

HARIJAN

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Editor: PYARELAL

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TWO ANNAS

SCRIPTURE FOR DEVILRY!

When man seeks to invoke sanction of religious scriptures in order to support his own inner lust, ambition or other forms of self-indulgence, or for inciting others to such acts or conduct; or when he seeks to clothe such acts with religious or moral aims and ideals, it is such abuse of religion and ethics that one would fain desire that no religious or ethical codes had ever existed.

When man feels that a course of action or conduct cannot stand the test of the straight reasoning of a discriminating human being and is seized, nonetheless, with the desire to indulge in it, and to incite others to do so, he is tempted to invoke the authority of religion in its support, and thus, whether or not does he mislead and deceive himself, he certainly misleads hundreds of simple people.

These thoughts have been provoked by two questions asked by a correspondent of obviously thoughtful and studious habits. The questions are:

"(1) The war of the *Mahabharata* is represented as a *dharmayuddha*, or right war. Yet, it was admittedly an internecine one. It was no better than what we call (in modern parlance) a civil or a fratricidal war. Can such fighting be called a right war? If so, why not call the present communal riots too a right war? Is it not being invoked for resisting unjust demands of one community against the other? How can we go on submitting to them *ad infinitum*? Is not a stubborn fight against such bullying a just and proper war?"

"(2) The great Krishna during the *Mahabharata* war had vowed not to use arms, but relented at a critical moment and took up the *Sudarshana Chakra* against Bhishma. Why should not Mahatma Gandhi similarly relent and allow as much violence for a while?"

The answer is, that until a man has tried to thresh out for himself the ethical aspect of a problem facing him by a process of independent and straight reasoning, there is no occasion to search for religious or historical sanctions; nay, it is improper to do so.

Let us leave alone the issues of *Akhand Hindustan* or *Pakistan* for a moment and examine the riots in terms of humanity and its interests dispassionately. Let us ask ourselves whether the barbarous acts of massacre, arson and worse, that took place in Calcutta, East Bengal, Bihar and other places, and the stabbings etc., that continue in so many cities and towns are consistent with right human conduct. Do our higher and humane emotions

justify the exhibition of this bestiality? What madness has possessed us, that if we are Hindus and see a crowd of helpless Muslims or if we are Muslims and see a crowd of helpless Hindus, we should thirst for their blood and visit them with fire and sword, ravish their women, indiscriminately kill old and infirm men and women and tender children and then try to justify these acts of devilry by quoting scriptures in their support? What do the poor starving peasants and the *Namashudras* of Noakhali, or Muslim village peasants of Bihar or the fishermen of Kolaba and their womenfolk understand about *Akhand Hindustan* or *Pakistan*, and why either of the two should endanger their lives, property and honour? Why should these political ambitions demand a toll of their blood and bring ruin upon them? What has a Hindu or a Muslim pedestrian going about his business done to deserve a sudden stab in the back at the hand of the other, to make you feel sympathetic, not with the victim, but with the assailant?

The fact is that the lust of war with its associate vices has not yet been extinguished from the human breast. That is why it flares up time and again under one pretext or another. It is fanned by the ambitions of a few influential individuals and thereafter involves millions of innocent human beings, destroys property worth billions and trillions, and brings untold hardships, penury and ruin on whole populations. Various ingenious reasons are adduced to tempt simple people into the net. The slogan of 'Religion in danger' is one such device. Under its spell they turn erstwhile simple people into ferocious fanatics, worse than the beasts of prey and mad elephants.

If you were to tell the people, "You are beasts, so behave like beasts", it is obvious, few would follow you. But it serves your purpose excellently if you tell them, "This killing is ordained by God and by the Holy Scriptures. It is a sacrifice of the highest merit; it is an act of service to God and is good religious conduct; it is the royal road to attain Divine Grace; it blesses both the killers and the killed; for, if you are killed, you will enter the gates of Heaven; and if you kill or convert, you prevent your opponent from going further astray. If you do not participate in this holy war, your religion and culture would perish." Under the influence of such strong 'spirits' of religious fanaticism men become far more intoxicated and insane than under that of alcohol.

To revert to the correspondent's questions : there is little to compare in the present riots in the country with the war of the *Mahabharata*. That was a family feud over rights of kingship between two rival royal families and followed the then prevailing cannons of war. Both sides, after a formal declaration of war, mustered their warriors on an open battlefield and fought to a finish. The commonly accepted rules of war were generally observed by both the sides. None but the participating warriors was so much as touched. Even fighting warriors observed commonly accepted rules of attack as well as defence. And whenever any one deviated, he was reprimanded and repudiated even by his own side. Thus certain ethical cannons were accepted and duly observed by the belligerents even while at war. Hence it was customary in those days to call such a war a right war, i. e. in consonance with the law (*dharma*).

Nothing of this can be said of the present murders, loots, fires, rapes or conversions. A big mob belonging to one community makes a sudden attack upon a smaller group of the other community or even a solitary wayfarer, and massacres wholly innocent people. None among the attackers is a brave warrior, none among the victims is a guilty culprit. There is no general openly commanding the campaign. The wire-pullers behind these dastardly attacks and acts are men who elect to work in the dark, are anxious to save their own skin, and carry on their nefarious designs by inciting simple and credulous people, or by engaging hooligans with the help of money and other base temptations. They are heartless men of inhuman and anti-social propensities. May be, some of them are leading men in society. Nonetheless, they are not its well-wishers but ambitious monsters stalking the land in human form. They have little concern with any religion whatever.

If the present riots have to be compared with any ancient episode, they may be compared with the cold-blooded massacre of the sleeping sons of the Pandavas and other fighters in the Pandava camp, perpetrated in the dead of night by Ashvathama and Kripacharya, the solitary survivors of the Kaurava camp. The mutual fratricidal fighting of the Yadavas of Dwaraka also may be cited in comparison.

The other instance cited by the correspondent is the wielding of the *Sudarshana Chakra* by Shri Krishna in violation of his self-imposed vow, in order to save a critical situation. The suggestion is, if Shri Krishna could do it, why not Gandhiji? Why should he not modify his non-violence a little to meet an exasperating situation? And if Gandhiji is not an adept at wielding violence, he should ask some one else to do so!

The question may be answered with a counter-question. Gandhiji in his boyhood, as narrated in his autobiography, resorted to stealing and smoking behind the back of his father. If the correspondent's son were to put him a poser by asking him, "What objection can you have, then, if I stole or smoked? And since I am not going to be

a Mahatma, there can be nothing wrong about it!" How will the father appreciate this? If this story of breaking the vow is true, it only means that even Krishna, great as he was, was still human and liable to err. That is why the great epic proceeds also to record that he was put to shame by Bhishma for the attempted lapse and also promptly stopped by his disciple-friend Arjuna.

We may not forget the good injunction given to graduates in the old universities that even masters are to be followed by the disciples in their good acts only and not in their faults and frailties.

The sooner we get rid of this communal poison, the better for our country. Indeed, this evil is a worse epidemic than plague, typhoid, cholera or small-pox. If one of these latter is on, say, in Bengal, surely, we will not think of introducing the contagion in Bihar or other provinces as an effective preventive; rather, if we are wise and alert, we shall take prophylactic measures to prevent it from spreading elsewhere. For instance, we might devise serums and inoculations to protect healthy persons, drink boiled water, spray disinfectants, segregate the victims, erect quarantines, etc. Can it ever be that the measures to fight the communal virus in Bengal should be to introduce it in another place? Can such an act be ever conducive to the nation's health? It is only when a people bids good-bye to straight thinking that perverse ideas receive a hearing and pass for bold measures and right cures.

Vapi, 3-12-'46

K. G. MASHRUWALA

(From the original in Gujarati)

Commendable

Shri Vidyananda Jayaswal, a local magistrate of Sahibganj (S. P.), Bihar has sent the following report in Hindustani of how his own presence of mind and courage, prevented a deadly clash between the local Hindus and Mussalmans. He says:

"In the evening of 5-11-'46 i. e. *Bakra Id* day, in spite of the curfew order in Sahibganj, people were shouting cries of *Allah ho Akbar* etc. in the butchers' locality. On the other side in the Hindu street people were shouting *Jai Kali Noakhali, Mahavir Swamiki Jai*, etc. with blowing of conch shells. I ran to the butchers' locality where I saw hundreds of Mussalmans armed with naked swords, pick-axes, spears etc., intent upon invading the Hindu locality. The Hindus too had assembled, ready to advance with *lathis*, etc.. Had I hesitated even for two minutes, the ground would have been strewn with a number of corpses. Seeing that there was no other remedy to bring the situation under control, I, accompanied by none and absolutely unarmed, rushed into the Mussalmans' crowd and snatched away swords and spears from a number of them; I told them how shameful and foolish their conduct was and exhorted them to retire quietly to their own homes. The non-violent remedy shown by Mahatmaji was successful by the grace of God and all the Mussalmans quietly returned to their houses. I then went to the Hindu locality and tried the same remedy. The effect was so salutary that nothing untoward has happened in our town since then."

Sabarmati, 17-12-'46

N. P.

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

[The following passages on the subject of the Medium of Instruction and the place of English in the curricula of our schools and colleges are taken from the convocation address of the Nagpur University delivered by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at Nagpur on the 30th of November, 1946—*Ed.*]

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

The University's decision to make the mother tongue the medium of instruction is of great significance. During the last quarter of a century we have realized that the use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction is an obstacle to the mental growth of students. They have to spend a lot of time in acquiring a vocabulary, and even then it cannot be said that they appreciate the correct meaning of the words they use. Words denote objects. A child first sees objects and then learns the words by which he can describe them to others. This process begins early in childhood and continues throughout life. After learning to use one word for a particular object, if a child has to learn another, it naturally feels the strain, specially when it has to memorize the second word with an effort as it does not hear it used by other children. The strain in fact is so great that the child remembers only the word without being familiar with the object which it describes. When a foreign language is the medium of instruction, children have not only to strain themselves to memorize words, but have to struggle to understand what is taught. Thus the habit of cramming is encouraged, while the capacity to comprehend is impaired.

All this is self-evident. But our educational system is such and we have been so enslaved by it that many of us do not fully understand even this simple problem. Thirty years ago the Sadler Commission recommended the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction. Later when Mahatma Gandhi appeared on the Indian scene and started his country-wide campaigns, he emphatically declared that instruction through the medium of English, instead of helping us to improve, was leading to our decay. During those days some Vidyapiths or national universities were started. As they were independent of Government control, they were free to follow their own system and use their own medium of instruction. They tried to impart education through the medium of the Indian languages and showed that even higher education could be given in the Indian languages. They demonstrated that it took much less time in teaching a person in an Indian language and the student learnt more about the subjects he studied. Despite this, not one University in British India has started imparting education through the medium of the Indian languages from the lowest to the highest class and done away with English. By deciding to teach in the Indian languages your university has set a very good example. By following in your footsteps other universities can render real help in imparting true education.

I know there are difficulties which have prevented other universities from taking a similar decision. Without effort, no difficulty can be overcome and it is cowardice not to try. True courage consists in overcoming difficulties. Most men are lazy by nature. Laziness is not merely physical, it is mental also. Most of us suffer from mental sloth. We do not try to get out of the rut. We seem to consider it a waste of energy to try to break old traditions. It is because of our inertia that our universities have followed their old traditional ways. Otherwise, there is no reason why we should not have got a sufficient number of text-books in the Indian languages on subjects which it has been difficult to teach in our own languages, particularly in higher classes. Your university has acted with courage and foresight in changing the medium of instruction despite the paucity of text-books. It would be wise to go ahead with the job and grapple with the difficulties as and when they arise. This was the only way of solving the difficulty and your university has shown that where there is a real desire to get things done, means can always be found to do it. I hope you will go ahead with determination. And when instruction is imparted from the highest class to the lowest in the Indian languages, you will see that there is a great saving of the students' time, their knowledge will be more comprehensive and they will enter life with their mental faculties fully developed.

THE PLACE OF ENGLISH

Introduction of the Indian languages in our schools and colleges does not mean that we do not want to learn or provide facilities for the teaching of foreign languages. No country in the world can live in isolation. Every country has to maintain contact with the outside world. For this, knowledge of foreign languages is necessary. But every national of a country does not come in contact with outsiders. Only a few come in touch with foreigners, and they should learn foreign languages. Knowledge of foreign languages is also necessary for those who want to keep themselves abreast of world thought. Those who want to travel abroad or carry on trade with other countries must have some knowledge of foreign languages. Such people are, however, a fraction of the population of a country and have to attain only that much proficiency which is absolutely necessary.

Every country, however, must have men who can translate in their own language the best of the books in foreign languages and make them available to their countrymen. For this it is necessary for people to learn foreign languages and visit foreign countries. The necessary facilities must be provided for them. We must not at the same time forget that 99 out of every 100 people have to stay in their own country and do not need the knowledge of foreign languages. Thus universities, while providing facilities for teaching foreign languages to one out of every 100 students, must not neglect the education of the remaining 99.

(From the original in *Hindustani*)

HARIJAN

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1946

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES AND THE STATE

[Almost all the Congress Governments have been paying their attention to the subject of village industries, some of the provinces having a special minister for the purpose. The Bombay Government has appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Shri Manu Subedar "to consider and report on the measures necessary for the promotion of rural handicrafts and industries, including different forms of State aid, and also to consider what restrictions, if any, should be placed on the movement of raw materials for industries in rural areas from the point of view of utilizing local resources for local consumption, processing or manufacture." In the following article I have discussed a few aspects of the subject. It is not meant to be exhaustive, but just introduces a number of points which I feel have been rather overlooked.]

In the first place, I would wish to urge that it will not be sufficient, in view of the enormous changes that have taken place in our modern life and of the progress of applied science, to consider only the dead and dying industries of the village. It is necessary also to enquire into the modern life of our people, to take note of the new articles or of old articles in new forms, which they have begun to consume and to consider how many of these or suitable substitutes thereof are capable of being produced in village areas. Some of these would be for local consumption, but others might well be produced for towns also.

Self-sufficiency of the village in respect of essential requirements is a good goal so far as it goes. But it should not exhaust the scope of village industries. If villages are not to be allowed to be emptied of their talented and plucky men and if it is agreed that it is not very desirable to allow towns and cities to expand without limit regarding their population and area, the villages and *kasbas* near about villages should be encouraged to become centres of suitable small-scale industries for supplying some of the necessities of the cities. The guiding principle in this respect should be that wherever the basic material of a finished article is essentially a village produce, the villagers should be encouraged to turn it themselves into a finished product and send it to the town in a finished form.

Thus, for instance, biscuits of various kinds, bread-loaf, preserves, pickles, ready-made *masalas*, *papads*, sweets, tooth-powders, canned fruits, starch, leather articles, herbs, drugs and a host of other things made out of village materials or waste, have now become articles of daily use for both the towns-people and the villagers. Some of them are needed also for large scale industries. The raw material for these is produced in villages or gathered

from adjoining forests, and yet they have to be imported from cities even by the villages producing them. If the State provided facilities for the starting of such industries in the villages and village-towns, they will become thriving places and young men will not be tempted to overcrowd the cities to find remunerative employment.

To achieve this the guidance and assistance by the State should in my opinion take the following forms:

(a) It should be clearly realized that a large-scale industry cannot but ultimately kill a small-scale industry of the same type. It is not merely a question of "Power" *versus* human or animal energy. Even if you provide "Power"—energy to every village, the village-industry will not thrive if there is no limit set upon the size to which a factory might be allowed to expand. Therefore, one of the essential things to be settled is to set down the limit to which a factory, which is capable of being started in village areas, should be allowed to expand in the province. If industrialization of the village is the aim, it goes without saying that you picture hundreds of work-shops scattered all over the province. Necessarily, therefore, its productive capacity must be limited to moderate quantities and, if necessary, the movement of the finished product must also be confined to limited areas in normal times. Of course, each industry would have to be considered by itself, and it may not be possible to lay down any general rule.

(b) Subject to correction, I feel that it is not merely the use of mechanical power, which comes in the way of village or manual industries. The village artisan has always been handicapped for want of capital on easy terms. Take, for instance, the tanning industry. The smallest village tanner, in order to have work throughout the year, must have a sufficient stock of hides, lime, *harda*, bark, colours, some chemicals and various other things purchased at the right season and preserved in well built godowns. If he has to tan leather which will fetch him the full price, he must have a full sized pucca soak-pit to spread his hides in, without folds, instead of an earthen tub, often smaller than a bath tub, which is all that he can at present afford to have. Even for these small requirements, the village tanner is dependent either upon a village money-lender charging a high rate of interest, or a middleman who advances him the necessary materials as and when required but purchases the finished product at his own price. Though nominally an independent artisan, in effect his earnings are less than that of a labourer doing similar work in a capitalist's factory. To call him an independent artisan is a misnomer. Actually he is a sweated labourer engaged on piece-work.

The large-scale industrialist, on the other hand, is not only able to produce goods more rapidly and in larger quantities, but by reason of advances made available to him on easy terms, has an advantage over the villager in every detail of the industry, including sales, though the amount of capital needed by him,

hide for 'hide, may be greater than that by the villager, and a considerable part of it may have to be spent in purchasing foreign machinery and materials.

If the above description is correct then, if village industries are to be encouraged, the provision of capital on easy terms must be regarded a primary condition for the fulfilment of the aim. By easy terms, I mean, on rates of interest actually less than those on which large-scale industrialists are able to get it. Personally, I am opposed to the institution of interest altogether. But I shall not labour that point here. But I strongly feel that the present practice, which enables large industrialists to get cheaper money than the small one cannot but ultimately kill the small industry. Even co-operative societies, I believe, do not get capital on as easy terms as the capitalist companies. Morally, a man who labours with his own hands ought to be given more credit than one who only drives labourers to work under a shed.

Not being the master of his own industry, the village artisan does not feel much interested in improving the quality of his work, or in learning new and improved methods of work, in spite of the efforts of *gram-sevaks*.

(c) After making the artisan feel assured that, provided he is honest and diligent, he will not have to vegetate for want of funds to start and carry on his business, the next item of assistance needed is instruction in improved methods of manufacture. Village industry ought not to mean crudely manufactured articles. There is no reason why villagers or patrons of village industries should be asked to be satisfied with indifferently or badly made things. There was once a time when village-made things used to be actually superior in make to the same things turned out from factories. "Cheap and nasty" was the attribute of factory-made and not hand-made or village-made articles. It is no longer so. On the contrary, the village article has deteriorated into "costly and crude". Clean, sorted and properly classified raw materials, tools kept in order, scientific method of handling them, precision in size, quality and calculations, proper testing of the turned-out work at every important stage, and a degree of elegance and beauty are some of the essentials, which have been till now largely neglected in our industrial activities. Even the so-called experts often betray not only a lack of knowledge about these matters, but even the sense for them. This is a matter, which requires considerable amount of supervision by instructors and inspectors knowing their job and capable of giving demonstrations to the village artisans. The State should help the industries by organizing this kind of work. The duty of inspectors should not be merely to pass or reject articles submitted for inspection but to give all possible guidance to the under-instructed worker to manufacture better things.

I wonder if we have an adequate number of people fit for this kind of work; a large staff of this kind of officers will have to be created. No

"planning" or "budgeting" may be expected to succeed without such knowing organizers.

(d) Then, village industries must be protected (i) against the inroads of synthetic substitutes (like artificial cloth) which are trying to displace manufactures made from original materials and (ii) against the tendency of capitalist concerns to deprive the villagers and actual workers of the use of their produce in order to obtain better prices abroad either of the natural produce itself or of artificial products made from it. Thus, often, not an ounce of milk finds its way into the stomach of the calf, or the children of the owner of the cow or the buffalo, or the servants of a dairy, but is either sent away to the town for being sold at a higher price, or turned into preserved milk, *pedas*, powder, and even manufactured into various luxury products meant for any use except food. This view of industrialization is harmful, but even industrial concerns organized for philanthropic and charitable objects are not free from it. Private ownership is only a secondary attribute of capitalism. The eye to make a concern as *profitable* as possible is the chief aim, and it is this, which deprives the masses of even bare necessities.

How this can be done is a pertinent question:

(i) To a certain extent the question leads us into the sphere of the very structure of the Indian Swaraj Government. Decentralization of industry will have to go hand in hand with decentralization of the Government of the country. In a way there is decentralization of Government even today. But it is decentralization of administrative work i. e. carrying out orders and policies dictated from a powerful centre. There is no power of initiation in the village or other suitable but small units, and if villages are to thrive, this must be brought about.

(ii) The masses must feel as realistically as they feel the help of the rain and the sun, that they can themselves plan their life, and there is a Government to help them with capital and transport and other facilities and who are better equipped with instructors of technical knowledge than they themselves are, and that this assistance will be available to them almost as of right and assuredly without favouritism or demand for *bakshis*. Incorruptible, fully trained, courteous and confidence-inspiring public servants are the *sine qua non* of the economic regeneration of the people. Every effort should be made to raise the character of public servants and they should be transformed into real *servants* of the people out of their present mentality of having the *amaldars* over them. While on the one hand their services must not be at the mercy of local or provincial party-groups, on the other hand they must also be made responsible to the local administration instead of being its dictators.

(iii) This itself is impossible without simultaneous rise in the moral character of the people generally and of the politicians in particular. The evil of power-politics in the interest of groups and

cliques is a great demoralizer of public life, and not much good will ensue as long as it continues.

(iv) Owing to the absence of the above conditions, the co-operative movement, which has done so much good in the Western countries has not been so successful in ours. Even village or decentralized Swaraj will not be a substitute for co-operative societies, which must become the principal pivot of industrial efforts in the village.

(v) Much has to be done in the direction of improvement of village machinery and tools. Two opposite movements have been going on simultaneously in this direction. One lays emphasis on making machines and tools as simple as possible, even in the direction of discarding the simple tools used from immemorial times. This is good in so far as it points to the fact that want of tools and implements need not make people feel helpless in producing their essential necessities and a start can be made in village industries without awaiting the arrival of readymade implements. The will is more needed than the tools.

The other movement lays emphasis upon increasing the productive capacity of the worker by placing at his disposal better implements and tools, even if they are to a certain extent more complicated and depend upon tool-manufacturing factories for their supply and repairs.

I think both the movements have a place, but in the long run the second is more important and permanent. Our wants have increased not only in the number of different articles consumed, but also in the quantity of each article consumed. And so quantitative increase in production cannot be ignored. Whether and how far this must necessarily lead to the use of power-driven machinery is a thing which cannot be foretold now. If our ambition is not to capture foreign markets — often done even by keeping one's own countrymen unprovided — but to make the country self-sufficient and to liquidate unemployment in the first instance, power-driven machinery may well have to be tabooed in the manufacture of a good many articles. The use of power-energy must come after human energy, if in spite of full employment, it is found insufficient to cope with the demand. And so, inventive ingenuity must, at any rate for the present, be largely concentrated on increasing the productive capacity of the machine driven by human or animal power only. But within this limit, there is no harm in perfecting it as fully as possible.

Particularly, improvements in machinery, which, even if they do not help a strong man, place a weak man on a par with the strong one, should be most welcome. For instance, it is possible that a strong man may be able to spin as much yarn as he needs on the *takli*, and almost in the same time, as a weak man would do on a *dhanush takli* or the *charkha*. If, therefore, self-sufficiency is the only aim, a strong man would not care to go in for the other implement. But it would make the weak man desiring to be self-sufficient quite helpless. While with the *dhanush takli* or the *charkha*, he would be able to

meet his own demand. This is but a simple example. But if we consider production of wealth for the nation, and the employment of the weak and the old people, inventive genius would find a large field opened before it. Every encouragement should be given to persons making such improvements in tools as places the weak-bodied, the under-nourished or the cripple as much as possible by aid of mechanical means on a par with the able-bodied adult.

Important as it is, I refrain from referring to the Wardha Scheme of Education. It is sufficient to say that I regard its diligent and intelligent application to be important not only for the economic regeneration of the country, but also for the whole education of man.

I also omit to dwell at length on the necessity of unifying or, at least, coordinating the activities of the various departments of Government, and simplifying the administrative machinery.

Both the points, I take, have been adequately stressed already by others.

Vapi, 29-11-'46

K. G. MASHRUWALA

Notes

Personal

None of us four, who have been asked by Gandhiji to look to the editing of the *Harijan* weeklies while he and his companions are engaged in restoring friendship between the Hindus and Muslims of East Bengal, feels at ease in writing for the English edition. Though I happen to be a more frequent contributor to the English columns than either Shri Vinoba, Kaka Kalelkar or Narhari Parikh, my command over English is even poorer than theirs. My vocabulary is too small for a modern writer, and I am never sure about the correctness of my grammar and idioms. But for the helping-hand of Gandhiji himself or Shri Mahadev Desai, or Rajkumari Amrit Kaur or Pyarelalji, I could have rarely found place in the *Harijan*, which has always set a standard in good English. I have no such helpers here, and I am afraid that amongst us four, I may have to do a greater part of the job. There is, therefore, every likelihood of the standard of English deteriorating. I request the reader to overlook whatever linguistic defects he might notice in the English edition. He will remember that English is not our mother-tongue. I would also advise editors of provincial editions of the *Harijan* to prefer the Hindustani edition (*Harijansevak*) to the English to translate from for their weeklies.

Vapi, 9-12-'46

India Vindicated

India has reason to rejoice and feel justly proud over the signal successes scored by Shrimati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit and her able colleagues at the Assembly of the United Nations Organization against South Africa. Her task was by no means easy. She had to win her case against the veteran Premier of South Africa Field Marshal Smuts — one of the ablest and most reputed statesmen of the day, who put up tough fight at every stage. He had the backing of the British Government itself

and of other major partners of the British Commonwealth. Shrimati Pandit's spirited but dignified advocacy of a just cause won universal applause and helped India to gain the sympathy of many member countries. It was significant that while China, Russia, France and most Asiatic countries supported India at various votings, U. S., Great Britain, Canada, Netherlands, Belgium etc., were found ranged against her.

The veteran General Smuts encountered an equally spirited opposition from the Indian Delegation on the South-west Africa annexation issue. And here too, the South African Premier was deservedly defeated.

It is remarkable that almost from early commencement of India's struggle in South Africa, a major part of our success has been due to the part played by Indian women. The names of the late Kasturba Gandhi and Shrimati Sarojini Devi will always be cherished with reverence and pride. And now again it was a daughter of India — perhaps the only lady delegate in the UNO — who dominated the scene. She has indeed raised India's prestige in the eyes of the world.

The 31 Nations who supported India also deserve our warmest thanks. By championing the cause of fundamental human rights and relationship they have enhanced the prestige of the UNO and inspired hope among the oppressed nations.

Vapi, 12-12-'46

Destruction of Monkeys

A correspondent has sent a newspaper cutting which runs as follows:

"There was some prejudice in the beginning against the killing of monkeys, but now the Government of Orissa find that the scheme for the removal of the monkey pest has achieved a very great success," says a Press Note.

"Monkeys have probably been the greatest menace to agriculture in Orissa," the Note continues. "The Government offered under the scheme a reward of Rs. 3 per monkey killed.

"The Government now consider that the time has come to take steps and concentrate on the killing of male monkeys with a view to reducing the monkey population of the province. The Government, therefore, have decided to award in future Rs. 4 per male monkey killed, including very young ones, and Rs. 2 per female monkey."

The correspondent feels shocked and requests Gandhiji that he should, as a humanitarian, take up this question in the *Harijan* and use his influence with the Congress Governments to immediately put an end to this campaign against the "poor voiceless life in the form of the monkeys in Orissa."

With all my love and compassion for the dumb creation and my personal inability to take even insect life, I hold that it is not possible to ask the Orissa Government to refrain from their project. There appears no practical way of effectively protecting agriculture without killing the animals that are a menace to it. Monkeys are not the only offenders. Rats, rabbits, deer, and wild boar belong to the same

class, and man is obliged to take organized measures to destroy each one of them. Man has to choose between living the same kind of natural life as other animals and destroying rival animals so that he may live according to his ideas of "civilized life".

Vapi, 9-12-'46

Labels of Caste and Religion

A correspondent writes to the following effect:

"People insist upon regarding me a *Saraswat Brahman* and a Shaivite Hindu. Whenever I have an occasion to appear before an officer or be described in public documents, I am asked to state my caste and religion. Now, I have not the least desire to be regarded a *Brahman*, far less a *Saraswat Brahman*, and though I am a believer in God and from my childhood used to call upon Him by such names as *Shiva*, *Shankara*, *Mahadeva* etc., I do not regard myself a Shaivite or even a Hindu, but consider myself to be just a believer unattached to any religious sect. What shall I do to remove and disown the labels put upon me by the society?"

So far as public officers and documents are concerned, it is open to the correspondent to describe his caste as nil, and his religion as, say, a theist. Perhaps it is possible for government to dispense with the rules requiring persons to state their caste and religion in public documents and before officers.

But this will not be the end of the matter. The mere declaration by a person that he has renounced his caste or creed or both, unaccompanied with any practical act, will not make the society in which he moves to disregard them. Has he formed any family and social relations with a considerable number of people outside his caste and religion? If all his relations are practically confined to his reputed caste and sect, let alone the general public, the members of his own family will not be able to forget that he still belongs to a particular caste and sect — though in an unorthodox manner — and notwithstanding his protests to the contrary. But his good intention will bear fruit in time, if it develops into appropriate conduct.

It should also be remembered that the recording of a person's caste, creed etc., need not have become an important item in public offices and documents but for the fact that the various communities are governed by their own laws of inheritance, succession, marriage, divorce etc., and persons can plead even special customs, which courts are bound to recognize. Consequently, even if a person is himself unwilling to be labelled with any particular caste or creed, his relatives and the society round about him are interested in having these details on record. Reformer legislators should consider whether a law could be enacted, which would enable a person to renounce his privilege to be governed by a personal law in these matters and place himself and his relatives under the operation of non-communal laws like the Indian Succession Act etc.

Vapi, 5-12-'46

K. G. M

HINDUSTANI AND THE GOVERNMENT

The Hindustani-policy of the government needs re-orientation; what is going on today is half-hearted and marked by lack of vigour. This is perhaps the legacy of disturbed years that have completely disorganized the work. Now that the popular government is once more in the saddle, there is an opportunity of re-shaping the entire policy. The cause of Hindustani being just, our own government need only imagination and vision without adopting the British methods of forcing a foreign tongue on an unwilling people. With this in view, the Gujarat Hindustani Prachar Samiti recently made certain recommendations to the government in the form of a resolution. The following is a summary of them :

Happily, the Government of Bombay had made at least this much abundantly clear in 1939 that, Hindustani, as a language, is distinct both from Hindi and Urdu and that, it being written in the *Devanagari* or the *Urdu* script, arrangements should be made to teach both the scripts in schools. Considering this principle to be a correct one the Samiti makes the following recommendation to the Government :

1. The teaching of Hindustani should now be extended

- (a) up to the Matriculation standard at the secondary stage,
- (b) at all the years of the *lokashala*, and
- (c) in training colleges meant for primary and secondary teachers.

2. The present policy of giving the student option of learning either of the two scripts, and exempting Hindi and Urdu schools from the obligation of teaching Hindustani, takes the very bottom out of the original idea and runs counter to the spirit in which the basic principle was accepted in 1939.

That there is in this policy a veiled recognition of the existing hair-splitting and disrupting controversies in this field is quite obvious. The view that a government cannot run in advance of public opinion is also understandable. The Samiti cannot therefore recommend compulsory learning of Hindustani (with both the scripts) in schools. Still, the moral obligation underlying the 1939 pronouncements cannot be evaded lightly, and the government policy must needs undergo a radical transformation.

3. Learning the Hindi or the Urdu style must not be permitted to become an excuse for seeking exemption from learning Hindustani. The option may not be in choosing the script as at present, but between learning Hindustani, the national language of the people, with both the scripts and not learning it at all. This rule must equally embrace the Hindi and the Urdu schools.

4. Adoption of this policy necessarily means that the Hindustani teacher must be capable of giving lessons in both scripts. The Samiti is happy that this is what the government desires.

5. It is, however, not enough that a teacher knowing Hindi or Urdu up to a certain standard may learn the other script and impart a requisite number of lessons in it. Exclusive recognition should be given to teachers trained on lines devised by the Hindustani Prachar Sabha, the interim arrangement of recognizing examinations only in Hindi or Urdu not being necessary with the implementing by the Government of a principle already accepted by them.

6. Such arrangements for the teaching of the national language (with the option regarding the script) as exist today in our schools, are on a compulsory basis; a change over to the optional system may therefore appear to be threatening what little that is being done today. But a firm and unequivocal declaration of policy by the popular government accompanied by its adoption in practice would be a powerful factor in creating public opinion in this regard.

The Samiti recommends the following measures :

(a) Government servants should be encouraged to learn both the scripts and those passing Hindustani examinations given credit. Departmental regulations may require them to acquire certain minimum qualification in Hindustani.

(b) 'Optional Hindustani' (with both scripts) may be introduced at the Matriculation, the Vernacular Final etc., and those offering this subject given preference in service.

(c) Institutions creating public opinion for the spread of Hindustani should be encouraged and assisted, and given exclusive recognition.

(7) The teaching of English which, it is now recognized by the progressive opinion in the country, starts too early at present, may be a great hindrance to the adoption of this policy. But since the national language must have a place next only to the mother tongue, in a programme of educational reconstruction, English must be unseated from the position it has usurped and assigned its proper place.

The Samiti realizes that this is a revolutionary step; hence the urgency.

(Abridged from the original in Gujarati)

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