

# HARIJAN

Editor: PYARELAL

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TWO ANNAS

## 'ALL ABOUT BHANDARS'

(By M. K. Gandhi)

An article under the above caption appeared in the *Khadi Patrika* of 3rd June. As it is important I give it in full below:

"It is our intention to make rapid changes in the running of our 'bhandars'. In spite of the condition of yarn currency attaching to the sales of Khadi, Bombay people have not yet taken to spinning. Most of the yarn given in exchange for cloth is bought. From the 1st of July, we shall give only Rs. 2 worth of Khadi for one hank and, as a result, the sales of Khadi will go down. One of the main reasons for Khadi sales is that mill cloth is rationed. Many persons who ordinarily wear mill cloth are almost forced, as it were, to buy Khadi. We take a statement from every customer as to whether the yarn given in is self-spun or spun by a member of the family or staff. But we have regretfully to admit that many customers do not appreciate their responsibility in the matter of making accurate statements. This irresponsible attitude is not in the best interests of Khadi. Khadi-production aims at self-sufficiency of village India. Other provinces will, therefore, now provide less and less cloth to our bhandars. The use of the words 'sale of Khadi' is really inconsistent with the ideal. In the circumstances it is imperative for us to make timely changes in the running of bhandars. From July 1st we are closing two branches in Matunga and Dadar. For the last three months we have been giving training in Matunga in all the processes of Khadi. In Dadar, there was some sale of Khadi too, but these activities must now come to an end. In Girgaum, in the Khadi Printing Shop, the A. I. S. A. was running a training centre too. This shop will now be handed back to the trustees of the Khadi Printing Shop who will continue to give instruction in all the processes of Khadi as well as arrange for some sales.

"The reduction of work involves dispensing with the services of fifteen workers.

"Ever since the new policy came into vogue, Gandhiji has been saying that the make-up of the bhandars must be changed. In order to fall into line we arranged facilities for teaching and weaving in some places but such outward changes have not connoted the real change. We felt that a change in our mental outlook is what was most needed. Therefore, examination of workers and such other reforms came into force.

"Nevertheless all the changes mentioned above have not enabled us to gain our object. At the time when customers looked upon Khadi as being in the fashion, bhandars were purely commercial depots. Today the bhandar desires to bring about a change in the mentality of the Khadi wearer. It no longer desires to remain a sales depot. It desires to become a centre for imparting knowledge in all the processes of Khadi manufacture. It desires to become a centre of attraction for weavers and other craftsmen. To this end we must continue undeterred to bring about the necessary changes and *pari passu* change the outlook of Bombay Khadi wearers. Then only will bhandars reflect the reality. We expect the customers of Bombay to remain loyal to us in our endeavour."

Readers will note that the success of the purpose, as expressed in the article, rests on the faith, intelligence and capability of the workers.

Bombay, 6-7-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

## WEEKLY LETTER

### A NEW SUPERSTITION?

"Am I propagating a new variety of superstition?" asked Gandhiji in the course of one of his recent prayer discourses at Poona. "God is not a person. He is the all-pervading, all-powerful spirit. Anyone who bears Him in his heart has accession of a marvellous force of energy comparable in its results to physical forces like steam or electricity, but much more subtle." *Ramanama* was not like black magic. It had to be taken with all that it symbolized. He likened it to a mathematical formula which sums up in brief the results of endless research and experimentation. Mere mechanical repetition of *Ramanama* could not give strength. For that, one had to understand and live up to the conditions attaching to its recitation. To take God's name one must live a Godly life.

### A PORTENT

South African Satyagraha is a sign and a portent. As Pandit Jawaharlalji remarked the other day in the A. I. C. C. meeting, it may be that the future of India is even now being decided by the struggle of the Indians overseas, particularly in South Africa. Lynch law has already claimed its first victim. Commenting on the doings of the White hooligans who were said to have beaten to death an Indian, whom they mistook for a Satyagrahi, Gandhiji remarked, "It is a sad event. Nevertheless, I feel happy. A Satyagrahi must always be ready to die with a smile on his



face without retaliation and without rancour in his heart. Some people have come to have a wrong notion that Satyagraha means only jail going, perhaps facing lathi blows and nothing more. Such Satyagraha cannot bring Independence. To win Independence you have to learn the art of dying without killing."

Indians in South Africa are a mere handful in the midst of the overwhelming majority of the Whites and the Negroes. The Whites in the intoxication of power had not only enacted a barbarous measure but had taken the law in their own hands. The excuse trotted out for that infamous measure was that it was necessary for saving the White civilization from being swamped by the rising tide of colour. "I venture to submit," remarked Gandhiji commenting on this, "that a civilization which needs such barbarous legislation for its protection is a contradiction in terms. The Indians are fighting for their honour. The land in South Africa does not belong to the Whites. Land belongs to one who labours on it. I would not shed a single tear if all the Satyagrahis in South Africa are wiped out. Thereby they will not only bring deliverance to themselves but point the way to the Negroes and vindicate the honour of India. I am proud of them and so should be you." His object in speaking to them, he continued, was not to move them to tears or to incite them to anger and vituperation against the Whites. Rather they should pray to God to guide the Whites aright and grant strength and courage to their brethren to remain steadfast to the end.

#### SOME HIGHLIGHTS

The way in which the courage and renunciation of the Satyagrahis is rising to the occasion would make the heart of an Indian dilate with pride. Dr. Goonam, a woman passive resister, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment with hard labour. The trying magistrate reduced her sentence by four months. She objected to it saying that she wanted no favour on the score of her sex. Her offence, if it could be so called, was the same as that of men Satyagrahis. But the magistrate would not listen to her objection. Young Sorabjee who was recently here as the head of the South African Delegation has also gone to prison. A worthy son of a worthy father, the late Parsi Rustomji, he distinguished himself by his unusual courage even as a young lad of sixteen in the course of the Satyagraha movement which was conducted by Gandhiji in South Africa. A mounted White man threatened to overrun the passive resisters. Sorabjee held the reins of the horse and told the horseman that he could not frighten the Satyagrahis into submission by such tactics. His pluck averted an ugly situation.

It is gratifying too to find that there is at least one White man in South Africa, Rev. Scott of Johannesburg whose Christian conscience has revolted against the inequity of the colour bar and the ill-treatment to which the passive resisters are being subjected there. As a protest against it he has joined the ranks of the passive resisters and has gone

to the only fit place, in the words of Thoreau, for a just man under an unjust government, namely prison. "It is no small thing," remarked Gandhiji, in paying him a glowing tribute, "for a White man to identify himself with the coloured people in South Africa. If the Satyagrahis remain firm and non-violent till the end, all will be well with them."

"The South African struggle may appear to be insignificant today," remarked Gandhiji in the A.I.C.C. meeting at Bombay, "but it is charged with momentous consequences. Satyagraha is today being tried in the land of its birth. The success of a handful of Indians mostly descendants of indentured labourers had excited the jealousy of the Whites of South Africa. And they are now subjecting them to unspeakable indignities. They are sought to be segregated into ghettos and further humiliated by being offered an inferior franchise. That all this should happen under the imprimatur of Field Marshal Smuts fills me with shame and humiliation. Our sins have a strange way of coming home to roost. We turned a portion of ourselves into *pariahs* and today the Whites of South Africa are doing the same to our compatriots there. Let us purge ourselves of this curse and bless the heroic struggle of our brethren in South Africa. They do not need our monetary help. But they need all our sympathy and moral support."

#### THE MOTE AND THE BEAM

Even while he was uttering these words in the A. I. C. C., his mind was filled with what he had seen and observed on the day before in the Harijan chawl from which he had driven to the A. I. C. C. meeting. Owing to rainy weather the prayer gathering was held in the Labour Welfare Hall that was built by the Congress Ministry in 1941. At the end of the prayer on the 6th, he asked how many Harijans were present in the hall. Not a hand went up. It was a great disappointment for him. He had come to live in Harijan quarters because he had become a *bhangi*. But not to talk of *bhangis*, there was no Harijan there. "I blame you and not those who are absent," he said addressing the gathering. "The reason for their absence is that the so-called caste Hindus have kept down the so-called untouchables for ages and that too in the name of religion. This hall is meant for the use of the Harijans. Non-Harijans can come only by grace. Let those who come here make it a point of bringing with them at least one Harijan each." If they befriended the Harijans, he told them, untouchability would disappear in the twinkling of an eye. But he was grieved to find that they had not really done so. There were Harijan barristers and lawyers. Even today they could not live in the bungalows on Malabar Hill, for instance. There was a Harijan volunteer girl working in his camp. She was studying in B. A. There was nothing in her appearance to distinguish her from other girls. Why should the knowledge that she was a Harijan cause her to be treated differently from other girls?



He was embarrassed, he observed, by the care and attention that was being lavished on him by those who were in charge of the management of the camp. Yet he was finding his stay very taxing. There was so much dirt and filth about the place. Dr. Dinshah had told him that the lavatories were so dirty that he could not use them. There were so many flies about the place that he was afraid lest he (Gandhiji) might catch some infection and get ill. He himself, said Gandhiji, was not worried about that. Although the two doctors with him looked after him, he did not depend on anyone except God. The Almighty would take care of his health. But his companions did not have that faith in God. He was anxious for them. He himself had been given a good, clean lavatory but all the party could not use it. He had been thinking that if he came here again he should stay there all by himself. He was occupying the house of the overseer. He had been wondering why the overseer and those in charge of the sanitation, i. e. the Municipality and the P. W. D. put up with all that filth. What was the use of his coming and taying there if it could not induce them to make the place healthy and hygienic?

#### A CASE FOR SATYAGRAHA

He followed up his remarks by deputing Drs. Sushila Nayyar and Dinshah Mehta to inspect the chawls and report. The filth and dirt which they saw there was unbearable. In several places the drain pipes were choked with the result that they did not function properly. In other places the drains overhead were leaking to the discomfort of those living below. There was grave scarcity of water. Except for two or three hours during the day, the taps were not running. Flushes did not work. No wonder the latrines were indescribably filthy. It was a wonder to him, remarked Gandhiji, that under such conditions anyone could use them at all. The arrangements for collection and disposal of refuse were most unsatisfactory. The open refuse bins emitted a foul smell. The overcrowding in the chawls was appalling. "It is the duty of those in authority to improve the sanitary conditions of the chawls," remarked Gandhiji in the last prayer gathering which he addressed in Bombay. "And if the Municipality fails in its duty, it is the right of the people to demand redress even by offering Satyagraha. The owners of the chawls and the overseers and the managing staff should all do their utmost to rectify the wrong."

He felt ashamed and hurt to find too that his residence was being guarded by the police day and night. It should be a matter of shame for them also, he said. They should tell the police that he was their charge and that they would look after him. The Harijans had a cause to feel bitter against "Caste Hindus" and therefore against him too, though he had become a *bhangi*. If they were angry with him and visited their anger upon him, he would feel no rancour against them. He had been doing his utmost to explain to the "Caste Hindus" and to the Harijans their respective duties. The Harijans

however could well feel bitter against him because with all his efforts, untouchability had not disappeared root and branch. When he came again, he concluded, he would expect to find cleanliness all round and not merely in his rooms. And he would like to do without police protection. He had no desire to become a burden to them, the dwellers in the chawls.

#### FALLEN FROM GRACE

Ahmedabad, the pride of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, where he had rendered yeoman service to the Municipality has fallen from grace. Hindus and Muslims had lived always together in peace there. But madness seems to have seized its inhabitants of late. It has distressed Gandhiji beyond measure. "Hindus and Muslims of Ahmedabad seem to be dehumanized," he observed in one of his prayer addresses. All the deaths in Ahmedabad were not the result of stabbing and the like. It was a shame that they should have to take the help of the police and the military to prevent them from flying at each other's throats. If one side ceased to retaliate, the riots would not go on. What did it matter if even a few lakhs were killed in the right manner out of the 40 crores of India? If they could learn the lesson of dying without killing, India, which was celebrated in legend and history as *Karmabhoomi* — the land of duty — would become a virtual Eden — the image of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

He had told Shri Morarji Desai, the Home Minister, who had seen him before proceeding to Ahmedabad that he must go to meet the flames under the sole protection of God, not that of the police or the military. If need be, he must perish in the flames in the attempt to quell them as the late Shri Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had done. Shri Morarji had invited the representatives of Muslims, Hindus and others to a joint conference at Ahmedabad and had told them that he was prepared to withdraw the police and the military if they so desired. But the latter had unanimously replied that they were not prepared to take the risk. The result was that the police and the military remained there. "The disturbances have been arrested," remarked Gandhiji in agony "but the peace that is seen in Ahmedabad today is the peace of the grave. It is not something of which one can be proud. How I wish that both the Hindus and the Muslims would combine and dispense with the help of the police and the military for purposes of keeping them from mutual fight." He warned them that so long as they depended upon the help of the police and the military for maintaining law and order, real independence must remain mere idle talk.

Poona, 9-7-46

PYARELAL

By M. K. Gandhi

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# HARIJAN

July 14

1946

## THE REAL DANGER

(By M. K. Gandhi)

As during the two days of the session of the A. I. C. C. in Bombay I listened to some of the spirited speeches against the Working Committee's resolution submitted to the A. I. C. C. for ratification, I could not subscribe to the dangers portrayed by the opposition. No confirmed Satyagrahi is dismayed by the dangers, seen or unseen, from his opponent's side. What he must fear, as every army must, is the danger from within.

Opposition, however eloquent it may be, will defeat its purpose if it is not well informed, balanced and well-based and does not promise action and result more attractive than what is opposed. Let the opposition at the late meeting answer.

My purpose here is merely to point out the danger from within. The first in importance is laziness of mind and body. This comes out of the smug satisfaction that Congressmen having suffered imprisonment have nothing more to do to win freedom and that a grateful organization should reward their service by giving them first preference in the matter of elections and offices. And so, there is an unseemly and vulgar competition for gaining what are described as prize posts. Here there is a double fallacy. Nothing should be considered a prize in the Congress dictionary and imprisonment is its own reward. It is the preliminary examination of a Satyagrahi. Its goal is the slaughter house even as that of the spotless lamb. Jail going is, instead, being used as a passport to every office accessible to the Congress. Hence there is every prospect of Satyagrahi imprisonment becoming a degrading occupation like that of professional thieves and robbers. No wonder my friends of the underground variety avoid imprisonment as being comparatively a bed of roses. This is a pointer to the pass the Congress is coming to.

The friends who opposed the resolution on the British Cabinet Delegation's proposal do not seem to know what they are aiming at. Is independence to be bought at the price of a bloody revolution as was, say, the French, the Soviet or even the English? Then frank and honest work has yet to begin. They have to tread a very dangerous path in openly making the Congress such an institution. My argument has no force if subterranean activity is a doctrine of universal application and is now being employed against the Congress. The very thought repels me. I should hope for the sake of my own sanity that the thought is devoid of any foundation. Then it is clearly their duty to say to the Congressmen that now that there is Congress Raj or Representative Raj, whether of the Congress variety or the Muslim League, they must set about reforming

it in detail and not condemn it *in toto*. Total non-violent non-cooperation has no place in popular Raj, whatever its level may be.

Who is responsible for the mad orgy in Madura and, coming nearer in Ahmedabad? It will be folly to attribute everything evil to British machinations. This senseless theory will perpetuate foreign domination, not necessarily British. The British will go in any case. They want to go in an orderly manner as is evident to me from the State Paper or they will go and leave India to her own fate assuming that India has forsaken the path of non-violence with the certain result of a combined intervention of an assortment of armed powers. Let the opposition say to Congressmen what kind of independence they want. Congressmen in general certainly do not know the kind of independence they want. They recite the formula almost parrot-like. Or, their notion of independence is fully expressed in saying that they mean by it Congress Raj. And they won't be wrong. They have left further thinking to the Working Committee — a most undemocratic way. In true democracy every man and woman is taught to think for himself or herself. How this real revolution can be brought about I do not know except that every reform like charity must begin at home.

If then the Constituent Assembly fizzles out, it will not be because the British are wicked every time. It will be because we are fools or, shall I say, even wicked? Whether we are fools or wicked or both, I am quite clear that we must look for danger from within, not fear the danger from without. The first corrodes the soul, the second polishes.

Bombay, 9-7-'46

## SUCCESS OF THE NEW TEAM

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The success of the new team depends as much upon the manner in which it carries out the work as upon the manners of the old. If new team breaks with the old, it is bound to fail even like a son who repudiates the inheritance left by his father. It is also bound to fail if those who have retired do not help their successors in every possible way. They were selected by Maulana Saheb not in order to give them importance but by reason of their services in their own provinces. A servant does not cease to be a servant when he gives place to another for the sake of accession of new blood or some other similar and cogent reason. It is to be hoped therefore that the old ones will give the new ones the full benefit of their experience.

The most striking change is the retirement of the General Secretary who had held the post for an unbroken period of ten years. His help will be required constantly by his successors who are new to the office and new members of the Working Committee. I know they will get all the help they need from Acharya Kripalani. It is a good thing a woman fills for the first time in the history of the Congress the post of General Secretary. Shrimati Mridula Sarabhai was one of the pupils of Acharya Kripalani in the initial stage of the career of the



Gujarat Vidyapith. Therefore, she will have full guidance from her *acharya* in the difficult task to which she is called.

To those to whom the change may give cause for misgivings, I would say that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru himself makes a fine and stable bridge between the old and the new, assisted as he will be by some of the ablest members of the old team. No one need therefore entertain any fear of a break with the past. A healthy circulation is as necessary for the body politic as for the individual. Poona, 10-7-'46

### A. I. C. C. RESOLUTION

The All India Congress Committee has passed the following resolution about Satyagraha in South Africa at its meeting held at Bombay, on 6-7-'46.

This meeting of the All India Congress Committee, while it is grieved that it has become imperative for the Indian settlers in South Africa once more to offer Satyagraha in the land of its birth against a law imposing on them a colour bar more sinister than the one against which they had put up a brave fight between 1907 and 1914, congratulates the handful of Satyagrahis on their brave but unequal action against heavy odds.

This meeting is pleased to find that doctors and such other men and women are at the head of the gallant struggle and that among them are represented Parsis, Christians, Muslims and Hindus. This meeting is also pleased to find that a few White men like Rev. Scott have thrown in their lot with the Satyagrahis. This meeting condemns the action of some White men in resorting to the barbarous method known as Lynch Law to terrorize the Satyagrahis into submission to the humiliating legislation.

It is worthy of note that a large part of the Indians are born and bred up in South Africa and to whom India exists only in their imagination. These colonial-born Indians have adopted European manners and customs and English has become like their mother-tongue.

This meeting notes with great satisfaction that the Indian resisters are keeping their struggle free from violence in any shape or form and conducting it with dignity and without rancour and that they are suffering not only for their self-respect but for the honour of India and by their heroic resistance have set a noble example to all the exploited peoples of the earth. This meeting assures the Indian settlers in South Africa, India's full support in this unequal struggle and is firmly of opinion that persistence in it is bound to crown their effort with success.

This meeting appeals to his Excellency the Viceroy to use all his endeavour and to ensure the support of the British Government in aid of this struggle and invites the European residents of India to raise their voice in protest against White hooliganism and anti-Asiatic and anti-colour legislation in South Africa.

## DISTINCTION BETWEEN HINDI AND URDU

(By M. K. Gandhi)

I know Shri Ram Naresh Tripathi fairly well. He came to see me in Mussooree one day and I was quite prepared for him to reproach me for my propaganda in favour of Hindustani. Contrary to my expectation he did exactly the opposite. He was of opinion that if I cherished the hope that true Hindustani would be born of a proper mixture of Hindi and Urdu, I would derive greater help in this endeavour from Urdu, provided I realized that, just as in the case of present-day Hindi and Urdu, wrong attempts are being made to clothe the language in an unnatural garb, the former in Sanskritic and the latter in Arabic or Persian. Similarly, it will be wrong to mutilate original Urdu. With this proviso there was every hope of Hindustani becoming a live language. I asked him to give me some concrete examples so that I might clearly understand his meaning. There was a pause and apparently it seemed difficult for him to do so on the spur of the moment. I, therefore, requested him to send me something illustrative in writing. The result is the following:

"You asked me to show you in writing the difference in mould between Hindi and Urdu. But it seems to me that this can really best be defined by intimate experience. No number of stray examples would answer the purpose. I have, however, one suggestion to offer. If you were to ask two knowledgeable persons to translate a paragraph of any of your English articles in 'Harijan' in simple Hindi and simple Urdu, you would at once see the difference.

"The day I met you I gave it as my opinion that Urdu is better-finished than Hindi. I give an example to prove my point. Take the following sentence from a wellknown Hindi writer: समझमें न आनेसे घबराहटकी लगने लगती है. In Urdu लगती cannot be used here. घबराहट होती है or घबराहट पैदा होती है would be correct. No good writer of Urdu is ever guilty of wrong phraseology. If he did, he would meet with strong criticism. There is no sustained movement to reform Hindi. As a matter of fact the best help that could be rendered today to Hindi would be to publish select Urdu books and writings in the Nagari script. In this way, the untiring efforts of Urdu poets and prose writers on behalf of the reform and finish of the Urdu language over the last several centuries could easily be taken advantage of by lovers of Hindi and I believe that Hindustani would be the natural outcome of such an experiment."

This letter deserves consideration. I love both the languages but I am not versed in either of them. My knowledge of Hindi is very average. I have not had the time to study it from books. My son Devadas who went years ago at my instance and with my blessings to spread Hindi in Madras knows it far better than I do. I can name many others who have similarly outpaced me. My knowledge of Urdu is much less even than my Hindi. I have known the Hindi script since childhood. I have had



to work to learn the Urdu and lack of knowledge of the language makes reading a difficult task. Nor can I write the script with ease. My knowledge being as limited as it is, I can claim nothing but a completely impartial love for both Hindi and Urdu. Therefore, it is my hope that if God wills, scholars in both the languages will contribute to make my venture a success. For this reason I have published Shri Tripathi's letter so that he and others may be inspired to help me in my endeavour.

Other lovers of Hindi have also told me that the same energy has not been expended on Hindi as on Urdu. If people will realize that there should be no ugly rivalry between the two, that both are, at root, one, that crores speak Hindustani and that it is the duty of scholars and poets to concentrate on it for the sake of the masses, I have no doubt that we shall progress by leaps and bounds.

Poona, 3-7-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

### A MEDICAL WITNESS

Sometime back I mentioned a case reported by a patient of his successful effort to introduce spinning as occupational therapy among the fellow patients in the orthopaedic ward of a hospital in South India. Even more striking is the experience related by Dr. Narendranath Ghosh, a retired Civil Surgeon from Bengal. He writes :

"As a Civil Surgeon I had opportunity to work in Bengal Jails. In Comilla Jail I introduced spinning as a psycho-therapeutic measure for curing lunacy with the help of a lady visitor of the Jail who used to spin yarn herself regularly. She is a highly educated lady, American by birth and Indian by marriage. I can't mention her name, as I have not got her permission to do so. We were very fortunate in curing the first case of lunacy within a period of three months. I got more extensive opportunity in Midnapore Central Jail to try this measure amongst lunatics. In this jail there were 35 to 40 cases in different stages in 1942-43 of different kinds. Those who were in a quiescent stage took to spinning on the charkha straightaway and their mental condition improved appreciably and proportionately with the gradual improvement of the quality of their own handiwork. The finer the yarn produced or spun by a particular lunatic, the better the result. It was rather a difficult and slow process amongst the violent lunatics, although once initiated into the art, the final result was even better than amongst others. In the case of violent lunatics, some medication was required to bring them to a fairly quiescent stage before they could be made to begin with the teasing of cotton first, followed by spinning on the *takli* and finally on the charkha. Most of the charkhas were made inside the jail with the help and guidance of some D. I. convicts and security-prisoners who had brought their own charkhas with them. In this connection I must also state that I was able to grow long staple cotton in the jail garden in Midnapore and Krishnagar with the help of the economic botanist and the local agricultural

officer who kindly selected the suitable plots, supplied good seeds and some bone manure. My idea was to make the prisoners learn all the stages and processes from cultivation of cotton to weaving of cloth. As a matter of fact the yarn produced by the lunatics was woven into cloth on handlooms and utilized for making for them *kurtas* and pants out of their own yarn, which again was a source of great pleasure to them and consequently of mental improvement also. But I did not succeed in making the lunatics themselves to cultivate or help in cultivation of cotton and in weaving cloth from their own yarn and tailoring it into *kurtas* and *dhoties* or pants for themselves. This would have been and was really my ideal. I shall be grateful if this important industry, from cultivation of cotton to weaving and tailoring etc., is taken up not only in the different mental hospitals but also in all the jails of India. It is quite possible to grow cotton in most of the jails of Bengal also. As most of the inmates of all jails are more or less mental cases, I don't see why this really useful art and industry should not be taken up by all jails for all kinds of persons as a major jail industry and all jail kit for prisoners themselves and also for *chowkidars* and police force of the local governments should not be manufactured out of the cotton and yarn produced in the jail by the prisoners. This will not merely be a measure for cure of mental cases but also a measure of moral improvement of all or a majority of the prisoners and a highly economic measure for any government."

The experiment can be safely recommended *mutatis mutandis* for trial in jails by the popular ministries in the provinces. Its success, however, will depend on suitable persons being available for conducting it. They must not only have mastered the science of Khadi but they must be inspired by humanitarian sentiment. In jails the tendency is to give to every kind of occupation penal, one may say even vindictive, flavour. That would be fatal to success. It may also be noted that the spinning has to be done solely by the hand and noiselessly. Its rhythm and soothing effect must never be lost sight of in this connection.

Bombay, 8-7-'46

PYARELAL

### Gurudev's Agony

The following from Gurudev, the original manuscript in English of which Shri Amiya Chakravarty is the proud possessor, is apt in our famine-stricken land today:

"The famished, the homeless  
raise their hands towards heaven,  
and utter the name of God.  
Their call will never be in vain  
in the land where God's response  
comes through the heart of man  
in heroic service and love."

Will the English knowing for whom this was written in the Poet's agony sufficiently understand the call for 'heroic service and love'?

Poona, 30-6-'46

A. K.



## USEFUL SUGGESTION

Dr. M. A. Chadray sends the following:

The method now in vogue of first grinding grain into flour and then making *chapatis* or bread out of the flour is wasteful. The defects of the method are as follows:

In the process of grinding in mills at a high speed, the properties of protein, starch, cellulose and mineral salts are altered while the fat content is lost, as in the process the flour gets hot. In the preparation of dough of workable consistency, the flour absorbs only half the quantity of water to its own weight, with the result that starch does not swell and in turn makes the food only partly nutritive due to insufficient proportion of water. In the East, the dough is rolled into shapes called *chapatis* and *puris* which can either be cooked or baked, but are fried with ghee or oils, and in so doing only a skin forms on both the sides. In the West, the dough is mixed with yeast for the preparation of spongy bread, but this too is neither fully nutritive nor hygienic as claimed, as the vitamins together with other constituents of food value are destroyed by the alcoholic fermentation due to the action of the yeast. Hence, the food prepared with this age-old process is neither tasteful nor hygienic, nor fully nutritive nor easily digestible and even for partial digestion needs a large quantity of digestive fluids, like bile, gastric juice and pancreatic juice. That a sick person cannot be fed with this food is a popular recognition of this fact. Even biscuits cannot be said to be better. Again, not being easily digestible, it causes constipation, the cause of all disease. Besides, before the preparation of dough, the flour is sieved to remove bran, which means a loss. The flour being liable to easy attack by microscopic germs, it cannot be stored for a long time and considerable loss occurs in transport and use, all of which make its use uneconomical.

All these defects can now be surmounted with the process developed after extensive experiments conducted with a view to increasing the nutritive value of cereals, particularly wheat, *bajri* and *jowar*, so that the food made out of these cereals can impart immense health.

According to this new process, a known quantity of wheat with about three and a half times water by volume, i. e. one pot of wheat and three and a half pots of water, or 1 lb. of wheat and 4 lb. of water, is hydrated by gradual boiling, with or without the addition of a teaspoonful of sugar or jaggery under low heat, keeping the lid on if an ordinary pot is used. Prior to heating, if wheat is steeped in water for about 12 to 18 hours, fuel will be saved. In case a pressure cooker is employed, the ratio of wheat and water should be one to one and three-quarter by weight. The proportion of water to be used varies according to the quality of wheat. In so cooking or boiling, about 2 lb. of water is removed by evaporation and starch, bran

and other constituents swell by absorbing water, and wheat become meaty. In this manner cooking or boiling should be continued till only a little water is left, which too will be absorbed by the wheat when it cools. Heating should neither be continued till water is completely evaporated, for then hydration will not be sufficient, nor should the water from the pot be thrown out, for if removed, it means a loss of soluble constituents of wheat. When wheat is cooked completely, which can be seen either from its swollen state or by pressing between the fingers to determine the softness, a little salt may be mixed with it to impart taste.

Wheat so cooked should then be masticated or ground to a paste, which can be accomplished with the aid of mincers, or by grinding on a *masala* stone, or pressing with two wooden pieces. With the use of pressure cooker, wheat inside will be digested to a pulpy dough of workable consistency. The paste so made can be made into shapes like *puris*, *chapatis* and biscuits by the known method, and fried with known fats or oils, for consumption.

In places like Bombay where at times grain cannot be had but only flour, one may first make a dough of the flour as usual when making *chapatis*, put the dough in a piece of cloth and hang it over a pot of boiling water till the dough gets completely cooked with the steam. *Chapatis* should then be made out of the cooked dough, following the usual process.

The advantage of this new food is that by it about fiftyfive per cent wheat is saved—forty per cent by the absorption of about one and three quarter times water, ten per cent by retaining bran, and five per cent by elimination of wastage. This means that a month's provision will last for two months. Actually, with this process, the volume of wheat increases to two and a half times, i. e. one pot on cooking becomes two and a half pots. This means that from a quantity of flour required to make four *chapatis* with the old process, ten *chapatis* can be made from the same weight of wheat with this process, without altering the thickness and size.

Besides, the food is more tasteful, hygienic, nutritive and easily digestible as the known and unknown constituents of food value are retained and evenly distributed. As such, its consumption will add a marked amount of weight. Moreover, being easily digestible, it can be fed even to sick persons. Also, the process will facilitate storage of wheat, *bajri*, *jowar* and like grains for a longer time without decay, and will save wastage in transport of flour. Moreover, it will dispense with flour mills.

Above all, this method will mean food for all. The adoption of this activated food in India will save every year about 8 to 12 million tons of wheat costing approximately Rs. 300 to 450 crores at the rate of Rs. 360 per ton and a similar quantity of valuable *bajri* and *jowar*. As such it will eliminate the present scarcity of cereals and will make the future bright for our famished people.



## LEFT-HANDED COMPLIMENT

(By M. K. Gandhi)

"I am writing this letter with a hope of getting proper and immediate response from you. Along with the whole of India I am well aware of your sweet will and affinity towards the *Mehetar* Community. Your "Harijan" has obliged us to a great extent by enabling us to see through your heart. Especially the recent "Harihans" have emphatically revealed your thoughts about the *Mehetar* Community.

"I now wish to reveal my interrogatory heart in order to be well nigh to your feelings towards us and to be definite about our position in the muddled and complicated Indian Political Field.

"By the time you will receive this letter it will be the last date of filling in nomination forms for the candidatures for the Constituent Assembly, which as it is learnt to be completed by the end of this month. Congress is proposing particular M. L. As and non-M. L. As for the same. It is believed that Scheduled Castes are also to be represented (adequately?). But is there any proposal from you or from Congress to elect adequate or at least some members from the *Mehetar* Community? Who, I am sure will discharge their duty of citizenship and pick up their legitimate share in the future constitution of Free India.

"2. Generous as you are towards us, May I assure myself and my community that *Mehetar* seats in the Constituent Assembly will not escape your notice.

"3. Who will be the components of the Advisory Board? Caste Hindus or Minorities including (?) the Scheduled Castes?

"4. Will the advice or proposals of the Advisory Board be binding to the Constituent Assembly? I think they will not. If so, what sense is there in appointing such a Board, which will be nonentity if the Constituent Assembly were not to pay heed to its advice. Is it not merely for the appeasement of the weak minorities?

"You might say you have been and will do every thing for us, but I wish to say 'let us be with you when everything for us is to be done. Let us be represented democratically."

"I strongly hope that my questions will be fully and satisfactorily answered by you with an obligation of immediate reply to me. I further humbly request you to be good enough to publish your answers in your weekly "Harijan".

"Hope to be excused for troubles."

I have reproduced the foregoing in order to show what havoc dangerous knowledge of English has produced in our society. This is a specimen not of English English nor yet of Indian English. It is bookish English which the writer probably half understands. I suggest to him that if he had written to me in the national language Hindustani or in his provincial language, it would not have evoked an unfavourable response from me.

The writer has paid me a left-handed compliment and that perhaps in order to teach me how

to express my love for the *bhangis*, otherwise known as *mehetar*. The writer is a discontented graduate, setting no example or a bad example to *bhangis*. He has isolated himself from them, though he professes to represent them.

He will certainly become my teacher if he will be a graduate in the art of being a good *bhangis*. I very much fear that he does no scavenging himself, he does not know what scientific scavenging is. If he became an expert in the art, his services would be wanted by all the cities of India. When *bhangis* really rise from the slumber of ages, they will successfully sweep the Augean stables everywhere and India will be a pattern of cleanliness and there will be in India no plague and other diseases which are the descendants of filth and dirt.

In the place where I am living in Bombay, my room and the adjoining lavatory are fairly clean, but I am in the midst of suffocating dirt. I have had no time to examine the tenements in front of me. They are as crowded and as dirty as the ones in the quarters where I was living in New Delhi. Had my graduate fellow *bhangis* been an expert in the art, I would, without doubt, have requisitioned his services as my guide and helper.

As it is, not only have I no use for him, I have to risk his displeasure by telling him that he should not think of the Constituent Assembly or other assemblies. Let those go to them who are wanted there. Instead of getting rid of the wretched caste mentality, he argues that any Harijan is not good enough for the purpose but preference should be given to the *mehetar* caste. I suggest to him that it is a harmful method, doing no good to anybody.

Anyway, he has expected the impossible from me. I am not made for these big institutions. I have never interested myself in the periodical assembly elections. I have not attended Working Committee meetings where they make these selections. What I know of the present selections is from the newspapers. I have become a *bhangis* because I think that that is the vocation of every Hindu, that the hoary institution of untouchability as we know it today in its ugly shape will die a decent death only when the Hindus will be casteless by becoming *bhangis* from the bottom of their hearts. That cannot be done by aspiring after the membership my correspondent has in view.

Bombay, 6-7-'46

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