

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XV. No. 11

AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, MAY 12, 1951

TWO ANNAS

NOTES

Shri Shivanand's Murder

In the dead of night of Saturday last (28th April, '51), some unknown assassins visited the *ashram*-quarters of Shri Shivananda, the well-known public worker of Saurashtra and mortally wounded him with shots fired at close range. A few hours later the career of this brave worker of Saurashtra thus came to a close.

He and his senior colleague, the late Shri Fulchand Kasturchand Shah, were for a few years members of Gandhiji's Ashram at Sabarmati during the closing teens of this century. Some time before the launching of the Non-Co-operation movement, with the consent and blessings of Gandhiji, they settled down at Wadhwan — their native place — to serve their own province, and founded an institution there. Ever since, they were associated with every political, social and educational activity connected with the struggle for Swaraj. They had found a colleague of a very high spiritual outlook in the late Acharya Shri Chamanlal Vaishnav, and the three worked together for the emancipation of Saurashtra from the grips of autocratic rule, social customs like untouchability, early marriages etc., and ignorance. Financially they were poor and were often hard pressed for maintenance. That has been regarded as one of the reasons for the too early end of two of them — Shriyuts Chamanlal and Fulchand, both victims of T. B. They had worked for Swaraj, always standing in the front rank. But they did not live to see the day of Swaraj. Shri Shivananda was the third comrade. Since the attainment of Independence, he was a link between the Government and the people. A non-seeker of office, he was highly respected by both, and feared by the reactionary forces, which stand for the oppression of the untouchables and the poor. It appears that, since he was a strong ally of the cultivators, he had enraged the *Girasdars* and has probably died at the hands of some of them.

He has died a soldier's death and is, hence, above mourning. But it is a great loss to the people of Saurashtra and his several personal friends. Among the latter must be particularly mentioned Shri Shardabehn Shah, widow of Shri Fulchand Shah, whose well-being he looked

after ever since his colleague's death with all the loyalty of a friend. But she too is a brave worker and it is hoped that she will carry on their joint mission further with as much devotion as ever. Wardha, 1-5-'51

Food Collection

A correspondent signing himself 'Two-Mealer' writes:

"Although millions in Bihar and elsewhere starve, there are yet tens of millions of us who enjoy two square meals a day.

"Shall we, then, be just gazing at the ghastly spectacle from a safe distance? Can't we even so much as give up voluntarily two meals a week, collect the foodstuff and despatch it as quickly as possible to the famine-stricken areas?

"But shall the Government provide the necessary transport facilities?

"A joint Press appeal may yet awaken the well-fed to a keen sense of duty towards our dying brothers and sisters.

"Why depend on American charity?

"India, though fallen, can yet stand on her legs."

The appeal is good and the Government should encourage the urge by providing suitable facilities. I suggest to the correspondent and the people with similar noble urge to make such collections in their localities and take practical measures.

Wardha, 2-5-'51

K. G. M.

The Message of Sarvodaya Samaj

Our short lives are on their trial. During the few years that we have to live on the earth, we must strive to serve all and to win the love of all.

He who has gained the riches of the world, but has gained not love, has gained nothing. He who has acquired knowledge, but has acquired not the love of all, has acquired nothing. He who has won power in the world, but has won not the love of all, has won nothing.

Hence, friends, love all and gain the love of all. This is the message of the Sarvodaya Samaj. (Translated from the Marathi *Sevak*)

VINOBA

Voluntary Beef-abstention

[I am glad to publish the following from Shri T. Vijayaraghavacharya.

—K. G. M.]

In your article on "Fast Against Cow-Slaughter" in *Harijan* of 21st April, you suggest to those who have no religious abhorrence for beef-eating voluntarily to give it up as a gesture of goodwill and fellow-feeling towards

Hindus. It may interest your readers to know that forty years ago when I was Chairman of the Tanjore Municipal Council, a petition was put in to allow a beef market in the city. When this was put before the Council, all the Muslim members spoke strongly against granting it. This surprised me. They told me that they had been so well treated by the Hindu kings of Tanjore, that they had of their own accord given up beef-eating as a gesture of appreciation and goodwill. In proof of their statement they produced a stamped and registered document in which a Tanjore Muslim, while giving his daughter in marriage to a Lucknow Muslim, demanded and obtained an agreement that she would not be asked to eat beef at her new home.

25th April, 1951 T. VIJAYARAGHAVACHARYA

Emerson on Dishonest Ways of Trade

[The following is received from a correspondent. It shows that our morals have not improved during a whole century. —K. G. M.]

The ways of trade are grown selfish to the borders of theft, and supple to the borders (if not beyond the borders) of fraud. The employments of commerce are not intrinsically unfit for a man; or less genial to his faculties, but these are now in their general course so vitiated by derelictions and abuses at which all connive, that it requires more vigour and resources than can be expected of every young man, to right himself in them.

* * * * *

We are all implicated, of course, in this charge; it is only necessary to ask a few questions as to the progress of articles of commerce from the fields where they grow, to our houses, to become aware that we eat and drink and wear perjury and fraud in a hundred commodities.

(From "Man the Reformer", a lecture delivered by Emerson in Boston on 25-1-1841).

Crossword and Race

The Editor, *Harijan*,

I cannot agree with Shri Morarji Desai's press statement that crosswords are not of the same class as racing.

Just because the solution is known to the sponsor does not make the cross-word any better than horse-racing.

Any scheme where a competitor uses 'judgment' to choose the winner (that is sizes up different rivals and makes a shrewd guess about the probable result), and where one out of many possible permutations pays off must — mathematically — belong to one class. Such are cross-words, word and numeral squares, foot-ball pools and horse-racing. If temptation counts, racing can tempt only a few city dwellers, whereas crosswords etc. are all pervasive.

Lottery, slot machine and other gambling devices dependent solely on chance may be considered slightly different.

U.

ON WAY TO SHIVARAMPALLI (A DIARY OF VINOBA'S ITINERARY)

VII

March 21, Gopalpeth (Fourteenth Halt, 14 miles).

Five miles out of the fourteen, which we had to cover to-day to reach Gopalpeth, lay through mountainous tracts. It had tired us, but the sight that we saw on our arrival was a veritable feast for the eyes, and a tonic which removed our fatigue. If the previous village were to be described as the source of a river, here the river was seen in all its glory. One hundred and twenty-five ladies, each with a *charkha* on her head, came in a procession to the village just before we were getting ready for our forenoon meal. As usual the procession was to the accompaniment of the village band walking in the front, followed by boys, women and men respectively. They came from a neighbouring village to see Vinobaji.

I should have said at the outset that the reception in the morning by the villagers of Gopalpeth had been equally imposing. They had come out about a mile to meet and escort us to their village with their women holding *niranjans* (auspicious lights of welcome) in the front and singing *bhajans* along the way. The village had been carefully swept, the road decorated with designs of *alapna*, and buntings of mango leaves hanging on both the sides of the road. A special cottage was erected for Vinobaji in which not a nail was used. A similar shed was also prepared to accommodate the members of his party. There were small enclosures for bathing and closets. Everything looked simple, natural and pleasant.

To return to the *charkha* procession. The ladies arranged themselves in 25 rows of five each and started spinning. The *charkhas* made no noise, and they spun without breakage of threads and waste. The only iron used in the *charkha* was that of the spindle. The rotation of the wheels, with intermittent stops for winding up the thread and restarting drawing was like visualized rhythm. They went on spinning for more than two hours. Sixty hanks were spun. All the yarn was presented to Vinobaji by the ladies, who were clad in their self-spun cloth. Vinobaji inspected the work of every spinner and examined her yarn. The uniformity of the count pleased him. Shrimati Madalsa demonstrated *punai* work and the spinners were glad to see that the problem of silvers could be so easily solved. We were told that there were a few women of the dyers' caste who did not spin, as that occupation was prohibited in their caste. Vinobaji referred to this in his post-prayer speech and said, "Every one who wears cloth must spin. Spinning is not a vocation like that of the carpenter or the blacksmith. It is an occupation common for all. It must be done in every cottage, just like cooking. Do dyers go without cloth? Nor is it only a woman's occupation. Small boys and girls, as well as men and women of all ages must spin. Gandhiji used to spin daily. He had done it even on the day of his murder. He went to the prayer ground after he had spun. He has presented to us an example and an ideal."

Referring to the demonstration of the *charkha* rally, Vinobaji said, "With your wheels, I feel today as if I were sighting Lord Krishna, with the *Sudarshan Chakra* in his hand. I wish the educated people come and see for themselves, what great energy and strength lies in the *charkha*. Let them also see whether the villagers who are all agriculturists find time to spin for their cloth!"

Some one asked Vinoba why they should be expected to spin even after Swaraj. "This is an unreasonable question," said Vinoba. "You might as well ask why you should cook your food after Swaraj!" Just as it is necessary for you to cook for your food, so it is necessary for you to spin for your cloth. For the present the mills have performed the negative feat of producing 12 yd. of cloth per capita in place of the 17 yd. which they could

produce before the war. But even if their production rose to 50 yd. it was not in the interest of the villages to purchase mill-cloth. It is dear even if it is given free. Unless you scrupulously abstain from purchasing mill-cloth, all your vocations will be ruined. You will be without work, and who is going to feed you for nothing? Remember the story of Lakshmi which I have told you." (The story was that the Goddess of Wealth had the habit of taking her round of inspection just towards dusk time, and she entered and blessed the houses of people, where she saw a light burning. The moral was that wealth went to those who worked till it was dark even with the aid of lamps.)

"Idleness," Vinoba continued, "brought a multitude of evils in its wake, e.g. internal dissensions, drinking, opium-eating, smoking. Smoking has increased to a dangerous extent. People are not ashamed to smoke even in a prayer meeting. It shows that even the sense of ordinary good manners has been lost. All such evils grow in the nursery of idleness. Hence our forefathers have taught us, 'Do not waste even half a minute.' (अनाममपि व्यर्थं न नेयम्) Idle hands are the tools of Satan."

Vinobaji also referred to other village industries. Oil, gur, flour etc.—every thing must be produced in the village itself. This alone could transform the Swaraj into Grama Raj (Village Raj). And when people refrained from quarrelling with one another, the Grama Raj would be transformed into Rama Raj. But that would necessitate the practice of Satyagraha. Satyagraha involved a non-violent struggle. "You will all be the soldiers of that struggle. The *charkha* and the plough will be its weapons. We do not need bombs or machine-guns. It will be our power of production which will be needed in a struggle for the establishment of Grama Raj and Rama Raj.

Obviously, it was the elimination of money economy Vinobaji hinted at. He also referred to a probable clash between cities and villages. Unless the former changed their ways of life, and worked for the regeneration of the village industries, instead of exploiting them, a struggle was inevitable.

March 22, Nirmal (Fifteenth Halt, seven miles)

The people of Chincholi, which lay on our way to Nirmal, took the opportunity of welcoming Vinobaji, as he passed through the village. Sixty women had lined up with *niranjanas*. In the morning hours, before the dawn, it looked as if were the stars had descended on earth to see Vinoba from a close distance. I remembered Dnyaneshwar's lines—"Let us join our lights to brighten the world." The tour seemed to fulfil this mission.

Vinobaji halted for a couple of minutes. "I am grateful to you for all this affection. You are so much devoted to the Lord's song. Devote yourselves to His work also!" He begged to be excused for not tarrying, as he must reach the destination in time.

Nirmal is a large town and the prayer meeting was a mixed gathering of town and village people. Vinobaji's speech was, hence, addressed to both. It was a great address, and has, therefore, been reported separately (in this issue).

There were some interesting questions and answers after the speech. Vinoba sympathized with some of the critics, who regretted the replacement of Indian languages by English in the Law Courts and public administration. Vinoba said that in Hyderabad there was, perhaps, some psychological objection to the use of Urdu, but in Baroda there was none against Gujarati. And still Gujarati had been replaced by English. But he wanted the people to console themselves with thinking that when a motor passed away it left a trek of dust behind for a short time. Similarly the trek of the English Government had been left in their language. It would pass off after the present aged men in the services had retired.

"Even the Congress circulars are sent in English!"
"Send them to the waste-paper basket," Vinoba replied.

"But how can we stop the members discussing in English at the meeting?"

Vinobaji had to evade it by saying, "You were the last people to achieve Swaraj. You should also be the last to enjoy it."

This was followed by a discussion on Urdu.

"There was a good field for Urdu here. But they developed an Urdu which is not understood even by the people in Delhi. If they have shaped an easy Urdu, it would have been an example for the country. But those who were responsible for its formation, crowded it with Arabic words. If they had taken the help of Persian words it would not have been so bad."

Vinobaji made one more suggestion. There were about five languages spoken in Hyderabad—Telugu, Kanarese, Marathi, Hindi and Urdu. They had also to learn Sanskrit. Marathi, Hindi and Sanskrit were always written in Nagari. He advocated the same script for Telugu, Kanarese and Urdu. "I know what a great hardship it is to learn different languages written in different scripts. In Europe they learn any language within a couple of weeks because of the common Roman script."

Some pointed to the difficulty of denoting in Nagari such different letters of Urdu which had similar pronunciations, e.g. the various shades of j & s.

Vinoba pointed to Turkey. They had abandoned the Arabic and accepted the Roman script, and arranged the letters according to the pronunciations. There was no need to differentiate between the z in Zakir and that in Mazboot. In the end it was the masses who moulded the shape of a language, and the minute shades would have to disappear.

"But then the purity of language will not be maintained?" objected a questioner. Vinoba explained the flaw in this reasoning. While '*shala*' was correct in Sanskrit, it was considered corrupt in Marathi who pronounced its *l* in a different way (ळ). So, too, was the case with the *l* in Nirmal, their own town. Who was to judge whether it should be ळ or ल? Hence to a certain extent, the purity of words and pronunciations was a matter of convention and fiction. Ultimately, the grammarian had to shape the language as it was spoken by the people, and not the other way round.

Evidently this scholarly discussion did not interest all, and a Harijan rose to speak. People tried to silence him, but Vinobaji called the man and gave him a seat beside him and enquired about his grievance. He narrated how difficult it was to get grain and cloth. He was a labourer. Vinobaji explained to the audience the need of payment in kind so that a necessary amount of food remained in the cities. The public appreciated the suggestion, but the Government officers put forward administrative difficulties. Administration, Vinoba said, was to be adjusted to the convenience of the people and not the other way. If the administrators could not make the people happy, even after Swaraj, if their miseries remained as before, why should the people feel inspired to fight for such a Swaraj, he asked.

D. M.

Our Latest Publications

SATYAGRAHA

[NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE]

By Mahatma Gandhi

Pages xvi + 406 Price Rs. 5-8-0 Postage etc. 14 as.

AN ATHEIST WITH GANDHI

With Introduction by Shri K. G. Mashruwala

By Gora

(G. Ramachandra Rao)

Pages 55 Price Re 1 Postage etc. 3 as.

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD.

HARIJAN

May 12

1951

FOOD DEFICIENCY

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has appealed to the nation to work for the production of food. It should be heartily responded to. Whatever differences there might be about the policy and administration of controls and rationing, there should be none on the absolute necessity of increasing the production of food. And Food must mean in this context the staple grains — wheat, rice, *juvar*, *bajra*, gram, *tur* etc.

Some people have asserted that, as it is, we are actually self-sufficient in food, and that the deficiency is all due to controls, black-marketing, profiteering etc. It is also argued that at the most the deficiency is not more than 10 per cent of our needs and it is too small a deficit to be a cause for worry.

I am afraid that these controversies give a wrong lead to the country, besides making us shut our eyes to obvious facts.

The very fact that profiteering and black-marketing in food are possible and large-scale famines take place from time to time, is evidence of its insufficiency. Kind Providence has not made food an article capable of preservation for too long a time. If the stock was sufficient to give to every individual the amount of food needed by him, the under-ground stocks in the hands of traders, and cultivators would, under a system of controls and very inadequate rationing, become too large to be held profitably and it would be impossible for them to raise the prices exorbitantly. For, while a black market subsists by severely cutting off the number of purchasers so that the stocks may not be too easily exhausted, it itself is controlled by the consideration that the stocks in hand should not become so big as to lock up too much capital or go to waste. If a fairy were to supply to every needy person the amount of money necessary to purchase his requirements from the underground stockists and the Government declared a general amnesty to black-marketeers, it would be quickly found that the stocks were insufficient to meet the demands of purchasers. When they say that you can purchase 'any amount of food you need from the black market', it is forgotten that this is possible only so long as the number of black-market purchasers is a very small one. The insufficiency is, thus, not an imaginary but a real one. It can be met only by increasing the production.

Whether the deficiency is 10 per cent, 5 per cent or 15 per cent is not a material point. That we are not self-sufficient should be a sufficient cause for concern to every prudent manager, whether he has to manage a family, a village or a State. Even if we were certain of the accuracy

of our statistics, our aim should be not to be just mathematically self-sufficient in food, but to be abundantly surplus therein. Personally, I think that our target should be to reach a condition of not less than 50 per cent mathematical surplus. Our country cannot be prosperous unless it had abundant food; indeed so abundant that it should be the cheapest thing next to water. I doubt if our country ever normally produced sufficient food during the last thousand years or so. Given a country which was abundant in food, it was bound to be prosperous. And if its food-sufficiency waned, it must give rise to evils in its religious, social and political order, and a progressive decline in its morals and culture.

The production of food in great excess should have priority over all other plans, and no means, which can help it, should be neglected or disregarded as trivial. The system of revenue administration, land tenure, payment of wages and salaries, agricultural research, afforestation, animal husbandry, local self-government, irrigation should all be so rearranged that they give supreme importance and incentive to the production of food *in excess*. International trade and commerce, industrialization, import of capital goods and machinery not needed for production of staple grains can wait even for a generation. If we prove our talent for increasing our food, we shall discover the key to our all-round prosperity. The talks about raising the standard of living and the establishment of a welfare State have no meaning, if we do not have the very first item needed for living.

Wardha, 2-5-'51.

K. G. MASHRUWALA

TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTES

As promised at the end of Mirabehn's article "Misgivings Confirmed", I give below some important portions from the brochure entitled *The Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore*, published by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi. It is in fact a collection of speeches delivered by prominent leaders and scientists at the time of the opening ceremony of that institution on 21st October, 1950.

The brochure gives eleven subjects proposed to be studied in this Research Institute. Of these Mirabehn has already enumerated six, but I give below all the eleven together for getting a complete picture.

- (1) Storage and preservation of different classes of food materials; prevention of spoilage; reclamation and utilization of partially-affected materials.
- (2) Processing of foodstuffs with a view to improving their keeping quality and facilitating ready usage; refrigeration, freezing, gas storage, dehydration, canning etc.
- (3) Treatment of different coarse food materials to improve their palatability, digestibility and general food value; elimination of harmful and unpalatable ingredients.
- (4) Study of new and hitherto unfamiliar sources of food materials; their processing and supplementation so as to render them more wholesome and acceptable; emergency foods.
- (5) Preparation of concentrated foods, vitamins and other food accessories, composite and multi-purpose foods, ready-to-serve foods, supplementary foods, food substitutes etc.

(6) Preservation of fruits, vegetables and other perishable articles; training of personnel into methods of preparation of squashes, jams, preserves, pickles, chutneys, etc. and general investigations into fruit technological problems including the possible use of exhaled gases, artificial colorization and anti-oxidants for preservation of shape and food quality.

(7) Dietetics, design and demonstration of improved types of food preparations to suit the economic conditions and tastes of people in different regions; improved cooking methods.

(8) Study of problems relating to food industries; provision of technological information; survey of existing industries; their technical problems and collection of factual data for development of new industries; pilot plant trials with different types of industrial equipment.

(9) Food sanitation; survey and advice on hygienic conditions in food industries; treatment and utilization of waste products from food industries.

(10) Development of improved and rapid methods of determining quality of food products; detection of new and unfamiliar adulterants.

(11) Food information; dissemination of general information bearing on food and dietary problems; popular presentation of important development in food technology, issue of bulletins and charts for the preparation of home preserves, different small-scale industries; demonstration of new methods.

There is some justification in Dr. Bhatnagar's complaint that Mirabehn's criticism of the Institute is based on a misconception of the objects for which it is founded. It is like finding fault with a Chemical Laboratory for not being equipped with apparatus needed for the research of physics. In the speech, which he made on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the Institute, he made it clear that the functions of this Institute were not

"those of agricultural institutes, which largely concern themselves with soil surveys, increasing production of crops and evolution of new varieties of resistant plants.....

....there is very slender connection, if any, between research for technological processing and research for increasing agricultural production."

He says further,

"....they (the Government) have laid much less emphasis on the more prudent utilization of our raw materials of food or reducing losses during storage, in industrial processing and on the prevention of ravages by insect pests and fungus after crop collection. The possibilities of introducing processed new materials which can be used as food have had the least attention. All measures for increasing the growth of food both in the vegetable and the animal kingdom are praise-worthy. The "Grow More Food" campaign will evidently require more money and time than the aids which technology can render to food preservation and food utilization. The losses incurred in the inefficient milling of rice and flour on a large scale, as well as in the making of parboiled rice and other parched, semi-parched, baked and cooked foods are pretty large and can be decreased by the aid of technical supervision and research.

"We feel that by introducing substitute foods in which technological research has already shown the way, and by preventing losses of food materials during the storage by fungus, moisture, monkeys, rats and insects science and technology can help to convert our shortage of 10 per cent perhaps into a surplus.....

"....this institute is the first big step which the Government of India have taken to solve the food

problem by the technological as distinguished from the purely biological methods. I have assured Rajaji and others who have made anxious enquiries about the immediate usefulness of this institute that within a year of its inauguration today (21-10-50), it will make a distinct contribution towards the solution of food shortages in India by its technological research."

Dr Bhatnagar has also given a brief account of the useful contributions made by it already during the period of its actual commencement and the formal opening :

"Particular attention has been directed to the production of emergency foods to meet our urgent needs and also to utilize food materials which are now going to waste in certain seasons."

Also

"....on the production of *suitably fortified grains* prepared from different starch-bearing materials, pulses and seed-cakes.....

"Other investigations relate to the possible application of lucerne, now used only for animal feeding, but which is a high-class article of food supplying practically all the food essentials which are lacking in the ordinary cereal diets. Work on the utilization of the jack-fruit and the citrus fruits which are produced abundantly in the Malnad regions, all along the Western Ghats, is actively in progress and the industries are also taking very keen interest in the new developments. Work on the processing and preservation of juice and pulp from cashew fruit has also been carried out.

"Other enquiries bearing on the utilization of different seed-cakes, processing of coarse grains to render them acceptable to rice-eaters, preservation of raw, sliced mango for chutney and pickling, curried vegetables, production of good class vinegar from different sources as a cheap cottage industry, canning of meat products, new and improved methods of processing of pulses without affecting their nutritive value, production of the attractive edible milk from groundnut etc., are in progress....."

Dr Bhatnagar is not one of those

"who get fits of strong belief in the foods as nature provides without any processing (and) are against salting, washing, boiling or baking or sugaring anything,"

and advises,

"Because these prejudices exist scientific research should not desist from search for new foods, new sources of supply or the employment of new processes in the preservation and utilization of our meagre food supplies."

Besides the speech of Dr Bhatnagar, who has earned a great name for powers of organization and speedy execution, and to whose talents the credit of getting this Institute founded is mainly given by all his collaborators, the brochure contains very interesting and instructive speeches made by Shri C. Rajagopalachari, who performed the opening ceremony, Shri M. Thirumala Rao, Deputy Food Minister, and three great scientists Shriyuts S. V. Ramamurthy, C. V. Raman and V. Subrahmanyam — the last being the Director of the Institute. Even though one might differ in one's approach towards some of the subjects to be studied in the Institute, I regard this Institute as a very useful and valuable one. In our vast country there is room for research institutes with a proper industrial approach. On the whole the Institute is not one which can be condemned outright, or to put it positively, it is one which should be maintained, and whatever drawbacks one might feel in its approach towards investigations from the point of view of the *Sarvodaya*

order should be remedied by reasoned persuasion and appropriate directives. Whatever wrong emphasis might have been laid on any particular subject of study and whatever drawbacks that might be or are discovered hereafter can be cured by maturer experience. These activities form a part of man's experiments for discovering Truth.

With these observations in favour of the Institute, I shall discuss next how I endorse the misgivings expressed by Mirabehn.

Wardha, 12-4-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

A POWERFUL WORD

[Text of Vinoba's speech at Nirmal, on 22-3-'51, summarized and translated from Hindi. —D. D.]

Powerful Words

Some words are so powerful that when uttered at the proper time they electrify the whole nation and place a goal before it. Thus in 1907 Dadabhai Naoroji gave to the nation the word *Swaraj*, and it gave a new spirit, a new source of energy to all India. It gave the people a goal to work for, and for 40 years the word gave them service. It had served its purpose when India reached that goal in 1947, and so it retired in a natural way. Gandhiji, too, who had worked for that word and carried the people to that goal, completed his earthly career shortly thereafter.

Sarvodaya — The New Word

Thereupon a new word, a new goal was needed for the nation. Unless the people had it, it seemed as if they had nothing left to work for. Indeed, for a time they actually felt so. Gandhiji had already pronounced it even when he had been working for *Swaraj*. But its significance was not realized then, because the nation's mind was concentrated upon *Swaraj*. The new word was *Sarvodaya*.

Moral Degeneration

Sarvodaya has placed a clear goal before the people. It extends to all the people. In my opinion, there is no need now for the various political parties which have arisen after *Swaraj*, because the problems which have arisen after *Swaraj* are all of a moral nature. The fall in the moral standards of the people is a common and universal experience. I do not blame the people for this. A whole nation cannot become morally depraved. And still, if such is the universal experience, the reason must be found in the environment. But whether it is the people or the environment which is responsible, it has to be remedied. The most important thing, which is necessary to be done after the attainment of *Swaraj*, is to stabilize the people's character, foster mutual goodwill in them and do such other fundamental work. There is no scope for setting up different political objectives in such circumstances. They can have their due place and scope when the moral level of the society is high and there is mutual goodwill. Accordingly, I for one, always ask the politicians, whenever I get an occasion to meet them, to remove the different political labels and be simple human beings.

Universal Unhappiness

During my tour I pass through both towns and villages. I find that the people in both the places are unhappy. In the villages, people are unhappy because they do not get cloth; in the

towns they are so because they are taking to drinking. It is not that they drink to enjoy their happiness.

Decline of the Swadeshi Spirit

The townspeople have been developing other vices also. Since the attainment of *Swaraj* they have even forgotten the distinction between *swadeshi* and foreign articles. They purchase whatever looks cheap, good and attractive. What is the use of *Swaraj* if the town-shops are to be filled up with foreign articles? I can assure you that if you continue to purchase foreign articles, no foreign country will care to establish its rule over you. Why should they undertake the responsibility of government, if they can sell their merchandise to India without any hitch? As it is, no country is now anxious to establish its political domination over another country. The long and short of this is that *Swaraj* has no meaning if our markets are to remain flooded with foreign goods.

Exhaustion of Villages

Such is the picture of the towns. On the other side, the villages have become depleted of all their industries. Their petty vocations have been snatched away from them by the cities. Look at the rice-mill here at Nirmal. If paddy-husking is done in villages, the villagers get employment. If it is done in the town, they are disemployed. Thus the towns, themselves powerless against foreign trade, exercise their ability for simply ruining the villages. The proper thing for the cities to do is to maintain village industries in the village itself, and establish only such industries in the cities as will stop the influx of foreign goods. If they do this the towns and villages can work together in concord and raise the prosperity of the country. Just as they declare some forests as "reserved", so the need is to declare some of the industries as "reserved for villages".

Danger to Towns

If this is not done, the very existence of the towns will be in danger. On the one side, they would be exploited by foreigners and on the other, they would be attacked and looted by hungry and unemployed villagers. What I ask townspeople to practise is merely enlightened self-interest.

I am constrained to say that if you do not find a co-ordination of the town and the village, a deadly struggle between the two is inevitable.

The Ideal of Sarvodaya

As I do not wish to encourage such struggle, I propagate the *Sarvodaya* ideal, and exhort you to meditate upon the power of that word. It connotes strength in every part of the body politic. Not a single limb should remain weak. If you do not think in terms of *Sarvodaya* but talk of classes and class-struggle, and consider only class-interests, India can not be happy.

At present the Government, the trader, the townspeople and the village people all strike discordant notes and nullify the attempts of one another. If all worked for the prosperity of the villages, they would find themselves working for a common goal and mutual benefit. This is the aim of *Sarvodaya*. It is not the slogan of a poli-

tical party, but a word which would dissolve all party factions. Its aim is to unite all hearts and to create united strength.

PROHIBITION AND EQUALITY

The ideals of equality and *Sarvodaya* have been given an important place in our Constitution. It was this very feature of the Constitution that led the Bombay High Court to rule that not to apply Prohibition to the military was against the spirit of the Constitution and hence the army cannot be exempted from it. This same spirit, we learn from the papers, led the Bihar High Court recently to declare null and void the law ending the Zamindari System.

Even the law prohibiting polygamy has been contested in some of the Courts on the plea that the Law cannot, should not, make any distinction between the sexes! In short, the principle of equality having been incorporated in the Constitution, is bound to attract in various ways the attention of the people, the Government and the judiciary.

What then is the practical significance or true significance of equality? — this is the important question before us. Adult franchise has, so to say, conferred political equality on every national. Adequate provision has been made to safeguard the interests of the untouchables, the backward classes, women and children, the minorities, etc. This has, in a way, laid the foundation of social equality. But the equality that all people always think of is the economic equality. The Government can do a lot towards achieving this equality. Radical changes are necessary in the whole economic structure for this purpose. Various schools of thought professing to achieve social welfare based on very fundamental but different outlooks and opinions have come into being — regarding how to do the work, and what are the real and efficient ways and means for it. The Indian Constitution aims at achieving equality and *Sarvodaya* by working on the democratic method. Prohibition can be said to be the best way for it. It saves the hard-earned money of the poor and backward classes and castes from being squandered over drink. With the money thus saved they can raise their standard of life. It is the duty of the adult-education workers and the social-service workers to see to it that these people learn to do so. A good deal of work will be automatically accomplished in the direction of achieving social security for their women and children, as envisaged by the Constitution, during the process. Equality cannot be established by expropriating the properties of classes and distributing the proceeds among the poor. Equality depends on the economic structure and the method of Government finance — the way they raise and disburse their funds. From this point of view, it can be said of prohibition that due to it crores of rupees are automatically distributed among the people, thus raising the standard of life of the poor and enabling them to be true citizens of Swaraj.

The Governments, therefore, should look at prohibition with the broad and comprehensive outlook and give up the unholy idea of monetary gain. Crores of rupees that might otherwise have gone to liquor do remain with the people. They will be circulating among them. The Governments will no doubt avail of these transactions through their sales-tax. They may also levy other taxes on the advice of economic experts. But under no circumstances should they look with a covetous eye at the income from drink which has been condemned by the people for over the last thirty years. Some Governments have undertaken to survey the working of prohibition under one pretext or another. They are welcome to do so with the above object, not to do away with prohibition. As a matter of fact no such survey is necessary, for prohibition is a wholly desirable and successful measure. A desire to survey is likely to enter one's mind if one entertains any doubts for one reason or other, or has an eye on something else; or one may want to survey the situation in order to take stock of the work done in the cause of prohibition and chalk out plans for the future. Let us hope that the Government undertakes the survey from the latter motive. The former type is *ultra vires* of the Constitution and Government cannot undertake it.

(Translated from Gujarati)

M. P. DESAI

FOR TRUTH'S SAKE

More than thirty years ago, Gandhiji declared that the use of liquor and intoxicants must be prohibited in India. Ever since Prohibition has remained a conspicuous item of Congress activity.

When the Congress first came to power the Prohibition policy was enthusiastically adopted and worked by almost all the provincial governments. Notable advances in this direction were made by Madras and Bombay. Even after the resignation of ministries some section-93 Governments, rather Advisors' Regimes, dared not discontinue this social-emancipation measure. And later, on the return of Congress ministries, the matter was pushed ahead vigorously. The prohibition-tune was ringing all over the country.

All of a sudden Gandhiji passed away. This great fact seemed to relieve the authorities in India of a great strain. It was like a patient's vomiting out the bitter dose of medicine after the administering doctor had gone, forgetting that it would only augment his pain. Slowly and steadily, the State Governments as also that at the Centre^a have been dropping one programme after another, which till the other day formed the very part of our veins. Of these the one which has been most disastrously cast off is that of Prohibition.

^aDrinking is an old addiction in a section of the people. Nor am I unaware of the high place it occupies in fashionable society. There is none, however, who does not know its evil effects. That is why we find in the Constitution of India the following directive requiring every State to

"endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption, except for medicinal purposes, of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health."

Our own country apart, very recently the P. T. I.—Reuter circulated a brief news-item from Lake Success which ran thus :

"Lake Success, Feb. 23.

"Women in the Pacific Island of Palau, now under American trusteeship, have petitioned the U. N. Trusteeship Council to introduce prohibition because they are 'plagued by the evils that arise from drinking'.

The American Representative told the Council's Petition Group there had been some cases of disorderly conduct from intoxication, but the administration did not like to go into private homes and regulate men's behaviour.

The Group decided to reply that the matter must be solved by the people themselves."

The reply given by the American Representative, or following it, by the Group is not important, because none of them believed in prohibition, and were also under no mandate to enforce it. What matters is the *appeal* for prohibition.

The prohibition programme has thus almost a universal appeal. And in the particular context of our country, it is very distressing to find the various Governments including the Central desiring to abandon or neglect it. Lack of finances is put up as an excuse. Here is a shocking statement from a very eminent constructive worker, now the Chief Minister of Orissa, which he gave in the Assembly while presenting the budget for the next year :

"Personally speaking it is a tragedy in my life to find myself today directly responsible for all that is being or not being done in the Excise Department. I hold very strong views about the drug and drink habit. But when it comes to take action on the governmental plane the problem at once becomes difficult. It is not merely a question of losing large revenues when from all sides there is demand for more money for all kinds of urgent development work. As an individual I may have a sort of puritanic satisfaction if I wash my hands clean of any money tainted by this vice; but Government will have no justification for losing revenue from this source if it cannot at the same time effectively stop brewing and distillation on a large scale. From my experience about the work of the Excise Department I know how difficult it is now to stop illicit distillation in many areas of the State. To make prohibition really effective we must have to employ a very much larger staff than the present Excise Department. However much we may want it we cannot find the necessary funds for the extra expenditure at the present moment. If we cannot afford to spend the money necessary to stop people from making their own drinks in their homes, dens and jungles, why should not the State tax such people and make it more expensive for them to drink?"

We have all sympathy for the virtuous Chief Minister for the tragedy in his life. But I am sure that the worst enemy of prohibition could expect nothing better from any Chief Minister who wants to eat the cake and yet have it. Any attempt to earn incomes by making others drink on the one side and banning the use of liquors on the other will not succeed any more than a rider anxious to ride two horses at once.

Another ingenious device that the governments have adopted for exhibiting their concern for the drink-habit is of appointing committees to go into the usefulness or otherwise of this measure. A committee is already at work in Madhya Pradesh, another is to shortly take up threads in Rajasthan. There can be no doubt about the recommendations of these committees. They would simply ditto the Government policy which seems to be out to do away with prohibition altogether, and might even take steps to amend the Constitution for the purpose.

The Governments have a knack of wasting public money. They work in a circuitous manner. If they are for prohibition, none can stop them; if against it, let them frankly say so, without fuss. Surely, in such times as these they must not waste public funds.

Of course prohibition does not stand alone in the Congress programme. Perhaps Governments feel embarrassed in adopting prohibition and rejecting other items such as, to mention only one, *vanaspati*. Government would not ban *vanaspati* and liquor as both are associated with Big Business and fashionable society and Government cannot displease them. The drinking habit is the symbol of India's high-class and high-positioned society. It cannot be denied that giving up or slackening prohibition is not a Gandhi policy. What he stood for is well known. Yet we cry from the housetops that our well-being as also of the world is in following the Gandhian way!

If we really desire the Gandhian way, Government must act up to it. Or, for Truth's sake, we should not associate Gandhi with our government and yet give up his fundamental ideals. If we have not faith in prohibition our very faith in Gandhi can be questioned. I wonder how Shri Rajaji, the father of prohibition legislation in India and the writer of several effective articles, stories etc. on the subject, does not speak out his mind in the matter and exhort the State not to depart from the original programme.

All is not yet lost. Governments are trustees of the public weal. They must be truthful and frank. They must carry out policies which are mandatory on them, or be courageous enough to declare in unambiguous terms that Gandhiji's ideas were no good, and the article 47 of the Constitution was passed when the minds of the framers were under the influence of a spirit, which was of a different type than the spirit of wine!

Wardha, 6-3-'51

SURESH RAMABHAI

CONTENTS		PAGE
ON WAY TO SHIVARAMPALLI—VII .. D. M.		82
FOOD DEFICIENCY .. K. G. Mashruwala		84
TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH		
INSTITUTES .. K. G. Mashruwala		84
A POWERFUL WORD .. Vinoba		86
PROHIBITION & EQUALITY .. M. P. Desai		87
FOR TRUTH'S SAKE .. Suresh Ramabhai		87
NOTES:		
SHRI SHIVANAND'S MURDER .. K. G. M.		81
FOOD COLLECTION .. K. G. M.		81
THE MESSAGE OF SARVODAYA SAMAJ .. Vinoba		81
VOLUNTARY		
BEEF-ABSTENTION .. T. Vijayaraghavacharya		81
EMERSON ON DISHONEST		
WAYS OF TRADE ..		82
CROSSWORD & RACE .. U.		82

Subscription Rates—Inland: One year, Rs. 6; Six months, Rs. 3; Foreign: One year, Rs. 8 or 14s. or \$2.

Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad 9.