

HARIJAN

Editor: PYARELAL

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TWO ANNAS

URDU, THE LANGUAGE OF BOTH ?

(By M. K. Gandhi)

1. "You are making strenuous efforts to get every Indian, particularly Hindus with whom you naturally come most in daily contact, to learn Urdu. Similarly, is any Mohammedan striving to induce Muslims to learn Hindi? If not, will not the result of your labours be that Urdu will become the language of both and Hindi remain the medium solely for Hindus? Will not this be a disservice to Hindi?"

2. "The Urdu equivalent of the Hindi word is invariably given in brackets in the Hindustani Prachar publications, but the converse is not done. Does that not signify a desire to teach Urdu by force to Hindus?"

3. "There are any number of Persian and Arabic words used in these publications. Do you think they are understood by the general run of people? For example *adab* (अदब), *ādāb* (आदाब), *etakat* (एतकाद).

4. "If Hindustani is in fact a language, why in your educational readers is there such a difference in terminology in the Urdu and Hindi editions?"

5. "My fear is that the lakhs of Southern Indians who have so far been trying to learn Hindi will be so scared of the Urdu script that they will learn neither and in the end the work hitherto done by the Hindustani Prachar Sabha will be completely wiped out."

1. Efforts are being made that those who are unacquainted with the Urdu form should learn it and vice versa with those who do not know the Hindi form. It is true that my contacts are more with Hindi knowing Hindus. But that does not worry me. Hindus are not likely to forget their Hindi. In fact I believe that their Hindi will be enriched by their knowledge of Urdu. The majority of Indians, whether Hindus or Mussalmans, generally know best the languages of their provinces which contain a large number of Sanskrit words. I myself have neither the fear nor the desire that everyone will, as a result of my efforts, learn the Urdu form to the exclusion of Hindi. Desire or no desire, whatever is natural will happen. The attempt to have a wise blending of the two forms for a national tongue is, in my opinion, a good venture in every way.

2. I have not read all the publications of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha. It is commendable if the Urdu equivalent of some Hindi words is given in brackets. This only means that in the opinion of the writers of the books these words are not commonly known. That the Hindi equivalents are not given signifies that those Urdu words have become current coin in Hindi. It is a pity that a learned person like the correspondent should have such suspicions. Suspicion is not an attribute of learning.

3. This does not seem to be a correct charge. And even if it were true, what harm can there be? The introduction of new words into any language enriches it. The words of Latin origin that came into the English language after the Norman Conquest added to its virility. Whatever was not good or unnecessary or forced did not remain. The words given by way of example by the correspondent are known to all Hindi lovers in the North and have taken their rightful place in Hindi. It is true that they are new for Southern Indians and therefore their Sanskrit equivalents should be and are given. The truth is that the Hindustani Prachar Sabha has neither antagonism towards one nor partiality towards the other. Both forms are there and will remain and these should not present any difficulty. But, of course, if there is jealousy and antagonism between the two, Hindustani will never come into being. And such an eventuality will be a bad thing for India.

4. Hindustani existed at one time. The present effort is directed to revive it through a wise mixture of Hindi and Urdu and let it grow thereby. Neither Hindi nor Urdu lovers should sorrow over this. Hindi and Urdu are sisters. What harm, therefore, if they mix with each other? It cannot be a matter of surprise that in this transition stage there should be a difference of terminology in Hindi and Urdu books.

5. My experience is quite contrary to that of the writer. I have not known anyone who has given up learning either script because of the insistence on the Urdu script. Nor do I fear that this will ever be so.

My appeal to the writer is to divest himself of his prejudices.

Mussooree, 4-6-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

MINDFULNESS, THE REMEDY

(By M. K. Gandhi)

"It is your insistence on truth and non-violence that has attracted me to you so powerfully. The realization that the mere desire for truth and non-violence is not sufficient to make people non-violent made me think that mere preaching of non-violence is not enough and that a way must be taught, which would enable people to rebuild themselves fundamentally.

"Just being fascinated by non-violence and wanting to be non-violent does not make a man truly non-violent. The sub-conscious does not react easily to the movements of the conscious mind and remains unaffected even when the conscious mind has been apparently soaked in the idea. The cause of this opacity of the unconscious lies in the hidden desires and fears which do not allow contrary ideas to become spontaneously active. Unless the sub-conscious is cleared and the hidden resistances removed, the man's real nature, which is wise and kind, cannot be revealed.

"Therefore, it is necessary to give to those who are earnest correct advice as to how to proceed to clear themselves of the unknown inner obstacles to truth and non-violence and to make truth and non-violence really reliable, spontaneous and effective.

"External observances like prayers, handicrafts etc. are not the efficient means for truth and kindness. The proof of it is in the whole history of mankind. Only by inner and well directed effort can a man rebuild himself. Good intentions are not enough—the correct means have to be used. Fortunately such means, well tested as correct and efficient and in harmony with the structure of the human psyche, are known, although practised by very few. I have in mind the way of mindfulness, recommended by Buddha in glowing terms, as supremely efficient. Sober and reticent as He was, He has gone to the point of saying that this way can bring a man to perfection in seven days.

"In case you have not read about the way of mindfulness, I am giving a short account of it.

"The way of mindfulness consists in being constantly observant, conscious, attentive, watchful, awake, uninterruptedly aware of the mental and emotional content of our consciousness and of its expressions through the body. Man must set himself into an attitude of constant observation, awareness, alertness. It is very important that he should maintain this awareness fully impersonal, detached, non-judging, non-condemning, non-approving, just awareness and nothing else. You will catch the point easily if you watch for a moment your breathing as it moves up and down, because not having any desires and fears attached to mere breathing you can watch it impersonally.

"If a man maintains this intense and perpetual awareness of the movements of his mind and feelings and of their expressions through the body, very soon things begin to happen to him. The mind becomes

clear, translucent, as if void and into the clarity of the conscious mind the unconscious tangles begin to emerge. They melt away in the light of awareness allowing deeper, still less accessible layers of the unconscious to emerge and get dissolved.

"The entire process, if carried out correctly, is effortless and accompanied by a sense of release and intense happiness. Man grows wiser and kinder from day to day and his wisdom and kindness are not self-imposed, but self-revealed. Therefore they are reliable, because there is nothing in the subconscious to oppose them.

"I am purposely avoiding quoting Western and Indian classics to prove that the way of mindfulness was well known to the ancients. It needs no authority for support. It stands by its own simplicity and ease with which a man can test on himself its efficacy. You can easily try it out on yourself. Within a week you will be convinced that Buddha has left with us a tool of unparalleled efficacy for rebuilding ourselves truly and permanently.

"We cannot have truth and non-violence in the world unless we as individuals are truthful and non-violent. Therefore, the problem of becoming truthful and non-violent is of the utmost importance. There is a way well spoken of by the great and tested by many as sound, correct, efficient, direct. You can have it tested again and again in small groups of friends, who will concentrate on it intensely and compare notes. You will see for yourself the result. The test can be made as scientifically accurate as you wish.

"There is also another aspect to consider. You have come across honest and earnest people, who have been defending falsehood and cruelty on the grounds of higher efficiency and quick results. Teach them only the way of mindfulness and they will see for themselves the roots of stupidity and hatred of which their methods are but a rationalized expression. The way of mindfulness will lead even the dull and cruel to wisdom and kindness, because it will dispel the very causes of dullness and cruelty, which are in craving and in the fear born out of craving.

"Please do not judge the message by the messenger. The message, although poorly conveyed, is of supreme importance to your work."

Thus writes Mr. Frydman, better known to the public as Bharatanand. I reproduce it for what it is worth. I have not fallen in love with it because this too has not caught on. If it was a seven days' work, why is it that it has so few witnesses in the world today? In so far as it is an aid, it is in general vogue and takes its place among the other remedies, whether it is called mindfulness, vigilance or meditation. It does not take the place of prayer or the 'mala' or any other outward practice. It is in addition to these outward observances so long as the latter are not for show. Indeed, prayer is purely an inward act. Those who found in *Ramanama* the talisman knew mindfulness and found by experience that *Ramanama* was the best of all the remedies adopted for the practice of Truth and Non-violence.

Mussooree, 4-6-'46

KASTURBA WORK IN ASSAM

The following is a synopsis of Shrimati Amalaprabha's report of her work in Sarania:

16 Village girls, mostly teachers and two of whom are Harijans are receiving training. There are two permanent members of the staff who live with the girls and share their life as one of them. All the house and cooking work is done by the girls under the supervision of the staff and Shrimati Amalaprabha, the only outside help taken being for fetching water, which has to come from some little distance necessitating a climb.

The main handicraft is *muga* reeling and weaving. As this work was new the production in the first 1½ months was small but even so one *than* worth Rs. 30 has been woven and yarn for two more worth Rs. 120 has been prepared. After deducting the price of cocoons the net profit is reckoned at Rs. 82. Cotton Khadi is also being made and the girls are being taught all the processes. Gardening is included in the programme. During the month of February, 35 seers of vegetables were produced. Physical drill forms a daily feature of the training and once a week the trainees go to serve the people there.

Hindustani, elementary science relating to diet, cooking and gardening, hygiene and sanitation and the principles of the Constructive Programme are subjects taught in the theoretical classes. Some friends from outside have helped in lectures.

The food is simple but wholesome. With an increase in the number of reeling machines and looms it is hoped in time to attain self-sufficiency in the matter of cloth.

Errata

In Harijan of May 19, 1946, in article 'An Exaction and Oppression', page 141, para 4, line 3, salt requirement for cattle should read *sixteen* (16) pounds instead of *eighteen* (18). In the same para, line 9 total requirement of salt should read *thirteen* (13) crores instead of *seventy-three* (73) crores and seventy-three lakhs maunds.

In Harijan of May 5th, in article 'A Light in Darkness', page 120, col. 1, para 2, line 10, read 1½ months instead of 1½ years.

Col. 2, para 2, line 8, read Anasuya Desai instead of Anasuya Mehta.

Same page, col. 1, last line, the figures for income and expenditure should be as being for 2 years instead of as being for 6 months.

By M. K. Gandhi

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NOT ENOUGH

Since Gandhiji's appeal to Gujarat to expiate for the wrong in keeping away the Harijans from fetching water from public wells and denying them the other social amenities, to which Shri Hemantkumar had drawn his attention, there has been a stirring in the 'Savarna' Hindu conscience in many places. Shri Parikshitlal of the Harijan Ashram, Sabarmati, in his letter to Gandhiji reporting the experiences of his recent tour in some of the Gujarat villages, writes:

"I had the opportunity in the course of my recent tour of the Surat District to visit the places where the villagers gladly gave permission to the Harijans to use the village wells. Both the incidents took place during the National Week and in both places a public function was held to take the Harijan families to the public wells. *Kolis* constituted the bulk of the population in both the villages in question.

"In Budiya village in Choryasi taluka a programme of interdining on a small scale was held after the visit of the Harijans to the public wells in the village. As there is a separate well for the Harijans in this village they still feel hesitation in going to the public wells newly thrown open to them. But I have learnt that they are satisfied that the bulk of the village people are in full sympathy with them. A public meeting was also held in the village, at which Harijan women were accorded a welcome.

"The other village was that of Hajira in the same taluka. It is a well-known sea-side health resort in the Surat District. Since the 1942 struggle, young men of the village have started a successful Bal Mandir. A weaving school is being run by the Charkha Sangh. Besides, there are classes for adult education. There is only one Harijan family in this village. The auspicious tilak mark was put by the village people on the forehead of the sweeper sister representing this family and she was taken to the public well to fetch water. As the poor woman was too poor to afford a rope for drawing water, a rope was lent by a 'Savarna' woman of the village. On inquiry since I have learnt that she can now use the public village well without any let or hindrance.

"In Vadadla village in Kaira District also, young men of the village had arranged a programme during the National Week for securing this right to the Harijans and had invited the workers of the district on the occasion. But it was found that the orthodox section was not fully ripe for the reform. The spokesman of the youth thereupon declared that so long as the public wells of the village were not thrown open to the Harijans, he would himself (he was from a Patidar family) fetch water from only the Harijan well. His wife joined him in his resolve. Several other young men in the village expressed their desire to follow suit. In the public meeting that was held in this connection water from the Harijan well was served and drunk. This softened

down the opposition of the orthodox section and the village well was declared open to the Harijans. But the Harijans have not so far ventured to avail themselves of their right."

All this is good so far as it goes, but not good enough, if Gujarat aspires to be in the vanguard of the freedom struggle. A vigorous campaign with a definite time limit for the complete removal of all the disabilities under which the Harijans suffer ought to be launched. Emancipation of the Harijans can no longer be postponed to an indefinite distant date. It has to be realized here and now even like Independence. Independence itself will turn into bitter ashes in our mouth if the most useful section of the community is balked of its essential rights.

Mussooree, 7-6-'46

PYARELAL

HARIJAN

June 16

1946

THE UNKNOWN

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Some learned men describe Him as Unknowable, some others as Unknown, yet others as 'Not This.' 'The Unknown' is good for the present purpose.

When yesterday (9th June) I said a few words to the prayer audience, I could say nothing more than that they should pray for and rely upon the strength and the guidance that this big X could give. There were difficulties to be overcome by all parties in the great Indian drama that was being enacted before them. They were all to rely upon the Unknown who had often confounded man's wisdom and in the twinkling of an eye upset his tin-pot plans. The British party claimed to believe in God, the Unknown. The Muslim League did likewise. They delighted in saying Allah-o-Akbar. The Congress naturally had no single equivalent cry. Nevertheless, if it sought to represent the whole of India, it represented the millions of believers, no matter to what compartment in the House of God they belonged.

At the time of writing, in spite of my irrepressible optimism, I am unable to say decisively that at least in political parlance, the thing is safe. All I can say, therefore, is that if, with the best efforts of all the parties, the unsafe happens, I would invite them to join with me in saying that it was as well and that safety lay in unsafety. If we are all children of God, as we are, whether we know it or not, we will take in good part whatever happens and work with zest and confidence for the next step whatever it may be. The only condition for that zest is that each party does its honest best for the good of the whole of India. For that is the stake and no other.

New Delhi, 10-6-'46

TAKE CARE OF PENNIES

(By M. K. Gandhi)

I have discovered honourable members of Assemblies using most expensive embossed note paper even for private use. So far as I know, office stationery cannot be used for private purposes such as writing to friends or relatives or for letters from members of Assemblies to constituents outside matters of public business. So far as I know, this is a universal objection in every part of the world.

But for this poor country my objection goes deeper. The stationery I refer to is too expensive for us. Englishmen belonging to the most expensive country in the world and who had to flourish on the awe they could inspire in us introduced expensive and massive buildings for offices and bungalows requiring for their upkeep an army of servants and hangers-on. If we copy their style and habits we will be ruined ourselves and carry the country in this ruin. And what was tolerated in the case of the conquerors will not be tolerated in ours. There is, too, paper shortage. I am of opinion, therefore, that all these expensive habits should be given up. Hand-made paper with ordinarily printed letterheads in Nagari and Urdu should be used. The embossed stationery already printed can easily be cut up and put to better use, and should not be used up under cover of economy. Surely village products cannot be made to wait till the expensive and possibly foreign stuff is used up. Popular Governments should signalize their advent by adopting popular measures and inexpensive habits.

Mussooree, 8-6-'46

Notes

Its Language

A correspondent writes:

"You must be aware that when constitutions have been drawn up in any of the countries of the world they have been invariably drafted in the language of the country concerned, e. g. France, Germany, Ireland, Egypt, Japan, etc.

"It would be fitting, if our constitution were to be drawn up in our national language. But one difficulty will be that few, if any, of the judges of our High and Federal Courts know Hindustani. They will, therefore, have to have an English translation for their use.

"The other question that will arise is as to whether the members of the Constituent Assembly will know enough Hindustani to grasp its essentials."

This letter appeals to me. Why should our constitution be in English? It should certainly be in an Indian language and, in my opinion, that language can only be Hindustani which crores can easily understand. In addition such an act will electrify the masses. As circumstances are, it is right that the Constituent Assembly should make an English translation of the document and, indeed, there should be translations also in every one of the provincial languages.

The second point raised by the writer is also apt. But since the members of the Constituent

Assembly will be chosen by the present legislative bodies, it will be open to the latter to elect, so far as possible, only those persons as are conversant with Hindustani and thus act on the correspondent's letter. Mussooree, 3-6-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

True but not New

Maulvi Hamidullah Sahib of Lucknow came to see me in Mussooree and handed two of his pamphlets. They are an attempt to prove the necessity of making obligatory up to the high school standard a knowledge of both Hindi and Urdu and Nagari and Persian scripts, whether for boys or girls. The idea appeals forcibly to me. My effort has always been directed to this end. Time was when Maulana Hasrat Mohani and Babu Purshottamdas Tandon were working for the same objective but alas! we did not meet with success. Nevertheless, I neither abandoned hope nor effort and the result was the creation of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha. The Maulvi Sahib's request, therefore, is nothing new for me.

If the U. P. Government is able, with the general consent, to make the attempt, they will have rendered a great service. I am of opinion that in all the provinces where Hindi or Urdu is the mother tongue, a knowledge of the other should be made compulsory. I have no doubt that the natural outcome of such a step will be the easy birth of Hindustani, in which the two will blend into one. The present controversy between the two sisters will then cease. Another advantage that will accrue is that tuition up to the high school will be in the national language instead of English.

Mussooree, 5-6-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

No Publicity Required

A Brahmin correspondent asks me to publish the fact that he has become a Harijan and wants to eliminate his name as a Caste Hindu from the census too. This is a sequence to my having asked all Caste Hindus to look upon themselves as Harijans of the so-called lowest stratum. But what is the point in giving publicity to an inner change? The real proof is for the convert to practise the change in his daily life. He will, therefore, mix freely with *Bhangis* and take an active part in their life. If possible, he will live with them or get a *Bhangi* to live with him. He will give his children in marriage to Harijans and on being questioned he will say that he has become a Harijan of his own free will and will register his name either as a Harijan or *Bhangi* in the census when he has to classify himself. But having done so he will on no account arrogate to himself any of the rights of Harijans as, for example, he will not enter his name as a voter on their list. In other words, he will undertake to fulfil all the duties of a Harijan without seeking any of the rights that pertain to them. So long as separate voting lists are maintained he will cease to be a voter.

New Delhi, 9-6-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

Petrol and the Black Market

A correspondent writes as follows:

"Owing to lack of time it is not always possible to do all the necessary touring by rail. Workers have, therefore, to travel long distances by car. As petrol is rationed and the required quantity is not available recourse is had to the black market. It is either brought through someone or the taxi-driver is commissioned to obtain it from the black market and payment per mile is given to him according to the price paid for the petrol.

"Is it right for workers to use a car under these circumstances?"

"It is possible that if they do not, they will have to cut down their touring which will seemingly be harmful to the work. Am I right in believing that there is no alternative?"

I am of opinion that the worker who believes in truth should not use a car under these conditions. Even if he is not a believer but tries to render service thoughtfully he should not do so. If he does, he knowingly encourages black marketing and nothing but harm can come of such action. I go further and say that to use a car at all times for service is wrong in itself.

New Delhi, 10-6-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

Decimal Coinage

It seems that I inadvertently allowed to be printed in the last paragraph of Shri K. Mashruwala's article on this subject the statement that a second instalment would follow showing how, if at all, decimal coinage without loss to the poor could be promulgated. As a matter of fact I do not think the time has come for a serious consideration of the contemplated reform. I am quite clear that however attractive any scheme of decimal coinage may be, it should not be considered before there is an independent national Government. Therefore, the publication of any such scheme is wholly premature. There are many more pressing and urgent problems occupying the best mind of the country. Surely the country can easily wait for a more fortunate moment for a proper understanding of a scheme before legislation on the subject is undertaken. If England has waited for years and is still waiting, why should poor famishing India have a radical reform in coinage sprung upon it without the man in the street being instructed in the pros and cons of the subject? It is not a matter which has nothing to be said against it. It will certainly not add one grain of corn to the existing stocks. Whether a rupee is to contain 100 cents or 64 pice is a problem that can await solution for a happier day. Democracy demands patient instruction on it before legislation. Hence I intended to erase the announcement of the second article in order to avoid raising a hope I had no desire to satisfy.

New Delhi, 9-6-'46

M. K. G.

WEEKLY LETTER

HIS LIBRARY

Perhaps very few people besides his close companions know that Gandhiji calls his lavatory 'library'. It is not merely a matter of nomenclature but is so in fact. He has done more reading in his 'library' than an average man does in his lifetime. It is also the place where he has done some of his hardest thinking—I can recall at least three occasions when decisions of a most far-reaching character were either taken or reversed in the solitude of that sanctum, the only solitude that he could have. The expression 'library' was borrowed from an esteemed friend. Gandhiji often loves to describe how this friend kept his lavatory so clean that one could sit and read in it without discomfort. He had even got fixed over the seat of his lavatory a book shelf which was put to its full and legitimate use. "The lavatories of even the poorest of the poor ought to be as clean and neat as a library or the kitchen. There should not be a trace of dirt or foul smell in it," remarked Gandhiji before the prayer gathering at Mussooree on Sunday last. He was speaking to them about the necessity of building a sanctuary or a *musafarkhana* at Mussooree for the poor folk, where they could avail themselves of the cool hill climate in case of need. "You might think that I am speaking with my tongue in my cheek. The fact is that a meticulous sense of cleanliness, not only personal but also in regard to one's surroundings, is the alpha and omega of corporate life. We in India have made a ritual of cleanliness. But we have yet to make good our claim that we possess the sanitary instinct. I have seen how we foul the banks of our holy rivers. Ganges water is regarded by us as holy, capable of washing off our sins. The idea is symbolical. Just as water washes the body clean, a devotee prays and hopes for the cleansing of the heart by the water of life. But if we contaminate our holy rivers as we do, how can their water effect inner cleansing?"

He had heard that the living conditions of the labourers in Mussooree were deplorable. They lived in small, overcrowded, dirty and evil smelling rooms. No one could afford to overlook that. All life was one. If they cleaned their own homes and neglected their neighbours' they would have to pay the price in the form of epidemics and the like. In the West they had been able to rid their countries of plague. He himself had witnessed in South Africa how by prompt and energetic action the Johannesburg Municipality was able to arrest the outbreak of plague so effectively that it never came back. But in India it returned again and again—it had become almost endemic. "The remedy lies in our own hands. We must not only observe the rules of health and hygiene in our own persons but we must see that our poor neighbours do so too. To neglect to do so is a sin for which we cannot escape the penalty. I do not grudge the rich their riches provided that they do not forget the poor and share their riches with them and provided

their riches are not gained at the expense of the impoverishment of others."

THE GADFLY

Socrates described himself as a gadfly, the mission of whose life was to shake the complacency and quicken the conscience of the rich and the powerful. Gandhiji did not allow the conscience of the fashionable rich of Mussooree any rest or respite. Only he accompanied it with the healing message of *Ramanama*. "*Ramanama* is not for the few; it is for all," he told them on the following day. "He who takes His name lays by a rich store for himself, and it is inexhaustible. The more you draw upon it, the more it increases. It is infinite. As the Upanishad says, you take out infinite out of infinite and infinite remains behind. It is the unfailing panacea for all the ills, physical, mental and spiritual to which man is subject. *Ramanama* is only one of the numerous names of God. In fact there are as many names of God as there are human beings in the world. You may substitute Krishna for Rama or you can substitute for it any of His countless names and it will make no difference." He himself had got the mantra of *Ramanama*, he said, from his nurse when he was a child. "I used to be frightened of ghosts and evil spirits in the dark. My nurse told me, 'If you repeat *Ramanama* all the ghosts and evil spirits will vanish.' I accepted her advice with all the unquestioning faith of a child. That cured me of my cowardice." If that was the experience of a child, how much more would the grown-ups stand to gain by it if they repeated *Ramanama* with understanding and faith, he asked.

But the condition was that it must come from the heart. "Do evil thoughts possess you or, are you tormented by lust or greed? Then there is no charm against it like *Ramanama*." And he illustrated his meaning by a parable. "Supposing you are tempted to amass a big fortune by some easy and dishonest means. If you have faith in *Ramanama* you will say to yourself, 'Why should I amass for my wife and children riches which they might squander away—why not leave them a legacy in the shape of sound character and sound education and training that will enable them to earn their living by honest industry and body labour?' Ceaseless repetition of *Ramanama* will dispel your delusion and false attachment and the living realization will dawn on you that you were a fool to hanker after millions for the sake of your dear ones instead of offering them the priceless treasure of His name which frees one from all bondage and wandering. Filled with the joy of that realization such a person will tell his wife and children, 'I have not brought for you the treasure I had set out for but something infinitely richer.' 'Where is it, show it to us?' they will say incredulously. 'It is the Name which is richer than all treasures' he will reply, 'because it quenches the thirst for all riches. It is enshrined in my heart.'"

SKELETONS IN THE CUPBOARD

As at Simla so at Mussooree, he more than once rattled the skeletons in their cupboards. He

spoke to them of the poor rickshaw pullers and load carriers there. They should be everyone's concern. They made life possible for the wealthy and yet the latter, while willing to take from them even the inhuman service of rickshaw-pulling, did not care to see where and how they lived, what they ate and what they earned. He had heard that these poor men lived in tiny rooms without adequate light and air; they did not want to reveal how many herded together into one room lest they should be evicted or fined. They were dirtily clad as could be seen from the little crowd of them that had come to attend the prayers that evening. But perhaps they had not the wherewithal to afford a change of clothes. They might be like the woman in Bihar, when he first went there, who, when asked to wash herself and her clothes, said to Ba: "How can I bathe when I have not another sari to put on?" It was the bounden duty of those to whom God had given more than their needs to spend the extra on those who were in want. He had been told that the Congress Government was now in power and would see to it that labour quarters everywhere were rebuilt. If they did so it would be a good thing. It would be no more than their bare duty. That would not, however, exonerate rickshaw riders from *their* duty. Doctors had told him that these poor people pulled these vehicles for four years or so and the work was so hard that they died soon after of lung and heart trouble. How could the users be so callous as not to see that they were properly housed and sufficiently paid and clothed and not overworked.

AN ERROR AND CONFESSION

In the mirror of Satyagraha what might appear as trifles to others, some times assume gigantic proportions. Not satisfied with what he had heard from others about the condition of the load bearers and rickshaw coolies of Mussooree, he deputed one of his party to visit their slums and study at first hand the conditions of living there. In the course of his report, the friend who had been deputed, mentioned to him, what he had been told by some rickshaw pullers, that they had been turned out from the prayer gathering on account of their dirty clothes. On the basis of that report he had allowed himself to address a few remarks to the prayer gathering. His remarks were taken to heart by one of the workers who was in charge of the meeting. On subsequent inquiry Gandhiji learnt that the information which he had received was of doubtful authenticity. As a Satyagrahi he felt he had fallen from grace in accepting a statement made to him without full scrutiny and by basing his public remarks thereon. Making a public confession of his mistake in his address after the prayer on the following day, he stressed the importance of speaking only when necessary and uttering every word after the most careful thought. A Satyagrahi could not afford to be credulous or to be careless in his speech. There is a Sanskrit verse saying that not to begin is the first sign of wisdom, but

once you begin a thing you should do it well. "It would have been best not to have made use of the unsifted information. But having done so I should end it well by making the admission that on inquiry I found that the accusation could not be supported." He next told them of his three *gurus*—the three Japanese monkeys, a replica of which he always kept before him on his desk. "There is a great piece of sculpture in Japan depicting three monkeys. One of them is shutting his mouth with his hands, the second is shutting his ears and the third is shutting his eyes. The lesson of the first one is not to speak unless absolutely necessary and then too, to weigh every word before speaking. The message of the second is not to hear evil things, of the third not to let one's eyes wander here, there and everywhere." Therefore, when going along the road, one should either contemplate the beauty of nature or else fix his gaze on the ground before one. He carried about the three *gurus* with him wherever he went and he advised them all to bear their instruction in mind.

ANOTHER LESSON

Accidental delay of a few moments at the prayer meeting provided Gandhiji with another theme for his after-prayer discourse on Thursday last. An important visitor had detained him beyond the stipulated time, so that when he reached the prayer-grounds the prayer had already commenced. Apologizing for the delay in his address at the end of the prayer, he told the audience how pleased he was that Shri Kanu Gandhi had started the prayer without waiting for him. "It should be the general rule that prayers must not be delayed for anybody on earth. God's time never stops. From the very beginning the wheel of His time has gone ceaselessly on. As a matter of fact there is no beginning for Him or His time.

"God is not a person. No one can describe Him as no one has seen Him. He is the Law and the Law-giver combined into one. The author of the Vedas, after the profoundest search has described him as *Neti, Neti* (not this, not this). He moves all and yet no one can move Him. Not a blade of grass moves without His will. For Him there is no beginning and no end.

"Everything that has a beginning must end. The sun, the moon and the earth must all perish one day even though it might be after an incalculable number of years. God alone is immortal, imperishable. How can man find words to describe Him? How can anyone afford to miss the time of offering prayers to Him whose watch never stops?" Had Kanu Gandhi waited for him it would have hurt him, he said. He had felt ashamed of disturbing the meeting by walking up to the dais when the prayer was going on. If others came late during the prayers he inwardly fretted against them: why did they not stand at the far end of the gathering instead of walking in and disturbing the meeting? He would have liked to

wait outside but he knew that people were waiting for him. They might feel worried over his absence. Therefore, he had dared to walk to the dais and take his seat there though not without trembling. His car had not failed him. But he could not rudely tear himself from his visitors.

He wanted them all to learn a lesson from the incident. If they kept the time for the prayers the habit would be reflected in all that they did. "A man who works regularly in a systematic fashion never feels overworked or tired. It is not hard work that kills a man, but irregularity or lack of system."

New Delhi, 11-6-'46

PYARELAL

HINDUSTANI CRITICIZED

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Shri Jivanji Desai has sent me samples of some criticisms of the edition in Urdu Script of 'Harijan-sevak' from both Hindi and Urdu newspapers. They have made fun of its Hindustani. Hindi critics opine that the articles are deliberately filled with unnecessary Urdu words and Urdu critics complain of the use of Sanskrit words which Muslims cannot understand.

I am glad of these criticisms. Thus, why should the paper be called 'Harijansevak' instead of 'HarijanKhidmatgar'? Why 'Sampadak' and not 'Editor' or 'Mudir' and so on? Lovers of Urdu believe that Hindustani and Urdu are synonymous. Lovers of Hindi feel the same conversely even when it is written in the Urdu script. Presumably they hope that this criticism will go home and make me give up the Urdu script in sheer despair. But the hope is not likely to be fulfilled. In fact neither Urdu nor Hindi is to be termed Hindustani. Though not in vogue today Hindustani is a wise mixture of the two. If newspaper and other critics will exercise a little forbearance they will presently see that it is not difficult to understand what is Hindustani as distinguished from Hindi and Urdu. I admit that those who write for 'Harijansevak' are still struggling but they are determined to reach the desired goal. Readers must bear kindly with what may today seem a hotch-potch of the two forms. If God spares my life, I hope to prove to the readers of 'Harijan-sevak' that Hindustani can be as sweet as either Urdu or Hindi. The seeming quarrel of today will shortly disappear when the two forms, it is realized, are sisters and that through their joint effort will come into being a stately language which will serve the crores of India.

In the interim I hope critics will point out what to them may appear as mistakes. Taken in a friendly spirit such criticism will help to improve the language of 'Harijansevak'.

Mussooree, 5-6-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

DURING MUSSOOREE SOJOURN

(By M. K. Gandhi)

During the prayer meetings in Mussooree I suggested that the gay people of the place might well think of the poor among them, and make their living comfortable, clean and hygienic as also enable the poorest of all classes to find an abode where it would be possible for them to receive the benefit of the hill climate. Both the suggestions have been taken up with enthusiasm. An influential committee has been formed to carry out the idea of a *dharmashala* or *musafarkhana*. I write this note to suggest that much the most important thing would be to have a committee of workers or even one worker who would make it his business to run the guest house in a becoming manner. Seeing that the place will be free of rent it will be no small task to choose the guests who may occupy the premises. Care will have to be taken to exclude those who are at all able to pay a reasonable rent. The visitors must be those who have nothing wherewith to pay. If the place is to be kept absolutely clean, there will have to be rules to be rigidly enforced in the interests of the visitors themselves. And yet the occupants will have to be treated with perfect courtesy. They must never be allowed to feel that poverty is a crime. Every third class traveller knows that the poor receive rough treatment in the railway carriages and at railway stations. It is a sad commentary that in this poor country where according to books poverty carries with it a certain dignity, in public places the poor are treated almost with contempt and they are made to pay for receiving it. It is in this unfortunate atmosphere that this guest house is to be built. Let the committee seek out from now an ideal caretaker who will answer the requirements of the office which are undoubtedly onerous. If such a person is found, the project is bound to be a pattern for all such places on hill stations.

Mussooree, 8-6-'46

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