARIJAN

November 9

1947

HINDUSTANI WRITTEN IN NAGARI ONLY

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Raihanabehn Tyabjee has written a well-argued letter to me favouring Hindustani as the inter-provincial language written exclusively in the *nagari*. She rigidly excludes the *urdu* script. As all her main arguments have been answered herein, the letter is not being translated. Her letter demands full consideration. Raihanabehn sees no distinction between a Hindu and a Muslim. Both, she holds, come from the same source and she acts accordingly. I have always held that there is no distinction between the two. Even though their observances differ, these do not separate them. They undoubtedly profess different religions but they, like others, come from the same root.

Nevertheless, I detect certain flaws in her arguments.

We are not two nations. Those who believe the Hindus and the Muslims to be two nations harm both the communities and India. It should not matter that the Quid-e-Azam believes the Hindus and the Muslims of India to be two nations or that there are Hindus too who entertain the same belief. Surely, it does not follow that because the whole world is in error, we, who believe otherwise, should follow it. This should never happen.

If Hindustani is taken to be the inter-provincial language of India, it follows that both the scripts, *nagari* and *urdu*, should be equally acceptable. If the State recognizes only *nagari* as the character in which Hindustani should be written, it would certainly be unjust to our Muslim brethren and when it is remembered that they are a minority the guilt is enhanced.

I have never contended that all the forty crores of Indians have to learn both the scripts. I have, however, held that those who have inter-provincial contacts and who want to serve not merely their own province but the whole of India should know both the scripts. The reason is obvious. They ought to be able to read letters written whether in the *nagari* or the *urdu* script. Hence, it is necessary that both the scripts are accepted as national.

If Hindi is to be the national language, naturally *nagari* alone will be the national script and if *urdu* is to take that place, *urdu* script alone will be the national script. But, if Hindustani, which is a resultant of the junction of Hindi and Urdu, is to be the national language, a knowledge of both the scripts is essential in the manner indicated by me.

It is worth remembering that in reality neither the *urdu* character nor the Urdu form of the same language is the exclusive property of the Muslims of India. There is quite a large number

of Hindus and others whose mother-tongue is Urdu and who know only the *urdu* character. It is further to be remembered that the necessity of knowing both the scripts was stressed by me on my return from South Africa in 1915. I submitted the same proposition to the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in Indore as its President. So far as I recollect, there was hardly any opposition to the proposition. It is true that then I did not suggest any alteration in the name. The definition, however, was the same as that of today. When perfect anarchy prevails in the thought world and we express different views without regard to facts, it is obligatory that we should have one strong helm to weather any storm.

In so far as it is believed that the Muslims only are concerned with the retention of the *urdu* character, at this juncture it becomes our special duty to emphasize the necessity of Hindustani written in either character. This should appear self-evident. Whatever were the reasons in justification, it must be admitted that within the Union in many places the Muslims have been dealt with harshly. It would be beside the point to contend that Pakistan made the beginning with harsh treatment against the Hindus and the Sikhs. For the State to ordain that the inter-provincial script in the Union shall be only the *nagari*, it would be an imposition upon the Muslims. If the result of the act of justice is to be that the Muslims are to confine themselves to the *urdu* character and gratuitously regard the word Hindustani as synonymous with Urdu, it would amount to cussedness and perhaps a sign that their heart is not in the Union.

It would be confusion of thought for Raihanabehn to argue that keeping of the *urdu* character side by side with the *nagari* would be construed to be in pursuance of the policy of appeasement. Though the word has come to have a bad odour about it, I would submit that appeasement can be a praiseworthy duty, as it can also be at times a blameworthy gesture. Thus, for instance, it can conceivably be a duty on the part of a brother to walk with his brother towards the North whilst alone he would have gone to the South. But it would certainly be criminal for him, a confirmed teetotaller, to drink spirituous liquors with his drunken brother in order to appease him. He would then harm both himself and his brother. I must not recite the *Kalma* in order to appease or flatter my Muslim brother, as he must not recite the *Gayatri* in order to appease or flatter me. It would be another matter if both of us recite either at will because we believe the two incantations as one in essence. I hold that it is so. Hence it is that in the daily recital of the Ashram prayers, among the eleven observances occurs equal respect for all the accepted religions in the world. The upshot of all this argument is that the policy of appeasement is not always bad. It may even become a duty at times.

This sister further says that the *nagari* script is, comparatively speaking, fairly perfect, whereas

the *urdu* script is imperfect and difficult to decipher. To write Sanskrit words in the *urdu* script is, she holds, well-nigh impossible. There is some force in these three statements. They amount to this that the *devanagari lipi* though comparatively perfect admits of improvement and the *urdu* script demands it because it is imperfect. It will be difficult for Raihanabehn to sustain the charge that it is not possible to write Sanskrit words in the *urdu* script. I have in my possession the whole of the *Gita* transcribed in that script. Improvement is possible only when fanaticism has died out. After all, what is the Sindhi alphabet but an improved edition of the *urdu* script?

Lastly, I suggest to Raihanabehn that her letter under discussion is a fine specimen of Hindustani. She has woven in that letter Urdu words as freely as Sanskrit words. The beauty of Hindustani is that it has no quarrel either with Sanskrit or with Arabic words. In order to strengthen Hindustani consistently with its genius, if a language can be said to have a 'genius', it must borrow from all the languages of the world. Its grammar must remain as it always has been in indigenous Hindi. Thus the plural of 'Hindu' in Hindustani will always be *Hindu-o* (हिंदुओं) and not *Hunud* (हुनुद) as it is in highly Arabicized Urdu. Raihanabehn is an Urdu scholar. Though not a scholar in Hindi, she knows it well. She reads and writes both the *nagari* and *urdu* characters. When I was in the Yeravda prison she and Zohra Ansari were my Urdu teachers. Naturally, they taught me through correspondence. My advice, therefore, to her is that she should devote her energy to the strengthening and spreading of Hindustani and making the teaching of the two characters as easy as possible. This work she can only do, if her ignorance, as I call it, is removed. If, what she has now begun to believe is true, I could have nothing to say to her. Then indeed, I shall have to unlearn the past and learn a new lesson and displace the *urdu* character from the position which I think it should occupy.

New Delhi, 1-11-'47

(Adapted from the original in *Hindustani*)

For Manufacturers of Flags

While turning over the pages of *What do you know* selected by S. C. Johnson (Foulsham), I lit upon an interesting piece of information which I think I must pass on to flag manufacturers:

"Q. Are the red, white and blue bands of colour forming the French national flag equal in width?

"A. Most people would say yes, but the answer is no. It was found that when the three bars were exactly equal in width, they appeared different. It was an optical illusion. As a consequence a national decree decided that they should be as follows: red 37 parts, white 33 parts and blue 30 parts. At a distance they now appear equal."

V. G. D.

WITH THE EDUCATIONISTS

At a meeting of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh held on the 22nd and 23rd of April, 1947 at Patna, Gandhiji poured out his soul to the members.

SELF-SUPPORT

At the very outset, while discussing the budget Gandhiji warned the members against any tendency to lean on the Governments. "They would be prepared to give us as much perhaps as we ask for. But if we begin to depend on them, it will mean the end of Nai Talim." The budget presented was for three years. They must become entirely self-supporting at the end of that period. They should, therefore, make the budget estimate accordingly. And if at the end of that period they were not able to succeed they would have to declare their bankruptcy before the country. Failure became a stepping stone to success when it was duly appraised.

KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS

Dealing next with the demand of Shri Avinashalingam, the Education Minister of Madras, that the Hindustani Talimi Sangh should run a training school in Madras, the expenses of which would be borne by the Madras Government, Gandhiji warned them against undertakings beyond their strength. Otherwise, they would dissipate their own energy and put the Madras Government also in a fix. Today, with the assumption of power, crores of rupees had come into the hands of the Congress Governments. It was upto the Sangh to weigh the pros and cons and to run the institution if they had teachers enough for the work and were sure of success. It was well to know one's limitations.

THREE-FOLD DEVELOPMENT

"Our system of education," continued Gandhiji, "lead to the development of the mind, body and soul. The ordinary system cared only for the mind. Nai Talim was not confined to teaching a little spinning and a little sweeping. However indispensable these were, they were valueless unless they promoted the harmonious development referred to." Gandhiji assured the Sangh, "Today I am engaged in other work. But Nai Talim has never been out of my mind."

THE PLACE OF KHADI

Next Gandhiji turned to the place of *khadi* in Nai Talim. "It was in South Africa in 1908 that *khadi* occupied an important place in my mind," Gandhiji said. He would not insist, however, on centering Nai Talim round *khadi* if he knew a better all-round village industry. He felt that if all spun for one hour daily, India would be able to produce all her cloth requirements. If, however, it required six hours a day, he had no room for *khadi*. For, people had to do other things also. They had to produce their food. Some intellectual work had also to be done. There was no room for slave-driving in Nai Talim. One hour spent in spinning should be an hour of self-development for the spinner.

KHADI AND POST-BASIC

"When Saiyyaidain Saheb said that at least in the post-basic stage the processes in the mills

would have to be taught, I could not accept it. Not only was hand-spinning sound as a medium of education during the basic period, it did not cease to be so during the post-basic stage. What is more, millions of students could not be exempt from the necessary occupation. Yesterday Dev Prakash showed me what he had written on the *takli* and the broom. If all that he has written is true, a lot of knowledge is gained in the learning of the two processes. It could not be finished during the basic period. The trouble is that we have not evolved the science of these essential crafts consistently with the good of all. The basis of mill-spinning and weaving are the *takli* and the hand-loom. The West made mills because it had to exploit us. We do not want to exploit anyone. We do not, therefore, need mills, but we must know the science of the *takli* and the loom. If India were to copy Europe in these, it will mean destruction for India and the world."

KHADI AND MILLS

On Dr. Zakir Hussain pointing out the difficulty of educationists to think in these terms when the boys who came out of the schools looked to the mills for employment, Gandhiji said, "Boys that come out of the school of my conception will not look to the mills for employment. As a matter of fact, mill cloth should not sell side by side with *khadi*. Our mills may sell their manufactures outside India. In England you do not get the cloth manufactured in Lancashire. The whole of it is exported. Our mills may not be able to sell in foreign markets too for long."

THE WAY FOR US

"I can, however, realize your difficulty in view of the fact that the whole atmosphere around is surcharged with the idea of mills. Even our own ministers talk only of mills. The way for us is to die in living up to our faith. If we believe in the truth of *khadi*, we must live it, spread it and convince the ministers that we are doing the right thing in terms of national good."

"The Congress created the Hindustani Talimi Sangh, but never took any interest in it. Similarly, the Charkha Sangh is a progeny of the Congress, but it never made it its own. Who cares for these institutions today? When Congressmen had only a little money and a little experience they paid some attention to constructive work. Today, however, the entire Government has come into our hands. They have not yet digested the power it has brought. They will take time to do so."

NO LONGER THE SAME POWER

Gandhiji realized that work of Nai Talim meant propagation of a new social order. The ministers holding power, perhaps, did not fully share the Sangh's views. Dr. Zakir Hussain asked Gandhiji to help co-ordinate the activities of the Government and the Sangh or let the Sangh go into the wilderness. Gandhiji confessed that he no longer commanded the same influence as he used to do. "I do not blame the Government for apathy. They have inherited a machinery which they have

to work. If I had been a minister, perhaps, I too would have acted similarly. Still, I am talking things over with Pandit Jawaharlal and others. One task of the educationists is to explain things. Is not it?"

Dr. Zakir Hussain: "I believe that the fault lay in the fact that the Congress had never explained its educational policy to its ministers. I met Maulana Abul Kalam Azad before coming here. He had expressed sympathy and said that he would like to meet the Sangh. The Sangh has now decided to see him."

Gandhiji: "The Government should have invited you at the very outset. Mr. Sergeant should work under the guidance of the Sangh. I had suggested to the Government that they should send you an invitation."

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Regarding religious education Dr. Zakir Hussain thought that facilities should be provided for and time apportioned for religious education in our schools so as to enable those, who understood religion, to come and teach. More than that the Government should not undertake, if it wanted to avoid the appearance of undue interference.

Gandhiji said in reply, "You should talk it over with Maulana Saheb. I do not agree that the Government should provide religious education. If there are some people who want to give religious education of the wrong type, you cannot prevent it. If you try to do so, the result can only be bad. Those who want to give religious education may do so on their own, so long as it is not subversive of law and order or morals. The Government can only teach ethics based on the main principles common to all religions and agreed to by all parties. In fact ours is a secular State."

QUESTION OF CERTIFICATES

Regarding the question of certificates to be granted to those passing out of the basic stage, Gandhiji said that the standard should have a short and precise name and the certificate should exactly state in clear Hindustani the qualifications of the candidate without the slightest exaggeration. "To give a thing a high-sounding name," added Gandhiji, "when its worth does not correspond to it, reflects no credit on the giver."

CO-EDUCATION

Shri Avinashalingam, the Education Minister of Madras, felt that the co-education policy of the Talimi Sangh in the matter was not suitable to Madras. He had no objection to co-education among children and among grown-ups, when they knew their own minds. But he was not in favour of co-education at the impressionable age of 15 or 16 when most of the girls came to training schools. Gandhiji, however, disagreed. "If you keep co-education in your schools, but not in your training-schools, the children will think there is something wrong somewhere. I should allow my children to run the risk. We shall have to rid ourselves one day of this sex mentality. We should not seek for examples from the West. Even in training-schools,

if the teachers are intelligent, pure and filled with the spirit of Nai Talim, there is no danger. Supposing if some accidents do take place, we should not be frightened by them. They would take place anywhere. Although I speak thus boldly, I am not unaware of the attendant risks. You, as a responsible Minister, should think for yourself and act accordingly."

KHADI AND SELF-SUPPORT

Shri Jajuji on the question of self-support said that the craft of spinning and weaving was much less paying than some other occupations as for example, carpentry. It was doubtful whether students passing out of the basic stage could be self-supporting even after seven years of training. They could earn six or eight annas a day at the Charkha Sangh rate. Gandhiji said, "We should not think in terms of money. *Khadi* is the centre of our activities because we all need cloth. We have the question of clothing the seven lakhs of villages. Today, we get our yarn woven by paying high rates to the weavers. It was wrong of me not to insist on everybody learning weaving as I did in the case of spinning. It must, however, be seen that it does not require more time than can be spared for it. If it occupies the whole of the time at our disposal, we shall have to think anew.

WORKING FOR THE LOVE OF HIS WORK

"The teacher of Nai Talim will be a craftsman educationist, not merely one for the sake of his pay. Pay or salary is a bad word. He is a workman worthy of his hire. His wife and children too will also be workers. Only thus will true co-operation be born. Only thus can Nai Talim spread in every village in India."

AGRICULTURE AS A BASIC CRAFT

"Some people ask me why agriculture could not be a basic craft. The answer is that it has not the educational potentialities of spinning. It cannot, for example, develop deftness as in spinning. The function of Nai Talim is not merely to teach an occupation, but through it to develop the whole man.

"But though I do not begin with agriculture, it is bound to come in ultimately. For, the field of New Education is comprehensive. The pupils and teachers of the school of my conception will together have to make provision for all they need. A teacher of Nai Talim will have to be a first-class craftsman. All the children of the village will be themselves drawn to the school. In this way, education would automatically become free and universal.

"Today, the condition of India is that vegetables grown in a village are not available for the use of the villagers themselves. The villagers of Travancore cannot use the cocoa-nuts that are grown there. They are collected at one place and sent to the towns. This anomaly will disappear where basic schools come into existence. Again, today we cultivate money crops such as opium, tobacco, cotton etc. Those trained in Nai Talim will cultivate food crops which they themselves need."

CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME, GOVERNMENT AND THE CONGRESS

Then the talk turned on the Constructive Programme Committee of the A. I. C. C. "Its work," said Jajuji, "will be carried on by the Provincial Congress Committees, who will be allowed to raise funds for the purpose."

At this Gandhiji remarked, "The machinery of the Congress seems not to be going smooth. Where the Congress is in power, there the Provincial Congress and the Provincial Government should work in perfect co-operation and be a source of strength to each other. Today, each pulls its own way. They should work as one organic whole."

DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR

(Adapted from the original in *Hindustani*)

GANDHIJI—ROMAIN ROLLAND MEETING

AN IMPRESSION

[The following, which is taken from *The Nation* (New York), is a letter written by the late Romain Rolland to an American friend of his on the visit of Gandhiji to his home.

—MIRABEHN]

"How I should have liked to have you here during the visit of the Indians! They stayed five days—from the 5th to 11th December at the Villa Vionette. The little man, bespectacled and toothless, was wrapped in his white burnoose but his legs, thin as a heron's stilts, were bare. His shaven head with its few coarse hairs was uncovered and wet with rain. He came to me with a dry laugh, his mouth open like a good dog panting, and flinging an arm round me leaned his cheek against my shoulder. I felt his grizzled head against my cheek. It was, I amuse myself thinking, the kiss of Saint Dominic and Saint Francis.

"Then came Mira (Miss Slade), proud of figure and with the stately bearing of a Demeter, and finally three Indians, one a young son of Gandhi, Devadas, with a round and happy face. He is gentle, and but little aware of the grandeur of his name. The others were secretaries—disciples—two young men of rare qualities of heart and mind: Mahadev Desai and Pyarelal.

"As I had contrived shortly beforehand to get a severe cold on my chest, it was to my house and to the chamber on the second floor where I sleep at Villa Olga—you will remember it—that Gandhi came each morning for long conversations. My sister interpreted, with the assistance of Mira, and I had also a Russian friend and secretary, Miss Kondacheff, who took notes on our discussions. Some good photographs by Schlemmer, our neighbour from Montreux recorded the aspect of our interviews.

"Evenings, at seven o'clock, prayers were held in the first-floor salon. With lights lowered, the Indian seated on the carpet, and the little assembly of the faithful grouped about, there was a suite of three beautiful chants—the first an extract from the *Gita*, the second an ancient hymn on the Sanskrit texts which Gandhi has translated, and the third a canticle of Rama and Sita, intoned by the warm, grave voice of Mira.

"Gandhi held other prayers at three o'clock in the morning, for which, in London, he used to wake his harassed staff, although he had not retired until one. This little man, so frail in appearance, is tireless, and fatigue is a word which does not exist in his vocabulary. He could calmly answer for hours the heckling of a crowd, as he did at Lausanne and Geneva, without a muscle of his face twitching. Seated on a table, motionless, his voice always clear and calm, he replied to his adversaries open or masked—and they were not lacking at Geneva—giving them rude truths which left them silenced and suffocated.

"The Roman bourgeoisie, and nationalist, who had at first received him with crafty looks, quivered with rage when he left. I believe that if his stay had lasted any longer, the public meetings would have been forbidden. He pronounced himself as unequivocally as possible on the double questions of national armaments and the conflict between capital and labour. I was largely responsible for steering him on this latter course.

"His mind proceeds through successive experiments into action and he follows a straight line, but he never stops, and one would risk error in attempting to judge him by what he said ten years ago, because his thought is in constant revolution. I will give you a little example of it that is characteristic.

"GOD IS TRUTH"

"He was asked at Lausanne to define what he understood by God. He explained how, among the noblest attributes which the Hindu scriptures ascribed to God, he had in his youth chosen the word "truth" as most truly defining the essential element. He had then said, 'God is Truth.' "But," he added, "two years ago I advanced another step. I now say, 'Truth is God.' For, even the atheists do not doubt the necessity for the power of truth. In their passion for discovering the truth, the atheists have not hesitated to deny the existence of God, and, from their point of view, they are right." You will understand from this single trait the boldness and independence of this religious spirit from the Orient. I noted in him traits similar to Vivekanand.

"And yet not a single political ruse catches him unprepared. And his own politics are to say everything that he thinks to everybody, not concealing a thing.

"On the last evening, after the prayers, Gandhi asked me to play him a little of Beethoven. He does not know Beethoven, but he knows that Beethoven has been the intermediary between Mira and me, and consequently between Mira and himself, and that, in the final count, it is to Beethoven that the gratitude of us all must go. I played him the Andante of the Fifth Symphony. To that I added, "Les Champs Elysees" of Gluck—the page for the orchestra and the air for the flute.

"He is very sensitive to the religious chants of his country, which somewhat resemble the most beautiful of our Gregorian melodies, and he has

worked to assemble them. We also exchanged our ideas on art, from which he does not separate his conception of truth, nor from his conception of truth that of joy, which he thinks truth should bring. But it follows of itself that for this heroic nature joy does not come without effort, not even life itself without hardship. 'The seeker after truth hath a heart tender as the lotus, and hard as granite.'

"Here, my dear friend, are a few hints of those days of ours together on which I have taken much more detailed notes. What I do not dwell on to you is the hurricane of intruders, loiterers, and half-wits which this visit loosed on our two villas. No, the telephone never ceased ringing; photographers in ambuscades let fly their fusillades from behind every bush. The milkmen's syndicate at Leman informed me that during all the time of this sojourn with me of the 'King of India' they intended to assume complete responsibility for his 'victualling'. We received letters from 'Sons of God'. Some Italians wrote to the Mahatma beseeching him to indicate for them the ten lucky numbers for the next drawing of his weekly national lottery!

"My sister, having survived, has gone to take ten day's rest at a cure in Zurich. She returns shortly. For my part I have entirely lost the gift of sleep. If you find it, send it to me by registered mail!"

LOVE AS MEDICINE

I

Dr. Karl Menninger, M. D., writes in his book *Love against Hate* written during the war years:

"Science is a slave. It is commandeered by war to kill men and by medicine to save them. It fires guns and it allays fevers. It builds bridges and it blows them up. In science man found a slave to minister to his comfort and safety, but one which could take away both. The slave may even destroy his master, a possibility somehow seems to be imminent. But the slave can also save his master, if the master will give the command.

"No one will maintain today that 'all is right with the world'. It is full of hate and murder and bitterness and hunger and waste and pessimism and fear and sorrow.

"But why? We are all human. We all want the same thing in life, and there is enough for all."

"Two contrary laws seem to be wrestling with one another nowadays," said Louis Pasteur; "the one a law of blood and death ever imagining new means of destruction . . . the other a law of peace, work and health ever evolving new means of delivering man from the scourges that beset him."

Freud said, "Die we must ultimately, but in the meantime we can live, if we can love.

"This medicine, love, which cures all sorrow was prescribed by Jesus long before Donne and by Gautama Buddha long before Jesus."

It is this medicine, love, that Gandhiji has been presenting to us for the last 30 years. We seemed to listen to him for a while, but his words seem to be falling on deaf ears today. Passions are running high. The Hindus and the Sikhs who have suffered in

Pakistan tell him, "Non-violence was alright against the British. You cannot possibly use it against the Muslims. You do not know how cruel and unreliable they are." It reminds one of the arguments presented by Europeans against the efficacy of non-violence in dealing with Hitler. Gandhiji's reply then was that non-violence was effective in all situations provided it was used in sufficient concentration. The worst of criminals too is a human being after all and there is a spark of the divine in his or her breast, which can be ignited.

II

During my stay in Noakhali I one day went to an old village practitioner's house in the village where I was stationed. Practitioners there were mostly men who had worked as compounders for some years in a hospital and had then settled down as village practitioners in their villages. This old practitioner also belonged to this class. I asked him how his house had been saved when all the others in the neighbourhood had been burnt. At this I was told that when the band of looters came to his house, they started looting and smashing religious pictures. A glass piece from the frame of one of these cut the foot of the leader of the party and he started bleeding profusely. The old practitioner took him to his half-ransacked dispensary and dressed his foot with the care and attention that he might have bestowed on his own son. It amazed the *goondas*. The chief ordered his men to go away. So the house was saved from fire. The nobility of the old practitioner had ignited the spark of goodness in the breast of the *goondas'* chief. It was a triumph of love over hate.

Again, during my stay at Wah Camp in West Punjab, I heard the romantic story of the bravery of seventythree women who had jumped into a well to save their honour. The Muslim mob had attacked the village and after a prolonged and brave armed resistance the Hindus and Sikhs had to surrender. The men were collected in the open *maidan* waiting to be converted to Islam if they wished to live. The women were to be taken away by the Muslims. Seventythree of them went inside the compound of their new well under the pretext of drinking water and said their prayers aloud for nearly an hour. The Muslim mob was shouting outside asking them to get ready quickly. At that the leader shouted back that they would never be able to touch them with their unclean hands, and seventythree women jumped into the well within three seconds. The mob was so impressed by this brave non-violent act that it slowly melted away without converting the Hindus and the Sikhs whom they had collected for the purpose. The self-suffering of these women had put the devil to shame and given a chance to the spark of goodness to assert itself.

New Delhi, 24-10-'47

S. N.

SELF-RESTRAINT v. SELF-INDULGENCE

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GANDHIJI'S POST-PRAYER SPEECHES

(Continued from p. 399)

Who was to bear the loss? Over and above this there was the problem of feeding and clothing of lacs of refugees. India was not so rich as to bear this heavy burden. If things like these continued, India would be ruined. If the railway earnings ran into crores, it was equally true that the expenses of running trains were no less heavy. If, therefore, such things continued much longer, stark ruin faced India. He had heard that things in Pakistan were no better.

Gandhiji then impressed on the audience the necessity of observing the laws of sanitation in railway compartments. Spitting within the compartments was an instance in point. He also deprecated disregard of railway rules like pulling the alarm signals without sufficient cause.

If he were at the head of the railway administration, Gandhiji said, he would advise the railway management to tell the public that unless they purchased tickets trains would be stopped and they would resume journey only if the passengers willingly paid the fares due.

Birla House, New Delhi, 29-10-'47

DILIP KUMAR ROY

Speaking after prayers Gandhiji introduced to the gathering Shri Dilip Kumar Roy who sang the *bhajan* of the evening. Gandhiji said that though he knew nothing of the art of singing he felt that the voice of the singer was sweeter and richer than when he first heard him sing in the Sassoon Hospital in Poona where he had undergone an operation as a prisoner. Probably, very few persons in the world had Shri Roy's natural sweetness of voice. He belonged to the *ashram* in Pondicherry of *Rishi* Aurobindo. The audience should know that there was no race or religious distinction at the *ashram*. He remembered that the late Sir Akbar Hydari went to the *ashram* as on a pilgrimage. Naturally, Shri Roy was a chip of the old block, and had no prejudices. He had been to see him earlier in the day when he had sung two songs viz., the *Bande Mataram* and Iqbal's the *Sare Jehanmen Achchha*. The concluding line of the evening *bhajan* meant that the wealthy had their crores in palaces, horses etc. and the devotee had his all in and through his God whom he knew as Murari, Rama, Hari etc. If they all took the lesson to heart, they would shed all prejudices.

KASHMIR PANGS

Referring next to the situation in Kashmir Gandhiji said that when the Maharaja Saheb in his distress wished to accede to the Union, the Governor-General could not reject the advance. He and his Cabinet sent troops by air to Kashmir telling the Maharaja that the accession was provisional upon an impartial plebiscite being taken of the Kashmiris irrespective of religion. The Maharaja had wisely appointed Sheikh Abdulla as his minister with all the powers accruing to the office. And it pleased him to read in the papers that the Sheikh Saheb had risen to the occasion

and made a hearty response to the invitation. What was the situation? It was stated that a rebel army composed of Afridis and the like, ably officered, was advancing towards Shrinagar, burning and looting villages along the route, destroying even the electric power house, thus leaving Shrinagar in darkness. It was difficult to believe that this entry could take place without some kind of encouragement from the Pakistan Government. He had not enough data to come to a judgment as to the merits of the case. Nor was it necessary for his purpose. All he knew was that it was right for the Union Government to rush troops, even a handful, to Shrinagar. That must save the situation to the extent of giving confidence to the Kashmiris, especially to the Sheikh Saheb who was affectionately called Sher-e-Kashmir i. e., the Lion of Kashmir. The result was in the hands of God. Men could but do or die. He would not shed a tear if the little Union force was wiped out, like the Spartans, bravely defending Kashmir nor would he mind the Sheikh Saheb and his Muslim, Hindu and Sikh comrades, men and women, dying at their post in defence of Kashmir. That would be a glorious example to the rest of India. Such heroic defence would infect the whole of India and we would forget that the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs were ever enemies. Then we would realize that not all Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs were fiends. There were some good men and women in all religions and races. The universe existed on its good men and women. Indeed, he would not be surprised if even the rebel army was itself converted to sanity. Let them remember the refrain of the *bhajan* — 'We were all of and from one and the same God, no matter by what name we worshipped Him.'

Birla House, New Delhi, 30-10-'47

WORKING OF AHIMSA

This evening when as usual before the prayer meeting the audience was asked if there was any objector to the *Quran* verses being recited as part of the prayer, one member spoke up and persisted in his objection. Gandhiji had made it clear that if there was such objection, he would neither have public prayer nor the after-prayer speech on current events. Consequently, he sent word that there would be neither prayer nor speech before the public. But the gathering would not disperse without seeing Gandhiji. He, therefore, went to the rostrum and said a few words on the reason for abstention and the working of *ahimsa* as he understood it. He said that it was unseemly for anyone to object to the prayer, especially, when it was on a private lawn. Nevertheless, his *ahimsa* warned him against disregarding even one objector when an overwhelming majority were likely to overawe one person into silence. It would be otherwise if the whole audience objected. It would then be his duty to have the prayer even at the risk of being molested. There was also the further consideration that the majority should not be disappointed for the sake of one objector. The remedy was simple. If the majority restrained

themselves and entertained no anger against, or evil design on, the solitary objector, it would be his duty to hold the prayer. The possibility, however, was that if the whole audience was non-violent in intention and action, the objector would restrain himself. Such he held was the working of non-violence. He further held that truth and non-violence were not the monopoly of a few adepts. All universal rules of conduct known as God's commandments were simple and easy to understand and carry out if the will was there. They only appeared to be difficult because of the inertia which governed mankind. Man was a progressive being. There was nothing at a standstill in nature. Only God was motionless for, He was, is and will be the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, and yet was ever moving. We need not, however, worry ourselves over the attributes of God. We had to realize that we were ever progressing. Hence, he held that if mankind was to live, it had to come growingly under the sway of truth and non-violence. It was in view of these two fundamental rules of conduct that he and the audience had to work and live.

Birla House, New Delhi, 31-10-'47

EXAMPLARY BEHAVIOUR

Two persons had again objected to the recitation of the verses from the *Quran* at Gandhiji's prayer meeting, one of the objectors being the same who had objected the previous evening. Both were quite restrained in their objection. Gandhiji asked the audience if it was proper on his part not to hold the prayer because one or two men out of several hundred objected and thus disappointed the rest. Decency demanded that those who had any objection to the recitation from the *Quran* should desist from attending his prayers. The only way to avoid the impasse was for the audience, as he had said the previous evening, not to be angry with the objectors and not to molest them in any way whatsoever. He also asked the police not to interfere with the objectors. All with one voice said they would not in any way interfere with them. And the prayer proceeded. Shri Dilip Kumar Roy happened to be present again and he sang a *bhajan*.

Speaking after prayers, Gandhiji congratulated the objectors on their exemplary restraint and the audience for having maintained perfect calm.

MIND — A TEMPLE

Commenting next on the *bhajan* sung by Shri Dilip Kumar Roy Gandhiji said that although the *bhajan* sung was a simple tune, the trained voice of the gifted singer had imparted to the simple tune a sweetness all its own. The refrain of the *bhajan*, Gandhiji said, had likened the mind of the devotee to a temple of worship wherein pure love resided permanently and illumined the heart. The heart being illumined, the vision became clear. This was non-violence in action. A mind not set on God was given to wandering and lacked the quality of a temple of worship.

RICH AND POOR

Referring next to the wide gap that was still existing between the rich and the poor among the

refugees, Gandhiji said that he had noticed, while in Noakhali as in Delhi, that rich people managed to flee from affected areas, leaving the poor in a helpless condition. This should not be. The rich and resourceful should have fellow-feeling for the poor and never leave them in the lurch. They must all sink or swim together. Adversity should abolish all distinctions of high and low or rich and poor. Then their refugee camps would be models of sanitation and solid co-operation.

FORCIBLE CONVERSIONS CONDEMNED

Gandhiji then mentioned a visit of some Muslim friends, who had complained about forcible conversions of hundreds of Muslims to Hinduism and Sikhism. Condemning such reported conversions, Gandhiji said that religion could not be forced upon an unwilling heart. Every so-called convert to Hinduism or Sikhism should feel sure that the conversion was not to be recognized and that every such 'convert' was free to follow his original faith. This applied equally to so-called converts to Islam. If it was to be otherwise, it would mean death to the three religions. It was the duty of the people to see that the minorities lived without any fear of the majority. If the Muslims from the Union wanted to go to Pakistan, they should be allowed to do so. But due protection should be afforded to such Muslims as wanted to stay in the Indian Union. He was against the use of force under any circumstances. Therefore, his ambition was that the evacuees on either side should return to their homes in honour and safety. He, for one, would not like to live to witness the perpetuation of the present unnatural condition.

Birla House, New Delhi, 1-11-'47

ABODE OF GOD

The previous day's objector turned up at Gandhiji's prayer meeting today also. Gandhiji said that he was glad that the objector only courteously registered his dissent from the recitation from the *Quran*. The rest of the large audience renewed their declaration that they would bear no malice and do no injury to the objector. The prayer, therefore, went on as usual. Shri Dilip Kumar Roy sang the *bhajan*, whose first line, Gandhiji said, meant that the devotees belonged to the land where there was neither misery nor sorrow. Gandhiji explained that in his opinion it had a double meaning. The one was that they belonged to a country, i. e. India in which there was neither misery nor sorrow. He could not recall a time when there was no misery nor sorrow in India. The first meaning, therefore, meant an aspiration of the poet. The second meaning had reference to the soul and the body which was its abode. Thus the soul inhabited a body which was in the language of the *Gita*, the abode of true religion and not the abode of fleeting passions. The condition attached to the success of the pursuit was that the owner of the abode was free from the six noted enemies whose names were anger, malice, greed, passion etc. The blissful state was capable of attainment by everyone. And if that happened on any appreciable scale, the poet's dream about India would be quickly

realized. Describing the misery of India he related the conversation he had with a lady doctor who had come from the Kurukshetra Camp. It was a pitiful sight. The Camp could take in more doctors, more medicines, more covering and warm clothing. Many had no change of clothes. The mothers of babies could keep them warm with the greatest difficulty.

SHEIKH ABDULLA

Then he invited the audience to cast their mental eyes on Kashmir and picture to themselves the condition of the people there. When he listened to the sound which the aeroplanes above made in their journey to Kashmir, his heart went out to the Prime Minister, Sheikh Abdulla and his people. He was a friend of all and made no distinctions between man and man. He represented the non-Muslims as well as the Muslims. Gandhiji remarked that those who were fleeing from Kashmir out of fear should not do so. They should learn to be brave and fearless and should be prepared to lay down their lives in defence of their homes. This applied equally to all whether old or young or women or children. He would not mind if the whole of the military and the people of Kashmir died at their post in defence of fair Kashmir. How he wished that the Afridis and other freebooters were sensible enough to leave Kashmir alone.

REFUGEES IN KURUKSHETRA

Lastly, Gandhiji said that if the refugees in Kurukshetra suffered terribly, he was sure, the refugees of Pakistan could not suffer less. This senseless and consequent misery was too great a price to pay for the prevailing madness. He, therefore, commended to the audience to treasure the thought. The best contribution they could make towards the deliverance from misery was to shed all enmity and to regard every Muslim and others as friends.

Birla House, New Delhi, 2-11-'47

FULL CO-OPERATION NEEDFUL

Shri Brij Krishan had reported that there was a much larger audience than usual and about ten objectors to the recitation from the *Quran*. There was among the objectors the old friend too. But the objectors were perfectly restrained and courteous. Gandhiji was also told that there was a suppressed objection from a much larger number. Gandhiji, before proceeding with the prayer spoke to the meeting. He said that he was glad that the people were open enough to register their objection. He did not like to think that people came not to share the worship of God but they came to see him or hear him because he was called a *mahatma* or because of his long service of the nation. The prayer was all inclusive. God was known by many names. In the last analysis the names were as many as human beings. It was rightly said that even animals, birds and stones adored God. They would find in the *Bhajanavali* a hymn by a Muslim saint which said that the chirp of birds in the morning and evening signified that they adored their Maker. There was no sense in objecting to any part of the prayer because it was selected from the *Quran* or from any other scripture. Whatever might be the

shortcomings of certain Muslims (no matter what their number was), the objection could not apply to a whole community much less to the Prophet or any other or his message. He, the speaker, had gone through the whole of the *Quran*. He had gained by it, not lost by it. He felt that he was a better Hindu for the reading of the world's scriptural books. He knew that there were hostile critics of the *Quran*. A friend from Bombay who had many Muslim friends had put before him a conundrum. What was the teaching of the Prophet about the *kaffirs*? Were not the Hindus *kaffirs* according to the *Quran*? He had long come to the conclusion that they were not. But he spoke to his Muslim friends about the matter. They spoke from knowledge. They assured him that *kaffir* in the *Quran* meant a non-believer. They said that the Hindus were not because they believed in one God. If they went by what the hostile critics said, they would condemn the *Quran* and the Prophet as they would condemn Krishna who was depicted as a dissolute being having sixteen hundred *gopis*. He silenced his critics by saying that his Krishna was immaculate. He would never bow his head before a rake. The God they worshipped with him every evening was in everyone and was all powerful. Therefore, they could have no enemy and they could fear none because God was in them and by them every moment. Such being the nature of the congregational worship, he would prefer to have no such worship if they could not with their whole heart and without reservation join the prayer. If they could, they would find that they daily gathered strength to enable them to dispel the darkness that surrounded them. On Gandhiji asking the audience frankly and fearlessly to express their opinion, they lustily said that they wanted the prayer and that if there was an interruption they would bear no anger or malice against the objectors. The prayer then went on in the usual manner. Gurudev's grand-daughter Nandita Krishna Kripalani singing the *bhajan* of the evening.

THE TIME FACTOR

Referring to the Kashmir trouble Gandhiji said that the Indian Union continued to send more troops and other necessary help. The Government did not own any aeroplanes but he was glad to hear that private companies had placed their planes at the disposal of the Government. Time ran in favour of ordered troops and ordered Government and against the freebooters.

AZAD HIND FOIJ OFFICERS

Gandhiji was, however, sorry to learn that the freebooters in Kashmir were being led by two ex-officers of the Azad Hind Fouj which valiantly fought under the able leadership of the late Shri Subhash Bose. It was composed of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others. They retained their own religion but there was no distinction of caste or creed. They were knit together in bonds of friendship and brotherhood. They were proud of being Indians. He had met them (if it was they) in the Delhi Fort and outside after their release. He could not understand why they led freebooters and took part in burning and looting villages and murdering innocent men and women. They were harming the Afridis and the other tribesmen by encouraging

them to do forbidden things. If he was in their place, he would wean the tribesmen from their error. They could meet Sheikh Abdulla Saheb if they thought he was harming Islam or India. He hoped his appeal would reach these officers and the tribesmen and that they would retrace their steps.

PAKISTAN ENCOURAGING?

Gandhiji could not escape the conclusion that the Pakistan Government was directly or indirectly encouraging the raid. The Prime Minister of the Frontier Province was reported to have openly encouraged the raid and had even appealed to the Islamic world for help. Then he had seen in the Press that Pandit Nehru's Government was accused of fraud, in that assistance was being sent to Kashmir and that accession was being plotted from some time. He was amazed that such reckless charges were made by a Pakistan Minister against the Government of a sister dominion. He had brought in Kashmir in his remarks because he had good news from friends which he wanted to share with the audience. The news did not square with the Qaid-e-Azam's declaration that there was an enemy of Pakistan meaning the Union, he supposed. A Hindu friend from Karachi saw him and another from Lahore. Both informed him that things were better than a few days ago and that they were getting still better. He was told, too, that at least one Muslim family was seen by the friend to have given shelter to a Sikh friend and set apart one room for keeping the Sikh friend's *Grantha Sahib* with due respect. He was informed that such instances of the Hindus and the Sikhs having sheltered Muslims and vice versa could be multiplied. He had, too, some Muslim friends coming to him who deplored with him that vast and criminal exchange of populations was going on. These friends told him that the Muslim refugees in Pakistan suffered no less than the Sikhs and the Hindus in the Union. No government could cope with such a large mass of human beings uprooted from their homes and thrown on its shoulders. It was like an overwhelming onrush of waters. Could not this mad rush be stopped? the friends asked. He had no doubt that it could be if the suspicion and the flinging of charges (he thought baseless) was altogether and sincerely stopped. He invited the audience to pray with him that God would bring sanity to the unhappy land. He wished to congratulate the objectors on their wise restraint in allowing the prayer to proceed smoothly and without any interruption.

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