

HARIJAN

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TWO ANNAS

IMMORTAL MALAVIYAJI

(By M. K. Gandhi)

There is a saying in English, "The King is dead, Long live the King". Perhaps it can be said with greater aptness though in a different setting of the great and good Malaviyaji whom death has kindly delivered from physical pain and to whom his body had ceased for some time to give the work he would gladly have taken from it. Can we not say of him "Malaviyaji the adored of *Bharatvarsha* is dead, Long live Malaviyaji?" His unremitting toil from his early youth to ripe old age has made him immortal. His services were many but the Benares Hindu University, styled in Hindi as *Kashi Vishwa Vidyalaya* must for all time be counted as his greatest and best creation. If it is more popularly known as the Benares Hindu University, the fault was not his, or, if it was his, it was due to his magnanimous nature. He was a servant of his followers. He allowed them to do as they wished. I happen to know personally that this spirit of accommodation was part of his nature, so much so that at times it took the shape of weakness. Only he was a powerful man. And has not his own special favourite *Bhagawata* said that no fault accrues to the powerful? But it is a defect which can easily be remedied now. Every stone of that majestic structure should be a reflection of true *Hindu Dharma* or culture. The institution must not in any shape or form reflect the glory of materialism as of the West that we are familiar with, but it should be a true reflection of the glory that is spiritualism. Is every pupil a representative of pure undefiled religion? If he is not, why not? This University will be judged, as all universities should be, not by the number of pupils studying at it at a given time but by their quality, however few in numbers they may be. I know that this is easier said than done. Nevertheless, it is the foundation of this University. If it is not that, it is nothing. Hence it is the clear duty of the progeny of the deceased as also his followers to give it that shape. It is essentially the function of the university to assign Hindu religion its status in the body of the religions of the world, as it is its function to rid it of its defects and limitations. The devotees of the deceased should regard it as their special duty to shoulder this burden.

Malaviyaji has left an imperishable memorial of himself in the *Kashi Vishwa Vidyalaya*. To put it on a stable foundation, to secure its evolutionary growth, will surely be the most suitable memorial that can be

erected by us to the memory of the great patriot. He spared no pains in making a big collection for his pet child. Everyone who reveres his memory can give a helping hand to the labour of continuing the collection.

So far about his outward activity. His internal life was purity exemplified. He was a repository of kindness and gentleness. His knowledge of religious scriptures was very great. He was by heredity a great religious preacher. He had a marvellous memory and his life was as clean as it was simple.

His politics I must leave alone as also his other manifold activities. He, whose life was singled out for selfless service and who had many gifts, would naturally stand for limitless activities. I have ventured to single out what has appealed to me as his most prominent service. And to give a real helping hand in making the institution a living example of true Hinduism will only be done by those who will try to imitate sincerely the purity and simplicity of his life.

Srirampur, 23-11-'46

(From the original in *Hindustani*)

ACHARYA KRIPALANI'S ADDRESS

[Important as it is, it is difficult to reproduce the entire text of Acharya Kripalani's Presidential address delivered at the Plenary session of the 54th Indian National Congress at Meerut on November 23rd last. But we reproduce below a few very pertinent extracts from it. Ed.]

THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

Even when we have achieved our goal of complete independence, we must not think that our task is done. National liberty is precious indeed. It is the very breath of a nation's life. But however important, it is a negative achievement — a removal of external shackles. It is merely the hindrance of a hindrance. It is quite possible that when an individual's shackles are removed, he may use his new-found freedom to his own injury. If we are wise we will not rest content merely with the removal of external restraints, but will so order our affairs that the freedom we gain is translated into concrete good to our people. This means that our revolutionary zeal, even while it destroys the old order must constantly achieve creative expression in constructive activity.

BUILDING WHILE DESTROYING

This constructive effort should be nothing new for us. Our revolutionary movement, based as it is

on non-violence, is unique in history. Usually, political revolutions have aimed at the destruction of the old order. Their strategy has been designed to capture power. All constructive effort to remould the nation's life has been done after the old order was completely destroyed and power captured. This process has inevitably led not to one but a series of revolutions before things could settle down and constructive effort begin. Not unoften, the process has led to civil war and ultimately to dictatorship. Both civil war and dictatorship have a tendency to defeat the aims of a revolution. It was so in the French and Russian revolutions.

The Congress under Gandhiji's lead has avoided over-emphasis on mere destruction or on the capture of power. It has, on the other hand, laid great emphasis on the constructive programme. Its destructive and constructive programmes have been worked side by side for the last 26 years. Indeed, for Gandhiji the only effective preparation for civil disobedience is the intensive carrying out of the constructive programme. Now that Congressmen are at the helm of affairs in many provinces, and even at the centre, we have some sort of a national government, it should not be difficult to intensify our effort and realize the full possibilities of the constructive programme as enunciated by Gandhiji and accepted by the Congress.

DEMOCRACY AND NON-VIOLENCE

The content of our Swaraj has been getting clearer and clearer for us as our national struggle has progressed. Long ago we decided against the tactics of mere destruction and capture of power. We therefore discarded the use of the pistol and the bomb. We decided that our revolution must be an open conspiracy and it must progressively bring in the masses. It must, therefore, necessarily be non-secretive and non-violent. A revolution brought about by the masses and that non-violently implies democracy. Our Congress organization therefore has a democratic constitution. As a matter of fact, if democracy is to be real and effective and not merely formal and institutional, it must be based on non-violence. And non-violence if it is not a mere form or lip-expression, must necessarily lead to democracy. Non-violence and dictatorship are contradictory. We cannot today change this democratic character of the Congress, nor will it be desirable to do so. Let it therefore be clear that we are pledged to political democracy and our Swaraj shall be democratic. It shall not be the rule of an individual however great or a family however glorious. Nor shall it be the Swaraj under one particular caste, creed or class. It shall be the rule of the people, by the people, for the people.

We have seen that political democracy the world over tends to become a mere form, if it is not broad-based on some sort of economic equality. The democratic note ceases to have much meaning in a society where there are great inequalities of wealth. We know that the smaller countries of Europe like

Norway, Sweden and Denmark, enjoy a more real democracy than the big capitalist countries for the simple reason that their democracy rests on a larger measure of economic equality.

But economic equality may be of the communist order based on centralized big industry, or it may be democratic and based upon a fair degree of decentralization.

I believe that economic equality in a society whose economic system rests exclusively on big industry, inevitably leads to the concentration of power in the hands of a few. It leads to bureaucratic and dictatorial exercise of power. The rulers in that case not only regulate the political but also the economic life of the people. If political power has a tendency to corrupt the holders of power, this tendency is doubly increased by the combination of political and economic power in the same hands.

Capitalism killed democracy because the capitalist class wielded, directly or indirectly, political power. Communism puts in the hands of the political dictator and bureaucrat the entire control of economic power. Herein lies as great a danger to democracy as under capitalism.

DECENTRALIZATION OF INDUSTRY

Therefore, if democracy is to survive, it must discover a means of avoiding concentration of economic power in the hands of the ruler or rulers, however selected or elected. Even a political democracy can be a dictatorship if there are no spheres of free activity left to the individual. The historical role of the Congress in the economic field has been its bold advocacy of decentralized industry. Ever since the Bengal Partition movement, our political thinkers have stressed the importance of reviving village and cottage industries. After Gandhiji's advent in Indian politics, this advocacy has gained emphasis and has been translated into a concrete programme of national reconstruction. We have therefore at this stage clearly to define the content of our economic Swaraj which must be in the direction of as much decentralization as is possible under the present circumstances. Nor may we forget that decentralization alone will help effectively to solve the problem of the chronic unemployment of the vast majority of our agricultural population.

NATIONAL PLANNING

The Congress appointed in 1939 a Planning Committee under the Presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. This Committee has been at work for several years. It has collected facts and figures. It is time that its labours are utilized. But these cannot be utilized unless the Congress makes up its mind as to what industries are to be centralized and what decentralized. Unless that is done each province will go its own way. I am afraid that already there is a kind of competition even among the Congress provinces in the field of big industry. Each province wants to introduce as

many mills and factories as possible. We had thought that the cloth industry was the one most eminently suited for decentralization. But even here each provincial government is vying with the other to set up new cloth mills. Some people believe that in the present state of scarcity of cloth all means of increased production must be utilized. They however fail to see that this necessarily creates new capitalist vested interests. As a khadi worker I believe that with less capital and less effort and in a shorter time more can be accomplished by a systematic encouragement of the charkha and the handloom than by opening new mills. I have taken the example of the cloth industry. But it is time that we took counsel among ourselves and decided what industries might best be worked on centralized and what on decentralized basis.

THE SCOPE OF ELECTRICITY

When I talk of decentralized industry, I do not necessarily mean the application of mere hand power. Electric power may well be utilized for increasing the scope and efficiency of the worker in his own home and village. That this decentralized industry will eliminate periodical waste of national wealth consequent on industrial conflicts, strikes and lock-outs is too obvious to be mentioned. To the extent that these conflicts are avoided, there is good neighbourliness among the people. This decentralized industry may be organized on a co-operative basis. There should be production and distribution co-operatives. If production co-operatives are not immediately possible, distribution co-operatives can certainly be started by public bodies and the provincial governments. The village worker does not find so much difficulty in producing goods as in marketing them.

AGRICULTURE AND OUR FOOD PROBLEM

Our agriculture too must largely follow the pattern of decentralized industry. It must chiefly consist of peasant proprietorship, with a provision that no plot shall be sub-divided, whether on account of inheritance, debt or any other cause, beyond what would maintain a village family. Decentralized industry and agriculture must supplement and complement each other. The latter too should be managed, as far as possible, on co-operative basis, both for farming and marketing purposes.

The food problem, which assumed dangerous proportions during the War, continues to be our great concern even to-day. We are still dependent on what foreign countries may choose to dole out to us. This dependence on the foreigner must be eliminated where the most primary needs of existence are concerned. With appropriate agricultural reform it should not be difficult to feed the present population of India and any immediate increase. Our agricultural production is extremely low. The best plan to avoid famine and the threat of famine in the future is to divide the country in such agricultural regions or units, big or small, as would be self-sufficient so far as

the essentials of human nutrition are concerned. Care must be taken that these regions produce what may constitute a scientifically balanced diet. The health of our agricultural population, the back-bone of our nation, cannot be improved unless the peasant has two square meals a day consisting of food which is properly adjusted to form a scientifically balanced diet. Proper food is the first condition of rural health and hygiene. In the matter of balanced diet more research is needed. But enough has been done, thanks to Gandhiji's efforts, to make a useful beginning.

At the Centre we have today our esteemed leader Babu Rajendra Prasad, a careful and conscientious Minister in charge of the Department of Food, and I have no doubt that he will not only enable us to tide over our present difficulties, but ensure such arrangements for the future as would never oblige us to go a-begging for our food at foreign doors.

NO EXPLOITATION

To sum up then, the historical evolution of our freedom movement, pledged as it is to non-violence and the good of the masses, demands a social order free from exploitation, functioning democratically and tuned to international co-operation and peace. Such a society will be in consonance with the highest ideals of the age and time we live in. The Congress under Gandhiji's lead has been working for these objects. Today it must define the objects more clearly and work more consciously towards their realization and utilize its newly acquired power towards that end.

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Today we have some kind of a national government at the centre and provinces have their popularly elected governments. In a short time we shall be assembling to form a new constitution for India. Freedom, if not achieved, is surely in sight. The British can no longer deny it to us, whatever their intentions. If today we miss our goal, the fault shall be ours. It will be due to the mistakes of commission and omission we make at this critical juncture. The greatest danger to a patient is not when the disease is active but when he is convalescing. The doctor's vigilance is relaxed and he has to take care of himself. We are in that critical condition; and the worst of it is that our enemies are clever and vigilant. The greatest strength of British imperialism in India is that it has been possible for it to carry out its nefarious designs through the instrumentality of the Indians themselves. India was conquered by Indian money, Indian resources, Indian soldiers and often with Indian brains. Our tragedy has been our divisions and differences and a tendency to subordinate larger national interests to those of caste, creed and party. We give to the smaller units the loyalty that is due to the whole. Herein lies our greatest weakness.

(Continued on p. 439)

HARIJAN

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THE "DO OR DIE" MISSION

On the road of *Satyagraha* there is no stop, no resting place. One must always move on and onward on or else retrogress. Gandhiji's decision which I described as *A venture in faith* in the last issue of the *Harijan* was taken at Dattapara. On returning from Dattapara, where I had to stop for a day on account of urgent business when Gandhiji shifted to Kazirkhil, I found that he had moved another step forwards. He must live in a Muslim household, if a good Muslim Leaguer approved of by the Bengal Ministry would be prepared to receive him as a member of the family. He discussed the question with Goffran Saheb, the Minister for Civil Supplies, who saw him on the 16th and asked him if he could recommend him to any. The latter was taken aback at Gandhiji's living stripped of all his companions in the midst of those who would not know how to look after him. "I shall look after myself. I shall need nobody's service," argued Gandhiji. "Then, I am afraid, I must say that no Mussalman family is prepared to receive you," replied Goffran Saheb laughing. But Gandhiji was not to be put away easily. He expatiated on it in his discourse after the evening prayer. He was in the midst of a Muslim population in Noakhali, he said. He did not like the idea of staying with Hindu friends. He would like to see if he could stay with a League Mussalman. "My requirements are very few. All I want is cleanliness, clean water, permissible food and the freedom to pray to God in my own way." The idea was that if the Hindus saw him living with a Muslim League friend, they would probably get back their confidence and return to their homes more readily. "The Muslim friends will have an opportunity to examine me at close quarters and find out whether I am an enemy or friend."

But he did not want to postpone his new "Venture in Faith" till a Muslim household was ready to receive him. "When I was in detention in the Aga Khan Palace," he remarked one day, "I once sat down to write a thesis on India as a protagonist of Non-violence. But as I proceeded with my writing I could not go on. I had to stop. There are two aspects of Hinduism. There is on the one hand the historical Hinduism with its untouchability, superstitious worship of stocks and stones, animal sacrifice and so on. On the other, we have the Hinduism of the *Gita*, the *Upanishads* and *Patanjali's Yoga Sutra* which is the acme of *ahimsa* and oneness of all creation, pure worship of one immanent, formless, imperishable God. *Ahimsa* which to me is the chief glory of Hinduism has been sought to be explained away by our people as being meant for *sannyasis* only. I do not share that view. I have held that it is the way of life and India has to show it to the world. Where do I stand? Do I represent this *ahimsa* in my person? If I do, then deceit and hatred that poison the atmosphere should dissolve. It is only by going into isolation from my companions, those on whose help I have relied all along, and standing on my own

crutches that I shall find my bearings and also test my faith in God."

To Sevagram Ashram people he wrote:

"I am afraid you must give up all hope of my early returning or returning at all to the Ashram. The same applies to my companions. It is a herculean task that faces me. I am being tested. Is the *Satyagraha* of my conception a weapon of the weak or really that of strong? I must either realize the latter or lay down my life in the attempt to attain it. That is my quest. In pursuit of it I have come to bury myself in this devastated village. His will be done."

On the 20th Gandhiji broke up his camp at Kazirkhil, Columbus-like, to face the dark unknown, accompanied only by his stenotypist, Shri Parsuram and Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose, his Bengali interpreter. Before embarking the little group round him held a short prayer when his favourite hymn "*Vaishnavajana to tene kahiye*" was sung. Many voices were husky, many eyes dim with tears as the tiny country boat bearing him disappeared beyond the bridge, in the direction of Shrirampur.

Following upon his departure the members of his party dispersed themselves one by one in various appointed places. A map showing the area covered and the various centres where Gandhiji and the members of his party are stationed will be found elsewhere.

The hut where he was put up in Shrirampur is in an open sunny clearing in the midst of thick groves of stately arecanut and cocoanut palms. Round about it is spread out a grim scene of arson and devastation. He has given up his warm immersion bath and for the first two days did his own massage. Since his arrival he has had several meetings with Shamsuddin Saheb and others and a conference with about 30 representatives of the Hindus and Muslims of Ramganj at Ramganj. As a result they were able to evolve a plan for the re-establishment of peace and communal harmony. The Ministers gave a solemn word of honour that they meant to implement it. The plan was put before the public at a public meeting that was held in the village of Chandipur on the 23rd November.

Gandhiji speaking at the close of the meeting uttered the following significant words:

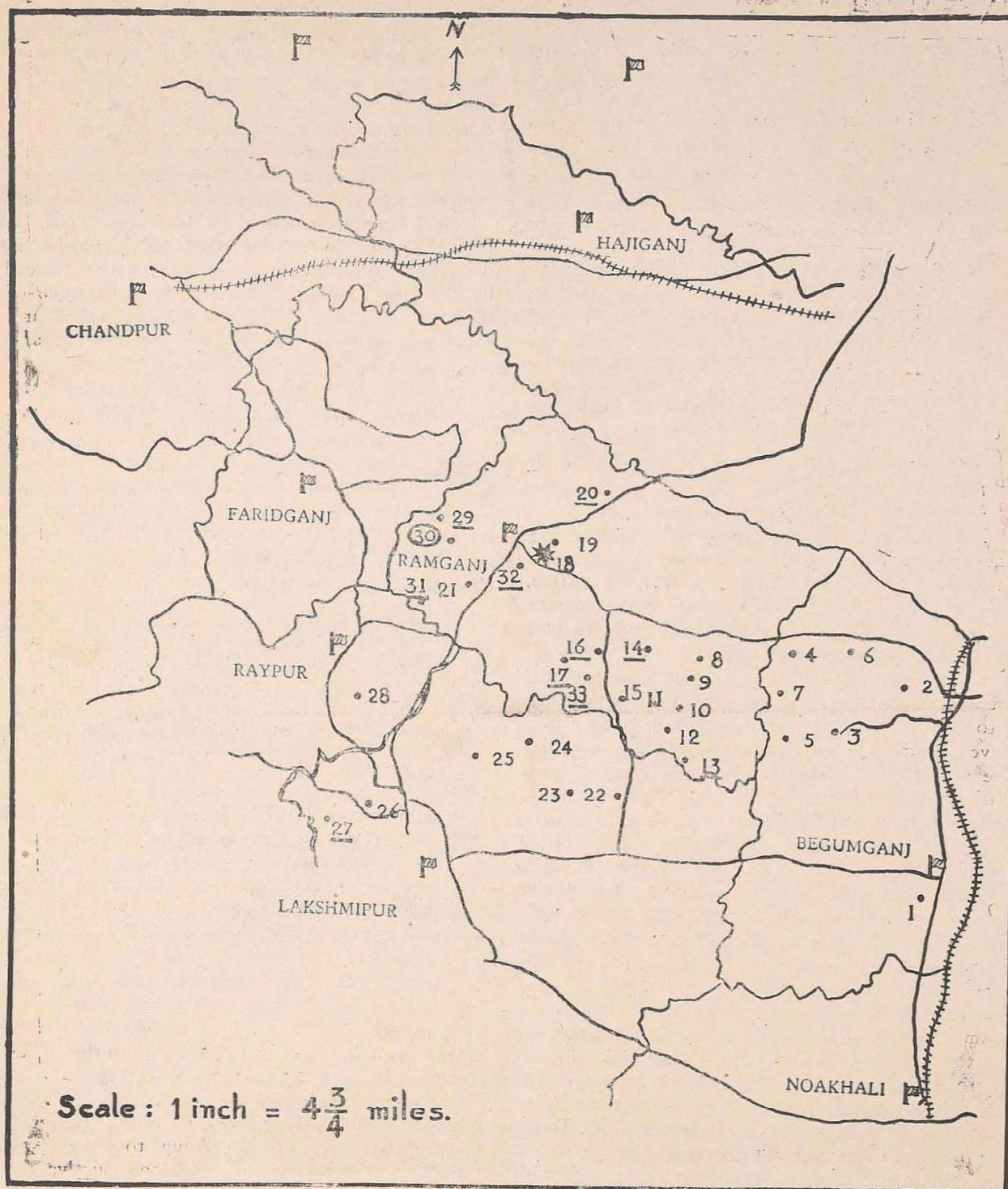
"Here are elected Muslims who are running the Government of the Province. They have given you their word of honour. They would not be silent witnesses to the repetition of shameful deeds. My advice to the Hindus is to believe their word and give them a trial. This does not mean that there would not be a single bad Mussalman left in East Bengal. There are good and bad men amongst all communities. Dishonourable conduct could break any Ministry or organization in the end." . . . If you want real peace there is no other way except to have mutual trust and confidence. Bihar, they say, has avenged Noakhali. Supposing the Muslims of East Bengal or the Muslims all over India make up their minds to avenge Bihar, where would India be? . . . After all if the worst came to the worst, you can only lose your lives. Only, you must do so as brave men and women. . . . If Shamsuddin Saheb and his companions do not mean what they have said, you will know. I for one would not wish to be a living witness to such a tragedy."

Kazirkhil, 24-11-'46

PYARELAL

MAP

[Part of East Bengal where Gandhiji and his party have stationed themselves to fulfil the "do or die" mission.]



1. Chaumuhani
2. Sonaimuri
3. Amishapara
4. Joyag
5. Gobindapur
6. Amki
7. Naori
8. Chatkhil
9. Tabga

10. Noakhola
11. Sonachaka
12. Khilpara
13. Gomatali
14. Dasgharia
15. Gopairbag
16. Sahapur
17. Karpara

- *18. Kazirkhil
19. Nandanpur
20. Paniala
21. Chandipur
22. Dattapara
23. Baralia
24. Nandigram
25. Bejoynagar

26. Dalalbazar
27. Charmandal
28. Shibpur
29. Sandora
30. Shrirampur
31. Changirgaon
32. Angrapara
33. Bhatialpur

* The village from which Gandhiji left for Shrirampur.

O The village Shrirampur where Gandhiji has stationed himself.

Numbers underlined are villages where members of Gandhiji's party have distributed and stationed themselves.

"LINE CLEAR" IN PUBLIC INTEREST

Whenever the Viceroy has to send a telegraphic message from Delhi or Simla, orders are issued, "clear the line". The public can make use of the telegraphic service on condition that the Viceroy is given first preference. When the Viceroy used to travel by train all train services were held up to let the Viceregal special pass without delay.

During the war the requirements of the military were given first preference at the cost of public requirements. And how can anyone object to it when a war is on?

There is a parable in the *Upanishads* about the rival claims to superiority of the various sense organs and the vital air. The eyes struck work for a year. The blind man however carried on. The ears went on strike. The deaf man got on all right. The nose, the tongue and the others then followed suit by turn. Life went on without them. Finally the vital air threatened to leave and there was a general trepidation. "You are superior to us all. Please do not go. None of us can exist without you," they cried with one voice.

For centuries in India, Government and society have neglected the masses, i. e. the very soul of the nation. That is a suicidal policy. The *Kisan*, the labourer and the handicraft worker does not get enough to eat. In our homes all have the best of life except the women folk. In the country all have a place except the *Adivasis*, the original inhabitants of the land. They have been driven into the jungles and several tribes amongst them have become extinct. The agriculturist who bears the weight of the earth on his shoulders has been pushed to the bottom rung of the ladder. The king and his officials, citizens and public leaders, doctors, lawyers and engineers, all the so-called respectable people, live by exploiting the *Kisan* and the labourer. The burden of taxation, no matter what the nature of the tax may be, falls ultimately upon them. But this exploitation cannot go on for long. Gandhiji has told the industrialists that they can take up any industry they like but should leave out those universal occupations which serve the primary needs of life and which can be taken up by the masses with little capital and skill. In this there is no question of charity on the part of the capitalists. It is just a matter of giving the "line clear" to those from whom all power flows. Today the masses do not know their own rights and interests. They do not understand who is sucking away their life-blood like a leach. They are not conscious of their own strength. Therefore, they are today like beggars instead of being the real owners. Therefore, Gandhiji has become their unpaid solicitor and has given notice to the capitalists that wherever the masses can manage it, they should be allowed to work out the scheme of Khadi and village industries. "Do not bring your mills there to rob the poor of their employment. Do not send mill cloth where Khadi can be produ-

ced. You can prepare rails, gramophones and radios, engines, motor cars and aeroplanes but leave agriculture and dairy farming, cloth manufacture and other village industries to the people of the villages. Give them the benefit of your knowledge, technical and organizing skill, but do not uproot them from their natural surroundings. Life itself is education for them and life is based on industry. Agriculture, cloth-weaving and other village industries, dairy farming, bee-keeping are some of the useful occupations which can be utilized to develop the intellect of the villagers. Do not take your killing education to the villages. *Nayee Talim* is life-giving. It is constructive and creative. It develops the intellect and the skill of the fingers by educating the hand. It should be made to cover the whole country. After giving the "line clear" to *Nayee Talim*, other forms of education and industries can find their place.

Gandhiji tells the Government, public leaders and the capitalists and industrialists, "You have money and power but the villagers have the advantage of numbers. Their capital is labour. When they become aware of the value of their capital, they will rule life. You cannot afford to antagonize them. Their patience is well nigh exhausted. Wake up, therefore, before they are driven to desperation. Give them the "line clear".

He does not ask for the destruction of cloth mills. He says: "Do not erect new mills and do not expand the present ones. Do not send mill cloth where Khadi can be produced. If you must have mills, do not let them compete with Khadi. Wherever there are mills see that the labour gets enough to eat and has its other basic needs satisfied."

Gandhiji has told the Government and public leaders that today they rule the destiny of the millions. Unless they keep the latter's welfare in the forefront in all their activities, a day might come when the millions might take their own and the country's destiny in their hands. When excited masses get ready even to commit suicide, there is revolution. A blind revolution will destroy the land-holders and the capitalists, the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, the Viceroy and the Governors alike. They will all tremble in their shoes if such an emergency arises. And those who go about with daggers today, if they survive till that time, will hide themselves in holes. Therefore, Gandhiji has given the warning to wake up in time. Give the masses life-giving constructive education before they get on to the path of destruction. Public workers and Government servants should all get ready to train the people on the lines of Khadi and village industries. They should learn the art themselves and then teach it to others. Good of the people is the hub round which everything else should revolve. Instead of the Viceroy getting the line clear, it is the masses who should get it.

(From the Original in Gujarati) KAKA KALELKAR

ACHARYA KRIPALANI'S ADDRESS

(Continued from p. 431)

Of all the political virtues, unity is the greatest and the most important, provided this unity is not superimposed by force but is natural and spontaneous. In this the British excel not only the Indians but also other European nations. At every critical moment of their history, the British have ignored religious, party and class differences. Even as early as the 16th century when sectarian differences led to religious wars and the Catholic hated the Protestant more heartily than either of them hated the non-Christian, as soon as England was threatened by the Spanish Armada sent by a Catholic Emperor, English Catholics, even though persecuted, stood shoulder to shoulder with their Protestant countrymen to repel the foreign invasion. This has continued up to the present time. In the last war, the Socialists had no hesitation to work under reactionary, snobbish, caste-ridden Churchill when the national emergency made it necessary for them to do so. But in India small differences produce unbridgeable gulfs. Common points are forgotten, petty disagreements over-emphasized. We must, if we have to live and progress as a nation, check this inherent centrifugal tendency.

COMMUNAL DIFFERENCES

Today the greatest danger to our freedom are the communal differences, specially between the two major communities, the Hindus and the Muslims. The foreigner has taken the fullest advantage of these in the past. Today he finds it his last trump card. He is playing it cleverly and subtly. It is unhistorical, unscientific, unethic and unnatural to think that the Hindus and the Muslims are two nations. Their interests, social, political and economic, are identical. Their common points are innumerable. Their differences can be easily counted and are only skin-deep. The foreigner cannot distinguish the Hindu from the Muslim except by the accident of dress, and that too only if he is familiar with sartorial differences which change from province to province. India, outside India is considered one whole. No conqueror ever thought himself safe until he had brought the whole of it under his sway. No native ruler ever thought his kingdom complete and rounded off until he had established his hegemony over the whole of this ancient land. Only those periods of Indian history have been most productive when the whole of India was united under one Government, whether it was under the ancient Maurya and the Gupta dynasties or again under the Moghuls.

Even though the present alien rule has dwarfed Indian genius by an unnatural system of foreign education and the denial of all opportunities of initiative, yet by the mere fact of uniting India under one common misrule, it has released the creative energy of the nation in various fields of thought and action. There has been an Indian renaissance. To think of India then as divided into two nations, Hindu and Muslim, is retrograde and reactionary. It is dividing what nature and history have united.

I have my own grand-nephews and nieces in Sind who are Muslims. They love me as well as do my Hindu grandchildren. I cannot imagine that I as a Hindu am an Indian and they as Muslims belong to a different nationality. One of them, a pretty little bride, wrote to me recently thus: "We offer you our sincerest congratulations on your attaining '*the highest honour which any Indian can aspire to.*' May you long adorn the Congress *gadi* with distinction and service. We are, of course, staunch Muslim Leaguers, but we pray that there should be a rapprochement between the Congress and the League." (*Italics are mine*).

THE THIRD PARTY

In this connection I would like to repeat to Indian Muslims the words of my predecessor in office. In his presidential address the Maulana Saheb said: "Do we, Indian Muslims, view the free India of the future with suspicion and mistrust or with courage and confidence? . . . No present declaration for the future, no constitutional safeguards can be a remedy for our doubts and fears. We are then forced to tolerate the presence of a third power. This third power is already entrenched here and has no intention of withdrawing, and if we follow the path of fear and suspicion, we must needs look forward to its continuance. But if we are convinced that for us fear and doubt have no place, and that we must view the future with courage and confidence, then our course of action becomes quite clear. We find ourselves in a new world which is free from the dark shadows of doubt and vacillation, inaction and apathy, and where the light of faith and determination, action and enthusiasm never fails." To this as a student of history I would only add that it was not want of faith and determination that made Islam great. Today in India the Muslim League works in fear and suspicion and infects the whole Muslim community with it. When the Muslims came into India from beyond the mountains, they came only in their thousands. They were not afraid of the teeming millions of Hindus. They came in the might of their faith and enthusiasm. Today they form a fourth of the population. It is wrong to say that they are a minority. As the Maulana Saheb rightly put it, "In the texture of Indian politics nothing is further removed from the truth than that the Indian Muslims occupy the position of a political minority. Politically speaking the word minority does not mean a group that is numerically smaller and therefore entitled to special protection. It means a group that is so small in numbers and so lacking in other qualities that give strength that it has no confidence in its own capacity to protect itself from the much larger group that surrounds it. . . . Thus this is not a question merely of numbers, other factors also count. . . . In four out of eleven provinces, there is a Muslim majority. If British Baluchistan is added, there are five provinces with Muslim majorities. Even if we are compelled at present to consider the question on the basis of religious grouping, the position of the Muslims is

not that of a minority only. If they are a minority in seven provinces, they are in a majority in five. This being so, there is absolutely no reason why they should be oppressed by the feeling of being a minority."

I, therefore, hold that a Hindu who believes a Muslim to be an alien not only does wrong to his religion but is an enemy of the freedom and progress of India. On the other hand, if a Muslim who is flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, believes and acts as if he were an alien on Indian soil, he does equal harm to his community and to the nation. We have almost everything in common except religion which should be a personal matter. To fight on questions of faith is the way of a barbarian. I know the present fight between the Hindus and the Muslims is not a religious fight. It is purely a communal conflict. It has nothing to do with political or economic issues that concern the masses of both the communities. The masses act as tools in the hands of the clever and often unscrupulous politicians. But whatever the causes, we must recognize the fact of the existing tension and bitterness, and steer our course so as to avoid any major conflict.

RETALIATION AND REPRISAL

If I must warn communities against the use of initial violence to settle their differences, I must warn them no less against the use of violence by way of retaliation and reprisal as was the case in Bihar. Two evils do not cancel each other. And these reprisals and retaliations fall on innocent victims, even if the original attack was against those who really had done wrong and deserved punishment. But as a matter of fact in communal violence, whether provocative or retaliatory, only the poor and the helpless suffer. The authors of the trouble always manage to go scot free. In civil strife, as in war between nations, the unrestrained and diabolical use of violence will succeed only in producing the equivalent of the atom bomb which will annihilate both the Hindus and the Muslims.

Violence is ugly and futile in any case, but the unorganized hysteric violence of the mob is worse than futile. It is fatal to the very cause on whose behalf it is invoked. I am afraid that if the present orgies of provocation and retaliation continue, the Muslim League leadership will soon be unable to control its followers, even if it should decide to. And so might the Congress, though the Congress leadership has done its best to save the people from this hysteria of violence. If that happens then Indians will be divided into two armed camps of communal fanatics and the Britisher will stand guard over them both with his bayonet. The day of India's freedom will be indefinitely postponed.

MUTUAL TOLERATION

If we are to be worthy of freedom we must learn to live together and respect each other's sentiments. The Hindu and Muslim minorities are scattered all over this country. No amount of police or military protection can permanently and effectively protect them from the wrath of the majority communities if the latter lose all sense of moral obliga-

tion towards them. If no Hindu's life, property and honour are safe in a Muslim-majority area and no Muslim's in a Hindu-majority area, then civilized life becomes an impossibility. Even Mr. Jinnah's dream of Pakistan, though it has made the problem what it is, holds out no prospect of its solution, for it leaves the minorities where they are.

I hope however that the leaders of the fanatics among both the communities will have more sense and humanity than to take recourse to desperate and mediaeval remedies. The problem is easy of solution if only we accept the obvious fact that if there are two nations in India, they are the exploited and the exploiting of both or all the communities. The Hindus and the Muslims have a common enemy, and that is poverty, disease, and ignorance. If only we realize what we really are, there need be no quarrel between us.

I have laboured this point at length, because this is the greatest stumbling block in our path to freedom and progress. Even at this late hour I hope, now that the Muslim League is in the Central Government and shares responsibility with the Congress, the orgies that were enacted in Calcutta, East Bengal, Bihar and to a lesser degree elsewhere, will be nightmares of the past. We shall write anew on a clean slate of brotherly love and cooperation as children of a common motherland.

* * *

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

We shall soon be meeting in the Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution of free India. It will be a democratic constitution and will be federal in character. We may not however forget that in the administrative as in the economic field, centralization, more than is absolutely necessary, is inimical to liberty. It is good, therefore, that the provinces in free India shall have the maximum autonomy consistent with external and internal security. But some of our provinces are each as big as a country in Europe. There may be over-centralization in the administration of the provinces, which too we must avoid. Long ago, how long history does not record, the Indian genius worked out the village and local *panchayat*. It remained our fort through many a turbulent period. Kings and dynasties fought and failed, empires rose, ruled, misruled and disappeared, but the villager's life maintained its even tenor, away from the din of battle and the rush of rising and falling empires. He had a village State which protected his life and property and made civilized life possible. Progressively, we must delegate to the village *panchayat* judicial powers in petty criminal and civil cases; the local police too might be put under the charge of the *panchayat*. If we build upon this village unit of self-government, rehabilitate it to the altered conditions of today, we shall be working in consonance with the genius of our people. This is the natural and the easy way. Merely to copy the West should not be our object. We may also not forget that the West has made, more specially in the big countries, democracy complex and expensive. West has evolved the official red-

tape which makes the democratic machinery cumbersome and slow-moving. All these drawbacks we must try to avoid in the new constitution that we may devise.

Our judicial system must be simple and effective. The law's delay and expense and complicity must be avoided. Also there must be ample provision made for the enjoyment of civil liberties. They must be protected even from the arbitrary action of a democratic and representative government. We may not forget that power corrupts even the patriot in office. Ample provision, consistent with the larger interests of the country and the masses, must be made for the protection of minorities. Their language and culture must have free scope for development. There must be absolute tolerance in matters of faith and religion. Every individual and every group must be free to propagate his and its ideas, consistently with the maintenance of peace and public morality.

CONCLUSION

It is our great good fortune that we of this generation have been afforded an opportunity to be the instruments of a noble cause. It is not merely the freedom of our people from foreign yoke that we are called upon to strive and work for. Such an opportunity has come to many people in history. Ours is a unique opportunity. It is to win our freedom by non-violent and truthful means and to work for high ends by moral means. Ours is the opportunity to bring about a fusion of different castes and creeds and racial and religious types. Ours is the opportunity to unify what appear to be differing and conflicting cultures. We have to work to build up unity in diversity and produce a mosaic of many colours. We have to combine various and dissonant sounds and notes to produce a symphony that was never before heard on land or sea. We may not forget that today humanity must find a peaceful solution to its conflicts, social, economic, political, racial and cultural, or perish. There can be no violent solution. Violence has over-reached itself. It threatens to destroy the patient with the disease. Some other method must be found. India has found the method and tried it to some purpose, under a leadership that comes once in many centuries. It is a new method. There have been lapses. But remember no revolution in history was less costly in the loss of life, property and the dislocation of normal life, and created less hatred and strife than the Indian revolution, which, if we are not negligent, is on the verge of success. But whether immediate success crowns our efforts or not let us not forget that we are engaged in a good and great cause. In such a cause there can be no ultimate failure. But if the cause is to succeed, the agents working for it must themselves be good and great. Slavery works neither for goodness nor for greatness. But the darkness of centuries can be removed the moment the light is brought in. In India the light has been lit. Let us keep it steadily burning and let us follow its lead and all shall yet be well with us. — *Vande Mataram*.

THE MOTHER'S DISTRESS

Once upon a time there was a mother, who was deeply religious. She visited daily all the temples in the village, and respectfully bowed before them, not omitting even the church and the mosque.

At home she had a collection of what apparently were curiously shaped stones, beads, coins, dolls, etc., but were worshipped by her as gods. And though she worshipped all the gods she had heard of, she had also an undefinable realization that there was only one God behind all these gods, and that He was good and loving. And, she also raised before her mind a vague picture of life after death.

And though her ideas and fancies were indistinct, and her vocabulary for giving expression to them poorer still, they were sufficient to give her faith, hope, love, strength to endure hardships, perform her duties, and keep her virtuous and honest.

Now, the Mother had several children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. And they had been all brought up with love, in the religious atmosphere of the Mother. And though some of them were as simple of faith as the Mother, several had received "education", and come into contact with the heads of different temples, and scholars of various religions and philosophies. And so, some of them called themselves, Shaivas, some Vaishnavas, some Jains, and some were worshippers of one God, and some of three, and some of a legion. A few had adopted Christianity and Islam. There were some who believed in image-worship, and some who did not. And there were also some who denied God, and called their ultimate principle Matter. But they were all religion-minded, though curiously enough, with some of them the effect was that the more religion-minded they grew, the less religious they became in their social behaviour. And the very zealous amongst them often debated about their various tenets and modes of worship and the right way of life. And at times their zeal brought so much heat in their debates, that they would come to blows and worse. And the more they became convinced of the truth, the infallibility and the perfection of their own particular systems, the more intolerant they became of those of their brothers and cousins of different persuasions. And each tried to convert the Mother to his particular doctrines and to ask her other children to do the same. But the simple Mother said, "Son, I am old and ignorant. Let me go my own way, and let each of you go his own way. Only be virtuous and honest and love your brothers and their children, and respect their tenets, even as you do your own, and it will be all right with all of you."

But in course of time, in their zeal for religion they forgot their relationship, and began to look upon one another as if they were strangers and enemies. And so blows developed into bitter fratricide, each trying to exterminate his brother and his progeny of a different faith, or forcing them to accept his own.

And when one of them had committed an atrocity, he came to the Mother boasting how successfully he had destroyed or injured some of

her children or grand-children for the vindication of Truth, before which blood-relationship was of no consequence. And he expected that the Mother would congratulate him for his religiousness. But the Mother would weep for the loss of her dear ones, and rebuke him for his heartlessness and inhumanity.

And this wailing and rebuke was regarded by the injured children as a permit to inflict similar injuries upon their assailant's family. And they in turn would go to the Mother and describe gleefully how they had avenged the wrong done to them expecting that the Mother would be gladdened by the tidings.

But the Mother wept again and rebuked these children also. For, she was the Mother of both, the assailants as well as the victims, and could not feel happy over the loss of any. And she was in deep agony, and with fast and prayer piteously clung to God for the peace, which her children had deprived her of.

Should there be any wonder that the Mother felt as she did? As a mere Hindu or a mere Muslim, or even as a congressman, thinking nationally but still feeling communally, you might regard with excitement or satisfaction in turn the barbarities perpetrated by one community upon another, and plan in terms of communal organizations. But just think for a moment of what the common Mother of all feels about your alternate anger and complacency and your communal boasts and slogans. Look into her eyes, and you will find her weeping and in intense agony.

And if you are unable to think of the common Mother look into the eyes and the heart of Gandhiji, and you will realize the Mother's distress.

Vapi, 24-11-46

K. G. M.

WEEKLY LETTER

THE LESSON CONTINUED

The lesson in fearlessness which Gandhiji began at Chandpur, when a deputation of Hindu workers waited upon him, was continued even in more forceful language at Chaumuhani and elsewhere. In fact it has become the central theme of all his talks. "The tragedy is not that so many Muslims have gone mad," he remarked to a friend who saw him at Chaumuhani, "but that so many Hindus in East Bengal have been witnesses to these things. If every Hindu in East Bengal had been done to death, I would not have minded it. Do you know what the Rajputs did? They killed their womenfolk when they issued forth to sacrifice themselves on the battlefield. The surviving ones immolated themselves by mounting the funeral pyre before the fortress fell rather than allow themselves to be captured and dishonoured. There is nothing courageous in thousands of Mussalmans killing out a handful of Hindus in their midst, but that the Hindus should have degraded themselves by such cowardice, i. e. being witnesses to abduction and rape, forcible conversion and forcible marriage of their womenfolk, is heart-rending."

"How can we create a sense of security and self-confidence," asked the friend,

"By learning to die bravely. Let us turn our wrath against ourselves. I am not interested in getting the police substituted by the military or the Muslim police by the Hindu police. They are broken reeds."

"To whom should we appeal—the Congress, the League or the British Government?"

"To none of these. Appeal to yourselves, therefore, to God."

"We are men—made of flesh and blood. We need some material support," finally he asked.

"Then appeal to your own flesh and blood. Purify it of all dross," replied Gandhiji.

ANATOMY OF FEAR

He described the anatomy of fear in minute detail in the course of a written message which was read out to the prayer gathering at Kazirkhil on the evening of the 18th (Monday). In fact it has become the central theme of all his addresses these days. "The more I go about in these parts," he observed, "the more I find that your worst enemy is fear. It eats into the vitals of the terror-stricken as well as the terrorist. The latter fears something in his victim. It may be his different religion or his riches he fears. The second kind of fear is otherwise known as greed. If you search enough, you will find that greed is a variety of fear. But there has never been and will never be a man who is able to intimidate one who has cast out fear from his heart. Why can no one intimidate the fearless? You will find that God is always by the side of the fearless. Therefore, we should fear Him alone and seek His protection. All other fear will then by itself disappear. Till fearlessness is cultivated by the people there will never be any peace in these parts for the Hindus, or for the Mussalmans."

AN OUTSPOKEN UTTERANCE

Goffran Saheb, the Minister for Civil Supplies, and the Minister for Agriculture, Ahmed Hussain Saheb with a number of Parliamentary Secretaries and Muslim League friends met Gandhiji on the evening of the 16th to discuss with him the rehabilitation proposals of the Government. After the prayers Goffran Saheb, who belongs to the Noakhali District where he served as Public Prosecutor before he became Minister, addressed the gathering. He was deeply pained, he said, by what had happened in the District and so were the Mussalmans of East Bengal. He had toured in the affected area from the 16th and could say that the happenings occurred between the 10th and the 16th. There was no doubt that excesses had been committed in East Bengal. He was most anxious that the miscreants should be brought to book, only he did not want the innocent to suffer. He assured the Hindus of East Bengal that neither the Government nor the Muslim League wanted the Hindus to go away from East Bengal just as the Congress did not wish the Muslims in Bihar, United Provinces, Central Provinces, Madras and Bombay to leave their homes and go somewhere else. The League wanted to prove that it knew

how to run the Government justly by according equal treatment to the Hindus and the Muslims. How could they think of leaving East Bengal where they were born and brought up? The Hindus and the Mussalmans had always lived together as friends. The Hindus called him 'bhai', 'uncle' and so on. Why should there be enmity between the two now? He requested them on behalf of the Mussalmans to return to their homes without any fear. When their confidence came back the military and the police would be sent away as neither the Hindus nor the Mussalmans had much faith in them. He desired that the Muslims should entreat the Hindus to go back to their homes.

At this point the speech was interrupted for a few minutes as it was time for *Namaz*. As at Chaumuhani, the *Namaz* was performed at the outskirts of the prayer gathering where the Muslim members of the audience repaired. After the *Namaz* Goffran Saheb spoke for a few minutes again. He told the audience that orders had been passed not to arrest anyone while coming to Gandhiji's meeting, at the meeting, or while returning home from the meeting.

Gandhiji, addressing the meeting after Goffran Saheb, began by referring to Shamsuddin Saheb's speech at Chaumuhani a few days ago. They had now heard Goffran Saheb. The Ministers wanted them to live together as friends. The police and the military could not protect them. God alone could protect them. They had, therefore, to look to each other for their safety. Goffran Saheb had told them that the Government did not wish the Hindus to leave East Bengal. Awful things had no doubt happened but they should let bygones be bygones. They must turn a new leaf. When one had suffered as they had, one was liable to become filled with suspicion. But that had to be overcome. A member from the audience had requested him, said Gandhiji, to allow him five minutes to reply to Goffran Saheb's speech which, he said, required correction in several places. But Gandhiji replied that he was afraid he could not allow the meeting to be turned into a public debate. Whatever was said at the meeting was said in good faith and to do his work. But if the friend in question sent him a letter, not couched offensively, he would gladly forward it to Goffran Saheb. He rebuked the audience too for not observing a pin-drop silence while the Muslim members of the audience were performing *Namaz*. Culture and good breeding required that they should observe silence when others said their prayers. There should be mutual respect. All worshipped the same God, whatever their religion. He was glad to see the Congress and the League flags flying together in the prayer ground. Both had great significance. They should realize as Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah Saheb had said that if they kept on quarrelling among themselves the country would remain a slave country and Pakistan would vanish into thin air. He was receiving threatening letters, said Gandhiji. Some Muslims feared that he had come to suppress them. He could assure them that he had never suppressed

any one in all this life. They asked him why he had not gone to Bihar. He had declared his resolve to fast if Bihar did not stop the madness. He was in constant touch with Bihar. Pandit Jawaharlalji, Doctor Rajendra Prasad and others had assured him that his presence there was not required. Bihar, he understood, was practically peaceful now. Tension was still there, but it was going. The Muslims were returning to their villages. The Government had taken the responsibility to build the houses of those who had been rendered homeless. He was also receiving angry telegrams from Hindus asking why he did not fast against the Muslims for the happenings in Bengal. He could not do so today. If the Mussalmans realized that he was their friend, he would be entitled to fast against them also. If he was to leave East Bengal he would go only after peace ruled the breasts of the Hindus and the Muslims. He had no desire to live any longer otherwise.

DASGHARIA

On the morning of the 17th Gandhiji visited the village of Dasgharia, two miles from Kazirkhil, where he was met by a large number of women. They had all been forcibly converted and now reverted to their own religion. The District Magistrate had issued orders and advertized the fact, remarked Gandhiji, that forcible conversions, i. e. conversions out of fear, would not be recognized by law. He, the speaker, did not know if everyone of those who had been converted forcibly had been restored to Hinduism. If not, it should be done, if they wanted to replace the present bitterness between the two communities by cordiality.

Some abducted girls were still missing. They should be returned without further delay. A *dhoby* had brought to him his boy of one year this afternoon. He had recovered the child after a month from a Muslim with police help. It was the duty of the Muslim brethren to put an end to such acts. They should make a frank confession of error in the past and promise to avoid it in future. He, who tried to hide his mistakes, could never rectify them. He himself was a votary of truth. Even when he practised law, he told his clients to tell him the truth if they wanted him to take up their case. He would not plead for a false case. The result was that only true and *bona fide* cases were brought to him. He had long ceased to practise law and had even been struck off the rolls of the Bar register for the offence of sedition. But he continued to follow the same principle. His advice to the Hindus and the Muslims was to get rid of all evil in themselves. Without that they would not be able to live in peace or have respect for one another.

Gandhiji's remarks at the prayer meeting which Goffran Saheb had addressed had some curious repercussions. At the prayer gathering on the 17th evening no woman came and very few Hindus, the majority of those present being Muslims. Speaking after the prayer, Gandhiji observed that he had heard that because he did not allow a gentleman to reply to Goffran Saheb's remarks there

and then in the meeting, the Hindus were annoyed and had boycotted the meeting. He was unrepentant. He never said or did anything merely to please others. He had always taught that one should do one's duty irrespective of the reaction it may have on others. A man who always did what he believed to be right never feared anyone.

Later the secretary of the Local Relief Organization came to him and told him that they had not boycotted the meeting but as it was Sunday and the Bazaar-day the women were afraid to come out as there would be many Muslims including goondas about.

Speaking at the prayer meeting on the 19th evening which was held at Madhupur, Gandhiji observed that a friend had told him that he explanation was a make-believe. If they had boycotted the meeting he did not mind it. They owed him no apology on that account. And if they had stayed away out of fear, certainly no apology was due to him. But it was a shame for them to be so afraid. Were the men also such cowards that they had stayed away out of fear? Were the Muslims going to eat them up? If they were such cowards, they were not worthy of living in this country. The sister who had gone to him in the morning to request him to hold a women's meeting at Madhupur had put before him three questions. The first question was that in spite of all their efforts they were unable to rescue some of the abducted women. He had told her that she should write to him about it and he would forward the letter to Saheed Suhrawardy. He could even write to the Prime Minister directly. It was a matter which brooked no delay. Secondly she said there were some women in the villages who wanted to come away but they wanted a military escort. He never could be a party to that. He had told the Prime Minister that he for one was not enamoured of the police and the military and that he could withdraw it at any time. The Hindus and the Muslims should be free to break each other's heads if they wanted to. He would put up with that. But if they continued to look to the police and the military for help, they would remain slaves for ever. Those who preferred security to freedom had no right to live. He wanted the women to become brave. To change one's religion under threat of force was no conversion but rather cowardice. A cowardly man or woman was a deadweight on any religion. Out of fear they might become Muslims today, Christians tomorrow and pass into a third religion the day after. That was not worthy of human beings. It was up to the men workers to tell the women that they would be their escort and would protect them with their lives. If still the women were afraid to come away, there was no help for them. He had come to proclaim from the housetops that the women had to become brave or else die. They should make use of the calamity that had befallen them to cast out the demon of fear. Lastly the sister had asked

as to how they could advise the refugees to go back to their homes. He would not ask them, replied Gandhiji, to go back under police or military protection. They had run away out of the fear of the Muslims. Therefore, it was the Muslims who had to come forward and reassure them that they would regard them as their own mothers, daughters and sisters and protect them with their lives. Everybody, continued the speaker, must be entitled to retain his or her own religion without interference. All worshipped the same God although under different names. "If I see my God in this tree and worship it, why should the Muslims object?" It was wrong for anyone to say that his God was superior to that of another's. God was one and the same for all. Hence his formula that from every village one good Hindu and one good Muslim should stand surety for the peace of the village. Then and then alone would he ask the refugees to return and the Ministers had liked his suggestion.

Kazirkhil, 24-11-'46

PYARELAL

To The Reader

The reader knows by now the circumstances under which Shri Vinoba, Kakasaheb Kalelkar, Kishorlal Mashruwala and Narhari Parikh have been asked by Gandhiji to look to the editing of the *Harijan* weeklies during the time he, Pyarelalji and other members of his party are engaged in the very important task of restoring friendliness among the Hindus and Muslims of Bengal. The four have been asked to carry out this duty jointly and severally. But it so happens that all the four are at present in widely different places and unable to meet together. Shri Narhari Parikh alone is at Sabarmati and most easily available to me. The articles written by any of them will, therefore, come to me without having been previously seen by another of them before they go to the press.

Generally, Gandhiji and Pyarelalji do not allow anything to be published in the *Harijan* without having personally examined the matter. This will not be possible at present. The reader will, therefore, please not assume that any opinion on any matter expressed for the time being in the columns of these weeklies has had the approval of Gandhiji or Pyarelalji before its publication.

MANAGING EDITOR

Errata

In the *Harijan* of 24-11-'46 on p. 412 in the last paragraph of 'A wife spinning for her husband' for *સુરભિ* read *સુરભિ*.

CONTENTS		PAGE
IMMORTAL MALAVIYAJI	... M. K. GANDHI	429
ACHARYA KRIPALANI'S ADDRESS		429
THE "DO OR DIE" MISSION	... PYARELAL	432
MAP		433
"LINE CLEAR" IN PUBLIC INTEREST	... KAKA KALELKER	434
ENGLISH INTO HINDUSTANI—		
INSTALMENT—VIII		435
THE MOTHER'S DISTRESS	... K. G. M.	441
WEEKLY LETTER	... PYARELAL	442
NOTE:		
TO THE READER		MANAGING EDITOR 444