

HARIJAN

Editor : PYARELAL

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[TWO ANNAS

ABOUT RAJAJI

(By M. K. Gandhi)

I have read Shri Kamaraj Nadar's press message. I am sorry. I can easily be silent, but the cause may suffer. He says he is my follower. In that case he should have referred to me before rushing to the press and certainly before resigning. I have intentionally described myself as a *bhangi*. In the man-made social ladder, I want to be at the bottom. I would like Shri Kamaraj to cease to be a Nadar and to become a *bhangi* with me and then in all humility withdraw his resignation. Whether it is legally possible or not, the Provincial and Working Committees alone can decide. Morally it is perfectly possible, if he himself feels he has hurt himself and the cause by resigning. Then he will rejoin the difficult post (if it is legally possible) as a strong man. He was weak in resigning. He says he prevented four others from following him. It was well that they did not resign.

Why worry about the use of the word 'clique'? In spite of all my love for the English language, it is a foreign tongue for me and I am as likely as not to make mistakes in using it. Of course, I have used the word 'clique' deliberately. I must not withdraw it. This is its dictionary meaning: 'small exclusive party'. I know that there is such a clique in Tamil Nad against Rajaji. I am unable definitely to name one single person in it. No one need wear the cap unless it fits him. There are many cliques in the Congress organization as even in the best managed organizations in the world. The fewer their number the better the organization.

Were I not challenged at the time that I was touring in the South I would have been silent.

I must admit that I did not talk to those who were with me in that special train. I was buried in my work which was divided between meetings at frequent stoppages and writing whilst the train was in motion. And let the public know that those who are physically nearest me have to be so forbearing that they would not come near me and interfere with my work. Such has been the usage during my stormy life. My own children thus get the least of me. Aruna Asaf Ali came for two days to see me fresh from her hiding place and was so forbearing that she had of me only as much as she could during my walks.

Seva-gram, 15-2-'46

LIGHTER INTERLUDES

In between the heavy round of engagements in connection with the Silver Jubilee function of the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha at Madras there was a number of light interludes during Gandhiji's stay there. These had to take place during the few minutes when he walked to and back from his meetings. Thus one time there was a group of discharged Indonesian sailors who waited on Gandhiji about the same time that Van Mook had landed in Madras in the course of his air passage from Holland to Batavia. They had refused to man their posts when their ship was ordered to proceed to Batavia with personnel and cargo ostensibly meant to be used against the nationalist struggle there, and had in consequence been discharged. They wanted India's sympathy and active co-operation in their cause and complained about the use of Indian troops to suppress the Indonesians. Gandhiji told them that Indian sympathy they had already as was shown by the resolution of the Working Committee on Indonesia and the Far East. As for the use of Indian troops against them, it was as much India's and Britain's shame as their misfortune. It could be ended only by India gaining her independence, which would be the forerunner of the emancipation of all the suppressed and exploited races of the earth.

Then there was a group of discharged I. N. A. men. Gandhiji saw them for a couple of minutes as he was going to his residence. They were returning to their respective homes. They had received their training in the military academy at Tokyo. "We worked under Netaji's guidance. Whose lead should we now follow?" they asked. Gandhiji told them that they could only follow the lead of the Congress and commended to their attention Captain Shah Nawaz's statement in which he had said that whilst they had fought with arms for their country's freedom when they were outside India, they would now serve India through non-violence. "Lastly, you should remember," he told them, "that it is unbecoming the dignity of a soldier to depend on anybody's charity. As soldiers of freedom, you should earn your bread by your honest industry and disdain to look to others for support, even though you may have to suffer hardships and privations in consequence."

Lastly there was a group of Negro soldiers from West Africa. West African Negroes are perhaps the most awakened of the Africans. The experiment

of modern university education has been tried among them and has produced some brilliant though queer results. They had come to Gandhiji with a long list of questions indicative of the deep stirring in their consciousness. The first question was: "There are several religions in the world. They were all originated in foreign countries. Which one of these should Africa follow? Or should she discover her own religion? If so, how?"

"It is wrong to say," replied Gandhiji, "that all religions were originated in foreign countries. I had fairly extensive contact with Zulus and Bantus and I found that the Africans have a religion of their own, though they may not have reasoned it out for themselves. I am not referring to the rites, ceremonies and fetishes that are prevalent among African tribes but the religion of one Supreme God. You pray to that God. There are many religions, but Religion is only one. You should follow that one Religion. Foreigners might bring you Christianity. Christianity as exemplified in Europe and America today is a travesty of the teaching of Jesus. Then there are Hinduism, Islam, Zoroastrianism and so on. You should absorb the best that is in each without fettering your choice and form your own religion."

They next quoted Gandhiji's observation that to remain in slavery is beneath the dignity of man; a slave who is conscious of his state and yet does not strive to break his chains is lower than the beast. "How can a continent like Africa fight down the fetters of slavery when it is so hopelessly divided," they asked.

"I know your difficulty," replied Gandhiji. "If you think of the vast size of Africa, the distance and natural obstacles separating its various parts, the scattered condition of its people and the terrible divisions among them, the task might well appear to be hopeless. But there is a charm which can overcome all these handicaps. The moment the slave resolves that he will no longer be a slave, his fetters fall. He frees himself and shows the way to others. Freedom and slavery are mental states. Therefore, the first thing is to say to yourself: 'I shall no longer accept the role of a slave. I shall not obey orders as such but shall disobey them when they are in conflict with my conscience.' The so-called master may lash you and try to force you to serve him. You will say: 'No, I will not serve you for your money or under a threat.' This may mean suffering. Your readiness to suffer will light the torch of freedom which can never be put out."

"Africa and India both drink of the cup of slavery. What necessary steps can be taken to unite the two nations so as to present a common front?"

"You are right," replied Gandhiji. "India is not yet free and yet Indians have begun to realize that their freedom is coming, not because the white man says so but because they have developed the power within. Inasmuch as India's struggle is non-violent, it is a struggle for the emancipation of all oppressed races against superior might. I do

not propose mechanical joint action between them. 'Each one has to find his own salvation' is true of this as well as of the other world. It is enough that there is a real moral bond between Asiatics and Africans. It will grow as time passes."

"Everything immoral and deadly is attributed to Africa. What steps should be taken to eradicate the epidemic of foreign prejudice against us," was their next question.

"In so far as there is a modicum of truth in this criticism," replied Gandhiji, "it is no special prerogative of Africa. Immorality and wrong are common in all countries. But you must not allow yourselves to take refuge in self-complacency either by saying to yourself: 'Well, others are no better than we'. Many, perhaps most, of the evils that are at the back of the prejudice against Negroes are the result of nominal Christianity imported from America. They have learnt to drink, dance immoral dances and so on. Then there are evil African customs. You must eradicate these and thus disarm foreign prejudice. It is a laborious task but a joyous one. The epidemic of foreign prejudice will then die a natural death."

They wanted to know as to how they could set up depots of useful Indian books and what India could give them and how they could achieve "co-operative industrialization" in order to be saved from the terrible exploitation under which they were suffering.

"India can give you good ideas," replied Gandhiji. "It can give you books of universal worth. The commerce between India and Africa will be of ideas and services, not of manufactured goods against raw materials after the fashion of Western exploiters. Then, India can offer you the spinning wheel. If I had discovered it when I was in South Africa I would have introduced it among the Africans who were my neighbours in Phoenix. You can grow cotton, you have ample leisure and plenty of manual skill. You should study and adopt the lesson of the village crafts we are trying to revive. Therein lies the key to your salvation."

Sevagram, 8-2-'46

PYARELAL

TO SUBSCRIBERS AND AGENTS

It is not, for the present, possible for us to send Harijan by V. P. P. Hence intending subscribers are requested to send their subscriptions by M. O.

Intimation of a change of address to be effective for the week should be received by Thursday. The subscriber no. must always be quoted.

The attention of the agents is drawn to the agency term No. 1 about maintaining with us a deposit equivalent to at least the price of one month's copies required by them. This rule will be strictly observed, and the supply to its defaulters will be stopped at once.

The intimation of a change in the number of copies required by agents, to be effective, should also be received by us *before Thursday*.

MANAGER

WHAT OUGHT TO BE DONE

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Food crisis should be regarded as a certainty. In the circumstances the following things should be attended to at once:

1. Every person should confine his daily wants regarding food to the minimum, consistent with his or her health requirements; and where, as in cities, milk, vegetables, oil and fruit are available, grains and pulses should be reduced as they easily can be. Starch can be derived from starchy roots such as carrots, parsnips, potatoes, yam, bananas; the idea being to exclude from present diet and conserve those grains and pulses which can be kept and stored. Vegetables too should not be eaten as an indulgence or for pleasure when millions are denied the use of these things altogether and are now threatened with starvation due to shortage of cereals and pulses.

2. Everyone who has access to any water should try himself or herself to grow some edible for personal or general use. The easiest way to do so is to collect clean earth, mix it with organic manure where possible — even a little bit of dried cowdung is good organic manure — and put it in any earthen or tin pot and throw some seeds of vegetable such as mustard and cress etc., and daily water the pots. They will be surprised how quickly the seeds sprout and give edible leaves which need not even be cooked but can be eaten in the form of salad.

3. All flower gardens should be utilized for growing edibles. And in this connection I would suggest to the Viceroy, Governors and high officials to take the lead. I would ask the heads of agricultural departments at the Centre and Provinces to flood the country with leaflets in the provincial languages telling laymen how and what to grow easily.

4. Reduction should be taken up not merely by the civilian population but equally, if not predominantly, by the military. I say predominantly for the military ranks being under rigid military discipline can easily carry out measures of economy.

5. All exports of seeds, such as oil seeds, oils, oil cakes, nuts etc., should be stopped, if they have not been already. Oil cakes, if the seeds are sifted of earth and foreign matter, are good human food with rich protein content.

6. Deep wells should be sunk by the Government wherever possible and required, whether for irrigation or for drinking purposes.

7. Given hearty co-operation by Government servants and the general public, I have not the slightest doubt that the country can tide over the difficulty. Just as panic is the surest way to defeat, so also will be the case when there is widespread distress impending and prompt action is not taken. Let us not think of the causes of the distress. Whatever the cause, the fact is that if the Government and the public do not approach the crisis patiently and courageously, disaster is a certainty. We must fight this foreign Government on all other fronts except this one, and even on this we shall fight them if they betray callousness or contempt for reasoned public opinion. In this connection I

invite the public to share my opinion that we should accept Government professions at their face value and believe that Swaraj is within sight inside of a few months.

8. Above all, black-marketing and dishonesty should disappear altogether and willing co-operation between all parties should be the order of the day in so far as this crisis is concerned.

Sevagram, 14-2-'46

LIVING UP TO 125

(By M. K. Gandhi)

I have not talked about wishing to live up to the age of 125 years without thought. It has a deep significance. The basis for my wish is the third *mantra* from *Ishopanishad* which, literally rendered, means that a man should desire to live for 100 years while serving with detachment. One commentary says that 100 really means 125. Even today in Madras the word 'hundred' is used to mean 116. Only the other day some one presented to me what was described as Rs. 100/-, but was, on scrutiny, found to be Rs. 116/-. $100 = 99 + 1$ is not an invariable formula in our country.

Be that as it may, the meaning of 'hundred' is not necessary for my argument. My sole purpose is to indicate the condition necessary for the realization of the desire. It is service in a spirit of detachment, which means complete independence of the fruit of action. Without it one should not desire to live for 125 years. That is how I interpret the text. I have not the slightest doubt that without attaining that state of detachment, it is impossible to live to be 125 years old. Living to that age must never mean a mere life like unto death, like that of an animated corpse, a burden on one's relations and society. In such circumstances one's supreme duty would be to pray to God for early release and not for prolongation of life anyhow.

The human body is meant solely for service, never for indulgence. The secret of happy life lies in renunciation. Renunciation is life. Indulgence spells death. Therefore, everyone has a right and should desire to live 125 years while performing service without an eye on result. Such life must be wholly and solely dedicated to service. Renunciation made for the sake of such service is an ineffable joy of which none can deprive one, because that nectar springs from within and sustains life. In this there can be no room for worry or impatience. Without this joy, long life is impossible and would not be worth while even if possible.

Examination of the possibility of prolonging life to 125 years by outward means is outside the scope of this argument.

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

Sevagram, 11-2-'46

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HARIJAN

Feb. 24

1946

HOW TO CANALIZE HATRED

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Hatred is in the air and impatient lovers of the country will gladly take advantage of it, if they can, through violence, to further the cause of independence. I suggest that it is wrong at any time and everywhere. But it is more wrong and unbecoming in a country where fighters for freedom have declared to the world that their policy is truth and non-violence. Hatred, they argue, cannot be turned into love. Those who believe in violence will naturally use it by saying, 'kill your enemy, injure him and his property wherever you can, whether openly or secretly as necessity requires'. The result will be deeper hatred and counter-hatred, and vengeance let loose on both sides. The recent war, whose embers have yet hardly died, loudly proclaims the bankruptcy of this use of hatred. And it remains to be seen whether the so-called victors have really won or whether they have not depressed themselves in seeking and trying to depress their enemies. It is a bad game at its best. Some philosophers of action in this country improve upon the model and say, 'We shall never kill our enemy but we shall destroy his property'. Perhaps I do them an injustice when I call it 'his property', for the remarkable thing is that the so-called enemy has brought no property of his own and what little he has brought he makes us pay for. Therefore, what we destroy is really our own. The bulk of it, whether in men or things, he produces here. So what he really has is the custody of it. For the destruction too we have to pay through the nose and it is the innocent who are made to pay. That is the implication of punitive tax and all it carries with it. Non-violence in the sense of mere non-killing does not appear to me, therefore, to be any improvement on the technique of violence. It means slow torture and when slowness becomes ineffective we shall immediately revert to killing and to the atom bomb, which is the last word in violence today. Therefore, I suggested in 1920 the use of non-violence and its inevitable twin companion truth, for canalizing hatred into the proper channel. The hater hates not for the sake of hatred but because he wants to drive away from his country the hated being or beings. He will, therefore, as readily achieve his end by non-violent as by violent means. For the past 25 years, willingly or unwillingly, the Congress has spoken to the masses in favour of non-violence as against violence for regaining our lost liberty. We have also discovered through our progress that in the application of non-violence we have been able to reach the mass mind far more quickly and far more extensively than ever before. And yet, if truth is told as it must be, our non-violent action has been half-hearted. Many

have preached non-violence through the lips while harbouring violence in the breast. But the unsophisticated mass mind has read the secret meaning hidden in our breasts and the unconscious reaction has not been altogether as it might have been. Hypocrisy has acted as an ode to virtue, but it could never take its place. And so I plead for non-violence and yet more non-violence. I do so not without knowledge but with sixty years' experience behind me. This is the critical moment, for the dumb masses are today starving. There are many ways that will suggest themselves to the wise reader as to how to apply the canons of non-violence to the present needs of the country. The hypnotism of the I. N. A. has cast its spell upon us. Netaji's name is one to conjure with. His patriotism is second to none. (I use the present tense intentionally.) His bravery shines through all his actions. He aimed high but failed. Who has not failed? Ours is to aim high and to aim well. It is not given to everyone to command success. My praise and admiration can go no further. For I knew that his action was doomed to failure, and that I would have said so even if he had brought his I. N. A. victorious to India, because the masses would not have come into their own in this manner. The lesson that Netaji and his army brings to us is one of self-sacrifice, unity irrespective of class and community, and discipline. If our adoration will be wise and discriminating, we will rigidly copy this trinity of virtues, but we will as rigidly abjure violence. I would not have the I. N. A. man think or say that he and his can ever deliver the masses of India from bondage by force of arms. But if he is true to Netaji and still more so to the country, he will spend himself in teaching the masses, men, women and children, to be brave, self-sacrificing and united. Then we will be able to stand erect before the world. But if he will merely act the armed soldier, he will only lord it over the masses and the fact that he will be a volunteer will not count for much. I, therefore, welcome the declaration made by Capt Shah Nawaz that to be worthy of Netaji, on having come to Indian soil, he will act as a humble soldier of non-violence in Congress ranks.

Sevagram, 15-2-'46

Please Note

I have taken up 'Harijan' at such a critical moment in our country's history that having undertaken to write I cannot wait in certain matters for publishing my thoughts till the next number of 'Harijan' is out. Then too it is published not at the place where I reside but away from me. Thus exacting readers will forgive me if they find things in the columns of 'Harijan' which have already been printed in the daily press. The reason for publication is obvious. 'Harijan' goes to many readers who do not read the papers in which my statements may be published and in which, accurate publicity can never be guaranteed. 'Harijan' is not a commercial concern in any meaning of the expression. It is published purely in the interest of the cause of India's independence.

Sevagram, 15-2-'46

M. K. G.

OH! FOR OUR ENGLISH!!!

(By M. K. Gandhi)

How nice it would be if we had newspapers only in our own languages. We would not then be blind persons, one mistaking the tail for the elephant, another the tusks, a third the trunk, for the noble animal, — all wise in their own conceit, yet all wrong in essence. Thus, I, in my conceit, said and still say that the opposition to Rajaji was and is confined to a clique. An esteemed friend and others maintain that I have made a serious blunder in calling the opposition by this name. My appellation cannot be and was not meant to be applied to the Congress organization, whether provincial, central or any other, which, like the king, can do no wrong. A clique generally does the wrong thing. But surely both my critics and I are right, each in our own way, and both are wrong. All this bother over the use of a foreign word! If I had written in the national or my mother-tongue, we would not have quarrelled over a word. Only let me close the Rajaji episode by saying that if I am wrong in the use of the word or in my estimate of Rajaji, no one need follow me. I have no official authority. The loss will be purely mine in that, for a wrong estimate, I shall have lost much or some of the moral weight I possess.

My purpose, however, just now is to quarrel with the reporter who, in trying to translate my Hindustani speech at the Goseva Sangh meeting into English, has made me say the opposite of what I had said and meant. A handsome and delicate compliment has been turned into an indelicate reflection. There was no 'if' about my saying that Janakibai, the widow of the late Jamanalaji, was the rightful first successor of her late husband, even as the late Ramabai was of her late husband Justice Ranade. Next to her were his children. They might fail, but those of us who had gathered together to honour the memory of the deceased were also heirs, only if we were true. We were heirs by choice unlike the heirs through relationship. I am sure that the delicate compliment I paid in my indifferent Hindustani was not lost upon the widow, the children who are all working for the cause, or the number of friends who filled the pandal which was specially constructed for the purpose. All were heirs in a common and noble service which constituted a limitless inheritance. I prided myself on the message which was altogether lost in transmission through a foreign medium. Could it have been reported and transmitted in Hindustani, it would have gone home to the readers.

I have not been able to read the whole report. Let me therefore complete it by briefly stating the other two thoughts I placed before the meeting. Cattle preservation was one of the major problems of India. It was not to be solved by speeches or money. It could only be solved by the Goseva Sangh possessing many cattle experts who understood and gave themselves to the problem and by the mercantile community doing its work in the spirit of service rather than in the spirit of self-aggrandizement and exploitation. If they applied their undoubted talent

to cattle preservation, they could render great service to India. They need not be overwhelmed by the vastness of the problem. Each one was to think what he could do and do it thoroughly, irrespective of his neighbour or others. Therefore, the central body was to concentrate on producing milk and bringing milk cheaply to every inhabitant of Wardha. In the end they would discover that they had solved the cattle problem for India.

Lastly, I asked them to bear in mind Aruna Asaf Ali's well-meant taunt that in thinking of their benefactor, the four-footed animal they might not forget their elder friend, the biped of India, who made up the forty crores and without whom cattle could not exist for one day. Therefore, every honest man owed it to himself and the country only to eat what he must for living healthily and not a morsel for indulgence. Every man, woman and child of understanding should try to grow for the use of India two blades of grass where today only one was growing. If they worked intelligently, honestly and co-operatively in hope, they would find that they could tide over the impending calamity without fuss, without anxiety and with dignified bearing.

Bombay, 18-2-'46

QUESTION BOX

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Q. It is necessary to import as many foodstuffs as possible. As it is, people do not get enough to eat. Any further reduction in rations is fraught with risk. It will mean further under-nourishment, making the people an easy prey to disease. It may even lead to food riots. As for increasing production, it is most difficult, if not utterly impossible, at the present juncture.

A. I am aware that many people hold the views given above. But the argument does not impress me. People will find it unbearable to have their rations further reduced when they are already not getting enough to eat. But if we accept, as I do, that the Government figures are correct, foresight demands, and it is our duty, to swallow the bitter pill and ask the people to do likewise, i. e., we should all eat less so that we can hold out till the next harvest. Today, because of the corrupt administration, the masses do not even get their just dues under the rationing system. It will be a great thing if this can be rectified, so that everyone can get his or her share easily and truly. If, however, we believe the Government figures to be wrong and continue the agitation for increased rations and if the Government concedes that demand, a time will come before the next harvest is in when we shall be left without any food whatsoever and the poor will have to die an untimely death. We should take every care to avoid such a calamity. It will, therefore, be wisdom on our part to put up with a reduction in the present rations.

Then, I do not think it is impossible to grow more foodstuffs, though I agree that it is difficult. The difficulty is due to our lack of knowledge and the requisite skill. If we are all optimistic and courageous and employ ourselves forthwith to produce whatever

food we can by our individual effort, we shall probably be able before long to give the people a balanced diet and shorten the period of reduced rations.

My optimism is irrepressible, but I admit that nothing will be possible without whole-hearted co-operation on the part of both the Government and the public. Without it, even the imported foodstuffs may be squandered and maldistributed. Besides, we are not yet independent. Relying on outside help will make us still more dependent. If, however, without relying on them, we do get imports of foodstuffs, we shall gratefully accept and make the best use of them. While it is the duty of the Government to try to get food from outside, I do not think it is good for us to look either to them or to other countries. What is more, disappointment from that direction will be positively harmful for the morale of our people in these hard times. But if the people become united and determined to look to none save God for help and do not oppose such Governmental measures as they find useful, there will be no cause for disappointment. Such action will enable the people to emerge stronger from the ordeal and foreign countries will think of their duty to send us food of their own accord wherever they can spare it. God helps those who help themselves. How can others withhold help from the self-reliant? The British Government, during their hour of need, took away all that India had and today we have to put up with the consequences of their action. Need we then tell them and those whom they helped by depleting India's resources that their duty today is towards India?

Q. India does not produce enough cotton. This has to be imported from Africa and America. Peasants are not allowed to grow cotton, the reason given being that they should grow more food.

A. This cannot apply to those who grow cotton for their own use. It can only be applicable in the case of those who grow cotton as a money crop. The Government has committed the crime of making cotton a commercial commodity. This sin cannot be wiped out by importing cotton. That can only aggravate the wrong. The export of cotton was made solely for the benefit of Lancashire. It thus became a commercial commodity in an artificial manner. I can understand the prohibition against growing large quantities during war of cotton in certain areas in the interests of food production. To prohibit the growing of cotton altogether and depend on imports for our needs is no remedy for food scarcity. Wherever possible, people should grow cotton for their own use. I might understand and even tolerate the policy of importing cotton for the use of Indian cloth mills. But if this policy prohibits the growing of cotton for the individual's own use, it becomes wholly untenable and must, therefore, be strongly resisted. This is a matter for the consideration of both the Government and the public.

Sevagram, 16-2-46

(From Harijanbandhu)

THE LEPROSY PROBLEM

First, the problem in leprosy is one of educating not only the common people, but the leaders of society, the administrators, the legislators, and sometimes even medical men and public health authorities, in the modern view of the disease. Leprosy is an ordinary disease, sometimes infective but not fearful or worthy of reproach. Not all leprosy is infective. Even when it is so, it is infective only in close and prolonged contact and that too to children primarily. Leprosy is not hereditary. It is not venereal in origin. It is capable of control and arrest if patients would take early and persistent treatment. But the patients would come early for treatment only when the public understand that there is no shame attached to the disease. Moreover, doctors should acquire the modern knowledge about leprosy and do their best for the patients.

Leprosy, however, is more easily prevented than cured. Prevention in leprosy is nothing more than the prevention of close contact between children and infective cases. In Norway they controlled leprosy mainly by preventing children from living with infective cases. 'Isolation' or 'segregation' with reference to leprosy only means the avoidance of close and prolonged contact with infective cases, primarily by children. Rigid segregation puts early cases in hiding. Every case has to be decided on its merits. There are cases which need to be sent to a sanatorium for treatment and isolation; even here the aim must be to keep the patient in useful work and return him to society as a useful person.

In our land leprosy is largely a rural problem. For though it is not a disease of all villages there are many villages with a high incidence. We cannot and should not banish all the patients to settlements. The old notion that the leprosy patient needs an asylum for life should be abandoned. Near Madurantakam we have an experiment of segregating infective cases during nights only in huts on the outskirts of the villages. By day the patients work in the fields; by night they sleep in the segregation area. The children are protected and the patient retains earning capacity. By a sympathetic approach we should help patients to learn to live in the villages and do their work without being a danger to children. We want in India cheap and humane segregation.

There is a spiritual aspect of the problem which ought to stir us deeply. A case of leprosy is also a cause. He or she belongs to an oppressed class. To remove that sum of avoidable human misery which the leprosy patient has to endure, we should remove the ignorance and prejudice which are the cause of it. This can best be done by a number of brave and humane people coming forward to answer the challenge to fellowship which leprosy throws. Such an answer Father Damien made in his time and thereby did more for leprosy than all the acts and grants of Parliament could. We can now make a similar answer without running the risk that the good Father so nobly ran.

Lastly, leprosy work can be made a lever with which to raise the general level of our villages.

For leprosy goes to the root of the problem of human suffering. Any set of workers who help to relieve the leprosy situation will inevitably face the whole cycle of social and economic questions. It is also true that leprosy work gains immeasurably by being part of the Constructive Programme. It can help to remove the leprosy patient off the charity list and to give him the dignity of self-support. In the *Kasturba Gandhi Kushtaroga Nivarana Nilayam* we hope to make the women and children spin their way to self-respect. The economic problem in leprosy is that of creating men and women of value. The psychological problem is one of persuading people that it can be done. I see in the Constructive Programme a solution to the problem. T. N. JAGDISAN

Notes

Purses for Public Men

An interesting case of the use of purses presented to a public person has recently come under my observation. I receive many purses from the public. Thus, during my recent tour, donations covering over two lakhs were given to me between Calcutta, and Madura. Some of them were anonymous, some ear-marked, and some donors said, when asked, that I was to use the money in any manner I liked. I have kept no property which I can call my own. Am I entitled to use those donations or a part of them for personal needs? During the whole of my career I have never made any such use and have always advised friends to do likewise. I hold that there is no other course open to persons who enjoy public confidence and to whom the public give donations, fully believing that the money will be used more judiciously and carefully than by themselves for some public purpose. It would be a terrible thing if the trust reposed in one were abused for personal purposes. Ruinous consequences of such use can be better imagined than described. Public service must be, like Cæsar's wife, above suspicion.

Bombay, 19-2-'46

Ignorant Waste

Shri Jhaverbhai Patel of A. I. V. I. A., who knows his subject, writes:

"Since the cutting off of the supply of rice from Burma there has been an acute shortage of rice in India. To meet this quantitative deficiency Government prohibited the polishing of rice beyond a certain degree. If polishing had been banned altogether the deficiency caused by the supply of rice from Burma being cut off would have been more than met. The import of Burma rice came to only about 5 per cent of Indian production, while the loss entailed in polishing rice came to 10 per cent. But Government could not introduce that measure partly because it is difficult to make violent changes in the habit of the people and partly because the present government is not in a position to create and carry public opinion with it. But what is more, even the halting step taken by the Government has been put to naught without the intelligent co-operation of the people. Since the Government has begun supplying undermilled rice, consumers have begun getting the rationed rice polished. I have

recently seen in Gujarat that the pounding of rice on wages by the women of the *Gola* caste from door to door has become a regular system. There has also been a brisk sale of wooden pestles for use by families. In big cities like Bombay, where space does not permit the use of wooden mortars and pestles, women use the handy iron pestles and mortars. The average quantity of rice reduced in getting it polished in wooden mortars comes to about 5 per cent, while there is no limit to this reduction in the case of iron mortars, the loss sometimes being as high as 30 per cent. There may hardly be a few families who may be eating rice as it is rationed out. The result is worse than the regular supply of polished rice.

"The most effective way to get whole rice find its permanent way into our dietary is to teach our womenfolk the science of dietetics."

It is very true that this peremptory reform can be brought about quickly by educating our women in the art of conservative cookery. How this education can be imparted is a serious question. Schools and colleges are perhaps the most ready-made media, let alone the press and the platform. If the people are to save themselves and the starving millions, during this critical period the press and the platform have to respond to the urgent need.

Sevagram, 17-2-'46

M. K. G.

Wasteful

Wherever he goes, apart from the unrestrained greetings he gets from the crowds, Gandhiji also receives endless gifts in money and in kind. His greed can never be satiated! The demands on the money entrusted to him increase with time. The accurate sorting and counting of the money is a herculean task and takes hours of the time of those in charge of this department.

Gifts in kind make accommodation for the travellers more and more cramped as the journey progresses. The yarn and cloth given is always more than welcome. There is endless need for Khadi for Gandhiji's growing family of individuals and institutions who cannot pay in yarn. But there are certain gifts in kind, such as models of spinning wheels made in gold and silver and a number of useless metal and wooden goods, which are difficult to dispose of and the presentation of which should be discouraged. The cost of workmanship entailed in a gold spinning wheel is, perhaps, more than the metal involved. It would be better to give money rather than such gifts. Apart from yarn and cloth, only a really rare specimen of village craftsmanship or ancient art, or jewellery which women may feel spontaneously called upon to offer Gandhiji, should form the exception.

Another type of gift that needs to be discouraged is bad paintings or photographs or bad statuettes in wood, silver, gold, ivory or glass, of Gandhiji himself. They are inartistic. Nor should artists or others expect Gandhiji to put his signature to bad likenesses of him. It is unwise to encourage a low standard of production in any sphere. And it is easy for the public to procure good photographs.

On the train to Madras, 4-2-'46

A. K.

WEEKLY LETTER

Crowds are Gandhiji's pet study. Child-like, erratic, wayward, they can sometimes be vicious too like a caged animal when worried. Gandhiji has had sometimes to be protected against their unthinking adoration. But he can never put them off any more than a mother can her wayward child.

Now that freedom is at hand the education and disciplining of the crowds have become a matter of supreme importance. "How will the millions react to the first shock of freedom," is the question that continues to exercise Gandhiji's mind. Does their upwelling enthusiasm and devotion spell non-violence or violence? Unless they are properly organized and trained in the non-violent spirit they will not be able to make much of freedom and it might even prove to be a questionable boon. He turned his recent train journey from Calcutta to Madras into a tour for the inspection and study of crowd behaviour.

As is well known Gandhiji has a particularly soft corner for Orissa, the "orphan child" of Mother India. The organizers of the journey had decided not to have any stoppages during the night. But Gandhiji particularly asked the train to be stopped at certain stations in Orissa. Cuttack was reached at about midnight. A large crowd had gathered there and Gandhiji was taken out to address them. What he met there hurt him deeply. There was noise and confusion. He poured out his anguish to them. It had cut him to the quick, he said, that Orissa which he had loved so fondly and through which he had made his Harijan pilgrimage on foot should belie his expectations. Was this their non-violence or did they imagine that freedom would be won or kept through indiscipline and hooliganism? They were living in a fool's paradise if they did. Was it not ridiculous to pit indiscipline and hooliganism against the atom bomb which was the ultimate of brute force? It was time that they made up their mind as to their choice between the two paths. They were at liberty to scrap non-violence if they felt that it was a played-out force. But if they were thinking of violence while they professed non-violence, they would be guilty of deception and fraud upon themselves and the world. "I do not want your cheers of welcome, nor your money during these stoppages," he remarked. "But I want you to purge yourselves of the lie in the soul. That will please me more than your gifts, the noises never will and never have."

Berhampur, however, made some amends for Cuttack. The crowds continued to surge at all the stoppages during the rest of the journey. Day journey began at Waltair. It was a sight and a revelation to see monster crowds that had walked long distances and had been braving the inclemencies of weather with uncalculating devotion. They poured out their coppers into Gandhiji's beggar's bowl unstintedly for the service of the Harijan cause. The counting of collections occupied Kanu Gandhi and his batch

of 40 tellers for the better part of two days and nights at Madras. It included 3,895 currency notes and 54,608 coins, the total amount collected during the journey being Rs. 55,071-7-3

(To be continued)

Sevagram, 16-2-'46

PYARELAL

MEANING OF GOD

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A correspondent writes:

"I am reading your "Gita Bodh" these days and trying to understand it. I am puzzled by what Lord Krishna says in the 10th discourse, "In dicer's play I am the conquering double eight. Nothing, either good or evil, can take place in this world without my will." Does God then prevent evil? If so, how can He punish the evil-doer? Has God created the world for this purpose? Is it impossible then for mankind to live in peace?"

To say that God permits evil in this world may not be pleasing to the ear. But if He is held responsible for the good, it follows that He has to be responsible for the evil too. Did not God permit Ravana to exhibit unparalleled strength? Perhaps, the root cause of the perplexity arises from a lack of the real understanding of what God is. God is not a person. He transcends description. He is the Law-maker, the Law and the Executor. No human being can well arrogate these powers to himself. If he did, he would be looked upon as an unadulterated dictator. They become only Him whom we worship as God. This is the reality, a clear understanding of which will answer the question raised by the correspondent.

The question whether it is impossible for mankind ever to be at peace with one another does not arise from the verse quoted. The world will live in peace only when the individuals composing it make up their minds to do so. No one can deny the possibility nor say when that will come to pass. Such questions are idle waste of time. To a good man, the whole world is good. By following this golden rule the correspondent can live in peace under all circumstances, believing that what is possible for him to be is also possible for others. To believe the contrary connotes pride and arrogance.

Sevagram, 16-2-'46

(From Harijanbandhu)

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