

HARIJAN

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Editor: PYARELAL

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[TWO ANNAS

SALARY OF M. L. A.'s

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Q. The monthly salary of an M. L. A. is Rs. 200/-. He is a mofussil member and, as such, is entitled to a daily allowance of Rs. 15/- when the Assembly is in session. Besides that, he may draw a conveyance of Rs. 2/8/- for any day on which he attends the meeting of the Assembly. Moreover, he is entitled to 'travelling allowance' for his journey from the usual place of residence to the City at the rate of one and a half times first class fare but he cannot draw 'travelling allowance' and 'daily allowance' for the same day.

1. (a) Should such a person as a representative and servant of the poor draw the salary?

(b) Would he be absolved from the wrong if he gave the whole amount to the local Congress Committee or the institution under which he is working for constructive work?

(c) If so, would it not mean that the end justifies the means?

2. He will have to live in the City when the Assembly is in session and has to incur some other expenditure for discharging his duties and responsibilities as an M. L. A.

(a) In the circumstances, may he, consistently with his ideal, draw the daily allowance to meet the expenses?

(b) If so, and if it be not permissible to draw a part of it, should he draw the whole of it and give the balance to the institution under which he is working?

(c) In that case, may he, consistently with his ideal, spend the balance or part thereof for his family, which will have otherwise to depend upon the charity of friends to make the two ends meet?

3. (a) Should he draw the conveyance allowance (meant for his conveyance inside the city for attending meetings) when the daily allowance will be more than sufficient to cover all his expenses including the conveyance?

(b) Should he avail of costly conveyance for attending meetings, if he usually travels in tram cars and buses?

4. If such a member travels third class on principle, what should he do regarding drawing 'mileage allowance' if it is not permissible to draw at lower rate than one and a half first class fares?

A In my opinion, the salary and allowances drawn by the gentlemen of the various Assemblies are out of all proportion to the services they render to the country. The scales fixed are on the English pattern, not at all compatible with the income of this country — the poorest in the world. Therefore, the answer I suggest is that the Ministers should, with the consent of the Assemblies, reduce the whole scale in accordance with requirements and, in the meantime, either the amount taken should be handed to the party to which the member belongs, drawing what the party has fixed or, if that be not possible, drawing what his conscience thinks just for himself and his family and devoting the balance to some item of the constructive programme or some such public activity. The money allowed has to be drawn but nobody is obliged to use it for oneself except to the extent needed. No question here arises of end justifying the means.

New Delhi, 25-5-'46

INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The Indian Deputation from South Africa have made a great stir in India. They propose to approach the U. N. O. with a view to enlist the latter's sympathy. But the legislation is going through. The Indian High Commissioner will be withdrawn as he should be. What little aid he can render is nothing compared to the indignity of representing a country whose inhabitants are to be treated as an inferior race. This new caste is worse than the ancient but dying institution of India which has some redeeming features, even while it is dying. But the new civilized edition has none. It shamelessly proclaims that white civilization requires the erection of legal barriers in order to protect itself against Asiatics and Africans. The Indians in South Africa are bearing a heavy burden which they are well able to discharge. Satyagraha, the mightiest weapon in the world, was born and bred there. If they make effective use of it, it will be well with the sacred cause they are handling. It is not one of making it easy for a handful, to be permitted to live and trade there if they wear the badge of inferiority called years ago by an Englishman of South Africa 'dog's collar'. The cause is the cause of the honour of India and through her of all the exploited coloured races of the earth, whether they be brown, yellow or black. It is worth all the suffering of which they are capable.

New Delhi, 27-5-'46

QUESTION BOX

(By M. K. Gandhi)

WHO IS RAMA?

Q. You have often said that when you talk of 'Rama' you refer to the Ruler of the universe and not to Rama, the son of Dasharatha. But we find that your *Ramadhun* calls on 'Sita-Rama' 'Raja Rama' and it ends with 'Victory to Rama the Lord of Sita'. Who is this Rama if not the son of the King Dasharatha?

A. I have answered such questions before. But there is something new in this one. It demands a reply. In *Ramadhun* 'Raja Rama', 'Sita-Rama' are undoubtedly repeated. Is not this 'Rama' the same as the son of Dasharatha? Tulsidas has answered this question. But let me put down my own view. More potent than Rama is the Name. Hindu Dharma is like a boundless ocean teeming with priceless gems. The deeper you dive the more treasures you find. In Hindu religion God is known by various names. Thousands of people look doubtless upon Rama and Krishna as historical figures and literally believe that God came down in person on earth in the form of Rama the son of Dasharatha, and by worshipping him one can attain salvation. The same thing holds good about Krishna. History, imagination and truth have got so inextricably mixed up. It is next to impossible to disentangle them. I have accepted all the names and forms attributed to God, as symbols connoting one formless omnipresent Rama. To me, therefore, Rama described as the Lord of Sita, son of Dasharatha, is the all powerful essence whose name inscribed in the heart, removes all suffering, mental, moral and physical.

New Delhi, 26-5-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

PEACEFUL STRIKES

Q. How should a strike be conducted so that hooliganism and violence are avoided?

A. A strike should be spontaneous and not manipulated. If it is organized without any compulsion there would be no chance for goondaism and looting. Such a strike would be characterized by perfect co-operation amongst the strikers. It should be peaceful and there should be no show of force. The strikers should take up some work either singly or in co-operation with each other, in order to earn their bread. The nature of such work should have been thought out beforehand. It goes without saying that in a peaceful, effective and firm strike of this character, there will be no room for rowdyism or looting. I have known of such strikes. I have not presented a Utopian picture.

New Delhi, 26-5-'46

WHY DOCTORS?

Q. Why do you go to the doctors for examination and diagnosis and not to the *vaidyas*?

A. The *vaidyas* do not possess the knowledge of the human body as the doctors do. The basis of diagnosis in *Ayurveda* is the theory of *tridosh*. They have not got to the bottom even of that. The doctors are ever carrying on research and making

new discoveries. One either goes forward or backward. Nothing remains static in the world. Those who become static, become lifeless. God alone is static, but amazing as it may sound, He is described both as motionless and full of motion.

Moreover, doctors and *vaidyas* are my friends. The doctors have clung to me. One of them has become more than my own daughter. One's own daughter can leave her father; how can one who has chosen to become daughter? The *vaidyas* themselves use though indifferently the methods of diagnosis used by the doctors or else they advise the patient to go to the doctors for it. The *vaidyas* possess the knowledge of certain drugs which they use effectively.

But the doctors, *vaidyas* and *hakims* all slave for money. They do not take to the profession purely from a spirit of service. That some of them have that spirit does not contradict my statement. Nature cure is the only thing which has come into existence purely from the point of view of selfless service. Today even that has become a means of making money. Thus money has taken the place of God. The doctors examine me, but I depend on none but God. He is the Master of every breath I take. If He wills it, He will keep me up to 125 years. If not, He might carry me off any moment, leaving the medical friends staring as helpless spectators.

New Delhi, 27-5-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

[The following resolution was passed by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress on May 24, 1946, at New Delhi.]

The Working Committee have given careful consideration to the Statement dated May 16, 1946, issued by the Delegation of the British Cabinet and the Viceroy on behalf of the British Government, as well as the correspondence relating to it that has passed between the Congress President and the members of the Delegation. They have examined it with every desire to find a way for a peaceful and co-operative transfer of power and the establishment of a free and independent India. Such an India must necessarily have a strong central authority capable of representing the nation with power and dignity in the counsels of the world. In considering the Statement, the Working Committee have kept in view the picture of the future, in so far as this was available to them from the proposals made for the formation of a Provisional Government and the clarification given by members of the Delegation. This picture is still incomplete and vague. It is only on the basis of the full picture that they can judge and come to a decision as to how far this is in conformity with the objectives they aim at. These objectives are: independence for India; a strong, though limited, central authority; full autonomy for the provinces; the establishment of a democratic structure in the centre and

in the units; the guarantee of the fundamental rights of each individual so that he may have full and equal opportunities of growth; and further that each community should have opportunity to live the life of its choice within the larger framework.

The Committee regret to find a divergence between these objectives and the various proposals that have been made on behalf of the British Government, and, in particular, there is no vital change envisaged during the interim period when the Provisional Government will function, in spite of the assurance given in paragraph 23 of the Statement. If the independence of India is aimed at, then the functioning of the Provisional Government must approximate closely in fact, even though not in law, to that independence, and all obstructions and hindrances to it should be removed. The continued presence of a foreign army of occupation is a negation of independence.

The Statement issued by the Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy contains certain recommendations and suggests a procedure for the building up of a Constituent Assembly, which is sovereign in so far as the framing of the constitution is concerned. The Committee do not agree with some of these recommendations. In their view it will be open to the Constituent Assembly itself at any stage to make changes and variations, with the proviso that, in regard to certain major communal matters a majority decision of both the major communities will be necessary.

The procedure for the election of the Constituent Assembly is based on representation in the ratio of one to a million, but the application of this principle appears to have been overlooked in the case of European members of Assemblies, particularly in Assam and Bengal. Therefore, the Committee expect that this oversight will be corrected.

The Constituent Assembly is meant to be a fully elected body, chosen by the elected members of the Provincial Legislatures. In Baluchistan, there is no elected assembly or any other kind of chamber which might elect a representative for the Constituent Assembly. It would be improper for any kind of nominated individual to speak for the whole province of Baluchistan, which he really does not represent in any way.

In Coorg, the Legislative Council contains some nominated members as well as Europeans elected from a special constituency of less than a hundred electors. Only the elected members from the general constituencies should participate in the election.

The Statement of the Cabinet Delegation affirms the basic principle of provincial autonomy and residuary powers vesting in the Provinces. It is further said that Provinces should be free to form groups. Subsequently, however, it is recommended that provincial representatives will divide up into sections which 'shall proceed to settle the Provincial Constitutions for the Provinces in each section and shall also decide whether any Group Constitution'

shall be set up for the Provinces'. There is a marked discrepancy in these two separate provisions, and it would appear that a measure of compulsion is introduced which clearly infringes the basic principle of provincial autonomy. In order to retain the recommendatory character of the Statement, and in order to make the clauses consistent with each other, the Committee read paragraph 15 to mean that, in the first instance, the respective provinces will make their choice whether or not to belong to the section in which they are placed. Thus the Constituent Assembly must be considered as a sovereign body with final authority for the purpose of drawing up a constitution and giving effect to it.

The provisions in the Statement in regard to the Indian States are vague and much has been left for future decision. The Working Committee would, however, like to make it clear that the Constituent Assembly cannot be formed of entirely disparate elements, and the manner of appointing State representatives for the Constituent Assembly must approximate, in so far as is possible, to the method adopted in the Provinces. The Committee are gravely concerned to learn that even at this present moment some State governments are attempting to crush the spirit of their people with the help of armed forces. These recent developments in the States are of great significance in the present and for the future of India, as they indicate that there is no real change of policy on the part of some of the State governments and of those who exercise paramountcy.

A Provisional National Government must have a new basis and must be a precursor of the full independence that will emerge from the Constituent Assembly. It must function in recognition of that fact, though changes in law need not be made at this stage. The Governor-General may continue as the head of that Government during the interim period, but the Government should function as a cabinet responsible to the Central Legislature. The status, powers and composition of the Provisional Government should be fully defined in order to enable the Committee to come to a decision. Major communal issues shall be decided in the manner referred to above in order to remove any possible fear or suspicion from the minds of a minority.

The Working Committee consider that the connected problems involved in the establishment of a Provisional Government and a Constituent Assembly should be viewed together so that they may appear as parts of the same picture, and there may be co-ordination between the two, as well as an acceptance of the independence that is now recognized as India's right and due. It is only with the conviction that they are engaged in building up a free, great and independent India, that the Working Committee can approach this task and invite the co-operation of all the people of India. In the absence of a full picture, the Committee are unable to give a final opinion at this stage.

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1946

VITAL DEFECTS

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Intrinsically and as legally interpreted, the State Paper seems to me to be a brave and frank document. Nevertheless, the official interpretation would appear to be different from the popular. If it is so and prevails it will be a bad omen. During the long course of the history of British rule in India, the official interpretation has held sway. And, it has been enforced. I have not hesitated before now to say that the office of the lawgiver, judge and executioner is combined in one person in India. Is not the State Document a departure from the imperialistic tradition? I have answered 'yes'.

Be that as it may. Let us try to glance at the shortcomings.

The Delegation, after a brief spell in Simla, returned to Delhi on the 14th instant, issued their statement on the 16th, and yet we are far from the popular government at the Centre. One would have thought that they would have formed the Central Government before issuing the Statement. But they issued the Statement first and then set about the search for the formation of the Interim Government. It is taking a long time coming, whilst the millions are starving for want of food and clothing. This is defect No. 1.

The question of paramountcy is unsolved. It is not enough to say that paramountcy will end with the end of British rule in India. If it persists without check during the interim period, it will leave behind a difficult legacy for the independent Government. If it cannot be ended with the establishment of the Interim Government, it should be exercised in co-operation with it and purely for the benefit of the people of the States. It is the people who want and are fighting for independence, not the Princes who are sustained by the alien power even when they claim not to be its creation for the suppression of the liberties of the people. The Princes, if they are true to their professions, should welcome this popular use of paramountcy so as to accommodate themselves to the Sovereignty of the people envisaged under the new scheme. This is defect No. 2.

Troops, it is declared, are to remain during the interim period for the preservation of internal peace and protection against external aggression. If they are kept for such use during the period of grace, their presence will act as a damper on the Constituent Assembly and is more likely than not to be wanted even after the establishment of independence so-called. A nation that desires alien troops for its safety, internal or external, or has them imposed upon it, can never be described as independent in any sense of

the term. It is an effete nation unfit for self-government. The acid test is that it should be able to stand alone, erect and unbending. During the interim period we must learn to hop unaided, if we are to walk when we are free. We must cease from now to be spoon-fed.

That these things are not happening as we would wish is to be accounted as our weakness, be the causes whatever they be, not the cussedness of the British Government or their people. Whatever we get, will be our deserts, not a gift from across the seas. The three ministers have come to do what they have declared. It will be time to blame them when they go back upon the British declarations and devise ways and means of perpetuating British rule. Though there is ground for fear, there is no sign on the horizon that they have said one thing and meant another.

New Delhi, 26-5-'46

RIDICULING RAMANAMA

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Q. You know we are so ignorant and dull that we actually begin to worship the images of our great men instead of living up to their teachings. *Ramalila*, *Krishnalila* and the recently opened Gandhi temple are a living testimony of that. The *Ramanama* bank in Benares and wearing clothes printed with *Ramanama*, is, in my opinion, a caricature and even insult of *Ramanama*. Don't you think that under these circumstances your telling the people to take to *Ramanama* as a sovereign remedy for all ailments is likely to encourage ignorance and hypocrisy? *Ramanama* repeated from the heart can be a sovereign remedy, but in my opinion religious education of the right type alone can lead to that state.

A. You are right. There is so much superstition and hypocrisy around that one is afraid even to do the right thing. But if one gives way to fear, even truth will have to be suppressed. The golden rule is to act fearlessly upon what one believes to be right. Hypocrisy and untruth will go on in the world. Our doing the right thing will result in their decrease if any, never in their increase. The danger is that when we are surrounded by falsehood on all sides we might be caught in it and begin to deceive ourselves. We should be careful not to make a mistake out of our laziness and ignorance. Constant vigilance under all circumstances is essential. A votary of truth cannot act otherwise. Even an all-power remedy like *Ramanama* can become useless for lack of wakefulness and care, and become one more addition to the numerous current superstitions.

New Delhi, 25-5-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

By J. C. Kumarappa

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FAMINE NOTES

ABUSE OF FOOD GRAINS

Now that the expectation of consignment of food grains arriving from America has receded into the background and we are threatened with the breakdown of our rationing system by the third week of June, most stringent measures must at once be taken to prevent a single grain of foodstuffs from being wasted or put to any other use than that of saving human lives threatened with starvation. The use of enormous quantities of food grains for the manufacture of dextrine and starches for industrial use, was commented upon in these columns some time back. A friend has now sent a detailed note showing that not only one lakh and sixtyone thousand and odd tons of food grains are diverted to this use, but also a considerable proportion is wasted. It could either be greatly reduced or eliminated altogether. He writes:

"At present as far as I could gather, there are 13 starch factories manufacturing starches, dextrines, flour etc. on a large scale all over British India and the States. The raw material used for manufacturing starches and dextrines are maize, wheat, rice, tapioca, potato, barley, etc.

"These starches and dextrines find application in many industries for various processes but I touch upon only three main uses of these on a very huge scale:

1. AS "SIZE" OR "SIZING PRODUCT" IN THE TEXTILE TRADE. In order to give sufficient winding and/or weaving strength to fibre and/or fabric "Sizing" is the process generally employed. As far as I could collect details, the total all India consumption of such sizing products made of starch or dextrine by various textile mills and handloom societies and factories is estimated to be in the neighbourhood of 1,32,000 tons a year. The percentage of "Sizing" or "Size" depends on the counts of yarn used, the quality of textile material manufactured, the price at which it is marketed and particularly the whims and fancies of the manufacturers. The cheaper varieties of textiles are given very heavy sizing to fetch better prices, the burden of which ultimately falls on the lower class who go in for cheap consumer goods. To manufacture 1,32,000 tons of sizing products, 70,200 tons of starch or dextrine are necessary on a 60% basis every year, which in turn consumes double the raw materials. In other words, yearly 1,40,400 tons of foodstuffs mentioned above are used up in the manufacture of sizing products. Here in India, starch is made of all essential foodstuffs given above and the starch contents range between 30 to 60% of the raw materials. But for our calculations, I have taken an average of 50%.

2. IN MANUFACTURING GUMS OR PASTES. Though the statistics are not available, the flour of wheat and rice, and tapioca powder used in manufacturing gums, pastes, etc. for various purposes including sticking or affixing etc. can be estimated at about 1,500 tons a year from 2,000 tons of raw materials (foodstuffs).

3. IN REDUCING THE STRENGTH OF DYE-STUFFS. Use of dextrine as a reducing agent in

the "Dyes" or "Colours" trade is a well-known fact. As far as I could gather, the consumption of the reducing agent in various provinces is approximately 5,500 tons, Bombay Province leading the list with 2,500 tons. These figures I fear may be on the lower side as I could not get accurate consumption. The necessary data can only be collected by the Government machinery.

"Reducing dyestuffs for the bazar consumers is a common practice with all leading firms like Imperial Chemical Industries, Ciba (India) Ltd., Shaw Wallace, and Geigy as also many Indian firms. Fine dextrine or starch is used as a reducing agent. Only 30% dextrine can be manufactured of raw materials that is to say, to prepare 5,500 tons of dextrine 19,000 tons of raw material are consumed.

"Thus for all the three purposes a total of 1,61,400 tons of foodstuffs are consumed.

"I have gathered these statistics from the actual consumers of starch and dextrines and my assumption is based on the actual consumption and not on the manufacturers' production. To these must be added another 20% for wastage, the stocking and storing tendencies of the manufacturers and so on. The actual quantity of foodstuffs used for these purposes may thus be about 2,00,000 tons a year."

The correspondent then goes on to describe the wastage due to mismanagement and corrupt practices in mills and factories.

"There is a lot of wastage of these sizing products in textile mills and colour factories, merely because of corruption. The sizing master or the mixer or the manager of the establishment is generally offered a *bakshis* or *illegal gratification* or commission depending on the quantity he orders or recommends. Sometimes and in some places there are chains and the margin of commission is more. In some cases the master or manager becomes greedy and goes on ordering the quantity, always stressing the importance of such products. Enormous quantities are wasted to show huge consumption.

"In some cases textile material costing 6 to 8 annas, by giving a very thick and heavy size, can be sold at 10 to 14 annas to very poor but ignorant consumers. This can be checked or remedied by appointing textile experts to fix the minimum and maximum sizing for a particular kind of textile of a particular count of yarn. I think this will have to be tackled by the National Government.

"So also points 2 and 3 can be controlled by offering suitable substitutes or at least prohibiting the use of all these in colour-reducing by colour importers, mixers and packers. Here again there is corruption on one side and duping the consumers on the other. Colours which may normally cost Rs. 3 to 6 are even sold at a higher if not the same price after reducing the strength by 50% by the addition of dextrine, thus deriving over 100% profit."

This enormous use of huge quantities of grains and roots, etc. can either be prohibited forthwith or at least restricted to a very great extent, thus making a considerable quantity available for human consumption. This step, it is suggested, would not

in the least affect or paralyse the textile industry or the colour trade as suitable substitutes in the form of coffee-dextrine, tamarind-starch, mango-seed-starch, and a score of other forest products can take its place. At present hundreds of tons of tamarind seeds are being exported to foreign countries.

AN UNWELCOME INTRUDER

Even more startling are the facts about the spread of tobacco cultivation at the expense of food crops, to which a correspondent from Gujarat has drawn attention. The following is the gist of his letter:

"While on the one hand you are asking people to dig up flower gardens to grow vegetables and food grains and to sink more wells and repair old ones for cultivation, lakhs of acres of land are being used for growing tobacco, which not only has no food value but is positively harmful to health. Thus tube wells and oil engines and quantities of crude oil which could serve to grow more food to alleviate famine are being used for growing tobacco for the black market.

"In 1942 the British Government imposed a tax of as. 9/- per lb. or Rs. 23/- per maund on tobacco and with a view to obtain the maximum revenue from it encouraged the cultivation of tobacco. This has resulted in an enormous increase of the acreage under tobacco.

"In States where the tobacco tax was not levied the State authorities offered free land and tobacco seed and engaged the services of tobacco growers from outside by paying salaries to grow tobacco within their territories. Thus nearly 3,000 families of tobacco growers migrated from Gujarat and engaged themselves in tobacco growing in the neighbouring States of Bhavnagar, Junagadh, Morvi, Jamnagar etc. Tobacco growing has also spread to the States of Udaipur, Jodhpur, Khetri, Neemuch, Piplode, Ratlam, Gwalior, Bhopal, Dewas, Indore, Ujjain and Sirohi in Marwar. In Hyderabad, Sukkur and Kharej in Sind, 90,000 *bighas* have been put under tobacco. In the Nizam's territory and Palanpur State a tax on tobacco has been levied and tobacco growing is encouraged for the sake of revenue. In Amaraoti, Yeotmal and Khamgaon in C. P., Patidars from Charotar are engaged for tobacco growing. In Mehsana in Baroda State, tobacco yield has increased from 1,000 bags to 7,00,000 bags."

The correspondent ends by suggesting that all tobacco cultivation should be stopped by law while the threat of famine lasts and that in the case of areas assigned to food crops preference should be given to growing oil seeds and cotton, so that the oil-cake and cotton seed might be fed to milch cattle, instead of grain.

A WAIL FROM GUNTUR

Shri Sitarama Shastry from Guntur writes:

"I discussed the question of tobacco cultivation in the Guntur District with the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Guntur, last month. The Government called for suggestions regarding the stopping of the tobacco crop and utilizing the lands, thus released, for foodcrops. Virginia tobacco is grown on about 70,000 acres of land and country tobacco is grown on about the same extent. The total area under tobacco is thus 1,40,000 acres of land. It was calculated that tobacco crop of either variety will yield about Rs. 150/- per acre and

that a food crop will yield about Rs. 80/- per acre. The money crop cultivator has thus an advantage apparently of about Rs. 70/- per acre. It was then proposed that a subsidy of Rs. 70/- per acre should be given to the cultivator of tobacco on the basis of acreage as shown in the cultivation accounts for the current fasli.

"There are vested interests in tobacco and to minimize the damage caused to them by total prohibition, it was also suggested at the time that 50% of area might be converted into food crops this year and the other half might be switched over to food crops next year.

"The Director of Agriculture speaking at Bapatla the other day hinted that Government contemplated measures to check tobacco cultivation.

"The extent of 1,40,000 acres, above referred to, is exclusive of the extent on which Virginia seedlings are grown; such seedlings are grown on about 1000 acres of land in this district. That extent also will be available for foodcrops.

"It is unnecessary to dilate upon the evil effects of tobacco. It affords neither food nor drink to any man or beast or bird.

"This tobacco is an all India question and concerted action should be taken by all the provinces and states. The matter may be considered by the Working Committee and a definite lead may be given to the whole country."

There can be no question as to the desirability of prohibiting by law the raising of this most exhausting of money crops at a time when dire famine threatens the land. The proposal about paying compensation to tobacco growers, however, is preposterous and can arise only in a capitalistic order that has made money its God. Vested interests can have no claim on famine and starvation. Cultivation like other production should primarily be for use. The invasion of our economy by 'money crops' has become a national menace. In a well ordered society land will belong only to those who till it and will be worked in answer to the people's needs, not for making money. Agriculture must be freed from the octopus of vested interests which enslaves it today.

TWO VALUABLE SUGGESTIONS

Two valuable suggestions have been made for growing more food which are worthy of immediate attention of the Government. An engineer from Quetta writes:

"If the Government are really in earnest about growing more vegetables, wherever practicable, to supplement the rations that could be made available immediately by human effort in India, I would suggest you to request the Viceroy to persuade the provincial governments to order their Public Works Departments to put into commission, for the growth of vegetables, all those pieces of land along the canals called *berms*. A *berm* of a canal is from six to twenty feet in width on either side and is about six inches above the level of water.

"The area of *berms* if put into use will mean thousands of acres of virgin and fertile land needing no extra expenses of making new water courses

or regulation of water. The soil of these *berms* keeps always sufficiently moist for the purpose and in practice it has been found very workable. In Sind, at least, on almost all the regular sites (where there is a P. W. D. establishment stationed for the purposes of regulation of water) vegetables are grown by the P. W. D. staff for their own consumption.

"If the facilities of approach to the *berms* are given to certain local farmers of adjoining lands they would gladly employ their spare time usefully in the plantation of vegetables and look after them. The P. W. D. only has to overlook the encroachment of the "foreigners" on their area; but this should not be objected to considering the immediate good that will accrue to the country at this critical time.

"The provincial governments have also to make necessary arrangements for transport of the vegetables to the railway stations or nearby markets for further disposal. This can be done exactly as was being done during the war period for the supply of vegetables to the army camps. The lease lend lorries given to many contractors could be put into commission at a reasonably fixed rate; (this is one of the conditions of the issue of these lorries to the contractors). The existence of a service road along every canal, its branches and distributaries will be usefully employed by these lorries and no further charges have to be borne for making any new roads etc. Of course the road has to be maintained which also can be easily done through the farmer who would be willing to look after that length of the road which comes in his jurisdiction.

"There is no article of food so quickly grown as vegetables. If the Government could only organize it, it would not be difficult to dehydrate (by sunshine only) most of the vegetables."

ARMY TO THE RESCUE

The other suggestion is from a British army man. He writes in a letter to Gandhiji:

"It is with concern and regret that I find the Indian people have now to face yet another famine. I have followed this matter in the press and read your published letter of 21st February to Mr. G. E. B. Abell, Private Secretary to the Viceroy.

"The Indian Army should certainly be used as you suggest, and I also think both the British and Indian Army and Air Force should start growing food in cantonments and all other permanent stations and camps. There is ground that can be set aside for this purpose, there is the labour and there is usually a fairly plentiful water supply at such places. The Army in Britain was called upon to do this during the war and the present position in India warrants that similar steps be taken in India now.

"It was with interest that I noted you also suggested the distribution of food should be through co-operative societies or similar organizations. In civilian life I am connected with the Co-operative Movement in Britain, and whilst I have been in India I have been observing the position here. There are, of course, some big differences, one of the most important that you will appreciate being that in Britain the Co-operative Societies are of the people, whereas in India they are mostly Government sponsored. However,

from my contacts with the Societies in India I think the retail stores that have been set up mostly during the war have been doing good work in ensuring the people of their supplies of *atta*, sugar, oil cakes etc. at fair prices and I was interested to see some recognition of this in your suggestion."

Delhi, 11-5-'46

PYARELAL

PROGRAMME FOR THE CONGRESS MINISTERS

Now that the Congress has once again accepted office in the Provinces, it is very essential that the Ministers should have before them a definite programme of constructive work in terms of the Congress Election Manifesto. This programme should be completed within six months, if not earlier; the Ministers should, then, be free to plunge into another struggle if and when necessary. It would have been in the fitness of things if the Congress Working Committee or the Central Parliamentary Board had chalked out such a programme for the Ministries. Since this may not be done in the near future, I venture to place before the Ministers in all humility a concrete programme of national reconstruction. The following items constitute only the barest outline of this programme:

1. The Village Communities should be resuscitated and revitalized by devolving maximum local autonomy on the *Gram Panchayats*. A bold policy of decentralization should be carefully formulated with due regard to local conditions.

2. The Ministries should plan to make the Village Communities, more or less, self-sufficient in regard to food, cloth and other necessities of life. To this end a vigorous policy of rehabilitating and subsidizing cottage industries like spinning, weaving, paper-making, paddy-husking, oil-pressing etc. should be adopted. The Ministers should immediately seek the guidance and assistance of the A. I. S. A. and the A. I. V. I. A.

3. Intensive efforts should be made to introduce and popularize co-operative farming and co-operative marketing. Cheap credit facilities for both short and long terms should be arranged.

Drastic steps should be taken to scale down rural indebtedness.

4. The existing land tenure systems should be radically overhauled so as to provide full security to the actual tillers of the soil. I suggest that the *Mauzawari* (Village tenure) system should be introduced, as far as possible, in all the provinces with necessary modifications to suit local conditions. (Details of the *Mauzawari* system will be found in the "Gandhian Plan of Economic Development for India".)

5. Intoxicating drinks and drugs should be totally prohibited except for medicinal purposes.

6. Basic education or *Nayee Taleem* should immediately be given the fullest scope in the primary and secondary educational system. Even during the period of transition, the existing primary and secondary courses of study need radical recasting.

7. The medium of instruction at all stages of education must be the predominant language or languages of the territorial area. The English medium

has had its day and should now cease to be. The Education Ministers should abolish the English medium up to the high school stage immediately. A definite policy of imparting college education as well through the medium of the provincial language or languages should be announced by them. Immediate steps should be taken to prepare and publish suitable text books in the Indian languages.

In this connection, it is gratifying to note that the Nagpur University has accorded the necessary permission to the authorities of the Seksaria Commerce Colleges at Nagpur and Wardha to introduce Hindustani and Marathi media of instruction from the ensuing session.

8. The Provincial Governments should, as far as possible, directly control primary or basic education and try to transfer existing Government high schools and colleges to private educational societies or universities.

In the domain of higher education, the Governments should maintain only technical and research institutions.

9. The Ministries should fully exploit the natural and mineral resources of their respective provinces and wherever possible develop key industries which should be State-owned.

10. With a view to promoting public health, especially in the rural areas, indigenous systems of medicine and naturopathy should be encouraged and popularized. Cottage dispensaries and maternity centres should be established as far as possible in every village. Special medical institutes for training doctors and midwives for rural areas should be started.

11. The system of public taxation should be overhauled in order to make it more direct and equitable. Whenever necessary, the provincial Governments should raise public loans and not be "fastidious" about "balancing the budget".

12. Special attention should be devoted to schemes of labour welfare.

13. Ministers are expected to lend impetus to the propagation of Hindustani in both the styles and scripts.

14. The present judicial system encourages unnecessary litigation. It should be decentralized in order to render it cheap, just and speedy. Settlement of disputes by arbitration through local *panchayats* should be the usual practice.

15. British jails are monstrous institutions; they are breeding places of crime. The existing jails should become veritable reformatories.

The above list is not exhaustive; it could be multiplied according to immediate local needs and circumstances. Needless to mention that the impending food famine should be the first concern of the Ministries. But without tackling the fundamental problems of India's poverty and social degeneration, permanent results could never be achieved. Hence the need for intensive constructive work in different sectors of national life.

Wardha,

6-5-'46

SHRIMAN NARAYAN AGARWAL

TRUE PHILANTHROPY

Great truths are universal. They are not confined to any particular race or religion. Every schoolboy knows the story of the dying Sir Philip Sydney passing on the cup of water, just as he had lifted it to his lips to slake his thirst, to a fellow soldier whose need he felt was greater than his. A correspondent draws attention to the story of Rantideva in the 9th *skandha* of the *Bhagawata* bearing on the same theme. He writes:

"The story of Rantideva as narrated in the epic of *Bhagawata* in the 9th *skandha* will be interesting to you and your readers of 'Harijan' from the point of view of the food situation:

वियद्वित्तस्य ददतो क्वचं क्वचं बुभुक्षतः ।

निकिंचनस्य धीरस्य सकुटुम्बस्य सीदतः ॥

Rantideva used to give whatever he possessed to the needy and did not mind the starvation of his own family.

न्यतीयुरष्टचत्वारिंशद् अहान्यपिबतः किल ।

घृतपायससंयावं तोयं प्रातरुपस्थितम् ॥

कृच्छ्रासकुकुम्बस्य क्षुत्तृङ्भ्यां जातवेपथोः ।

अतिथिर्ब्राह्मणः काले भोक्तुकामस्य चागमत् ॥

तस्मै संन्यभजत् सोऽन्नम् आहत्य श्रद्धयान्वितः ।

हरिं सर्वत्र संपश्यन् स भुक्त्वा प्रययौ द्विजः ॥

He passed fortyeight days without water. One morning ghee, pudding and water were brought before him. He was just about to partake the food, when one *Brahmin* suffering from hunger and thirst came to him. Knowing that God was everywhere, he gave some food and water to the *Brahmin*.

अथान्यो भोक्ष्यमाणस्य विभक्तस्य महीपतेः ।

विभक्तं व्यभजत् तस्मै वृषलाय हरिं स्मरन् ॥

Rantideva was about to eat what was left, when a *Shudra* came to him for food and he gave him also a part of the food.

याते शुद्धे तमन्योऽगाद् अतिथिः श्वभिरावृतः ।

राजन् मे दीयताम् अन्नं सगणाय बुभुक्षते ॥

स आदृत्यावशिष्टं यद् बहुमानपुरस्कृतम् ।

तत् च दत्त्वा नमश्चक्रे श्वभ्यः श्वपतये विशुः ॥

Another guest came with dogs and beseeched Rantideva for food. Rantideva granted his request and gave him food.

पानीयमात्रमुच्छेषं तच्चैकपरितर्पणम् ।

पास्यतः बुल्लोऽभ्यागाद् अपो देहशुभस्य मे ॥

न कामयेऽहं नतिमीश्वरात्पराम् अष्टद्वियुक्तामपुनर्भवं वा ।

आर्तिं प्रपद्येऽखिलदेहभाजाम् अन्तःस्थितो येन भवन्त्यदुःखाः ॥

So only water was left just sufficient to quench the thirst of one man. Just then a *Chandala* came and said he was thirsty. Rantideva said that he was not desirous for attaining salvation i. e. *siddhi* or *moksha* but it was his life's desire to remove the distress of the needy even at the cost of suffering to himself.

क्षुत्तृष्टश्चमो गात्रपरिश्रमः च दैन्यं क्लमः शोकविषादमोहाः ।

सर्वे निवृत्ताः कृपणस्य जन्तोः जिजीविषोः जीवजलार्पणान् मे ॥

He said to the *Chandala* that his own hunger and thirst had disappeared since he had quenched the thirst of the *Chandala* who might otherwise have died.

Delhi, 11-5-'46

PYARELAL

DR. MEHTA'S INSTITUTION

(By M. K. Gandhi)

I have received several questions about Dr. Dinshah Mehta's institution. Two of them are worth noticing. They are given below:

"In order to make the institution more scientific, more modern and more useful for the public, is it not desirable that some capable enthusiastic nature cure man or men should be sent abroad for higher studies in nature cure? Would not such experts on their return evolve a system of nature cure suitable for our country and enable it to become popular and stand on its own feet?"

"You want a simple and cheap method of nature cure for our villages. Can the methods described by Kuhne, Just and Kneip etc. serve that purpose? Can these methods be useful and suitable for village work?"

The clinic at Poona could not serve the purpose of village nature cure in the opinion of the Trustees. Therefore, it was closed down and an experiment in village nature cure started at Uruli Kanchan. There the work is going on satisfactorily, though on a small scale. There is nothing there worth seeing as yet. Even the land has not been bought and no buildings have been built.

Now let us take the main question. The tendency of looking to the West in order to make progress in whatever we do, should be checked. If we have to go to the West to learn nature cure, it cannot be of much use to India. Nature cure is a thing which everyone can practise in the home. The advice of nature cure experts should not be necessary for all time. It is such a simple thing that everyone can learn it. If we have to go to Europe to learn to recite *Ramanama*, it simply will not do. *Ramanama* is the very foundation of nature cure of my conception. Nor should it be necessary to go across the seas in order to learn the use of earth, water, ether, sun and air. This is self-evident. Whatever other knowledge is required in this direction can be had in our villages. For instance, if herbs are used, they must be village herbs. *Ayurveda* teachers know all about them. If some *Ayurvedic* physicians are scoundrels, they cannot become good men and servants of the people by going abroad. The knowledge of anatomy and physiology has come from the West. It is very useful and necessary for all physicians. But there are plenty of means of learning it in our own country. In short, whatever useful contribution to knowledge has been made by the West, it has reached everywhere and can be learnt everywhere. I might add here that the knowledge of anatomy and physiology is not essential for learning nature cure.

The writings of Kuhne, Just and Father Kneip, are simple, popular and useful for all. It is our duty to read them. Practically every nature cure physician knows something about them. Nature cure has not been taken to the villages so far. We have not thought deeply and no one has thought of it in terms of the millions. This is just the beginning. No one can say where we shall stand in the end.

As in all great and good enterprises, sacrifice and dedication are required to make this successful. Instead of looking up to the West, we should turn the searchlight inwards.

New Delhi, 24-5-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

NATURE CURE FOR THE POOR

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Q. Is it not a cruel joke to ask the poor villager to live on orange juice when he cannot afford even ordinary diet? He has to work throughout the day to feed his wife and children. His land and his children mean more to him than life itself. Nature cure is meant for the rich who have plenty of money and time at their disposal.

If you really wish to serve the villagers through nature cure, you should see that the right type of nature cure homes are started every where. At these homes the patients should get free food, clothing and bedding. And, if the patient happens to be a wage earner, arrangements should be made to support his family.

You have said nature cure means re-orientation of the way of living. Is it not necessary that education in that direction should form a necessary part of nature cure treatment?

A. The question betrays the correspondent's ignorance. He has not taken the trouble to read carefully what I have written on the subject. Nature cure implies that the treatment should be the cheapest and the simplest possible. The ideal is that such treatment should be carried out in the villages. The villagers should be able to provide the necessary means and equipment. What cannot be had in the villages should be procured. Nature cure does mean a change for the better in one's outlook on life itself. It means regulation of one's life in accordance with the laws of health. It is not a matter of taking the free medicine from the hospital or for fees. A man who takes free treatment from the hospital accepts charity. The man who accepts nature cure never begs. Self-help enhances self-respect. He takes steps to cure himself by eliminating poisons from the system and takes precautions against falling ill in the future.

The central feature of nature cure treatment is *Ramanama*. But it must come from the heart, if it is to be a remedy for all one's ailments.

Orange juice is not an essential part of nature cure treatment. Right diet and balanced diet are necessary. Today our villages are as bankrupt as we are ourselves. To produce enough vegetables, fruits and milk in the villages, is an essential part of the nature cure scheme. Time spent on this should not be considered a waste. It is bound to benefit all the villagers and ultimately the whole of India.

It is true that nature cure homes of the right type should be opened in the villages and the cities. God willing, this will be done. The individual should rest content by doing his own duty leaving the rest to God.

New Delhi, 25-5-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

WEEKLY LETTER

CONDITIONS OF REDEMPTION

The Working Committee's deliberations have been engaging practically the whole of Gandhiji's time during the week following upon the Cabinet Mission's pronouncement. The resolution of the Working Committee will be found reproduced elsewhere in these columns. Whilst the charter of independence that is to be framed by the popular Constituent Assembly, if its deliberations are successful, will launch us on the path of sovereignty, the contents of that sovereignty and independence will be realized solely through and to the extent of our own effort. In his first prayer discourse after his silent day's written message last week, Gandhiji described the conditions of individual and national redemption. In the song that had been sung by some of the Harijan girls of the Balika Ashram, Okhla, at the prayer, it was said that since God was known as the Redeemer he would redeem us some day. "The orthodox conception of redemption," remarked Gandhiji, "is redemption in the life to come. What I want to tell you is that redemption in that song is promised us here and now, if we fulfil the necessary conditions. They are firstly, self-purification and secondly obedience to the Law. It is vain, it is demoralizing to expect that in the life to come God will vindicate his title as Redeemer by saving us while we continue to carry the load of sin on our heads in this life. A businessman who lies and cheats his simple-minded, ignorant customers cannot hope to be saved."

It had been said, continued Gandhiji, that to one who is good the whole world becomes good. "That is true so far as the individual is concerned. But goodness becomes dynamic only when it is practised in the face of evil. If you return good for good only, it is a bargain and carries no merit, but if you return good for evil, it becomes a redeeming force. The evil ceases before it and it goes on gathering volume and momentum like a snowball till it becomes irresistible."

So much for the individual. How could a slave country like India be redeemed?—he next asked. His reply was that a slave country owes the continuation of its slavery to the vices which slavery engenders. The way of self-purification, therefore, is also the way of redemption for a slave country. It was no use putting off hopes for redemption to a future state. If they failed to gain redemption here they would probably miss it in the hereafter too. "Let us therefore turn the searchlight inward and purge ourselves of all dross. If we shed our petty quarrels and animosities and forget all communal differences and petty distinctions the foreign troops would find their occupation gone and nobody would be able to keep us in servitude for a day."

SUN AND SHADE

The picture of "the land without regrets and sorrow" which he presented in the course of his discourses during the last week has gripped him. He

got that song printed and distributed at the prayer meeting.

A gentleman had donated Rs. 51/- for free distribution of the printed copies of that song but Gandhiji did not want it to be treated as a hand-bill and therefore decided that people should show their appreciation of it by paying the price of one pice. He was under the impression that the amount of the promised donation was Rs. 101/- and he had announced that figure accordingly. But when it was pointed out to him that the donation was Rs. 51/- only, he retorted that he could not allow the Harijans to be done out of the full amount which he had announced and therefore the donor should come forward and make up the balance. He apologized for the delay in the printing and distribution of the leaflet and twitted the Imperial City for its dilatoriness. He twitted too the printers of the leaflet for their 'greed' in charging for paper and printing. When he was told that nothing had been charged for printing, he twitted them still for charging the price of paper. The gentleman concerned thereupon announced that paper also would not be charged for.

Gandhiji had been told that he had been coming to the prayer meeting late. That was not so, he explained. Only his watch was slow and he kept time by it. Unpunctuality was not his weakness. Still less could he afford wilfully to be unpunctual at the prayer gathering where they assembled for the solemn purpose of renewing their covenant with God. "If we have to catch a train, we try to reach the station well in time because the train waits for nobody. That is even more true of God—the wheel of His Law never stops nor slows down."

LAND WITHOUT REGRETS

Coming back to the text of the song that had been distributed, he once again explained in detail the inner meaning of the ideal set forth in it. The conception of a country where there was no suffering and no sorrow, might at first sight strike one as Utopian. Nevertheless, they wanted their country to be such a country and he had even allowed himself to say the other day that the announcement of the Cabinet Mission contained in it the germs of that fulfilment. The poet in that song, had not only set forth the ideal but also mentioned the conditions for its realization. Those conditions were freedom from illusions and regrets, delusion and desire. Such a country, however, was nowhere to be found on this earth. The poet, therefore, in order to be logical and true, had said that it was within us—it was identifiable with the realm of the spirit within. It connoted Swaraj, that is to say, self-rule or rule over self. A person who had perfect mastery over self could realize in his own person the ideal depicted in the song. As he had remarked on the previous day, to a person who is good the whole world becomes good. If millions did that, the Kingdom of God would be realized on earth. But even if all did not, there was no need for the individual to despair. He could make

a beginning with himself straightaway in the faith that what he did today the rest would do tomorrow.

A SUBTLE TEMPTATION

As result of Gandhiji's remarks on Wednesday last the gentleman who had donated Rs. 51/- brought an additional fifty rupees to make up the balance of Rs. 101/- announced by Gandhiji in his previous day's prayer discourse. All the printed copies of the song being sold out a fresh lot was printed for distribution. Gandhiji, however, decided that it should be sold at the fixed price of one pice for each copy and on no account at a fancy price. Similarly, he said that he would hereafter insist on the printer receiving his due charge for printing and stationery. He did not want to be greedy. It was a subtle snare in which humanitarian workers sometimes fell. If he charged more for the *bhajan* than its fixed price, the money would become tainted and would hinder instead of helping the cause of the removal of untouchability. Untouchability could not be eradicated by the expenditure of crores of rupees. But it could be eradicated in the twinkling of an eye without spending a penny if there was a true change of heart among the so-called Caste Hindus. That would elevate both the Harijans and the *Savarnas*. "Today the '*Savarnas*' ride on the backs of the so-called Untouchables. That degrades them both. For, it is nature's law that one cannot degrade another without degrading himself." They should not tempt him, said Gandhiji, by offering fancy prices. If any one wanted to pay the price for more than one copy of the *bhajan* leaflet, he or she would have to produce a corresponding number of bona fide purchasers. Just as the leaflet would not be distributed free so it would not be sold for more than its fixed price. The way to earn merit was to translate into their lives the teachings of that *bhajan*.

BONDAGE OF LOVE

Commenting next on the *bhajan* of the evening "*Sabase unchi prem sagai*" he said that in that song the poet had sung of the bondage of love or *ahimsa*. There was no bond higher or stronger than that of love. Under the power of Sudama's love Lord Krishna had accepted the former's gift of broken rice taken out of a dirty rag and had preferred to partake of the simple greens and herbs of Vidura in preference to Duryodhana's rare and luscious fruit. Again, it was in return for Arjuna's loving devotion that he had forgotten his royalty and became Arjuna's charioteer and we are told that it was the mastery of his art that contributed more to Arjuna's victory than the might of the latter's bow. Service of love was the highest service one could render to another. It asked for no consideration or return. "Love becomes a sordid bargain when it asks for return or compensation; it degrades. Spontaneous service of love purifies and elevates."

SUPERSTITION

Gandhiji's next two discourses were devoted to the subject of nature cure or the cure of ailments spiritual, mental and physical, by the application prin-

cipally of *Ramanama*. A correspondent had written to him, pointing out how some people superstitiously wrote *Ramanama* on their clothes so as to wear it 'next to the heart'! Others wrote *Ramanama* millions of times minutely on a piece of paper which they afterwards cut up into small bits and swallowed so that they could claim that *Ramanama* had entered into them! Another correspondent had asked him whether he had prescribed *Ramanama* as the sovereign remedy for all ills because Rama was God's anointed and was a descendant of Dasharatha, the illustrious King of Ayodhya. There were people who thought that he was self-deluded and was trying to delude others by adding one more to the thousands of superstitions which filled this superstition-ridden land. He had no answer to such criticism. He only said to himself, what did it matter if truth was abused and fraud practised in its name by others? So long as he was sure of his truth he could not help proclaiming it for fear of its being misunderstood or abused. "Nobody in this world possesses absolute truth. This is God's attribute alone. Relative truth is all we know. Therefore, we can only follow the truth as we see it. Such pursuit of truth cannot lead anyone astray."

WHO IS THIS RAMA ?

He reiterated that Rama whose name he prescribed as the infallible remedy for all ills was neither the historical Rama nor the Rama of those who used the name as a charm or black magic. Rama whose name he prescribed as a cure-all was God, by taking whose name devotees attained purity and peace, and he claimed that it was the one infallible remedy for all ailments whether mental, spiritual or physical. It was, of course, possible to cure physical ailments by going to doctors and *vaidyas*. But *Ramanama* enabled one to become one's own doctor or *vaidya* and to find the elixir of healing within oneself. Even when the ailment could not be cured, because physically it was incurable, it enabled one to endure it with equanimity and peace of mind. "A person who has faith in *Ramanama* would not run from pillar to post and dance attendance at the doors of celebrated doctors and *vaidyas* in order to prolong existence anyhow. Nor is *Ramanama* meant to be taken only when the doctors and *vaidyas* have failed. It is meant to enable one to do without them altogether. For a believer in *Ramanama* it is the first as well as the last remedy."

HOW TO RECITE RAMANAMA

Continuing the theme Gandhiji in his next day's discourse explained the conditions under which alone *Ramanama* could become an effective remedy for the three-fold malady, to which man was subject. The first condition was that it should come from the heart. What did that mean? People did not mind going to the ends of the earth to find a cure for their physical ailments which were much less important than the mental or spiritual. "Man's physical being is after all perishable. It cannot, by its very nature, last for ever. And yet men make a fetish of it while neglecting the immortal spirit

within." A man who believed in *Ramanama* would not make a fetish of the body but would regard it only as a means of serving God. And for making it into a fit instrument for that purpose, *Ramanama* was the sovereign means.

To install *Ramanama* in the heart required infinite patience. It might even take ages. But the effort was worthwhile. Even so success depended solely on the grace of God.

Ramanama could not come from the heart unless one had cultivated the virtues of truth, honesty and purity within and without. Every day at the evening prayers they repeated the *shlokas* describing the man with a steadfast intellect. Every one of them, said Gandhiji, could become a *sthita prajna* — man with steadfast intellect — if he kept his senses under discipline, ate and drank and allowed himself enjoyment and recreation only to sustain life for service. If one had no control over one's thoughts, if one did not mind, for instance, sleeping in a hole of a room with all doors and windows shut, and breathing foul air or drinking dirty water, his recitation of *Ramanama* was in vain.

That, however, did not mean that one should give up reciting *Ramanama* on the ground that one had not the requisite purity. For, recitation of *Ramanama* was also a means for acquiring purity. "In the case of a man who repeats *Ramanama* from the heart, discipline and self-control will come easy. Observance of the rules of health and hygiene will become his second nature. His life will run an even course. He will never want to hurt anyone. To suffer in order to relieve others' suffering will become a part of his being and fill him with an ineffable and perennial joy." Let them therefore, said Gandhiji, persevere and ceaselessly repeat *Ramanama* during all their waking hours. Ultimately, it would remain with them even during their sleep and God's grace would then fill them with perfect health of body, mind and spirit.

A BRIEF HOLIDAY

A lull in the Cabinet Mission's deliberations has enabled Gandhiji to take a brief holiday for rest and recuperation. He had been advised by his doctors some time ago to pass two months of the hot weather at some hill station to enable him to build up a reserve for the rest of the year. He could not do so this year for reasons that all know. He has decided to go to Mussoorie in preference to Panchgani or Simla as it is nearer. He will return when the Maulana Saheb or the Cabinet Mission require him again.

In announcing his plans to the prayer gathering on Sunday he said that they had been coming to the prayer gathering daily in order to join him in reciting *Ramanama* or rather in learning how to do so. *Ramanama* could not be taught by word of mouth. But more potent than the spoken word was the silent thought. "A single right thought can envelop the world. It is never wasted. The very attempt to clothe thought in word or action limits it. What

man has ever succeeded in expressing fully a thought in word or in action?"

"Then, why not go into perpetual silence, one might ask", proceeded Gandhiji. "In theory that is possible," he replied. "But it is very difficult to fulfil the conditions by which silent thought can wholly replace action." He for one could not claim to have attained the requisite intensity or control over thought. He could not altogether keep out useless or irrelevant thoughts from his mind. It required infinite patience, vigilance and *tapashcharya* to attain that state.

He was not indulging in a figure of speech, he continued, but had meant it literally when on the previous day he had told them that there was no limit to the potency of *Ramanama*. But in order to experience that, *Ramanama* had to come from a heart that was absolutely pure. He himself was striving to attain that state. He had envisaged it in the mind but had not fully realized it in practice. When that stage was reached, even the recitation of *Ramanama* would become unnecessary.

He hoped they would continue to recite *Ramanama* in their homes severally and in company during his absence. The secret of collective prayer was that the emanation of silent influence from one to the other could be of help in their spiritual striving.

New Delhi, 27-5-'46

PYARELAL

Flags and Uniforms

A correspondent writes:

"During the recent election meetings I was astonished at the number of flags — not to speak of the special uniforms worn by Congress volunteers for the occasion. In these days of cloth shortage, is not the use of cloth for flags and special uniforms a criminal waste?"

Flags and uniforms are in order when they are in their time and place. They are easily an abomination when they take the place of bread. Satisfaction of hunger has precedence over everything. Similarly, flags and uniforms cannot replace cloth for wear. Hence, if the correspondent is right, congressmen and others will have to be strictly economical in the use of flags and uniforms for demonstrative purposes.

New Delhi, 26-5-'46

M. K. G.

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