

HARIJAN

12 Pages

Editor: PYARELAL

VOL. X, No. 12]

AHMEDABAD — SUNDAY, APRIL 28, 1946

A [THREE ANNAS

THE LESSON OF THE CROSS

Good Friday is, perhaps, the greatest day in the Christian year, inasmuch as it is the day that reminds the followers of Jesus of the supreme sacrifice by means of which he showed the way of life to man. As one reads or dwells afresh on the story of the Cross, the pathos and beauty of it never fail to stir one to the depths. Could man's cruelty to man have gone further, and could man's forbearance with man have been more manly? 2000 years have rolled away but Jesus lives, and the noble example is there to inspire man for all time. For me he is more man than God.

It was fear of the truth which was in Jesus, that made his enemies slay him. It is fear in the hearts of men at all times, that breeds hatred and suspicion, the root cause of strife. The fear that stalks our land to-day cannot but distress everyone. During the recent meeting of the Kasturba Trust Agents in Uruli, one worker asked that while he (Gandhiji) did not advocate their taking any part in politics what would he (Gandhiji) advise them to do in case of violent outbreaks? The reply was quick and clear. "There is no question of any of you keeping aloof from the fiery furnace, should such ever come your way. I shall not shed a tear, I shall rejoice to hear if any or all of you are found to have laid down your lives in trying to quell the disturbance. To be killed but never to kill is the law that governs us, and women should surely excel in this field."

In talking to a friend the other day who was suggesting an expedient to solve the political tangle, contrary to his inner conviction of the wrong of it, Gandhiji told him that it was unworthy for a man of faith ever to believe that anything but evil could be born out of a poisonous germ. The friend replied, "The Cross was poisonous, full of hatred and ill will and yet redemption came out of it." "No," was Gandhiji's reply. "That is not my interpretation of the Cross. There was no poison there, no hatred, no fear. It was the way of self-suffering and therefore of love and hence the story of redemption."

The story of Calvary brings home to one the need for supreme faith in the hour of trial, which sees beyond the veil and gives one the courage to stand by truth at all cost.

New Delhi,

Good Friday, 1946

A. K.

WEEKLY LETTER

THE LURID BACKGROUND

The labours of the Cabinet Mission are proceeding against a lurid background. The Imperial City has for the last few days become a seething cauldron of wild rumours, with swirling eddies and counter currents. The air is thick with alarms and threats of rioting. Some dealers in daggers and knives and other lethal weapons are even said to be exploiting the panic which they assiduously foster for their own selfish purposes like their ante-type—the merchants of death in Europe and America. Deprecating this tendency in the course of his remarks one evening, Gandhiji said:

"The newspaper man has become a walking plague. In the East as in the West newspapers are fast becoming the people's Bible, Koran, Zend Avesta and the Bhagwad Gita, rolled into one. All that appears in the papers is looked upon as God's truth. For instance, a paper predicts that riots are coming, that all the sticks and knives in Delhi have been sold out and the news throws everybody into a panic. That is bad. Another newspaper reports the occurrence of riots here and there and blames the police with taking sides with the Hindus in one place and Muslims in another. Again, the man in the street is upset. I want you all to shed this craven fear. It is not becoming of men and women, who believe in God and take part in the prayers, to be afraid of anyone.

"What if riots do actually take place and some people get killed? Everyone must die one day. I will expect you to go in the midst of the fracas and tell the rowdies to be sensible. A friend remarked in the course of the conversation the other day that whilst it is poor rowdies that kill and get killed in the riots, the real responsibility lies not with them but with educated people, some of them occupying respectable places in society. It is they who incite others to violence from behind the scenes. It is for these educated and cultured people to stop the riots by laying down their lives in the process if necessary. Even a little girl can go up to the hooligans and tell them to desist. Most probably they will. But supposing they do not and kill her, it will be well with her all the same. She will live through her pure sacrifice. It is always well with those who believe in God and try to do His will to the best of their ability.

"Independence is coming," he concluded. "But our lungs appear to have lost the capacity to breathe the air of freedom. But when freedom actually comes, you will find that the loss of capacity

was only apparent. May be, the first impact of freedom will give you a rude shock, and before you regain your equilibrium some undesirable things might take place. All that you need to do is to keep yourselves on the alert and undaunted and it will be well with you in the end."

ON THE EVE

An English novelist in one of his immortal stories has left us a picture of a doctor who, when suddenly brought into broad daylight after his long confinement in a dark dungeon, blinks uncomfortably and wants to go back into the unlighted gloom of the dungeon. Similarly, the question arises, how will India react to independence after nearly two centuries of subjection? Would she have the courage to face up to the realities, or would she be frightened by them and want to go back to the so-called ease and security of her servitude? For, it is getting more and more clear that independence, when it comes, is not going to be all beer and skittles. Are we ready to pay the price of freedom and make the necessary sacrifices or do we want to cling to the privileges and perquisites to which a foreign government might have accustomed a few of us as a part of its policy of divide and rule? These must be willingly sacrificed before we are fit to enter the temple of freedom. The fact that everybody is just now going through a fierce process of self-examination and introspection is a healthy sign. It is an indication of the general realization that the hour of independence is close at hand.

"Where shall we stand when India is independent?" asked a friend representing the landholders' interests, the other day during his visit to Gandhiji.

"You will be as free as any scavenger," replied Gandhiji, "but whether you will be able to retain all the privileges which you are enjoying under the British Government is a question you can answer for yourself."

"We realize," proceeded the friend, "that we shall secure our salvation at the hands of Indian leaders, not the British Government."

"Everybody believes that today," said Gandhiji. "Even the British Government feel that they cannot do otherwise than to leave India to settle her own affairs."

"The landholders," resumed the friend, "derived their charter of rights and privileges from the Permanent Settlement of 1802, which was of the nature of a contract between the British and the Zamindars, but they are quite willing to negotiate an agreement with the leaders of the country on the future of their rights."

"Being a non-violent man by nature," replied Gandhiji, "I cannot countenance the usurpation of anybody's just rights. But some of the extraordinary privileges that pass muster under the British rule are themselves in the nature of an usurpation. The history of British rule is a history of usurpation. Those who helped the British Government in this process got certain rights as a reward for their services. These cannot be insisted upon."

"Many ancient Zamindaris existed long before the advent of the British and were exercising

sovereign power," rejoined the friend, "as a product of indigenous social and economic system of long standing. Don't you think they have a title to continue their existence? They are trying their best to discharge a philanthropic function in the shape of founding educational and social institutions."

"Anything that is ancient and consistent with moral values has a title to be retained," answered Gandhiji. "Per contra anything that does not conform to moral values has to go. Wrong has no prescriptive right to exist merely because it is of a long standing. If those who are on your Zamindaris feel one with you and you with them, like members of a family, you have nothing to fear from anybody."

The friend proceeded, "We want even-handed justice. We have no objection to an Independent India Government abolishing all manner of vested interests. But let there be no discrimination against the Zamindars especially. We only want a conciliatory gesture, an assurance that you won't wipe us out as a class, without giving us a sporting chance to vindicate our existence."

"A just man," replied Gandhiji "need have no fear of any kind from an Independent India. India may, however, fall into unjust hands. Every Congressman is not an angel nor is everyone who is not a Congressman a devil. Let us hope that, if Congress comes into power, it will try to be more than just. Otherwise all the good that it might have done would disappear in the twinkling of an eye."

"I do not deny that there are bad boys amongst us. But you can cure us. We only wish that nothing should be done without consulting us."

"That goes without saying," replied Gandhiji, pointing in a mute petition of mercy, as it were, to the heap of undisposed papers in front of him.

ITS OWN SEAL AND SANCTION

Another group of friends presented Gandhiji with a poser, 'Could he guarantee that under independence the right of proselytization would be guaranteed by a statute?' This provoked the counter question, 'Did they really believe in the ideal of independence or was their support to the independence ideal only for a consideration?' In the latter case, he would say, remarked Gandhiji, that they believed neither in independence nor in religion. Who could suppress the voice of truth, if it filled one's being? And of what avail was a statutory guarantee if there was not the fire within to bear witness to truth?

"It is true, no one can suppress the voice of truth," interpolated one of them. "We want a guarantee from you that no attempt would be made to suppress it."

"I cannot give you that guarantee because I have no authority," replied Gandhiji. It was the function of religion, he continued, to save the temporal power from losing its soul; religion did not depend upon it for protection. And he cited to them the illustration of Daniel, the servant of God, who used to pray behind closed doors. But when Darius the King issued a decree prohibiting

the worship of any God or man save himself under a penalty, he began to pray to God publicly, the windows of his chamber being open so that all could see him praying. He was thrown into the hungry lion's den but came out unscathed. The result was that the King rescinded his former decree which was 'unalterable' under the laws of Medes and Persians and made another decree to the effect that in every dominion of his kingdom, "men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God and steadfast as ever." And "so Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus." That was the only true way of proselytization and it needed no guarantee, statutory or otherwise. It was its own seal and sanction. "To take a leaf from the history of our own times, remember the words of the late Lord Salisbury who, when in office, had told a missionary deputation about China that they were a poor specimen, if for their mission they sought the protection of British guns," concluded Gandhiji.

A PILGRIMAGE

Gandhiji had thought of returning to his residence from the Balikashrama. But a number of students and some members of the staff from Jamia Millia came and requested him, some time, to pay a visit, to their institution too.

"Some time must mean now," replied Gandhiji. "Having come so far I cannot go back without going to you." The Jamia Millia group were overjoyed. They ran ahead of him to carry the happy tidings to their colleagues and returned with petromax lanterns to lead the way. The unexpected visit put the whole place in a flutter of excitement. Dr. Zakir Hussain was away at Bhawalpur. But Moujeeb Saheb was there with other members of the staff. Carpets were spread on the lawn and a happy family gathering was held there under the sky. Jamia Millia, founded at the commencement of the non-cooperation movement in 1920 is shortly to celebrate its silver jubilee. The seedling planted by the late Hakim Ajmal Khan Saheb, Dr. Ansari and the Ali Brothers has grown into a stately tree under the loving care of Dr. Zakir Hussain and his colleagues. It has now 200 students attending the primary classes, 100 in the secondary section and 28 in the college. Sixty teachers are besides undergoing training. The institution is running a day school and a *Maktaba* or a publishing house in Karol Bagh.

"I have proved my claim to being a member of the family by coming without previous notice," Gandhiji remarked touched by the spontaneous welcome. He then invited questions.

One student asked, "What can the students do to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity?" It was a question after Gandhiji's heart. "The way is simple," he replied. "Even if all the Hindus turn rowdies and abuse you, you may not cease to regard them as your blood-brothers and *vice versa*. Is it impossible? No, rather the contrary. And what is possible for the individual is possible for the mass.

"Today the whole atmosphere is poisoned. All kinds of wild rumours are circulated by the Press and are indiscriminately swallowed by the people. Panic results and both Hindus and Muslims forget their humanity and behave towards one another like wild brutes. It behoves man to

act decently, irrespective of what the other party might or might not do. If one returns decency for decency, it is a bargain. Even thieves and dacoits do that. There is no merit in it. Humanity disdains to calculate profits and losses. It enjoins on one a unilateral obligation to put up decent behaviour. If all the Hindus listened to my advice, or in the alternative the Muslims listened to me, there would be peace in India which neither daggers nor *lathis* would be able to shatter. The mischief maker will soon be weary of the sorry business of stabbing, when there is no retaliation or counter provocation. An Unseen Power will arrest his uplifted arm and it will refuse to obey his wicked will. You may throw dust at the sun, it won't dim his lustre. All it needs is to hold one's soul in faith and patience. God is good and does not allow wickedness to proceed beyond a certain length.

"I had a hand in the building up of this institution. It, therefore, gives me much pleasure to be able to pour out my heart before you. I have said the same thing to the Hindus. May yours be a shining example to India and the world."

Before returning to his residence he made a pilgrimage of the tomb of the late Dr. M. A. Ansari, the living monument of Islamic liberalism at its best and Hindu-Muslim unity. To Gandhiji he was like a blood-brother. During Gandhiji's twentyone days' fast in Parnakuti at Poona in 1932, when things seemed critical, Dr. Ansari interrupted his visit to Europe and hastened to his bedside. A spacious platform thrown up into a series of terraces marks the burial place. A marble tablet at the foot bears his name and the dates of his birth and death. The unostentatious and austere simplicity only enhances its impressiveness. Independent India will always cherish the late doctor's memory as a symbol of hope, faith and unity.

New Delhi, 23-4-'46

PYARELAL

Notes

'Silk Khadi'

If partial payment in yarn is necessary for buying cotton Khadi why should the same not apply to 'silk Khadi'?

There can be only one answer to this question. Silk Khadi too is Khadi and its purchase should, therefore, also be contingent on the requisite payment of yarn.

Why Only Yarn?

Since spinning is a part of the constructive programme, why should not all constructive workers be exempt from paying for Khadi in yarn?

There is some confusion of thought in this question. The reason for part payment in yarn, instead of in money, is to give Khadi its rightful place, and in time make yarn current coin. That yarn is a part of constructive work has no bearing on the present argument. Let us leave aside for the moment the fact that the wheel is the central sun of the solar system of our constructive programme. If we believe that Swaraj hangs on the hand-spun thread, then it is clear that the value of yarn will be far greater than gold and silver currency. Constructive workers are not exempt from spinning. How can there be any such exemption from *yajna*? Spinning is the necessary *yajna* for everyone.

New Delhi, 20-4-'46

M. K. G.

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

HARIJAN

April 28

1946

MINISTERS' DUTY

(By M. K. Gandhi)

It is legitimate to ask what Congress ministers will do for Khaddar and other village industries now that they are in office. I should broaden the question and apply it to all the Provincial Governments of India. Poverty is common to all the provinces and so are means of alleviation in terms of the masses. Such is the experience of both the A. I. S. A. and the A. I. V. I. A.. A suggestion has been made that there should be a separate minister for the work, as, for proper organization, it will occupy all the time of one minister. I dread to make the suggestion, for we have not yet outlived the English scale of expenditure. Whether a minister is separately appointed or not, a department for the work is surely necessary. In these times of scarcity of food and clothing, this department can render the greatest help. The ministers have experts at their disposal through the A. I. S. A. and the A. I. V. I. A.. It is possible to clothe today the whole of India in Khadi on the smallest outlay and in the shortest time possible. Each Provincial Government has to tell the villagers that they must manufacture their own Khaddar for their own use. This brings in automatic local production and distribution. And there will undoubtedly be a surplus for the cities at least to a certain extent which, in its turn, will reduce the pressure on the local mills. The latter will then be able to take part in supplying the want of cloth in other parts of the world.

How can this result be brought about?

The Governments should notify the villagers that they will be expected to manufacture Khaddar for the needs of their villages within a fixed date after which no cloth will be supplied to them. The Governments in their turn will supply the villagers with cotton seed or cotton wherever required, at cost price and the tools of manufacture also at cost, to be recovered in easy instalments payable in, say, five years or more. They will supply them with instructors wherever necessary and undertake to buy surplus stock of Khaddar, provided that the villagers in question have their cloth requirements supplied from their own manufacture. This should do away with cloth shortage without fuss and with very little overhead charges.

The villages will be surveyed and a list prepared of things that can be manufactured locally with little or no help and which may be required for village use or for sale outside, such for instance, as *ghani*-pressed oil and cakes, burning oil prepared through *ghanis*, hand-pounded rice, *tadgud*, honey, toys, mats, hand-made paper, village soap, etc.. If enough care is thus taken the villages, most of them as good as dead or dying, will hum with life and

exhibit the immense possibilities they have of supplying most of their wants themselves and of the cities and towns of India.

Then there is the limitless cattle wealth of India suffering from criminal neglect. Goseva Sangh, as yet not properly experienced, can still supply valuable aid.

Without the basic training the villagers are being starved for education. This desideratum can be supplied by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh. The experiment was already commenced by Congress Governments but it was interrupted by the resignations of the Congress ministries. The thread can be easily resumed now.

New Delhi, 22-4-'46

IS IT GENUINE ?

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Q. In one of your post-prayer discourses last week you stressed the use of Khadi to the exclusion of all other cloth. I love the very touch of Khadi as it links me, in my heart and thoughts, to my poor sisters and brothers, to whom it brings a well-earned morsel of food. I love it from every point of view—on hygienic, aesthetic, humanitarian, moral and spiritual grounds. But I have so far never been able to take to spinning, much as I like the soothing hum of the wheel, and thanks to our system of education, my hands are utterly untrained and unfit to learn spinning at this stage. I am, therefore, unable to comply in a straightforward manner with the conditions now imposed on the sale of Khadi, and it is galling to me to have to go in for mill cloth.

A. If the love for Khadi is so genuine as to cover moral and spiritual values, surely the writer should be able to learn spinning easily at his age. The late Pandit Motilal Nehru learnt it, after he was fifty. The late Ali Brothers learnt it, though they did not practise it regularly. And all these three learnt it for its national and political value in the highest sense of the term. As a matter of fact most of the public workers learnt it late in life.

The writer should learn spinning without delay. There is nothing wrong with his fingers. All who can write can spin. And spinning for Swaraj is any day more valuable than writing.

I agree that for one like the writer the only straightforward way to give his quota of yarn for buying Khadi is self-spinning. If he was incapable for any cause, it would be perfectly right for him to get his many friends or relations to spin the required quota for him.

As an earnest student of affairs, he should know, too, that while Khadi is good for the poor as an honourable occupation for earning bread, it has an additional and far greater value as an instrument of winning Swaraj through non-violent means. Let it not be said of men like him that they could write eloquently about moral values without realizing the implications of the statement.

New Delhi, 21-4-'46

QUESTION BOX

(By M. K. Gandhi)

SUGAR AND SWEETMEATS

Q. The sugar ration in Bombay has just been reduced by 25 per cent. Would it not have been fairer to reduce sweetmeat shops' rations rather than cut down the individual's?

A. It is always well to cut down the ration of sweet vendors rather than that of individuals. In these hard times I would not mind if sweet-making were even prohibited. Sweetmeats are not a necessary part of a wholesome diet.

WHITE BREAD AND BROWN

Q. Up till January it was obligatory to mix ten per cent of bran with wheat flour. Later the rule was abolished. Should it not be reinforced?

A. I am a witness to the age-old rivalry between white and wholemeal brown bread. People are attracted by whiteness. I nurse the belief that the Negro is not drawn by it. Be that as it may, it is a fact that special effort is made to make bread look white. Fortunately, only city dwellers indulge in such fads. Doctors say that one *chapati* of wholemeal flour is more tasty and contains more nourishment than two to five *Chapaties* made out of refined flour. And in these days it is our duty to use wholemeal, because all flour saved is flour gained. From one point of view it is even more than that. Wheat stored in villages is far more useful than sacks of it lying in ports. Therefore, it is desirable to make the mixing of bran with wheat flour compulsory. The war is over but post-war conditions are worse for us than during the war, and the situation is daily deteriorating. God alone knows when it will improve.

ROWDYISM IN ELECTIONS

Q. You are no doubt aware of the rowdyism resulting in severe damage during one of the recent elections in Bombay. Does it become the teacher of *ahimsa* to keep silent on such an occasion?

A. I do not want to enter into the question of whether silence becomes me or not. If the rowdyism is not a forerunner of what the future holds, it will be wrong to take note of it. Such sporadic clashes should not worry us. The education of the masses in *ahimsa* can make way gradually. It may be that it will develop from the lessons learnt from such happenings. But it may be that this rowdyism is symptomatic of an epidemic. Many people imagine that they alone are right and everyone else wrong, and they do not consider that there is anything unworthy in forcing their point of view down others' throats. This error has to be rectified. If we are in the right we must have infinite patience.

Just now we seem unable to see our own mistakes. Those who lack the faculty of reason, or who desire to live for the sake of enjoyment, can never see the error. If there are many such, then we must conclude that our non-violence has been a weapon of the weak, *himsa* masquerading in the guise of *ahimsa*. If this weakness continues we shall have to go through rivers of blood once the British rule goes. We may even come under the

sway of some other foreign power or it may be that with internecine warfare the weaker side will have to submit to the one that has the mightier weapons. If we are unfortunate enough to witness such strife, believers in non-violence will joyfully die in the effort to stop it and thereby live.

My hope is that the masses have sufficiently imbibed the spirit of *ahimsa* and that when the British go there may be a little fight here and there and then we shall settle down as brothers giving a lesson of peace to the world.

Only those who fought in Bombay know what good they achieved by fighting. I am ignorant of who fought and what the fight was about and what were the gains if any.

New Delhi, 22-4-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

SOVEREIGN REMEDY

(By M. K. Gandhi)

"I read with avidity every word that flows from your pen. I can hardly wait till I have finished reading the new issue of 'Harijan' when it arrives. This results in a strange ego in me, demanding the object of my adoration to be perfect according to my light! Anything which appears obviously unconvincing makes me restless. Your new note in nature cure — reciting of *Ramanam* as the sure remedy — leaves me completely bewildered. The modern youth refrains from challenging some of your views out of toleration. Their attitude may be summed up in the following: 'Well, Gandhiji has taught us a whole lot of things; he has elevated us to unimaginable heights; he has, above all, brought Swaraj within our reach; why not 'suffer' his *Ramanam* 'fad'?'

"*Inter alia* you have said the following:

"No matter what the ailment from which a man may be suffering, recitation of *Ramanam* from the heart is the sure cure' (*Harijan* 3-3-'46).

"Man should seek out and be content to confine the means of cure to the five elements of which the body is composed, *i. e.* earth, water, *akash*, sun and air' (*Harijan*, 3-3-'46).

"And my claim is that the recitation of *Ramanam* is a sovereign remedy for our physical ailments also' (*Harijan* 7-4-'46).

"At first, when you introduced this new note in the system of nature cure, I thought you were merely putting in other words a kind of psychotherapy or 'Christian science' based on faith. These have their place in every system of medicine. I interpreted my first quotation above in that light. The second sentence quoted above is difficult to grasp. After all, it is physically impossible for medicines to be composed of anything but the five elements to which you refer, and which you say must be the sole means of cure.

"If faith is what you insist on I have no quarrel; it is necessary for the patient to cooperate in getting well also by faith. But it is difficult to accept that faith alone would cure 'our physical ailment also'. Two years ago, my little daughter was struck by infantile paralysis; it was the most modern treatment that saved the child from becoming a cripple for

life. You would agree that it would not avail to ask a two and a half year old child to recite *Ramanam* to be rid of infantile paralysis; and I would like to see you persuade any mother to do the recitation (and recitation alone) on her child's behalf.

"The authority from Charaka that you have quoted in the issue of March 24th, leaves me cold; you have taught me not to accept anything, however ancient and however authoritative it may be, if it does not appeal to my heart."

Thus writes a teacher of youth. While I am eager to be in the good graces of the student world, my eagerness has well-defined limitations. For one, I must please them with the rest of the world, which is admittedly much larger. In no case should a servant of the public pander to any person or class.

If those whom my correspondent represents really think that anything I have done has taken India to unimaginable heights, they should extend to my so-called fads slightly more than toleration. Toleration by itself will do them and me no good. It may easily promote laziness in them, and false self-assurance in me. Let them think well before rejecting even a fad. Faddists are not always to be despised. Fads have before now made their owners mount the gallows.

Ramanam has the flavour of faith-healing and Christian science; yet, it is quite distinct from them. Recitation of *Ramanam* is a mere symbol of the reality for which it stands. If one is knowingly filled with the presence of God within, one is that moment free from all ailment physical, mental or moral. That we do not see the type in life is not to disprove the truth of the statement. My argument is admittedly useless for those who have no faith in God.

Christian scientists, faith-healers and psychotherapists may, if they will, bear witness somewhat to the truth underlying *Ramanam*. I cannot take the reader a long way with me through reason. How is one to prove to a person who has never tasted sugar, that sugar is sweet, except by asking him to taste it?

I must not reiterate here the conditions attendant upon the heart recitation of the sacred syllable.

The authority of Charaka is good for those who have some belief in *Ramanam*. Others may dismiss the authority from their consideration.

Children are irresponsible. *Ramanam* is undoubtedly not for them. They are helpless beings at the mercy of their parents. They show what tremendous responsibility parents bear to them and society. I have known parents who have trifled with their children's diseases even to the extent of trusting them to their (the parents') recitation of *Ramanam*.

Lastly, the argument about everything, even medicines, being from '*panch mahabhutas*' betrays a hasty confusion of thought. I have only to point it out to remove it.

New Delhi, 19-4-'46

MERCY VERSUS RUTHLESSNESS

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The virtues of mercy, non-violence, love and truth in any man can be truly tested only when they are pitted against ruthlessness, violence, hate and untruth.

If this is true, then it is incorrect to say that *ahimsa* is of no avail before a murderer. It can certainly be said that to experiment with *ahimsa* in face of a murderer is to seek self-destruction. But this is the real test of *ahimsa*. He who gets himself killed out of sheer helplessness, however, can in nowise be said to have passed the test. He who when being killed bears no anger against his murderer and even asks God to forgive him is truly non-violent. History relates this of Jesus Christ. With his dying breath on the cross, he is reported to have said: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." We can get similar instances from other religions but the quotation is given because it is world famous.

It is another matter that our non-violence has not reached such heights. It would be wholly wrong for us to lower the standard of *ahimsa* by reason of our own frailty or lack of experience. Without true understanding of the ideal, we can never hope to reach it. It is necessary for us, therefore, to apply our reason to understand the power of non-violence.

New Delhi, 21-4-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

'HARIJAN' IN URDU SCRIPT

(By M. K. Gandhi)

"Harijan" is variously described as 'Harijan-sevak' when it is the Hindustani and 'Harijan-bandhu' when it is the Gujarati edition. Hindustani was Hindi when it was in Nagari type only. Now, for reasons already known, it is Hindustani in two scripts—Nagari and Urdu. The Urdu edition would have been published simultaneously, if the arrangement could have been completed. But there were difficulties of official permission and type to be surmounted. Litho printing became well-nigh impossible, and expert advice favoured Urdu type. The type could not be had for the wanting. But it is now hoped definitely to bring out the Urdu edition on 5th May next.

Whilst the matter in the three editions is not as a rule mere translation, one of another, and to an extent differs in the three editions, the Nagari and Urdu will be the same, word for word. An endeavour will be made to produce Hindustani which will neither be sanskritized Hindi nor persianized Urdu. Whether the Hindustani will be popular or not will depend as much upon the writers for the Hindustani 'Harijan' as upon its readers.

New Delhi, 21-4-'46

MEETING SASTRIAR

Now that Shri Sastriar is no more, his last talks with Gandhiji assume a great though tragic importance.

The first meeting took place on the evening of the 22nd January. Gandhiji had heard that Sastriar was so ill that probably he alone would be allowed to go in for a few minutes. Shri Jagadisan had advised my brother and me to accompany him. "Sastriar will be pleased to see you," he had said. So Gandhiji took both of us and Shri Manilal Gandhi with him, warning us that we might have to stay outside. The doctor, however, gave us more cheerful news about the patient's condition, and we were all allowed to enter. At one time Sastriar had almost given up hope of surviving till Gandhiji's visit to Madras and the joy of meeting him in the flesh almost choked him with emotion. He had been reclining on a bedrest but he sat bolt upright as Gandhiji entered and moved to the edge of the bed. "I want to come near enough to hug you, little brother," he muttered in a choked voice.

Gandhiji took his hand and soothed him. "You must not hug me and excite yourself," he pleaded and the illustrious patient once again reclined on the bedrest holding Gandhiji's hand in both his own.

The excitement had greatly aggravated the breathlessness. With great effort he began, "I have wanted to say one thing to you." And panting for breath after each word, with moist eyes, he continued: "Another opportunity for peace has been lost. They are sitting there at the Peace Conference Table. But who is there who can speak for humanity except you? I am afraid India has failed to do her duty." Ever since Gandhiji's release from prison, Sastriar had been writing to him, imploring him to go to the Peace Conference at San Francisco. "Even if they do not ask you, you must go as the apostle of truth and non-violence and be on the spot. Your mere presence will have a tremendous effect. You must not stand on ceremony."

I have tried to put in my own words the substance of what he had been writing. Gandhiji's view was that his non-violence should have its effect from wherever he was. His going to the Peace Conference, unless the Great Powers themselves wanted it, could serve no useful purpose. But Sastriar had remained unconvinced and he gave vent to his feelings on meeting Gandhiji.

Then referring to the Parliamentary delegation he remarked, "We know nothing can come out of it. Labour or Conservative, so far as India is concerned, they are all one and the same."

Gandhiji agreed and added, "But we must trust."

"Burrows, the new pitboy Governor of Bengal, has a sense of humour. When the pressmen worried him and asked him what policy he was going to initiate, he replied, 'Gentlemen, I am not going to initiate. I am going to carry out.' That is true of all of them. The Labour Government cannot afford to do otherwise." So saying Sastriar asked: "What next?"

"Who knows?" replied Gandhiji. "The British Government itself does not know, I think. But I did not come here to discuss politics with you."

Sastriar spoke like a man, "I see, you think I am no good for it."

"No, but you are certainly no good for it in the present state of your health."

They touched upon the topic of the communal problem. They cracked a few more jokes and then Sastriar called us near and bade good-bye saying a few kind words to each one of us. He talked a little about South Africa and General Smuts with Shri Manilal Gandhi, and Gandhiji left him with a promise to visit him again if the doctor reported that the visit had had no deleterious effect upon his health.

The doctor's report was satisfactory and Gandhiji paid him a second visit on the night of the 30th. This time he was accompanied by Shri Rajagopalachariar, Shri Thakkar Bapa, Rajkumari Amritkaur, Miss Agatha Harrison, Shri T. N. Jagadisan, my brother Shri Pyarelalji, Dr. Srinivasan and myself. Dr. Srinivasan, an honorary physician of the General Hospital, Madras, who was in charge of Sastriar's case, came to Gandhiji's residence and escorted him to the hospital as on the previous occasion. The talk mostly centred round the *Ramayana*.

Sastriar began by saying, "You have been a blessing to me in a hundred ways."

"What nonsense, Sastri," said Gandhiji.

"Ah, don't I know, Gandhi, you are the greatest fellow alive in the world today," said Sastriar and introduced his grandchildren to him. "Let your *kataksha* fall on them." And in good humour he quoted a *shloka* from the *Ramayana*:

यत्र रामं न पश्येत्तु यं च रामो न पश्यति ।

निन्दितः स भवेत्लोकैः स्वात्माप्येन विगर्हते ॥ अयोध्या ८

"He who does not see Rama and whom Rama does not see is despised by every one in this world."

Then Sastriar told Gandhiji how on the previous day after his midday meal he had dozed off and as if in a trance written a most beautiful essay on the *Ramayana* in about 15 minutes. The theme was that after Ravana's death Hanuman goes to Sita in *Ashoka Vatika* and asks her, 'Mother, give me your permission and I shall severely punish all the *Rakshasis* who have been torturing you.' The Divine Lady turns round and replies:

समयो रक्षितव्यस्तु सन्तश्चारित्रभूषणाः

पापानां वाञ्छुमानां वा वधाहीनामथापि वा ।

कार्यं कारुण्यमारेण न कश्चिन्नापराध्यति ॥ अयोध्या ८

"No, what wrong have these poor things done? They are merely slaves of their master and they did his bidding for the sake of their livelihood. Leave them alone. It is forgiveness that makes life worth living. Forgiveness is divine. It is the noblest of virtues, so I pardon them. There is no one who is wholly free of error. And who does not need to be forgiven?"

"As soon as I go home," Sastriar added, "I shall dictate it to Jagadisan if he can come to me and send it to you. Will you let Pyarelal read it out to you?"

Gandhiji promised to read it himself. "You dictate it to Jagadisan tomorrow," he said, "and send it to me. I shall read it before I go to Madura."

"No," replied Sastriar, "it will take me at least two or three days. I have to do it in bits. Marvellous as my doctor is, he has not made me well enough to do it tomorrow."

Sastriar was full of the *Ramayana*. "The *Ramayana* has no parallel." He regretted that the great epic was not read more generally and that its ideal did not animate the people as of old. "When Sita had repulsed the evil-intentioned Ravana with the *tejas* of her purity," he continued, "the *Rakshasis* came to her and said, 'You do not know the world. Else you would not have refused what is being offered to you.' The Divine Lady's reply was, 'Your city is beautiful, the buildings are grand and there is every mark of civilization, but are there not two or three people who feel the wrong and can say the truth to Ravana?'"

And Sastriar was deeply moved. "That is the duty we owe to friends and that we fail to discharge. I have done that for you once or twice and as for you, you do it and sometimes publicly, much to the consternation of everybody. But it is the noblest office of friendship." Turning to Rajaji, he continued, "Tell me, Rajagopalachari, out of a hundred people that go wrong, is not there one whom a timely warning could have saved? Please do not think that I am preaching at the Mahatma. I am making a confession. I have also failed in that duty sometimes."

Turning to Bapu he said, "You are a seeker after truth. You and I are poles asunder in many things. I have differed from you and you have said so without reserve. But I also am a follower of truth, though at a great distance from you. The eternal truths propounded by Valmiki in the *Ramayana* have been the greatest source of inspiration to me. I feel I have failed to do my duty by not giving to the people what I have found for myself in that great epic." Gandhiji reminded him of the lectures on *Ramayana* that he had delivered and suggested that they should be printed. But that was not enough for him. "If I live for sometime more and good Jagadisan can spare time, I might still be able to make some atonement," he sighed.

Gandhiji: "Jagadisan is your admirer and a devoted follower. He will be always at your disposal, unless of course the doctor thinks that you should not be disturbed. Then he will just not be at home."

Sastriar had a hearty laugh. "So, like Rama you teach falsehood. When Sumantra was driving Rama, Lakshmana and Sita to the jungle, Rama asked him to drive fast. 'Man, why prolong the agony? Go fast, and if my father is angry tell him you did not hear him.'

The patient was talking too much and the doctor was getting worried. He said some thing in Tamil. Sastriar replied, "Yes, you are right. A good conversationalist hears more than he talks. But they say 'once a schoolmaster, always a schoolmaster.' So I have gone on."

Gandhiji: "And we shall bear witness to that."

Sastriar: "Well, this might be my last meeting with you. I am not in a position to say, 'I will come to see you when you return from Madura.' So, I wanted to talk and have talked. Now it is your turn."

Gandhiji: "Nonsense, this is not the last meeting. I will try to come and see you on my return from Madura. And I have very little to say except this, that you must get well soon and return the visit at Sevagram."

"You are the prince of optimists," replied Sastriar.

"Oh yes, an irrepressible one!" retorted Gandhiji, and they both laughed, exchanged a few more jokes and parted.

On his return from Madura, Gandhiji had only three hours at his disposal during which he held the prayer meeting, had his bath etc., gave several autographs, saw several people, collected funds for Harijans, and Hindustani Prachar and paid a hurried visit to Sastriar on his way to the station. It was a Monday and Sastriar was disappointed to find that Gandhiji was observing silence. Gandhiji would have liked to have begun his silence early on Sunday evening so that he could talk when he went to see Sastriar but he had not been able to manage. So Sastriar talked and Gandhiji replied by writing on slips of paper. In reply to Sastriar's enquiry about the tour, Gandhiji wrote that it had been very nice but very taxing. Sastriar was surprised to hear that five to six lakhs had gathered at the prayer meeting at Madura, more than half of which number had come from the surrounding villages. They had sat on the roadside without food and shelter just to have a *darshan* as they felt that this might be their last chance.

Gandhiji enquired about Sastriar's health and advised him to obey the doctor. Sastriar said he felt almost normal. He was moved beyond words. "Brother, you have done me an exceptional honour," he remarked, "especially by paying this visit when you were in a great hurry. You are dearer and nearer to me than my own brothers and sons and members of the family." His voice had become almost inaudible. "We have come together by some inner affinity. No external reason can explain this friendship. Gokhale was but the occasion of it." And he drew nearer to Gandhiji and whispered, "I won't waste words. You know what I want to say." Gandhiji waved to him to be quiet as he was becoming breathless with emotion and got up to say goodbye.

As Gandhiji got up Sastriar caught sight of his dangling watch. "Ah! your constant companion. Somebody said you had lost your watch and would use it no longer," he said. Shri T. R. Venkatarama corrected him by saying that the remark related to his fountain pen.

Sastriar: "Oh! I see. But if someone steals your watch, will you give up using a watch also?" Gandhiji laughed and shook his head to say that he could not do without his watch.

We bade good-bye to Sastriar and reminded him of his promise to return the visit to Sevagram. In another half an hour, we were in the special train and Gandhiji was busy writing and revising articles for 'Harijan'.

New Delhi, 21-4-'46

S. N.

By M. K. Gandhi
Non-violence in Peace and War

Price Rs. 7, Postage 10 Annas

Women & Social Injustice

Price Rs. 4, Postage 7 Annas

By J. C. Kumarappa

Practice & Precepts of Jesus

Rs. 1-8-0, Postage 6 Annas

Christianity-Its Economy & Way of Life

Price Rs. 1-9-0, Postage 6 Annas

THE LOSS

It needed all his resources of philosophy and stoicism to enable Gandhiji to bear up under the loss of Sastriar's passing away. The news came in the middle of the night when he was fast asleep. It was communicated to him after the morning prayer on the following day. There was such a deep bond of affection between the two and a mutual recognition of the fundamental things which they shared in common, that people who saw only the difference in their respective political outlooks, marvelled at their friendship. The strongest bond that united them was truth. "Your truthfulness," remarked Gandhiji once in the course of a letter to him, "is far more precious to me than your co-operation." On another occasion he wrote: "Your criticism soothes me, your silence makes me nervous." On Sastriar's part, if he sometimes found fault with Gandhiji, it was out of his jealous concern for him. It was the concern of "a friend, a lover and a child." No wonder that Gandhiji, who is ever in search of a conscience-keeper, was never tired of beseeching him not to cease to strive with him.

Intellectually, Sastriar was a sceptic. But the heart, as the French saying goes, has a logic of its own that transcends the logic of the intellect, and so Sastriar's practice very often transcended his creed of scepticism. Gandhiji, on the other hand, with all his transcendent faith insisted on subjecting his actions to the pragmatic test with the result that very often, proceeding by diverse routes, they found a common meeting ground on the broad platform of humanity. Sastriar who enjoyed having a spar with the late Shri Mahadev Desai occasionally wrote to the latter in the course of a letter:

"You point out with justice that when I stop short where reason fails Gandhiji marches on, upheld by faith. Let me add by way of supplement . . . that I would first listen to faith, which has a strange fascination for me, and that Gandhiji on many occasions shrinks from the lengths to which faith would draw him. That is where a common human nature comes in; no distinction can reach down to the bottom."

As a further illustration of the same, Sastriar was one of the most erudite scholars of English and was proud of it too, and yet he found the fullest satisfaction only in the use of the mother tongue.

"This Tamil escapade," he remarked in one of his letters to a friend, referring to an autobiographical piece in Tamil which he had dictated, "warms my blood with the genuine passion. It is awkward, stumbling and—don't I see?—ludicrous. But it possesses me for the time. I am oblivious of what the critical world says.

"If second childhood may lisp, let it lisp in the mother tongue."

His last conversation with Gandhiji which is recorded elsewhere in these columns by Dr. Sushila Nayyar is a veritable monument of affection that transcends differences.

New Delhi, 23-4-'46

PYARELAL

COMMUNION OF SILENCE

Last week I referred to the Sunday silent prayer meeting of the Quakers which Gandhiji attended. He has been attending it every Sunday since his arrival here.

Quakers believe that "in corporate silent waiting, God does speak to us and we can understand His will in the common walks of life." As Shri Ranjit M. Chetsingh explained at the beginning of the service last week quoting an early Quaker, "The thinking busy soul excludes the voice of God." "Be still and cool from thine own self." Said George Fox, "The Silence of a religious and spiritual worship is not a drowsy unthinking state of mind but a withdrawing of it from all visible objects and vain imaginings."

Making the Quaker meeting which he had attended the theme of his address at the evening prayer gathering, Gandhiji described how his own experience tallied with that of the Quakers. "Emptying of the mind of all conscious processes of thought and filling it with the spirit of God unmanifest brings one ineffable peace and attunes the soul with the Infinite." The question may however be raised, should not one's whole life be an unbroken hymn of praise and prayer to the Maker? Why then have a separate time for prayer at all? Brother Lawrence testified that "with him the set times of prayers were not different from other times; that he retired to pray according to the directions of his superior, but that he did not want such retirement, nor asked for it, because his greatest business did not divert him from God." Gandhiji does not question that view. "I agree," he observed in his discourse, "that if a man could practise the presence of God all the twentyfour hours, there would be no need for a separate time for prayer." But most people find that impossible. The sordid everyday world is too much with them. For them the practice of complete withdrawal of the mind from all outward things, even though it might be only for a few minutes every day, would be found to be of infinite use. Silent communion would help them to experience an undisturbed peace in the midst of turmoil, to curb anger and cultivate patience. "When the mind is completely filled with His spirit one cannot harbour ill will or hatred towards any one and reciprocally the enemy will shed his enmity and become a friend. It is not my claim that I have always succeeded in converting enemies into friends, but in numerous cases it has been my experience that when the mind is filled with His peace all hatred ceases. An unbroken succession of world teachers since the beginning of time have borne testimony to the same. I claim no merit for it. I know it is due entirely to God's grace. Let us then in the Sacred Week seek His grace through the communion of silence and may be the experience will abide with us ever afterwards."

The silent Communion of the Friends generally ends when one and another feel a call to offer prayer or to pass on what they feel must be shared by the whole group. On the last occasion it ended

with a moving reference by Shri Sudhir Ghosh to the late Charlie Andrews. "I was not present by his side when he breathed his last in 1940. But they say that during the semi-conscious state before the end he often muttered the words 'Bapu, Swaraj is coming.' A lump rises in my throat at the thought that now that Swaraj is coming at last C. F. A. is no longer with us to see its coming. In these days when violence is simmering in this vast country and a spirit of vengeance against the British is in the air, let us remember more than ever the legacy left by this Christian man who lived and died for peace between the British and the Indian peoples, and for which he was even despised by some of his own countrymen. What better worship can we offer to God in these fateful days here in Delhi than to contemplate the work of a man whose life was a silken bond of the spirit between the good that is England and the good that is India?"

The biographer of Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman has recorded how it was the outspokenness and courageous championship of the Boers during the darkest days of the Boer war by an English woman—Emily Hobhouse—that contributed not a little to the liquidation of the hatred engendered by the incidents of the war and the final establishment of an understanding between the two nations. C. F. A. did for India what Emily Hobhouse did for the Boers. May his labours in the cause of Indian independence be a sufficient ransom for what British Imperialism might have done to India.

New Delhi, 17-4-'46

PYARELAL

YOUNG AT EIGHTYFIVE

In his 85th year Bharatabhushan Pandit Malaviyaji refused to remain confined to his bed and rushed to Delhi to watch the denouement of two centuries of British rule in India. In vain did Gandhiji and Sheth G. D. Birla try to dissuade this hero of a hundred fights, who is now practically bedridden on account of his years, from undertaking the journey. On reaching Delhi, he wanted to come and see Gandhiji in *Bhangi Nivas*. But Gandhiji anticipated him by meeting him at 5, Canning Road, on the evening of 18th April. "You would have covered me with shame, if you had come to me instead of my going to you," Gandhiji told him when he met him.

Malaviyaji lay half reclining in his bed, supported by a high pillow. At fourscore and five his mind is alert, the memory still functioning. The sight and bearing are good but the physical energy is at its low ebb. His voice during the conversations scarcely rose above a whisper. Both Gandhiji and I strained our ears in vain to catch it till Govind Malaviyaji came to our rescue. The one passion that filled his soul was the independence and integrity of India and on these points Gandhiji was able to allay his apprehensions. He had heard that a lot of people came and disturbed his peace by retailing all kinds of idle rumours. "Why do you lend a ready ear to such gossip?" pleaded Gandhiji. "Why can't you take a leaf out of my book? If someone comes to me and talks to me about the

Indian States, I send him off to Pandit Nehru. If it is about internal politics of the Congress, I give him Maulana Azad's address. In this way I have rigorously restricted my ambit of work. Even so, I have hardly a moment's respite. Unless I did that I would have to give up the desire to live up to 125 which I must not do, if my dream of non-violence as a world conquering force is to be realized. You are a man of religion and purity of the soul. It should need no argument on my part to convince you that if you completely empty your mind of outward things and fixing all your thoughts on Him inwardly pray, you will have more than contributed your share to the struggle for independence. You must complete your century. It is perfectly feasible if you will listen to my advice." Malaviyaji followed Gandhiji's remarks with an inscrutable childlike smile on the face, beaming affection. What did the amused look signify? Was it to say, 'O, I have heard all that before!' I wonder. "I must not engage you in talk any further," he remarked, "I know you are always busy."

New Delhi, 22-4-'46

PYARELAL

PRAYER DISCOURSES

The embargo laid by Gandhiji upon himself, in regard to press interviews, continues. Having adopted the delicate role of adviser to the Cabinet Mission and his own countrymen, he feels he must not be "broadcasting to the world on the matters covered by his advice". And so discourses at the evening prayer gatherings are the only public utterances that he has allowed himself to make since his arrival in Delhi. Prayer, as Gandhiji has more than once remarked of late, is not merely a means of attaining spiritual salvation, but also of obtaining freedom from bondage in this world. The greater includes the less. "If Swaraj is to be won through the non-violent strength of the millions," he observed in the course of one of his prayer addresses, "they must in some measure develop in them the qualities of a *sthitaprajna* or the man of steady wisdom.

"That ideal is not meant for *janis* only, it is for all, even ordinary lay people. Lord Krishna himself is depicted in the *Mahabharata* as a charioteer actually driving a team of white horses while his pupil Arjuna, to whom the Gita discourses are addressed is pictured as being plebeian in his mental make-up and outlook.

"What then are the characteristics of a *Sthitaprajna*? He is one who withdraws his senses from the objects of the senses behind the shield of the spirit, as a tortoise does its limbs under its shell.

"A man whose wisdom is not steady is liable to be betrayed into anger, evil thoughts or abuse. On the contrary, the man with the steady wisdom will remain equally unaffected by adulation or abuse. He will realize that abuse fouls only the tongue that utters it, never the person against whom it is hurled. A man of steady wisdom will

therefore never wish ill to anyone, but will pray even for his enemy with his last breath.

"Is it too difficult an ideal to follow?" he asked, and replied, "No. On the contrary, the conduct laid down in it is the only conduct worthy of the dignity of human beings.

"Today our minds are clouded by delusion. In our ignorance we quarrel with one another and indulge in rowdiness against our own brethren. For such as these there is neither salvation nor Swaraj. Self-discipline or rule over self is the first condition of self-rule or Swaraj.

"All might find it difficult to correctly recite the Gita verses which are in Sanskrit. But all can take part in the singing of *Ramdhun*. The mass singing of *Ramdhun* to the accompaniment of *tal* is prayer reduced to its simplest terms."

"But how can non-Hindus take part in it?" the question was once raised.

"I laugh within myself," replied Gandhiji, "when someone objects that *Rama* or the chanting of *Ramanam* is for the Hindus only, how can Musalmans therefore take part in it? Is there one God for the Musalmans and another for the Hindus, Parsis or Christians? No, there is only one omnipotent and omnipresent God. He is named variously and we remember Him by the name which is most familiar to us.

"My *Rama*, the *Rama* of our prayers is not the historical *Rama*, the son of Dasharatha the King of Ayodhya. He is the eternal, the unborn, the one without a second. Him alone I worship, His aid alone I seek, and so should you. He belongs equally to all. I, therefore, see no reason why a Musalman or anybody should object to taking His name. But he is in no way bound to recognize God as *Ramanam*. He may utter to himself *Allah* or *Khuda* so as not to mar the harmony of the sound."

On another occasion, commenting on a *bhajan* that had been sung at the prayer, he observed: "In that hymn there is an assurance that whom God protects no power on earth can injure. The message of that hymn has a particular relevancy in the present times when the whole world is plunged in strife. Although the war has ended, the causes that brought it about still continue. This is not peace; it is only silent preparation for another war.

"Look at the mutual recrimination, abuse and threats of violence that poison the atmosphere in Delhi itself. But if you have faith in God you will remain unaffected by all these threats and abuse, and feel secure in the assurance that not a hair of your head will be injured so long as you are under God's protecting care. There is a saying to the effect that the outer is only the reflection of the inner. If you are good, the whole world will be good to you. On the contrary, if you feel tempted to regard anybody as evil, the odds are that the evil is within you."

Applying the lesson of that hymn to an outburst against the Hindus in general, attributed to Chou-

dhary Khaliq-uz-Zaman, that had appeared in the Press, he proceeded, "The Choudhary Saheb has had great regard for me. If, therefore, somebody comes and tells me that he has abused the Hindus and called them names, I must refuse to believe it or think ill of him. How can a person who till yesterday was like a blood-brother to me turn all of a sudden into a hater of Hindus? I would rather think that some Hindus had exasperated him by their behaviour and made him lose his balance. Similarly, I am quite sure that if the Choudhary Saheb were to meet me today and I were to ask him if he really believed that the whole mass of Hindus had turned bad overnight, he would laugh at the remarks attributed to him and dismiss them as absurd. We must neither think evil about others nor suspect others of thinking evil about us. Proneness to lend ear to evil reports is a sign of lack of faith."

Here is another talk:

"In a moment of introspection the poet asks himself: 'O Man, why have you left off taking God's name? You have not given up anger or lust or greed, but you have forgotten truth. What a tragedy to save worthless pennies and to let go the priceless gem of God's love! Why could you not, O fool! renounce all vanities and throw yourself on the grace of God alone?' This does not mean that if one has wealth, it should be thrown away and wife and children should be turned out of doors. It simply means that one must give up attachment to these things and dedicate one's all to God and make use of His gifts to serve Him only. It also means that if we take His name with all our being we are automatically weaned from all lust, untruth and baser passions.

"In the first *shloka* of *Ishopanishad* that is repeated everyday at the beginning of the prayer, one is asked to dedicate everything to God and then use it to the required extent. The principal condition laid down is that one must not covet what belongs to another. These two maxims contain the quintessence of the Hindu religion.

"In another *shloka* which is recited during the morning prayer it is said, 'I do not ask for temporal power, nor do I ask to go to heaven, nor even to attain *Nirvana*. What I ask for is that I may be able to relieve the pain of those who are in pain.' The pain might be physical, mental or spiritual. Spiritual pain due to slavery to one's passions is sometimes greater even than the physical.

"But God does not come down in person to relieve suffering. He works through human agency. Therefore, prayer to God to enable one to relieve the suffering of others must mean a longing and readiness on one's part to labour for it.

"The prayer you will note is not exclusive. It is not restricted to one's own caste or community. It is all inclusive. It comprehends the whole of humanity. Its realization would thus mean the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth."

On another occasion a couple of children, that had been romping about during the prayers, disturbed the prayer service. It upset him. It was the fault of the parents, he remarked. He had never seen children playing in a church or a mosque. "True culture requires that there should be perfect peace in the prayer ground at the time of the prayer." There should be an atmosphere of solemnity as in a church, a mosque or a temple. He knew that many of the temples were full of clamour. It had hurt him deeply. "We go to the temple to worship not the stone or the metal image but God who resides in it. The image becomes what man makes of it. It has no power independently of the sanctity with which it is invested by the worshipper. Therefore everyone, including children, should observe perfect silence at the time of prayer." As a result of his criticism there was a striking improvement in the behaviour of children from next day.

New Delhi, 22-4-'46

PYARELAL

DEPLORABLE

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Shri J. C. Kumarappa, writing in the 'Gram Udyog Patrika', says that to rely on or encourage imports from abroad is wholly wrong in principle. In the matter of the expected shortage of sugar owing to the failure of winter rains in the U. P. and Bihar and by frost in the Punjab and N. W. F. P., he suggests that the deficit in sugar should be made good by tapping palm trees in jungle areas for *nira* and preparing *gur* and sugar from it.

In regard to the import of a primary necessity like kerosene oil, he suggests further extraction of vegetable oils to meet our needs. Imports will entail export of some of our own production to pay for them, and will only cause further distress in the long run.

He also draws attention to the insidious scheme for the development of Virginia cigarette tobacco in Bihar sponsored by Sir Herbert Stewart (Vice-Chairman of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research). Under the scheme a number of research stations on tobacco are to be opened in various places and the Imperial Tobacco Company have given two studentships of £500 per annum for training in tobacco cultivation abroad. At such a time the obvious duty of a government should have been not to waste good money or time on tobacco research, but to devote both to reclaim all available land for food cultivation. But Imperial Councils can only think in terms of either tobacco, long staple cotton or thick rind sugarcane for mills and groundnut for export, and thus serve foreign business masquerading as "India Ltd."

New Delhi, 21-4-'46

WHY NOT?

(By M. K. Gandhi)

"You say that if Kasturba Agents are also members of the legislatures, it will be setting a bad example to the villagers. I can understand this being applicable to the present Assembly, but when we have Swaraj the position will be changed. Will it, therefore, not be an advantage for us to be there? Will not such work as we want done be done in one session of the legislature, whereas ordinarily it would take years to do?"

So writes a sister. But there seem to be three flaws in her line of argument.

Firstly, I have not made any distinction between the present and the future Assembly under Swaraj. It is unnecessary for my argument.

Secondly, it is an illusion to think that M. L. A.'s are the guides of the voters. Voters do not send representatives to the Assemblies in order to be guided by them. On the contrary, they are sent there loyally to carry out the people's wishes. The people are, therefore, the guides, not the M. L. A.'s. The latter are servants, the former masters. The illusion is due to the present system of government. When the illusion disappears, the existing unseemly competition to get into the legislatures will also be much less. There will be a few whose duty it will be to go there, and they will go to do the people's will. Today they go to the Assembly in order to fight there for Swaraj, but it has now dawned on most people that they cannot achieve much there even in this line.

The third mistake in the argument is that the Assemblies are best fitted to guide the people. If we look around the world we shall find that the best guidance is given by those outside. If that were not so, a rot would set in in all governments, because the field for guidance is vast and the Assembly is a very small thing. Parliaments are, after all, a mere drop in the ocean of national life.

New Delhi, 20-4-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE LESSON OF THE CROSS ...	A. K. 101
WEEKLY LETTER ...	PYARELAL 101
MINISTERS' DUTY ...	M. K. GANDHI 104
IS IT GENUINE? ...	M. K. GANDHI 104
QUESTION BOX ...	M. K. GANDHI 105
SOVEREIGN REMEDY ...	M. K. GANDHI 105
MERCY VERSUS RUTHLESSNESS ...	M. K. GANDHI 106
'HARIJAN' IN URDU SCRIPT ...	M. K. GANDHI 106
MEETING SASTRIAR ...	S. N. 107
THE LOSS ...	PYARELAL 109
COMMUNION OF SILENCE ...	PYARELAL 109
YOUNG AT EIGHTYFIVE ...	PYARELAL 110
PRAYER DISCOURSES ...	PYARELAL 110
DEPLORABLE ...	M. K. GANDHI 112
WHY NOT? ...	M. K. GANDHI 112
NOTES:	
'SILK KHADI' ...	M. K. G. 103
WHY ONLY YARN? ...	M. K. G. 103