

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

THAKKAR BAPA MEMORIAL APPEAL

I request the reader's attention to the appeal for Thakkar Bapa Memorial Fund published elsewhere in these columns over the signatures of Shriyuts G. V. Mavalankar, Purushottamdas Tandon and several others. The reader will see that this memorial and its appeal are of a different type from those generally conceived and put forth in honour of departed and much loved leaders. The following are its peculiar features :

(1) It does not fix a target in terms of the amount to be collected, but in that of the number of people who will contribute to it. At least 10 lakh people are desired to subscribe to it. All the subscribers, I expect, should be persons who have heard about Thakkar Bapa and his great mission in life and admired him. It is usual in families to pay donations in the name of every member of the family — even infants. While contributions might be so made in this case also, what is desired, in my opinion, is that such infants or others who are too young to know anything about Thakkar Bapa or Harijan or Adimjati cause should not be reckoned as separate donors. Thus if a child of five, who has heard something about Thakkar Bapa, asks its guardian to pay something in its name, it may be so done. But if a guardian wants to pay something in the name of a child of a year or two (or older but without its being told anything about Thakkar Bapa or the two causes) the child must not be reckoned as a separate contributor. The object of adopting this manner of collecting the subscription is to find out the number of admirers of Thakkar Bapa and the sympathizers of Harijans and Adimjatis, and to canvass as many people as possible. It is a directive to the collecting agent to visit as many houses as possible and speak to as many persons — young or old, men or women — as possible for this fund.

(2) In furtherance of the same object, the amount of a single donation has been fixed at the small figure of *four annas* only. This will enable a poor man also to contribute his mite. It might be asked, why not a pice? Probably *four annas* has been fixed in order to facilitate accounting and receipting. But those who want to

pay less than four annas can do so by a number of them collecting four annas or more among themselves and taking a receipt in the name of one of them.

It will be remembered that the cause of Harijans was as dear to Gandhiji as to Thakkar Bapa. And Gandhiji had made a rule of his life since his memorable Harijan tour to collect even pies and pice in public meetings, railway trains etc. He also charged a fee for his autographs and the collection so made all went to the Harijan Fund. He has directed in his will that 25 per cent of the profits of his publications should go to the Harijan Fund. Since Gandhiji's death, none has taken his beggar's bowl in the interest of Harijans. This permanent Thakkar Bapa Fund will, I hope, fill up that want to a certain extent.

(3) Another peculiarity of this fund is that consistently with Thakkar Bapa's views, it treats all India as a single unit and makes no internal distinctions between Harijans and Adimjatis on regional, linguistic or caste differences. To every area and every group according to its need, and from every friend of the Harijan and Adimjati according to his capacity — is the principle kept in view.

(4) In order to avoid possible rivalries or differences arising between Thakkar Bapa's two children, namely, the Harijan Sevak Sangh and the Adimjati Sevak Sangh, the signatories have wisely decided that whether the collecting agency belongs to the one institution or the other, all the collections will be spent equally for the benefit of both the classes.

(5) Experience has taught the difficulties arising out of allowing all and sundry to make collections. The accounts are not easily settled, the collections are not promptly remitted and it becomes difficult to exercise a proper check on the expenses incidental to collection. In order that this should not happen with regard to this Poor People's Fund, the signatories have decided to authorize only their own trusted workers to make the collections and pass receipts.

Persons desirous of paying their contributions are requested to carefully read and observe the instructions of the signatories made in this behalf at the end of the appeal. No

contributions should be made or sent to any unauthorized agent or office, and receipts should be insisted upon.

I hope all those who admired Thakkar Bapa and all who have a fellow-feeling for Harijans and Adimjatis will pay their contributions without fail. Indeed, there should be many who should pledge themselves to send a contribution to this fund at least once a year.

Wardha, 7-5-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

THAKKAR BAPA MEMORIAL FUND

An Appeal

Who is not aware of the invaluable services rendered, for a long period of over 40 years, in a spirit of service and in an absolutely unselfish manner, by the late Thakkar Bapa in improving the lot of the backward, the untouchable and the tribal communities in India, and in service of the people in times of famine, floods, earthquakes, epidemics, etc.? His work was carried on silently, and on the solid and wider foundations of humanity, without an eye on power or popularity and without any ulterior or immediate political motives. His long-continued, strenuous and sustained work of the most important nation-building and humanitarian character has endeared him to all, including those who had even a casual chance of coming in contact with him or his work. It is, therefore, the natural desire of his colleagues, co-workers, admirers and followers to do what they can by way of homage and as a mark of respect in which he has been held by millions and millions of our countrymen.

The best memorial is to apply oneself to the cause that Bapa had at heart in his spirit and manner and to discharge our duty to the millions of our countrymen. And yet the idea of doing something tangible as a token of love and respect cannot be summarily brushed aside.

Thakkar Bapa was essentially a man of the poor. He lived for the poor. It is natural, therefore, that this memorial cannot be measured in terms of any money-target. The best measure for it is the number of his countrymen who will each contribute his small or big quota in token of his love. The cause he represented is so huge that any amount of funds will be inadequate to meet it. But it is our unswerving faith that, if the cause has taken root in the hearts of the people, there will never be any dearth of funds. It is therefore, that the target for the memorial is fixed in terms of the number of people who have imbibed the message of Bapa's mission in life.

The decision for the memorial was taken on 20th March, 1951, at the meeting of the Adimjati Sevak Sangh, under the presidency of Dr. Rajendraprasad, to make collections from at least a million people. The poorest of the poor may subscribe with his quota of four annas,

while the richest may subscribe whatever his heart and the cause of the poor impel him to do. There is no limit to the maximum that could be paid. The moneys collected will be administered by a joint Committee, appointed separately by the All India Harijan Sevak Sangh and the Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh which are Bapa's children, along with such members who may be co-opted by itself. As the fund is essentially the poor man's, care has been taken to see that the expenses of administration are kept at the lowest level.

The moneys will be applied to advance the work of education, sanitation, improvement of economic condition, relief from disease etc. among these backward communities to be shared equally for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes throughout the whole of India, irrespective of the amounts received as collections from various parts. We have visualized, as did Bapa, the whole of India as one unit, and the funds will be spent according to the needs and the capacity for work in each part of India.

The collections will be kept open till the 19th January, 1952, the first anniversary of Bapa's death.

As Bapa's work is to be carried on in the future and on a more and more extensive scale, donations to the fund will be received even thereafter, and to that extent, the fund will not be considered to have been closed.

We therefore, earnestly appeal to all, whether rich or poor, to contribute their mite to the memorial in token of their homage to Bapa, as also of their abiding interest in the future of the Indian Republic and humanity in general.

Arrangements are being made to set up local offices to receive collections at various places and for issue of receipts for every payment made. It is requested that payment should be made to none but the authorized agent, as also to none without a proper receipt. A list of authorized agents and offices will be published in due course in the Press. In the meanwhile enquiries and payments may be made to Secretary, Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, Harijan Colony, Kingsway, Delhi.

Purushottamdas	G. V. Mavalankar
Tandon	Hridaynath Kunzru
Govindballabh Pant	Rameshwari Nehru
B. G. Kher	Devadas Gandhi
G. D. Birla	Bishnuram Medhi
Shrikrishna Sinha	Anugrahanarain Sinha
Harekrushna Mehtab	Shantikumar
Rajkrushna Bose	N. Morarjee
L. M. Shrikant	Viyogi Hari
Swami Ramanand	Bhagirath Kanoria
Tirtha	Gopabandhu
Jehangir P. Patel	Choudhary
M. S. Aney	V. Bashyam Iyengar

Kingsway, Delhi

30th April, 1951

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

VIII

March 23, Sone (Sixteenth halt, 9 miles)

Reception processions with *niranjans*, *kumkum*, singing etc. have become an everyday common feature of our tour. These greeted us at four different places on our way to Sone, which was only 9 miles from the last camp.

Sone stands on the bank of a river of the same name, which meets the Godavari a little further on. It is a place of pilgrimage, being mythologically associated with Parashuram. He is said to have performed a sacrifice here, in which he gave so much gold to Brahmans by way of *dakshina*, that it began to flow like a river. Hence the village came to be known as Sone or Suvarnapur, i.e. town of gold. But the greedy Brahmans were not satisfied and wanted still more. Parashuram got enraged at this and turned the river of gold into a river of water! (How good!)

Being a place of pilgrimage, Sone is largely inhabited by Brahmans. Most of the villages, which we had visited so far, were almost exclusively inhabited by non-Brahmans—Reddies in particular.

It was brought to our notice that Sone was once a flourishing place, but had much broken down since. Several people had migrated to other places in search of a living, and there was no public school. The people felt much depressed and sought guidance from Vinoba.

As usual there was a spinning demonstration by ladies, and Vinoba noticed that the clothes of the spinners were mill-made. These two features supplied the theme for Vinoba's sermon.

He was glad to see that women occupied themselves in spinning. But he warned them against the deceptive illusion of cheapness created by the mills. The people of the village must use the cloth made in the village itself. The people must love one another, and love meant that they must protect one another. There lived in the town, spinners, weavers, shoe-makers, oil-pressers, Brahmans and others. If the people did not use the shoes, the oil, the cloth and other things made by the village artisans on the ground that they were costly, they simply destroyed one another. It was an illusory cheapness, which made them overlook the fact that it was a more profitable transaction if money from the pocket of one went to that of another person of the village itself, than if it went to the pocket of an outsider. They must all support one another's industries. That was the meaning of *varna-dharma* (duties of vocations) of which the Brahmans spoke with pride.

Addressing the Brahmans Vinoba said that *varna-dharma* implied that a person must carry on the hereditary profession for earning his living. This would not be possible, unless they supported the village artisans. He found that the Brahmans, who had the pride of being at the crest of the *varnas*, had mill-made clothes on their bodies, and factory-made shoes on their feet. That was not *varna-dharma*. There was no dearth of educated Brahmans in the village. How was it then, he asked, that there was no school there? They should not expect the Government to open a school at every place. Government was in very straitened circumstances. They could have it by their own effort. The population was less than two thousand. A few classes, teaching for an hour in the morning and the evening, would be sufficient to give literacy to the whole village. They should do this without any fee.

The Brahmans agreed and offered their names. The school was to be named Sarvodaya Vidyalaya. A ten-year programme to educate the whole village was chalked out. Batches of twenty-five students per teacher; six months' intensive training; two batches a year; fifty students per teacher; four teachers; two hundred boys; night classes for adults—this was the skeleton of the programme. Thus Sone was selected to set an example to the nation. They discussed details with Vinobaji and work was to be started

in a couple of days. (At the next halt we were informed that work had been started accordingly).

March 24, Balkonda (Seventeenth halt, 11 miles)

Before we left Sone, the District Superintendent of Police sent a message to Vinobaji requesting him to allow an armed batch of police constables to accompany him up to the next station, as the area in between was affected by Communist terrorism. Vinobaji, while thanking the D.S.P., suggested that ordinary etiquette demanded that the Police, if they desired to accompany at all, should do so without uniform; 'the question of armed police, accompanying me therefore does not arise at all.'

At Mukphal 6 miles from Sone, the village leader requested Vinobaji to address a few words to the people. It is very difficult to persuade Vinobaji to speak at the middle stations, but the discipline and the sentiments exhibited by the people were sufficient to induce him to break his usual practice. "I am glad to meet you. Those who can come to Armur will come there, but I must give you a happy news. The people of Sone have decided to educate their village without any outside help. That is a good example to follow. After all it is education alone which is the real solution for all our problems. I thank you for the affection you have shown." And he moved ahead. At Kisanagar the workers of the Seva Mandir garlanded him and acquainted him with the work of the hospital. It was a small village where a few workers were rendering medical service to the surrounding villages. The centre can be well developed into a Kasturba Maternity Home.

At Balkonda the compound was filled with men and women numbering not less than 1,000. Shri Hanmanth Reddi welcomed Vinobaji and acquainted the people with the programme of the day. They were asked to come at 5 in the evening, but the place continued to be crowded with the people, especially women, who had flocked there from the neighbouring villages. At 3 p.m. the whole place was completely filled with women. It was not advisable to keep the crowd waiting till five. So Vinobaji stood in their midst and began: "It has become possible now for you to attend such meetings in such big crowds. A few years back, during the Razakar regime, this would not have been possible. But freedom does not mean that happiness will come of its own accord. We have to work for it. I have seen women spinning here today. But they do not wear *khadi*. They spin for money. If we don't value our own work, how can we expect others to value it? Let us use the cloth made of our own yarn."

He advised them to form a village committee to look after the village affairs, including village economics. They must live like one family and keep themselves away from all party politics, that might filter to them from the towns. He wished their village to become a *Gokul* like that of Lord Krishna. Last but not the least, he advised the people not to touch the feet of any leader in order to offer *pranams*. They must not put their head on the feet of any man. A *namaskar* with folded hands was sufficient for the expression of their regard and affection.

The meeting was held in the compound of the temple where we were lodged. There was only one door and a rush was expected. Vinobaji himself attended the exit door. *Prasad* distribution by Vinobaji was arranged and about two thousand people received *prasad* from him. On return to his room, he told us, 'Today I had the *darshan* of one thousand nine hundred and fifty *Narayanas*.'—that is how he looks towards life.

And thus we crossed the Godavari—finishing the Adilabad district and stepping into the Nizamabad district.

D. M.

SARVODAYA

Its Principles and Programme

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INCOME AND PROPERTY

I draw the reader's attention to Swami Sitaram's article "Economic Equality", published elsewhere in this issue.

There is no difference of opinion on a principle, as such, involved here. It is a question of fixing immediate targets. They have to be such as you might hope to achieve by the double method of (i) legislation of a truly democratic government, and (ii) voluntary sacrifice of individuals. About the latter there need not be any limit at all. So, for practical purposes, the only point to be considered is to what extent you would be able to induce the representatives of the people in the legislatures to pass legislation for the reduction of incomes and private property, and to ensure the implementation of the laws you pass. If a party committed to the targets proposed by Shri Sitaram comes into power, I would willingly accept his targets in preference to those suggested by me.

In the prevailing critical condition of the country and with an adult franchise, it may not be quite difficult to put forth attractive schemes of expropriating private property, and the party which promises speedier equalization of wealth may easily gain more popularity than one with a moderate target. With an adequate party organization, it may be able to get even a majority and, thereafter, to pass bold pieces of legislation. But passing laws is not equivalent to the realization of the objectives.

When it comes to implementation, unless a fair section of the class of persons who are adversely affected by a law have become reconciled to the change and several of them have even voluntarily carried it out in their own lives, the ministers will find themselves sandwiched between their own laws and a stone wall. Both Government servants and the moneyed classes will combine to resist the implementation, and all the corruption, which we complain of in the present system, will continue. Hence the futility, in part at least, of passing laws without the intelligent consent of the people against whom they will operate. Hence, also, the necessity of creating a fairly good number of people, who will make voluntary sacrifices and without waiting for legislation. To bring about this, a hunger for a better life than the one dominated by money should be created on a fairly large scale.

This is not impossible. It is not only the evil forces which propagate with intensity and rapidity. We know how Gandhiji could create a new force in the nation in less than a generation. Mohammed had electrified the whole of Arabia

during an equally short period. Several such instances could be cited from the history of every people. If apostles of *Sarvodaya* possess the right spirit of a mission and personal example, the revolution might take place more quickly than we can dream of. If they are weak the world will be where it is, even at the end of a century. People believing in violent and coercive methods might also get temporary ascendancy, and apparently bring about with great rapidity the changes desired by us. That might bring economic equality, but it will not bring *Sarvodaya* and, therefore, well-being.

For the above reasons, it is difficult to put down any time-limit either for achieving the first step or for the period between the first step and the next one. Everything depends upon the intensity of the effort and the purity of the means.

Moreover, the world has been changing more rapidly than we are able to calculate. The change takes place in both the directions. The so-called democracies have been proceeding at one time towards Fascism and at another towards Communism. At one moment people become strongly war- and violence-minded and at another intensely peace- and love-minded. India and Pakistan might move towards each other's destruction during the next few years, or they might fraternize in a manner that might amaze the world. And both the enmity and the fraternity might become long-lived or short-lived.

We do not know the future and cannot, therefore, lay down any definite time-limit for any particular goal. We know, however, that, constituted as we are, we can find our peace by working for *Sarvodaya* alone, and not for Fascism, Communism, Communalism or any other violent ideology.

I would wish, if I could, to move in the directions of the first step suggested by me before the next elections; and if it could be achieved by my saying, "Open Sesame", I would at once utter the *mantra*. But I feel that "practical people" of our time will think of me, with even my low targets, that I am a denizen of the moon. Nonetheless, I have no quarrel against Shri Sitaramji's ideal or even one bolder than his and if he can show a way to its achievement, I shall welcome it without reserve.

Wardha, 21-4-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

Mango Kernel

Now that the mango season has begun I remind the reader that mango kernel is a valuable article of diet, and must not be wasted. Industrious individuals and institutions can organize their collection on a good scale. At Maganwadi, Wardha, students have thought of starting the collection.

Wardha, 10-5-'51

K. G. M.

ECONOMIC EQUALITY

In the *Harijan* dated 31st March, Shri Kishorlal Mashruwala has clearly expressed his considered views on economic equality. He has stated that as a first step he would be satisfied (i) if the maximum incomes of merchants, and others and employees—governmental or otherwise—are brought down to Rs 5,000 and Rs 2,000 per month respectively and (ii) if the maximum property of every individual is limited to Rs 10 lakhs worth on the whole.

I have pondered over the opinions of my esteemed friend. After bestowing on them the greatest thought which they deserve, I find myself unfortunately unable to endorse the standards set by him.

In a Sarvodaya Samaj, as in Swaraj, there is no scope for private property at all. If any allowance is to be made for differences in wealth during the transitional stage, the inequality should not be great or abnormal, but should be as small as possible. The possession of such private property will not benefit the possessor. There are no special facilities or comforts purchasable or enjoyable by him. This wealth may on the other hand render his position awkward and may make him the object of public aversion.

The length of the transition period should have been fixed by Shri Kishorlalji. The omission might have been an oversight. It should not exceed ten years at the most. That was the term fixed for removal of social untouchability; and a longer period is not necessary or desirable for the liquidation of economic anomalies.

The value of the assets both movable and immovable of an average Indian citizen may be estimated at roughly Rs. 6000/-, calculating at 25 years' purchase of Rs. 250, the present average annual income. The holder of 10 lakhs worth of property will then be equal to 166 poor people. It is an unconscionable equation ignoring all canons of democracy. Every citizen's vote in a democratic republic is equal to that of every other. It implies equal status and respect. But under unequal wealth, the poor voter is an insignificant fraction of the other rich voter.

No one should be allowed more than Rs. 25000/- worth of property and that too not longer than 10 years. There should be a further provision for its automatic reduction to the minimum if any fixed for the average man. The gradual scaling down of wealth will mean and inspire proportionate increase in the stature of that man—social, moral and spiritual.

The same considerations apply also to the maximum monthly incomes. The average per capita income *per mensem* being Rs. 20/- the merchant-prince will be equal to 250 and the employer to 100 ordinary individuals. There

should be a similar scale, time-limit and scaling down for these incomes.

Dissolution of wealth may take place in three ways: (i) by violent dispossession by the enraged proletariat, (ii) by compulsory legislation in a well-ordered society, and (iii) by the willing conversion of the owner into a conscientious trustee. The last is the best while the first is the worst method of change. The second is the pattern used by countries accustomed to the parliamentary form of government.

Whatever the extent of the wealth and whatever the length of the transition stage, to that extent and for that period, the possessor of wealth should approximate his position to that of a trustee.

The ancient seers in our country did not tolerate these distasteful and disastrous economic inequalities. They enjoined charity or *dana* as a pious duty and further provided for *Vishvajit yajna* which the rich magnates and kings performed once in seven years. These meant redistribution of wealth hitherto accumulated in the hands of the fortunate few. They are natural, virtuous, beneficial outlets for the free circulation of wealth throughout society. Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, thereby justified her name of *Chanchalaa*.

Since modern society has lost sight of these sacrifices and beneficent deeds, untold misery has descended upon it, affecting the life of both the rich and the poor, thus giving rise to envy, hate and strife and poisoning the very springs of cordial relations inherent in humanity.

A return to the village and a resumption of bread-labour will restore the essential foundations of human society and will herald the dawn of *Sarvodaya*, resulting in equitable distribution of wealth, well-being and happiness.

Vinayashram

SITARAM

The Fivefold Programme and Shri Jawaharlal Nehru

Readers know that at the last Sarvodaya Conference at Shivarampalli, a fivefold programme, namely, of honest life, cleanliness, physical labour, peace and presentation of a hank of self-spun yarn, was placed before the nation. It seems Shri Jawaharlal Nehru has decided to practise the programme. Some days ago he was reported to have taken part in digging a *nallah*. The other day the newspapers reported that at the last session of the A. I. C. C. several members had carelessly thrown about banana rind after eating the fruit. The Prime Minister could not bear this and he started picking up the rinds. He thus set an example in cleanliness. His strong efforts to prevent war and his determination to forge communal unity are too well known to mention. He has thus set the ball in motion for the nation to follow.

Wardha, 8-5-51

K. G. M.

ALCOHOL AND FATIGUE

[A correspondent from Bihar writes to say that alcohol is good for miners, as it is the cheapest and the easiest way to relieve fatigue. I was under the illusion that, thanks to Gandhiji's vigorous campaign for prohibition of over more than a generation this dreadful ignorance and killing superstition no more existed in India. Reformers in Bihar and elsewhere should see that this wrong belief lingering among the masses, and the classes even, is removed. The following is taken from Shri C. Rajagopalachari's *Indian Prohibition Manual*. It will dispel the wrong belief that people like the Bihar correspondent ignorantly harbour in their minds. — M. P. D.]

Some persons fancy that a little strong drink nourishes them and enables them to do their work. The best medical testimony declares that alcohol has quite the contrary effect. The hardest workers in fields, in factories and in mines, soldiers marching, and well-known athletes have all testified that better work can be done without strong drink than with it.

There is no nourishment in beer, toddy or wine. There is a trace of substances that may be called food in these drinks, but there is more nourishment in a few grains of rice or wheat than in a gallon of beer or toddy. The amount of poison in the drink far exceeds the small trace of nutrition dissolved in it. People fancy that there is nutriment in fermented drinks, because the alcohol deadens the feeling of hunger, which is a very different thing from being food.

The fact that toddy is drawn from the palm tree, or that wine is made from grape-juice, or beer and whisky from grains, should not make us believe that these drinks have the nourishing or other good qualities of the fruit or the grain. The alcoholic ferment alters the whole character of the thing, making poison out of food. The sugar which was food has been split by the ferment into two totally different substances, viz., alcohol and carbonic acid.

There is hardly one reputable scientist today who could be induced to assign any food value to alcoholic drinks.

Intoxicating drinks do not impart strength. They take it away. The action of alcohol is to lessen muscular power. This is the opinion of the best doctors and experts.

In a statement issued in January 1918, Surgeon-General Evatt, Sir Alfred Pears Gould, Sir Frederick Treves, Professor Sims Woodhead, Dr Saleeby, and a large number of Indian and British physicians of repute and with good experience of Eastern conditions, testify to the fact that even a moderate use of alcohol, opium or other narcotic drugs "is harmful, especially in tropical countries like India. They are of no avail permanently to relieve physical and mental strain."

Alcohol does absolutely nothing to remove the cause of fatigue. It deadens the power of appreciating the result. If its action be frequently sought in this respect, deeper draughts are called for.

The temporary relief, exhilaration or feeling of strength obtained by the use of alcohol is just like the relief, or feeling of possession, obtained by borrowing from a relentless usurer. You are much the poorer for it.

Brookes, World champion tennis player, said: "Now, when I am more or less at the end of active athletics, the message I give to all young men desirous of attaining their highest efficiency in any line of sport is, 'Do not touch spirituous liquors.'" W. T. Tilden said: "I am convinced that tobacco and alcohol do not refer here to the idiot who smokes all the time or attempts to drink all the liquor he can get. I refer to the moderate smoker and moderate drinker, if there are any. Both tobacco and alcohol are absorbed into the system, and in time have an injurious effect." Jack Dempsey said: "I am a total abstainer and have always been one. I am opposed to spirits in any form for any young man who desires to compete in sport."

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO WAR

Dedicated to Rene Girard, a conscientious objector by his Christian faith, who was sentenced on November 16, 1950, to three months' imprisonment for refusal to render military service, and to all who act in the same spirit.

Conscientious objection is based on a religious faith which admits of no compromise. Its strength is in the work of command (the compulsion) which comes, through Christ, from God. Its justification is the duty laid upon every man to love his neighbour as himself; its law is reverence for life. It is opposed to any order (of society) which does not respect the fundamental dignity of man, with liberty of conscience. It cannot be satisfied with individual witness only; it breaks into the existing order to transform it. It does not rest content with the world as it is; it does not despair of men.

Conscientious objector does not seek his personal salvation, nor retires from the world to win it, nor gives himself passively to charity; he is, before all, a fighter. He knows that God waits in hope for men who will build in their lives a society in which His Son will not be continually crucified afresh; but will be received into the city with shouts of praise perpetually renewed. He is a witness to that conviction.

"God created Man in His own image" and man is responsible for that image. He has no right to limit it to those whom he calls kin, he has no right to hold aloof from all others. He must recognize in every man a brother; such is the divine law, such is the supreme courage which God expects from him.

It is fear that divides, and violence is the daughter of fear. The courage of the violent is nothing but an illusion; it is a fear of death. True courage is to love. But love does not mean protecting some lives by destroying others; it means making these lives into deeds of love, giving them power to fulfil themselves even in death. Who would dare to say that death is inevitable, or to claim that love would never triumph over violence?

O men, bound by excessive love for material goods, limited by your meagre knowledge of the resources of life, and by your cowardly lack of faith, by what right do you claim to be the sole effective defenders of the human values which give a meaning to our own lives and the lives which are dear to us? By what right do you doubt the possibility of a different kind of human society of which the conscientious objectors are the heralds? Your experience? What is your experience worth? Of what value is the experience of men of little faith? By what right do you condemn what you do not understand? The law of the State demands it? But I ask you, judges, men as you are, should justice be shaped according to the form of the State, or the form of the State according to justice? I know, alas, that it is not your business to answer that question. But I affirm that only those men who can shape society according to justice (and all true justice is love) will be able to bring a better world into being.

The conscientious objector, a man of no account, is merely the tool of his own faith; and his value, like that of all good tools, is measured by his faithfulness. Insignificant as he is, the presence of God is with him, guarding him beneath the shadow of His presence, filling heaven and earth, almighty. Weak as he is, he is an incarnation. Mortal, he partakes of all that is perishable; but, inspired by the breath of God, he partakes also of the eternal life. He partakes in the confidence of God.

Is not Christmas the day which glorifies the confidence of God in men, the day on which He sent to them His Son, asking simply for their goodwill, so that peace might be established?

O man of no account, modest as you are, may others follow your example and bring honour thus to the land of their birth.

M. S.

(Translated from a statement in French in *L'Essor* (Geneva), 29th Dec., 1950)

SELECTED LETTERS

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Second Series

XXV

I am glad you realize that poverty is the common lot of millions. The real way to pray to Lord Krishna is to do in His name some little service to those who are less fortunate than ourselves; and when we show the spirit of service in daily life, unbelieving neighbours will begin to believe in God (Recorded by Mahadev Desai in his diary under November 14, 1932).

XXVI

[Message for Shri Verrier Elwin's Ashram recorded by M. D. under November 13, 1932]

Cleanest air, cleanest water, simplest food and cleanest thinking which really means communion with God are the four laws, the first three flowing from the fourth. Hence your English saying, plain, that is, simple living and high thinking. I would like to simplify that saying into — clean thinking and clean living. Boils are a symptom of unclean living in my sense of the expression. Let this then be my message to the brothers for a beginning.

XXVII

[To Arun, Satishbabu's son, who was ill and confined to bed. Recorded under October 20, 1932]

You must not give way to despair. Even organic defects are known to have been removed or at least brought under control. Proper breathing, proper diet and fresh air added to the will to be better bring the desired recovery. You should have a living faith in God and know He will keep your body intact so long as He has use for it.

And why do you think that we can serve only with the body? Mind is a far more powerful instrument of service. They serve best who have perfect purity of heart. Indeed we serve so as to attain perfect purity. Thoughts of the pure in heart can do what the bodies with corrupt hearts can never do. Therefore in no case have you the slightest cause for despair. Do not seek to prove how thoughts work. Enough for you to believe that they do work and produce mighty results. Therefore always cultivating purity of heart, you should be perfectly at peace, whether you are well in body or not. Will you do this?

XXVIII

[To the same. Recorded under November 5, 1932]

I hope you clearly understood what I meant when I said you should cease to think the body as yours. It is God's but God has given it to you for the time being to keep it clean and healthy and use it for His service. You are therefore the trustee, not the owner. An owner may abuse or misuse his property; but a trustee or keeper has to be very careful and make the best use of the property left under his care. So whilst you must not be anxious about the body, you have to take every care you can of it. God will take it away when He wishes.

XXIX

[Recorded under October 30, 1932]

You have asked me for my opinion about occult sciences. I am not in love with them. The

book of life is open to the simplest minds and it should be so. There is nothing occult in God's plan. Anyway the mysterious and the occult have never made any appeal to me. Truth has no secrets, and Truth is God.

XXX

[To Mrs Horace Alexander. Recorded under November 24, 1932]

I have personally ceased for years to grieve over death at all. The shock is felt when a comrade is torn away from me, but that is purely due to personal attachment which in other words is selfishness. But I immediately recover and realize that death is a deliverance and has to be welcomed, even as a friend is welcomed, and that it means dissolution of the body, not of the indwelling spirit. But I must not philosophize. To be true to you and to myself I had to declare my faith and at the same time to let you know that Mahadev and I and your other friends here were not so indifferent as not to take note of the happenings in your circle.

XXXI

[To Miss Mary Barr. Recorded under November 29, 1932]

Because I do not find a particular thing helpful for me, I may not be indifferent about others and not take the trouble of knowing whether it is helpful for them. I know that that particular form of idolatry is helpful for millions, not because they are less developed than I am, but because they are differently constituted. What must not be forgotten about me is that not only do I not consider idol-worship to be a sin, but I know that in some form or other it is a condition of our being. The difference between one form of worship and another is a difference in degree and not in kind. Mosque going or Church going is a form of idol worship. Veneration of the Bible, the Kuran, the Gita and the like is idol-worship, and even if you do not use a book or a building, but draw a picture of divinity in your imagination and attribute to it certain qualities, it is again idol-worship. And I refuse to call the worship of the one who has a stone image a grosser form of worship. Learned judges have been known to have such images in their own homes. A philosopher like Pandit Malaviyaji will not eat his meal without offering worship to the household deity. It would be both arrogant and ignorant to look down upon such worship as superstition. Again in the imagination of the worshipper, God is in a consecrated stone and not in the other stones lying about him. Even so the sanctuary in a Church is more sacred than any other place in it. You can multiply for yourself instances of this character. All this is a plea not for laxity in thought or worship, but it is a plea for a definite recognition of the fact that all forms of honest worship are equally good and equally efficient for the respective worshippers. Time is gone for the exclusive possession of right by an individual or group. God is no respecter of forms or words,

for He is able to penetrate our actions and our speech, and understand our thoughts, even when we do not understand them ourselves, and it is just our thoughts that matter to Him.

MIND OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT

Shri Manilal Gandhi received many hundred messages from various parts of the world during his 14-day fast.

Four organizations of New York, namely, Peacemakers, War Resisters' League, Fellowship of Reconciliation and Catholic Workers expressed their sympathy with the cause for which Shri Manilal Gandhi fasted by picketing the South African Consulate in New York. A delegation of the pickets waited upon the Consul and had a discussion with him for 1½ hours. In the interview

"The Consul denied that there was any 'cruelty or oppression' exercised towards the Cape Coloured, the Indians, or the Bantus. He contended that the Indians were much better off than most in India, that the Union was quite willing to assist them to get back to India, but the Indians did not want to return, which, in his opinion, demonstrated that they were being well treated in South Africa.

"The natives, he stated, were being encouraged to maintain their own tribal society and at the same time were being educated in democracy.

"The real difficulties, he contended, were with those coloured persons who came into the South African cities and mines to work and in many cases to return to their native habitations. Difficult as are the problems raised, the conditions of the coloured people were being constantly improved.

"On the other hand, the Consul made it perfectly clear that the Union of South Africa intended to maintain the policy of keeping political control in the hands of the white minority and the policy of segregation as well. He repeatedly justified this position by asking what we thought Americans in the South would do if the whites were outnumbered ten to one. To our question as to whether this policy of minority rule represented democracy or progress towards it, his answer was to ask whether we knew of any instance where democracy, that is to say, majority rule, was actually practised. When we cited the United States and Western European countries, he suggested that as a matter of fact small minority cliques run all of them.

"We raised the question as to whether South Africa really believed that it could indefinitely maintain this minority rule against the upsurge of the coloured peoples of Africa. His answer was that nobody knew what might happen in 200, or may be 100 years, but that for the present the policy in effect was the only possible one.

"One interesting moment came when Bill Sutherland, the Negro member of the committee, asked the Consul whether he would be permitted to visit South Africa to witness for himself the 'improvements' in the conditions of the coloured peoples which the Consul had stressed. The Consul cleared his throat and was, obviously, for the moment bowled over by that suggestion. He retained his temper outwardly at least and in a moment said: 'That would be a matter for the Government of South Africa to settle. All kinds of people want to migrate to or visit all kinds of countries, and all governments find it necessary to screen those who apply for visas.'

(From the *Indian Opinion*, April 20, 1951)

CE'SAR BUGANY — FRANCE

The Secretary, War Resisters' International of England informs that Ce'sar Bugany, a conscientious objector to war, had served four sentences totalling a period of four years nine months' imprisonment and was about to face his fifth trial for continued refusal. This was felt by his friends as unnecessarily hard, and at a recent meeting of the committee for the legal recognition of conscientious objection each member undertook to work for his release. But it did not appear to meet with much success, until on the intercession of another friend, also a member of the French F. O. R., the wife of Monsieur Jules Moch, Minister of National Defence for France, became personally interested in the matter, and took it to the authorities. News has been received that Ce'sar Bugany is to be discharged from the army as physically unable to serve.

This is relieving news. Not only is it a personal triumph for the steadfastness of Ce'sar Bugany who has stood the test of very great trials for nearly five years, but also for the cause of war resistance in France. It shows that considerable progress has been made there, for the case is unparalleled in its important implications. Bugany deserves our congratulations.

Thanks are also due to M. Jules Moch, the Minister of Defence of France, for taking the right step. It is hoped that he will also look into the cases of several other war resisters who are now suffering terms of imprisonment in France because of the stand they have taken similar to that of Ce'sar Bugany, and that the proposed law for the legal recognition of conscientious objection will soon be brought before the Assembly in France and passed.

Wardha, 17-4-51

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