Respect for Womanhood

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HARIJAN

16 Pages

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)
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NOTES

Vinoba's Telangana Tour

The "Unofficial Note" of the Hyderabad State, dated 9th June, 1951, says:

> "Acharya Vinoba Bhave who has been touring Telangana on foot since April 16, 1951, concluded his tour at Mancherial on June 6, 1951. During his historic tour, he encamped at 51 villages, studied the conditions of about 200 villages and addressed more than two *lakhs* of persons. '*Sarvodaya* is a better alternative to Communism,' he said wherever he went.
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> "Acharya Vinoba Bhave settled, in the course of his tour, more than 500 village disputes. They were referred to him by the parties themselves. Acharyaji has received about 9,000 acres of land for distribution among the landless. A Committee consisting of Hon'ble Shri B. Ramakrishna Rao, Shri K. V. Ranga Reddy, M.P., and Shri P. V. Subbarao, Member, Board of Revenue, will arrange for the distribution of these lands among the deserving."

Vinoba is expected to arrive at Sevagram on the 25th instant, and reach Paunar on the 26th.

Wardha, 13-6-'51

The Waste of Somnath

I received letters from correspondents who challenged the official statement that no rationed articles were used in feeding the guests at Somnath, and alleged that there had been an enormous waste (more than three-fourths) of *ladoos* and other food prepared for the occasion.

I made enquiries and regret to find that though the letter of the law may have been observed, it was altogether broken in spirit. I am consoled that the *ladoos* were not made of rationed cereals but of gram, which is not a rationed article, and that though the quantity of 'unused *ladoos*' was 'substantial', it was not so great as my correspondents had alleged, and that they were not wasted but were distributed among the people of the neighbouring villages. One cannot but deprecate this special pleading. Gram may not be a rationed article; but being cheap certainly forms a substantial part of the poor man's food and serves as a substitute for cereals. The quantity which went to waste could have fed at least a *lakh* of the famine-stricken people of Bihar. Moreover *ladoos* do not mean merely gram, but almost an equal quantity of sugar and a huge amount of *ghee* or *vanaspati* (whichever was used). That they were distributed among the neighbouring villagers (who did not need to be fed) is hardly a consolation.

All this cannot but bring discredit to the Government. But nothing better can be expected to take place in a Vanity Fair.

Wardha, 14-6-'51

The Bureaucratic Machine

Early last month the Prime Minister made a stirring appeal to the country to come to the aid of the people of Bihar and Madras. A few young men in Wardha with the permission of the Food Minister, Madhya Pradesh, took up the work immediately and began to collect grain from the neighbouring villages. When they had collected some, they requested the Deputy Commissioner to receive it. But the Deputy Commissioner regretted that he had received no authority to do so, although he was expecting it every day. The volunteers made enquiries day after day, but the authority would not arrive. Where should the volunteers store the collection? They approached me. I wired to the Food Secretary of the State at Nagpur and wrote to the Food Minister at Panchmadhi. There was no answer from the former. But after nearly a week, I was informed yesterday that the D.C. had *now* been authorized to receive the grain.

The Food Minister explained that the delay had been caused in the Secretariat as such instructions could be issued only through the Chief Secretary, and not by the Food Secretary. Evidently the Chief Secretary's machine had stopped functioning somewhere.

Imagine how Lord Linlithgow or the Governor of a province would have dealt with a delay of more than a fortnight in the despatch of food during the war! Could their Secretariats have dilatorily despatched their instructions from one department to another at the proverbial bureaucratic pace?

The last war showed that the bureaucratic machine was not altogether incapable of speedy action. If it does not do so now, the inference is that either the popular ministers are as helpless against the bureaucracy as they were in the British regime, or that they, too, are not quite serious when they say that they treat the food problem on a war basis.

Wardha, 14-6-'51 K. G. M.

The Devil at Play

A Press report in *the Hindustan Times* of May 24th reads as follows :

"Tokyo, May 22. A new weapon, perfected only a few days before the latest Chinese offensive in Korea, helped to check the Communist onslaught.

"An American commander gave the order and ten Chinese advancing towards a U. S. defence line in the Pukhan valley disappeared in a searing mass of flames.

"The flames soared 90 feet into the air and enveloped 100 square yards of ground. No sign of the Chinese remained on the devastated patch of ground.

"The new weapon is believed to be the ground development of the Napalm (jellied petrol) bomb which U. N. planes have used throughout the Korean campaign with good effect. — P.T.I.-Reuter.'

What difference is there in this and the "Mussolini" mentality? None at all! Methods have become more efficient and still more cold-blooded, that is all. Crores and crores of rupees are being spent throughout the world on "perfecting" ever more and more "new weapons", and what is man achieving by this? The slaughter of his brothers and devastation of his Mother Earth, while in so doing he sells his soul to the Devil.

Oh India! keep clear of this hellish game! If there is any vestige left in thee of thy ancient faith and culture, then no one knows better than thou that the material body is of no account and the soul is all in all. Whatever the future may hold in store, sell not thy soul to the Devil.

MIRA

Seven Prizes

The *Watumull Foundation* of U.S.A. has announced prizes varying from Rs 3,000 for the first to Rs 100 each for the last three for an essay on *Population Control in Relation to Food in India*, in *English*, to be submitted on or before 15th August, 1951. For rules and conditions apply to Mr J. Watumull, Kishore Building, Kalbadevi Road, Bombay 2.

ON WAY TO SHIVARAMPALLI

(A DIARY OF VINOBA'S ITINERARY)

XII

March 31, Vadiaram (24th Halt, 12 miles)

Vadiaram is Udeeyavaram, i.e. Udaipur. Narsingi and Chheguntha (i.e. *chhe kunda*—six ponds) are neighbouring villages. The following table shows what havoc *shindi* and *tadi* have played in these villages :

	Abstainers	Drinkers	Total	Percentage of Drinkers
Narsingi	106	894	1,000	89.4
Chheguntha	10	290	300	96.7
Vadiaram	30	470	500	94

Workers and students of the Hindi classes at Narsingi came to see Vinoba and asked for a message. Vinoba said: "Give up *shindi*, learn Hindi." The young men took the message like a *mantra* and returned to Narsingi shouting it as a slogan on the way.

At Vadiaram, we were put up at a Christian Mission, which has been doing its work for the last 25 years in this area, and has been able to convert about two thousand people to Christianity. Medak, which is about twenty miles from here, is regarded as the second largest Mission establishment in India, Calcutta being the first. The Mission priest headed the several hundred people who came to receive Vinobaji. But in the *dhuns* and the *bhajans* which were sung, the name of Vitthal of Pandharpur was quite prominent. This was rather surprising, for Vadiaram is in the heart of Telangana itself. Possibly, people of this place go to Pandharpur every year on pilgrimage or some Maharashtra saints have at some time visited this part, and introduced these *dhuns* among the people. Be that as it may, today, they had amongst them a saint who represented not only the popular creed of Maharashtra but of all religions.

Christian prayers were recited at the prayer time. In his post-prayer speech Vinobaji expressed his pleasure in being able to reside at the Mission house.

From ancient times, he said, several saints have been born in India. Christ, the *guru* of the Christians, was also a great Saint. Muhammad, the teacher of Islam, was equally great. Saints and messengers were born in every community, every country and every language. God graciously produced every now and then good men to guide the people. Mahatma Gandhi was one such great saint of our age. All these great men belonged to the same category. They all belonged to one community and had one religion. Devotion to God and love for humanity was their common religion.

The Christian prayer which they had then heard said that God is Love and that men should make their hearts pure and full of affection through devotion. Such also was the teaching of Muhammad. But it was strange that the followers of Muhammad, Christ and of Hinduism did not have cordial relations among themselves. It was good to recite the name of God and one's *guru*. But to make a particular word for God and the name of one's *guru* an object of egoistic pride for distinguishing oneself from others was bad. Instead of putting into practice the teachings of their master, people took an empty pride for the excellence of those teachings, and with a vain egoism commenced to hate others. It was well known that Hinduism taught that all life was one. And yet they had created thousands of castes and sects within the Hindu society and generated mutual hatred and disrespect. Similarly Christ had given the message of Love; but in the name of Christ, Christian nations waged war after war everywhere in the world, and within the last forty years two great world wars had taken place. Christ had preached non-violence in the same way as Mahatma Gandhi. But the increase and development of arms and ammunition by Christians had no parallel in history. In the same way Muslims called their religion Islam, that is Peace. When they greeted others they said, "*salaam alekum*" (Peace be with you). But the general behaviour of the Muslim people created a doubt whether Islam had any message of peace to give. In this way people transformed their teachers into egoistic entities and did not practise their teachings. Life remained as degenerate as ever.

When people got morally deteriorated, teachers appeared in their midst to reform them. But instead of improving and reforming themselves, the disciples merely invited others to accept their religion. Every one was anxious that the number of his co-religionists should increase. Religion was a thing to practise, Vinoba said. It was not concerned with numbers. "I have heard that 3,000 villagers of this and the neighbouring region have embraced Christianity. If this act of theirs has improved and reformed their life I shall say, well, a good thing has happened. But if their life has not improved or reformed, it is the same whether they call themselves Christians or Hindus. If they continue to drink wine and toddy, if they continue to speak lies as before, but have only changed their religious denomination, they have changed nothing. A man who speaks lies and hates others is neither a Muslim nor a Christian, nor a Hindu! He is a man without religion. If a Hindu commits acts of *goondaism*, he is a *goonda*. But the moral condition has so deteriorated that Hindus take pride in such a *goonda*. Similarly if a Muslim or a Christian *goonda* commits *goondaism*, Muslims or Christians, as the case may be, take pride in him. Owing to such deterioration, young men of the present time say that they do not want any

religion. This, too, is a wrong attitude. If people belonging to a religion do not act according to the principles of that religion, the fault does not lie with the religion, but with its followers." Vinoba said that good religious teachers had been born in every region and religious sect of India, and it was not necessary that a teacher from another sect or region should go and teach religion to a particular place or sect. Thus it was not necessary that a Malbari should go to teach religion to the Telugu people or a Punjabi should impart religious knowledge to Maharashtrians. He would advise that they should act according to the teachings of the saints who were born in their neighbouring regions. If people belonging to every religion and the followers of every teacher improved and reformed their lives, others would get inspiration and happiness from their lives. If the people belonging to the various religions acted according to the principles of their respective religions, not only would they be helping one another, but would also increase the collective happiness of the world. They must not make invidious comparisons between a Hindu, a Muslim and a Christian. "When we stand before God we shall not be asked whether we are Hindus, Muslims or Christians; but we shall be asked whether we have performed good deeds or bad ones. If a Brahman commits bad deeds, he will degrade himself in the eyes of God, while if a *chandala* (lowest born) offers his devotion to God, it will be accepted by Him. So, let us love each other and adopt the right path. All the teachers in the past have told us these things and we have to learn these things from them. I tell the same thing to you today and say that as I have come here, take at least this much advantage of me. I heartily accept the meaning of Christianity. I accept every good thing in every religion. I call myself a Christian among Christians, a Hindu among Hindus, and a Muslim among Muslims. Bear in mind this secret of every religion and try to elevate, improve and reform your lives. There is no difference between a stone and a slab. They are synonyms. So also, the words *Hindu, Muslim* and *Christian* mean good men. That is the only meaning of these terms. My *namaskars* to you all."

April 1, Toopran (25th Halt, 8 miles)

The damage which the recent storm had done in these parts could be imagined from what we had witnessed at Bhiknoor and other places. The whole of the route on both the sides from Kamareddi to Bhiknoor, Ramayampeth, Vadiaram and Toopran, was covered with green leaves which had dropped down from the mango trees. Thousands of green mangoes had fallen to the ground. At Kamareddi the roofs of several houses had broken to pieces. For about seven to eight minutes, there was a shower of hails as big as a brick. They had preserved a piece for two days. Nearly two hundred and fifty roofs had been destroyed. Thousands of tiles had been broken. Some old houses had completely collapsed.

Toopran is a small town with a population of about 4000 souls and 3000 acres of land. "At least two thousand out of these four thousand people can be put to work. That is, at the rate of eight hours per day we want work for sixteen thousand hours per day, and this for 365 days," Vinoba explained to the workers. He asked what was the work which could be planned for these sixteen thousand hours? Agriculture did not need all that time. All of it was wasted. Do you ever meet together to think of the village, to deliberate about providing work to all the villagers?" asked Vinobaji. "We must accustom ourselves to think about the village as we do about our families. You ask me the reason for the feeling of frustration, that prevails among Congressmen. What else is possible? Have they engaged themselves in any work of service in order to avoid this frustration? Hardly three-fourths of an acre can fall to the share of every villager here. And you say that there is no other occupation that would employ the villagers. You import cloth for these four thousand people. If there had been other occupations to meet this import, I could understand that you have not the leisure to prepare your own cloth. But it is not so. Why should you not then prepare your cloth? And then there is the manure, which is wasted. Why should it not be utilized? Why should not Congressmen give the people lead in this respect?"

He gave one more suggestion: "There are *bhajan mandalis* in the village. You should go there. At the end, when the programme of the *bhajans* is finished, the village problems can be discussed."

A few questions followed:

Q.: We badly need a hospital here.

Vinoba: Surely, starvation must be resulting in illness. And as the illness will naturally result in death, besides the hospital, a cremation ground will also be necessary!

Q.: The Congress has no programme to give to the workers.

Vinoba: I have not come to discuss what Congress has, and what it has not. We are not so poor of programme. We have our things to present, and I have brought them here with me. I have come as a man to speak to you all as men. What is most essential for every village is to begin to think of the village as a unit. That is why I want the Sarvodaya Samaj to be founded everywhere. You will then begin to think about the problems of the village. In your village of 4000 people there must be at least a hundred men who can be called fairly educated. Hence educational work can be started in the form of night and morning schools. Then there is the compost manure. Let a few begin the work in their farms and others will follow. Their very crops will make the propaganda for it. There is also the question of cotton, cloth and oil-*ghani*. These are just a few suggestions at random. Four thousand men and only 3000 acres of land! What a leisure at your disposal! The population has increased; the land *per capita* has decreased. A hundred years ago people tilled more land than now per head, and even then they were self-sufficient in cloth. There should be no comparison between *khadi* and the mill-cloth. Every yard of cloth that is prepared is an addition to the production.

Thereafter under the guidance of Shri Gopal Reddi, a local worker, a committee was founded. Addressing a few words of advice to this commitee Vinobaji referred to the hail-storm havoc and said that *lakhs* of tiles were needed. There were only four potters in the town. They would not be able to supply all the tiles. So, young men should manufacture tiles. They could help the potters. If the young men of Toopran engaged themselves in manufacturing tiles for the damaged roofs of Toopran, there would be a revolution in the life of Toopran. Was it not indeed a time for their test?

And then Vinoba suggested a programme that could suit all:

> "He, who can contribute labour, should contribute labour;
> He who can contribute money should contribute money;
> And the potter should manufacture tiles.
> You must create an atmosphere, so that every one would feel that he has to co-operate on this occasion."

Referring to the town committee, Vinoba said, in his post-prayer speech that the committee was formed for rendering service. It had no rights. The members of the committee would not belong to any particular group nor would they have any connection with any political party. It was wrong to think, Vinoba warned, that any one from outside the village would come and serve them. They must train themselves to think about their village and go beyond their family. That would transform a whole village into a family. And the committee then, like the mother, who ate only after satisfying herself that every member of the family had been served, would see that not a single soul starved.

D. M.

KAUMI EKTA SAMMELAN

(NATIONAL UNITY CONFERENCE)

The following is the purport of the resolutions passed at the Kaumi Ekta Sammelan, which met at Lucknow in the last week of April 1951 under the Chairmanship of Pt. Sundarlal.

Resolution 1 affirms that India being a vast nation composed, in the course of centuries, of people of various religions and races living together, has necessarily diversities of 'culture'. They are all Indian, and no particular pattern of it is common to all or may be regarded as universal in India. In the name of one or unified culture, a section of the people wants to suppress the aspirations of the masses by forcing upon the rest a particular type of it. The Conference holds that this will lead to Fascism and destruction, and is not in the interest of democracy and our newly achieved freedom.

Resolution 2 relates to an incident in the Allahabad University involving the R.S.S.

Resolution 3 calls upon all citizens irrespective of party affiliations to uphold the secular character of the State by recognizing the followers of all religions in the country as fellow citizens entitled to equal rights, opportunities and privileges and by not indulging either by word or deed in any action which would amount to intolerance or disrespect for another. The conference is of opinion that only by maintaining the secular character of the State and by acting as such can the nation ensure stability and progress, and enable the citizens to develop their personality, and to render their best in the service of the country and towards its development and prosperity.

This conference is further of definite opinion that no party which advocates "a national theory on religious basis and confines its membership to followers of any one religion or debars followers of other religions from becoming its members should be given recognition for purposes of setting up candidates to the Parliament and State legislatures.

This conference calls upon all citizens to shun religious intolerance and communal narrow-mindedness as national poison and to show consideration for all religions and communities as a national duty.

Resolution 4 relates that in the long course of India's history, it has often happened that different religions have sprung up from time to time and gained political ascendancy, and the followers of the ascendant religion have persecuted the followers of others. This has often resulted in the demolition of the places of religious worship of one religion by the followers of another, and of erecting their own in the place of the former. At present there are numerous places of worship which originally belonged to the followers of other religions, but these have been in possession of the followers of a different religion. There are some who are of the opinion that such places of worship must be returned to their original owners. But this conference strongly feels that such a thing is totally impracticable, undesirable, and of no importance. This will lead to a never-ending series of disputes and conflicts, which have no place at all in the modern world.

It is our aim that our country should march towards the good democratic goal in order to construct a society free from colour and religious prejudices.

From historical experiences, therefore, we have arrived at this conclusion that we should maintain *status quo ante* in respect of religious places which existed on 14-8-1947, i.e., which the people enjoyed till the communal frenzy caused by the partition of India raised its ugly head.

This conference demands that the mischievous attempts of reactionaries to change the ownership of religious places be at once checked. This conference further appeals to the Government and the Indian masses to make efforts towards the realization of this nation-building task.

Resolution 5 announces that in order to translate the principles and programmes decided upon in the National Unity Conference into action and give solid help to the victims of communal riots and create real spirit and zeal in the Government and the people for National Unity, a Kaumi Ekta Mandal is being established, which shall have nothing to do with any political faction and which shall be open to all those, belonging to any party, who believe in National Unity and consider communal fanaticism dangerous to the country and the nation.

The resolution also announces the appointment of an *ad hoc* Committee to take steps to establish the *mandal*.

A COSTLY BARTER ?

In the life of every nation, and particularly in that of one which has just achieved its political freedom, there arise many an occasion when it has to face the poignant question: 'To Be or Not To Be'. We in India are being confronted with such a dilemma, such a crisis, in more respects than one. The one that affects all and is felt most by the man-in-the-street is the shortage of food.

This long-drawn crisis has made us over-solicitous and also over-sentimental. Be it in the Press, on the platform or in conversation between friends or family members, the most common topic is the one relating to the shortage of food-grains and the continuation of controls and the rationing system. There is a painful similarity in the opinion, the general outlook and the approach to the problem. The general tendency is to criticize and find faults, real or imaginary, with those who are shouldering the responsibilities. The cry of those who try to sound a different and realistic note is a cry in the wilderness. Their opinions are discarded. They are branded as propagandists of those who are bearing the brunt !

There is, however, nothing surprising in this sort of mass attitude. It will continue to be so, as long as the principal object continues to remain the one of finding out, somehow or other, the solutions of *immediate* problems and difficulties. This does not mean that attempts should not be made to solve immediate problems.

Problems like food shortage do call for early and urgent solutions. The question, however, is *how* it shall be solved and what we, the people of India shall, as a nation and as individuals, do to solve this problem apart from and in collaboration with what the Government do on and off the government level. If it is true that immediate problems must be solved, it is equally, perhaps more, true that such solutions cannot be made our *main* goal or our *principal* objective. The consequences arising out of such a tendency would be utter ruin and disaster.

Unfortunately, this tendency has crept in far too deep. We look to others to supply us our requirements and the worst part of it is that all our attention and energies are concentrated only on this aspect of the problem. We are more given to criticizing those who cause delay in sending

us their surplus stock of foodgrains even when they are deliberating to dole out some gifts, which may or may not be conditional; we attribute motives for such behaviour of theirs and in our disgust and desperation, we even go to the length of suggesting and earnestly advocating that we should get the food-grains from those who are willing to oblige us. We usually take such an attitude which most suits our political ideologies and advance such arguments which would corroborate our notions and our 'isms'.

In all this bustle and fury, we almost completely fail to realize the true significance of the fact that, more likely than not, we are being treated like dummies and pawns in the political chess of the cold-warring power blocs.

Let us remember that our political freedom, though it sounds sonorously pleasing, is almost worthless as it is not accompanied or followed by economic freedom. Let us realize that economically we are almost the slaves of the West.

A political game is being played which aims at subjugating us, in a manner altogether different from the one in the past, by crushing our stomachs with a heavy foot. Whether this 'foot' is the imperialist one, the capitalist one, or the communist one is an altogether different matter. Let us not waste our energies to decide which way it cuts. The fact stands and it ought to be enough to open our eyes.

Ere it is too late, we should make up our minds that politically free India shall not be economically ruled by any power on earth; that we shall be prepared to face the heaviest odds to defend our hard-won freedom; that we shall willingly pay the heaviest price and sacrifice to the utmost to win economic freedom, if not for ourselves, then at least for our children and grandchildren.

India is a democratic country. Here is an opportunity for us to prove that democracy does not simply mean the government run by the elected representatives of the people but, truly, by the entire people. In the administrative set-up there are some Food Ministers and Directors of Food and Agriculture. Let us provide an example to the world that every farmer in our fields and every individual in our homes is a Food Minister outside the administrative set-up, that every politician and social worker in our country is a Director of Food and Agriculture, and that every citizen of Free India is a devoted and faithful member of the staff of *this* Ministry of Food and Agriculture. This is how we should tackle and try to solve the problem of food shortage. We should not devolve our responsibilities but should share them. Let us resolve that:

If we have to, we are prepared to face even death but we shall *not* barter our freedom or our honour for food. If otherwise, would it not be a costly barter?

Rajkot, 10-4-'51 VITTHALDAS BODANI

PROHIBITION —A REAL BLESSING

It is significant that most of the opposition to the Prohibition policy of certain State Governments appears in English papers. It indicates from which class the patrons of the bottle come from. As this class is comparatively negligible, one can safely presume that the heart of the general public is sound, and it is rightly so. A critic in Bombay told me that in Bombay every house is a distillery of illicit liquor. I told him that I knew that at least the house of my host in Bombay was not so and I could vouchsafe for a number of such houses. But that is by the by.

The opposition to the Prohibition policy from these 'educated' people is not a new phenomenon. I was connected with the anti-drink movement started by Gandhiji as a part of his Satyagraha activities in 1930. Even then there were pessimists and anti-prohibitionists. If the policy of prohibition is meant for making poor people a little more happy both economically and socially, I can say with confidence that the Government is successful. Being connected with activities for the welfare of the backward classes in Gujarat for more than 25 years, I am convinced that the disappearance of public sale of intoxicant drinks has totally changed the whole social outlook of these people. I had occasion to conduct a hostel for backward-class boys in a town in Surat District for ten years. The hostel precincts were surrounded by huts of backward-class people, all living on manual and unskilled labour. Before the enforcement of Prohibition not a day passed when there were no quarrels all around in those huts. Wife, husband and children all created a row, at times accompanied by physical violence, and the people were very unhappy. I find today that the same people are as peaceful as their Ashram neighbours.

Last week I attended a meeting of the Vagharis of Gujarat. The Vagharis are socially backward and the percentage of primary education among these people is very low. On the subject of Prohibition a Vaghari speaker said in the open meeting that before Prohibition, marriage gatherings among these classes often broke up without the marriage taking place. "The ceremony started with drinking of liquor freely, and 'marriage' was usually forgotten," he said.

Once on a railway station in the Panchmahals in Gujarat I was waiting for a train and I saw labourers one by one going to a shop and returning after having some drink there. I could easily see it was a liquor shop. My heart wept within me when I saw the poor, ignorant labourers thus putting some part of their hard-earned money at the feet of the god of wine. I was praying since then for the day when the open sale of liquor would be a thing of the past. I am now thankful to God that I have been alive to see the miracle. I remember the occasion when the late V. R. Shinde, the veteran old Harijan

worker, in an open meeting of Harijan workers of Bombay province said in 1938 that he would like to fall at the feet of Shri B. G. Kher (Chief Minister) for initiating the prohibition policy. He blessed the movement from the bottom of his heart.

As a member of the Merged Area Committee appointed by the Government of Bombay last year, I made it a special point to ask the backward-class people at every place during our long tour in the interior about the effects of the Prohibition policy and with one voice they welcomed and blessed it. One of our witnesses, a caste Hindu M.L.A. in the Merged Area, informed us that after the introduction of Prohibition there was a rise in the sale of silver in the bazaar and many a time it happened that all available stock of silver in the bazaar was exhausted. A trusted and veteran worker in Saurashtra once asked a group of Koli women as to the effects of the Prohibition policy and with one voice they said that it had wrought a miracle and brought peace in their homes.

Such incidents may be multiplied if collected from various sources. The free sale of liquor has similarly ruined quite a large number of the so-called high-caste people and we hear stories of woes from wives who had given up all hopes of improving the lot of the family on account of their husbands who had gone astray. In the Kheda District I met a young leader of Baraiyas who had lost his all in drinking. We tried to improve the lot of that man if he helped himself. On the occasion of the last Hindu New Year's Day, to my great surprise, I received a postcard from that leader quite unexpectedly wishing me success in life. I prayed to God to give him strength of character and confidence in himself. A young man of a cultured family from Baroda once travelled with me in the train. He was in a drunken state and in spite of all the admonitions of his attendant, at an interval of every few minutes, the fellow could not but drink. I wish he is alive today to enjoy the blessings of Prohibition.

In the face of hundreds of such facts where Prohibition has changed the whole outlook of families, which are numberless, one wonders and feels sorry when he reads academic discussions on the utility or otherwise of the Prohibition policy of Government. The talk of moderation and such other remedies in drink in the case of these poor ignorant people, who are subjected to all sorts of pressures, legal and otherwise, and are surrounded by various temptations and attractions shows ignorance about the state of things in our country. One can only say that the less we talk about it the better. To talk of getting any income out of the unholy trade is sinful and I can humbly but confidently say that the Government of Bombay deserve thanks from all right-minded persons for holding on to the Prohibition policy at such an obvious sacrifice.

What Government have, perhaps, lost in money has been repaid in greater proportion by bringing peace and unity in thousands of families which earn their bread by sweat and which are an important part of the nation. I am sure their prosperity will make the Government more prosperous than revenue from drink ever can.

The Prohibition policy has indeed led a small section of the people to resort to illicit distillation and sale. But its extent and volume is very much exaggerated, and even if the illicit trade is large it is certain that the liquor has ceased to be an article of sale in the open market and has therefore saved a large number of persons from temptation. The creation of a new generation of drunkards is, let us hope, a thing of the past, and future generations should and will bless the Government for it.

P. L. MAJMUDAR

THE DUTY OF THE STATE TOWARDS KHADI

(By Satishchandra Dasgupta)

I. A Brief Retrospect

When we had been struggling for obtaining Swaraj, we had set some ideals before us. One particularly marked among these was in respect of *khadi*. We perceived that the cotton mills were created by the urge of making profit by taking away the means of labour from the millions of our people, bringing unemployment. We promised to remedy this by accepting *khadi* as the nation's only wear.

This process in its negative aspect banned the use of mill cloth, and in its positive aspect promised employment on the *charkha* and the handloom to millions of men, women and children — in fact all who wanted some secondary occupation.

National Planning Committee

Putting a cess on the mill and equalizing the price of mill cloth was one of the means of bringing State aid to bear on achieving the universal production and use of *khadi*. At one time, those who are now at the head of the administration, particularly Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, brought into being the National Planning Committee. Of the various sections, planning for cottage industries was the work of one. I happened to be the Chairman of this section. All the meetings were held at Wardha under the virtual Presidentship of Gandhiji. In two meetings Shri Nehruji was present.

In these meetings, held on the 16th April 1940 and on subsequent days and occasions, the central topic was *khadi*, and it was naturally so. On one occasion for days, Gandhiji discussed the economics of *khadi*. He gave the assurance that if at the discussion it transpired that *khadi* was not an economic proposition, he would take off *khadi* from the national programme. He was attached to it for other values besides the economic value, therefore he would keep *khadi* to

himself and those who believed in those other values. But then he would not make it a national programme. This created a great stir and heart-searching amongst the economists who were on the Cottage Industries Sub-committee. For several days there were discussions on the economics of *khadi* from various angles and ultimately it was the agreed opinion of all that *khadi* was an economically sound proposition. There were in the Sub-committee those who stood for capitalism and the capitalistic economic programme. They were probably in the majority.

We came to a unanimous decision on some other matters also and a small committee was appointed to draft the resolutions in view of the agreed conclusions. The drafting committee could not complete the work before the country was plunged in the 1942 movement. But Shri Gulzarilal Nanda, who was a member of the drafting committee, presented the draft to the Secretary and it appears in the published Report of the Sub-committee for "Rural and Cottage Industries" (N.P.C. series), pp. 71-75.

Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Draft are given below:

"7. Considering the appalling poverty and helplessness of the people in the villages, on the one hand, and the vast amount of unoccupied time available for useful employment, on the other, the major industries concerned with the satisfaction of the primary needs of the rural population, e.g. manufacture of clothing, processing of food articles for the pursuit of which the people are equipped by long tradition, which engage large numbers at present and which are capable of affording employment to much larger numbers, should be organized and developed by the State, as cottage or rural industries, irrespective of considerations of comparative cost, in relation to the competing methods of production.

No addition to or extension or replacement of plant in large-scale mechanized industry, producing goods within the scope assigned to cottage industries should be permitted by the State till full employment and satisfactory living conditions have been made available to the rural population as a whole.

The use of mechanically generated motive power should not be extended in any field of industrial development in which use of the available man power and animal power has not been made.

8. The national plan should provide for the adoption of all measures necessary for relieving the existing or proposed cottage and rural industries from the stress of competition of machine-made goods and for facilitating the expansion of such industries to the desired size, while providing a living wage to the workers engaged in these industries.

In this connection it is of the utmost importance that the State should arrange for the training of artisan and skilled workers who would take charge of groups of unskilled workers in the villages and improve the latter to the requisite level of skill and discipline as speedily as possible.

While every possible step should be taken to strengthen the economic basis of the cottage and rural industries, by supplying the requisite finance, providing facilities for securing and storing raw materials, readjusting freights, improving marketing technique, implements, organization etc., such disadvantages as may remain in the matter of the price at which the products of these industries can be sold should be neutralized by a tax on the competing article and if necessary by an adequate subsidy. The means for the subsidy should be procured if feasible by a tax on the competing articles or on the establishments producing such articles.

"Till a living wage can be assured to all the workers, the fair price for the purpose of this clause would be such as to cover a wage which shall not be less than annas four in the case of any rural workers, on the basis of the cost of living index in August 1939."

A Scheme for Bengal

Gandhiji On Cess: In 1945 at the request of Mr Casey, the then Governor of Bengal, a scheme was made and presented to him by Gandhiji. He was staying at Sodepur at that time. The essential feature of it was to make Bengal self-sufficient in the matter of cloth. The mills of Bengal were making 14 crore yards of cloth, the handlooms were weaving 18 crore yards of cloth and for the rest of the total requirement of 72 crore yards, Bengal had to depend on supplies of mill-cloth from outside, which was not coming at the time. The proposal was to make up the deficit of the 40 crore yards by home-spun and hand-woven *khadi*.

The price of mill-cloth and *khadi* in normal condition was estimated to be 7 annas and 12 annas per yard respectively. This meant a difference of 5 annas per yard. The Bengal mills were producing 14 crore yards.

The Scheme wanted to provide for the following:

(1) Imposition of an Excise Duty or Cess of 5 annas per yard on Bengal mill production and correspondingly on yarn importation, yielding a revenue of 6 crores annually.

(2) This will lead to the raising of the price of mill cloth to the level of *khadi*. People would then spin for themselves and those who would not spin would pay for *khadi* at its just price.

(3) To spend the 6 crores in organizing spinning, weaving, *khadi* industry, and providing for necessary capital and other facilities.

(4) Banning of importation of mill-cloth from outside the province at the rate at which *khadi* was being produced.

This was in December 1945. But nothing came out of it. The Scheme was published in the *Khadi Jagat* (Hindi magazine published by the A.I.S.A.) in 1946.

(To be continued)

AN ATHEIST WITH GANDHI
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RESPECT FOR WOMANHOOD

Very noble sentiments and ideals in respect of womanhood have been expressed in parts of our scriptures and classical literature by *Smriti* writers and poets. Some of our famous saints have looked upon woman with uncommon reverence and tenderness. In some of the sects God is not addressed as 'Father' but as 'Mother'. The names of Sita, Savitri, Damayanti and several other great women are uttered with the same reverence as those of Rama, Krishna, Yudhishthira and other male heroes. In ordinary day-to-day life, in spite of heavy ignorance, illiteracy etc. and occasional quarrels, relations between husband and wife, mother and son, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are, taken broadly, not devoid of peace, amity, mutual understanding and goodwill. The home is not generally unhappy. In the governance of the home, woman has often a sphere of action in which she rules supreme. Nonetheless, there is an ugly strain in our religious and social outlook and moral valuation and in our actual behaviour towards woman, which at a moment of test reveals what our subconscious estimate of her is. According to that estimate the actual place of woman at home and in society is below that of an undamaged usable chattel. Many people will risk their life for the protection and defence of their field, house and property but not always for that of their cattle or women. There will be some who will do so for the cattle also, but not for their women. If they have to fly for their safety, they will collect as many articles as possible and take them even on their heads, but they will not wait for their women if it meant risk to their own persons and property. When put on his honour, man is often found to be a failure. The life and honour of women is not quite safe in his hands, often not even in her home. She takes a risk, if she travels or visits fairs or crowded gatherings. Danger often comes to her even from persons to whose care she has been entrusted by her relatives. The late Anandibai Karve has related in her interesting little autobiography a few incidents from her own life showing how untrustworthy even close friends could be. There are several women who have had similar experiences. This danger is becoming particularly great some years since. During and after a great war or any campaign of human killing, man seems to get so uncontrolled that even tender baby girls might become victims of his passions or cruelty.

Recently I received in rapid succession, a series of reports of man's misbehaviour with innocent women and girls.

In one, a young teacher of less than 20 had committed a rape on a girl less than 10 years old. In another, another teacher — a man with wife and children — was found guilty of subjecting a timid girl of 13 or 14, living in his house as a ward, to his repeated aggressions. In a third, a girl of about the same age sought protection of a neighbour's wife, against the incestuous advances of her own father, a man more than 55 years old and father of several children. In a fourth, a young village worker of about 20, placed in charge of a new Kasturba Trust centre, was ravished by the village leader, who was also an office-bearer of the local Congress and Janapada Committee, and was recommended by the District leader as a reliable friend. The incident has naturally made young lady workers as well as the Organizing Secretary of the Trust nervous. If even the elders and leaders of a village are so depraved, to whom will young inexperienced girls look to for protection? To whose care and guidance may they be assigned in a village, which they may never have seen before?

Perhaps these will be regarded as individual cases. It may be argued that in a vast country like India, such incidents will happen in one place or another. They do not mean that the society in general is depraved. But the following incidents give a picture of the mass mind towards woman.

The incident is alleged to have taken place in East Punjab. A reckless Punjabi youth attempted to molest a refugee girl. This enraged other refugees, who caught hold of the young man and belaboured him severely. Not content with that they — having become a crowd of five hundred by then — marched upon his place, beat his relations, drove his wife on to the street, tore her clothes, and processioned her naked through the bazaar to the accompaniment of various nasty gestures. Not one man or woman moved his or her finger by way of protest.

Perhaps these people will be dismissed as uncultured uneducated refugees, whose moral health has been exceptionally upset on account of their own sad experiences, and who had been provoked by wickedness of the victim's husband. But the disgraceful incident which took place at the Jivan Vikas Exhibition in Nagpur has no excuse or relieving feature of even that type. There the simple fact was that an advertised musical performance was announced as cancelled after making the audience wait for it for a long time after the appointed hour. The assemblage consisted of a large number of college and high school students and other *goondas*, and several young women of middle class society. Upon learning that the performance was not to take place, these so-called patrons of art and culture lost all sense of decency and became gangsters and boors. They broke glasses, extinguished the lights, rushed upon ladies, and behaved with them in a manner, which would put

beasts to shame. Order was restored by the police with difficulty. This was a wanton act.

This sort of conduct is becoming a common feature day by day. Schools and universities have become breeding centres of depravity. They are capable of rowdyism in meetings, murderously assaulting their professors, rival students, and girls who reject their overtures. They imbibe little knowledge and the civilizing influence in the atmosphere of these academies is still less. Girls find themselves pursued by boys on the roads. Only a few girls are plucky enough to give a lesson to the molesters. Others have to use tricks to avoid them. This conduct of the boys is sub-beastly, for beasts are certainly better behaved than they.

For some years past we have been talking too much of culture. We hold cultural conferences, and cultural programmes accompany almost every public gathering. We speak with pride of our ancient culture and talk of its revival. We have urban culture, village culture, Adivasi culture, Aryan culture, Hindu culture, Islamic culture, Sikh culture, Gujarati, Maharashtri, and other provincial cultures, in fact culture of every denomination. I humbly ask what is this culture which is endangering the safety and honour of Indian women throughout our country ? Whence has come this devilish propensity in India's males ? Three or four thousand years ago Vyasa sung the incident of Draupadi, and ever since women have recited with emotion her piteous prayer to God to save her against the wicked Kauravas. But neither the incident seems to have become stale nor the song become an anachronism. Helpless Draupadi and the wicked Kauravas seem to be not only perpetually alive, but multiplying every day.

Individually there is no dearth of men of very high and pure character in India. But so also were Bhishma and Drona. Their individual purity is not sufficient to remove gross social evils. Goodness is good for nothing if it does not combine and actively rise up against evil. It is good for nothing if its total effect is merely to conceal the evil, or speak of it only in suppressed tones, so that it becomes a gossip rather than a remedy.

Women must also be bolder than what they are. There are undoubtedly hundreds of women of very high character. But they too are often weaker, as if, by the very reason of the purity of their character than profligate women. The latter are not afraid of men, and successfully defend themselves and their wards, if they will. They also befriend victims of man's passions with greater sympathy than chaste women. The latter are afraid of facing men, and do not always befriend victims of man's evil acts. If the victim is one whom they cannot forsake, they rather think of suppressing the incident than raise a hue and cry against the culprit. This goodness is not of much worth. It does not arise out of non-violence, nor from regard for truth or chastity. It is timidity and passivity, a want of urge to be actively good. It cannot save the honour of their sex and establish respect for it.

I understand that Home Guards are organized in all important places. How do they guard our women ?

Wardha, 30-5-'51 K. G. MASHRUWALA

A HOPEFUL SIGN

One of the hopeful signs of the *Shuddha Vyavahara* (Honest Life) movement observed by several of us is that it has set people athinking. Those who have heard the call have been examining minutely the moral nature of their various commercial transactions. For instance, some have to purchase several articles which are under control prices, but are not available without payment of a premium, and it would entail closing down of their concerns, if they insisted on sticking to the letter of the law. Some have to book their goods, sometimes of a perishable nature, and the railway employees simply neglect them, until they have been tipped, causing delay, loss, worry, constant attendances etc. Some are retailers and have purchased goods at the then market prices from another trader or province. By the time they have to take delivery, controls are suddenly imposed, and the control-price is considerably less than what they have paid. It is a certain loss, whether they take delivery or refuse it. There are private offers from less scrupulous dealers to purchase the consignment even at a small margin of profit. Then, there are public servants, who do not wish to take any illegal gratification. But they form a link in a regular chain of bribery from the man at the bottom to a very superior officer at the top. If they do not fall in line with them, they are harassed with constant transfers, punishments for small or even faked mistakes ; even false cases are fabricated against them, resulting in dismissal, degradation, compulsory retirement or resignation through sheer inability to stand all these harassments.

What is their duty in such cases, they ask.

These are real problems. Their presentation is welcome. It is not impossible for some people to tackle them even individually. But I own that it is difficult for ordinary men to find solutions individually. But if several such men pledged themselves to honesty, established their reputation, and worked in combination, ways could be found to meet most of the situations. They must meet together and discuss their difficulties and problems frankly and freely. I feel that they would be able to deal with their difficulties one by one. We see that it has been made possible to establish a chain of corrupt officers and employees, and of unscrupulous producers, consumers and traders. It should also be made possible to build a chain of honest producers, traders, consumers and employees. Persons and concerns working in various fields of life who are anxious to practise honesty in their dealings

should come together, and know and support one another, and resolve to deal with one another in preference to other members of the same profession. They would then be able to create moral sanctions, which could not be ignored even by corrupt people. No doubt, they would have to make some sacrifices, and certainly put a restraint on their avidity. But a simple honest living must be made possible at any initial cost, if the world is to be fit for honest men's habitation.

Wardha, 8-6-'51 K. G. MASHRUWALA

THE HINDI OF THE CONSTITUTION

What, according to the Constitution of India, is the form of the language which it now names as Hindi, and which is to be taught in our schools? It is also to be seen whether it means any change in the language accepted by the Government of Bombay — till now under the name *Hindustani*.

For examining this question let us turn to Part XVII of *The Constitution of India* — "The Official Language of the Union." This will chiefly require us to closely examine arts. 343, 351 and sched. 8.

Art. 343 lays down that Hindi in Devanagari script will be the official language of the Union.

Arts. 343-50 contain matters regarding the use of Hindi in various ways and lays down the manner of changing over from English to Hindi. As this is not relevant for our purpose here, we need not go into them.

The most relevant art. is 351 * which gives a directive to the Governments of the Union and the States regarding

(a) promoting the spread of Hindi;
(b) developing it 'so as to serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India', and
(c) securing its enrichment by (i) assimilating..... 'the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule' and by (ii) 'drawing wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages.'

It is obvious from this that the Constitution of India acknowledges that

(i) the Hindi of the Constitution has to grow and develop; it is not a readily available language like English which can be adopted forthwith in its stead. Hence the limit of a transition of 15 years, provided in the Constitution of India.

(ii) And hence the law of its growth and development is laid down that it is to be a vehicle for all the elements of the composite culture of India, i.e. it is not to be exclusive but all-inclusive of all the elements in the composite life and culture of our land.

(iii) And the assimilation is to be from Hindustani and the other languages of India enumerated in the Eighth Schedule.

(iv) And the vocabulary is to be enriched, *'wherever necessary or desirable'*, by drawing on Sanskrit and other languages — i.e. not necessarily Indian. The choice is to be as wide and broadbased as our history and culture demands; there is no bar against any language as such.

Sched. 8 gives the names of 14 languages.* These with Hindustani are the 15 languages as the great treasure-chest from which Hindi is to be enriched for its forms, style and expression. Thus these 15 languages are named as defining the present language map of India, for the specific purpose of the growth and development of Hindi, which is to be the all-India expression of our composite life and culture.

Let us now see what these 15 languages are. 'Hindustani' is one. It should be noted that it is not one of those enumerated in the Eighth Schedule. Clearly enough, the word connotes the national language as it was generally named in the country and was accepted by the Government of Bombay previous to the passing of the Constitution. As we know, Hindustani also had to grow and develop as a common language of our people. Art. 351 clearly acknowledges this great fact of our recent history and lays down that the work of spreading and developing Hindi or Hindustani is to continue, even though under the name Hindi and in the Nagari script. Thus we conclude that the policy regarding the form of the language does not materially change in any way.

We now turn to the 14 languages of the Eighth Schedule.

All of them are the great literary languages of India and are our noble and rich heritage given to us by the history of our people. Except Sanskrit all the others are spoken and written in various States of the Union, more or less in compact areas. Hence they are sometimes termed as regional languages also in various other connections. Hindi is one of them noted by the Constitution of India in the 8th Schedule. Let us see what this Hindi of the 8th Schedule is. Is it the Hindi named in art. 351 or in part XVII of the Constitution? or whether what is meant by the Hindi of the 8th Schedule is different?

We should note that the Constitution of India directs the Union, in art. 351, to secure the enrichment of Hindi by assimilating the forms, style and expressions of, among others, Hindi of

* Art. 351: It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule, and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages (*The Constitution of India*).

* These are: 1. Assamese; 2. Bengali; 3. Gujarati; 4. Hindi; 5. Kannada; 6. Kashmiri; 7. Malayalam; 8. Marathi; 9. Oriya; 10. Punjabi; 11. Sanskrit; 12. Tamil; 13. Telugu; and Urdu.

the 8th Schedule. In other words, it amounts to enriching "Hindi" by "Hindi". Unless the word *Hindi* in this context means two different things, the directive in art. 351 becomes totally meaningless. Obviously it is not, nor can be, so. We see that Hindi is mentioned along with Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada etc. Clearly enough, the Hindi mentioned in the Schedule is of the class of these languages; and it is, to use the term used by some linguists, the High Hindi, which is the regional language of U. P. — the Sanskritized literary form developed chiefly in the last century.

Similarly also the Urdu mentioned along with Hindi in the Schedule is what is termed as High Urdu, the Perso-Arabic literary form also developed chiefly in the last century.

Hence we conclude that the Hindi of the Constitution which Government will henceforth teach in schools is not the regional Hindi of U.P. which is one of the sched.-8 languages, though as such along with Urdu and other sched.-8 languages, it will surely help the development of the Official Language of the Union. But this Hindi must not be confused with the Hindi of the Constitution, nor can it be equated with it. The Hindi of the Constitution is to be a dynamic growth as a result of an over-all and total effort of the whole of our people and as the expression and vehicle of their composite life and culture. It is this language which is to be taught in the schools of the Union.

11-6-'51 M. P. DESAI

"PEACE ON EARTH AND GOODWILL AMONG MEN"

Most of the people of India and America do not know what a horrible thing a war is and what havoc it can inflict on humanity. The most grievous wounds and scars inflicted by the last war have not yet healed and it remains to be seen how many years more they will take to heal completely. I have seen in Europe some families getting terrified at the mere mention of the words, *bombing* and *war*. As I am one of those who served in the last world war, I know what a disastrous catastrophe war is. During the most terrible winter season in Europe, I have seen soldiers, being quite tired of fighting, sleep on the snow-covered mountains without proper food and accommodation. Had it not been for the war, these unfortunate men could have lived peacefully and happily with their families. I have also seen hundreds of wounded soldiers taken in ambulance cars to the military hospitals where many of them died. Nevertheless, we must coolly and dispassionately think that, in war, we are not to deal with animals, but men who have the same life and feelings as we have. Forget not that life is dear to each and every one in his own sphere.

Yet, politicians instigate and encourage war. They honour men who show extraordinary bravery and crooked skill in killing and exterminating other men. Yet they boast of their belief in God and conduct prayers to bring peace on earth and goodwill among men! They pay lip-service to God, holding in their hands the holy scriptures, every noble injunction of which they intentionally disregard.

All wars were fought in the name of peace for establishing true democracy. By fighting the first world war the victorious nations thought that they could prevent further wars. Yet the first world war became the cause of the second. The second war also was fought for establishing permanent peace and democracy and all the victorious nations were sure that there would not be any more wars. "The cost of the second world war is calculated to be one thousand billion (1,000,000,000,000) dollars (nearly 3,750 *abja* rupees), a sum which is sufficient to build a home for every family in this world or to give a high standard of education to every child on earth." (Taken from the *History of the Second World War*). Having won the victory, the victorious nations, forgetting all human sympathy and forgiveness, conducted the "Neuremburg Trial" and condemned many men of the defeated country as war-criminals and later, hanged and shot them, thus exterminating them from the face of the earth for ever. But there was no one to question as to why the atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and why they killed several thousands of innocent people and why those leaders who ordered such brutal action were not declared war-criminals and punished as such. And now it is proposed to rearm these defeated nations, in order that they might be made to fight against Communist countries.

Now our world is in the grip of another world war and the democratic nations are under the delusion that they will fight it out with all their might for establishing true democracy and peace. As evil begets evil, the evil of war will only help to multiply wars. War can never be stopped by war. Peace can never be achieved by war, however high-sounding its aims and purposes might be.

Waging war against one particular political organization to exterminate it will not help us in solving our problems. Some one has said: "A hungry stomach is the most fertile soil for growing Communism." If we remove the poverty and misery which are rampant among the people, the creed of Communism will not fascinate people and it will have its natural death. It would be the best way to destroy Communism. The law of violence should not have the least place in the society of human beings and with love alone we can conquer men.

As a common man, I, therefore, request every individual to raise his voice in protest against all kinds of war preparations and war-mongering.

The lot of the common people has become worse than it was ever before. The price of every commodity is soaring very high day by day and it has become very hard for them to lead an average life of peace and contentment. Most of the revenue and taxes collected from the people are being wasted on the preparations of all kinds of destructive weapons like the atom bombs and hydrogen bombs. Most of the people, though they know this truth, cannot do anything, as they are under the domination of dictatorship. But we must find a way out so that the unanimous voice of the common people who hate war and love peace should be heard all over the world rather than the wild cry of the rulers and politicians who boast that they represent the masses.

The greatest truth that God has ever given to men through various religions is, "Do not do unto others, what you would not see done to yourselves." Unless and until each individual, each society or nation is guided by this most important principle, our hope of world-peace will never be accomplished. Let us therefore earnestly work and pray to achieve this.

N. R. BALAKRISHNAN

WHERE IS OUR EMORY ALVORD?

[The following is from an article in the *Reader's Digest* of March 1951, by Liston Pope and Clarence Hall, pp. 67 ff. —V. G. D.]

On an April evening 30 years ago a young teacher from Washington State was jolted out of a deep sleep by the sound of jungle drums and weird chanting. Only that day Emory Alvord, with his bride, had arrived at this remote spot in Southern Rhodesia to begin work. He sat bolt upright, listening, then rushed outside. He came upon a sight that shook him to his shoestrings.

Over an acre of farmland a milling crowd of African men and women were prancing and shrieking appeals to the gods of the soil.....

Alvord watched. So this was native agriculture. He had been told what to expect. On the long hazardous journey to his station, —7,000 miles by ship, six days and 1628 miles by train into the interior, and 14 days and 174 miles by donkey wagon to Mt. Silinda Mission, —old hands had warned him that vigour was something the African farmer had too little of.

Now Alvord thought he saw these people as they really were. Lazy? No lazy man would expend such energy. Superstitious? Perhaps, but was not superstition itself a sort of faith? Redirect that energy and faith, and.....

Striding back to his mission, he mapped out a programme which he dubbed the 'Gospel of the Plough'. He was Africa's first agricultural missionary.

Today, after 30 years, Alvord's faith in the Bantus of Rhodesia has been spectacularly justified. Under his guidance they have literally changed the face of the country.

In 1918 the idea of saving souls by saving soil was comparatively new. The mission at Mt. Silinda in the early 1890's on 30,000 acres granted by Rhodes, majored in Christian education and handcraft. Agriculture was not stressed. When his associates lamented the failure of their mission, Alvord asked: 'What else can you expect? You can't build a good society, let alone the Kingdom of God, on eroding soil and eroding people.'

He promptly laid out 6 demonstration plots. At the first harvest season he invited the Bantus to see the maize plants 12 feet high bearing 12-inch cobs — quite a contrast with the native plants 2 or 3 feet tall with cobs no bigger than a man's thumb.

Triumphantly, Alvord expounded the merits of proper tillage.....He persuaded the Bantus to put his methods to work on their own plots.....His formula was simple: clear the land properly, water it, fertilize it with kraal manure now being wasted, rotate the crops. He moved among the people as a fellow worker, eager to help. More and more natives volunteered their land for his experiments. They found that plots properly tilled would yield ten times as much as before. Even the worst land blossomed under proper tillage.....

The officials at Salisbury now invited Alvord to take a job as Government agriculturist. In 1926 he accepted, and during his first year he stepped up acreage production sixfold on demonstration plots. His huge bulk packed behind the wheel of his small car became a familiar sight everywhere.....

Now Alvord seemed to be everywhere at once — organizing courses in schools, setting up demonstration plots and experimental stations, arranging shows, introducing more diversified products, making soil surveys, directing irrigation, laying out model villages. By 1949, 72,849 demonstration plots had been set up; on them the average yield was seven times what it was on adjacent fields.

The art of scientific farming, now a required subject in all schools for natives, is taught to 170,000 pupils yearly. Almost half of all Bantu farmers are working under the guidance of trained Government demonstrators drawn from their own ranks.....Seven large breeding stations are steadily improving cattle strains.

To oversee this programme, Southern Rhodesia today maintains a staff of 70 Europeans and 436 native experts in the department of Native Agriculture. Twenty-five years ago Alvord was the whole department.....

A headman told him one day of the sickness that periodically swept the village. Alvord showed to the headman how the construction of 'pole and dagga' huts made for dampness, draftiness, the increase of vermin. Then he drew a sketch of a thatched brick house. Next day he and the headman began work; the house became a show place for miles around.

Next he started teaching a group of young men in each village the art of brickmaking, stonework, roof-construction. Pupils completing the course were given a Builder's Certificate; they in turn became contractors and teachers of others. Today more than 58 per cent of Rhodesia's native population live in improved houses designed by Alvord and built by the natives themselves.....

Upon his retirement in 1950 Alvord sat through the laudatory speeches, obviously ill at eace. But when a wizened little old Bantu chief stood up and said, 'Cecil Rhodes founded this country but Emory Alvord has founded a people!' — Alvord wept unashamedly.

A Curious Ministry

On the one hand the daily papers report that weavers are arrested and sent to prison because they ask the Government for yarn in a rather boisterous fashion, which is understandable as no yarn spells no food, i.e. starvation for them and their wives and children. On the other hand we find yarn being exported to Pakistan and Ceylon. Strange indeed are the ways of that ministry. They remind one of a Gujarati proverb, घरनां छोकरां घंटी चाटे अपाध्यायने आटो। (The children lick the mill-stone while the flour is given to the family priest).

V. G. D.

SHRI VINOBA AT SHIVARAMPALLI

I

FIVE-FOLD PROGRAMME OF THE NEW AGE

[Summary of Shri Vinoba's speech at the third Sarvodaya Conference, Shivarampalli, on the first day, 8-4-'51.]

The Rau Conference

Shri Vinoba commenced with expressing his joy in meeting the *sevaks* once again after two years since the Rau Conference. He thanked Shri Shankarrao Dev for bringing about this, because but for his strong advocacy, he was in no mood to go to the Conference. One of Shri Dev's pleas which appealed to him most was that all should cherish a desire for the company of the good. Shankaracharya, the Prince among philosophers, had said that the company of the good even for a moment was like a boat to cross the sea of life. Good company by itself brought peace and happiness and if, further, it had been secured by personal effort, the peace and inner joy became manifold, as he could testify himself, after having made a strong personal effort by walking more than three hundred miles for the purpose.

Vinoba recalled some of the ideas expressed by him at Rau. Prior to the Conference, he observed, he had toured over about a half of the country. The travelling had to be done, for the first time in his life, in the upper classes. This created a chain of thoughts in his mind. Was it proper to tour like that? Would it further the cause of non-violence? True, the tour was useful to a certain extent; but would it lead to the main object? Whence did the money spent for his travelling come?

New Age and Its Means

He also thought of the Gandhi Memorial Fund which was being raised in those days. He had said at one place that he was not interested in the Fund. Then, thoughts came to him about the manner in which Ashrams should be run in the future. "Ultimately I came to the conclusion that a new age has now set in. The task that we have now to achieve is far more difficult than the attainment of Independence. It is capable of being achieved only by the abandonment of money and its props. Hereafter our work should be carried on not on the strength of money but of physical labour."

Money they might be able to get, and they might be able to render therewith some service too. But there would be no life in it, and it would not herald the revolution which they aimed at.

Large funds could not be spent all at once. Large balances which remained had to be invested in banks and securities. These investments were not utilized for helping village industries; but rather for developing those, which were hostile to them. Thus there was a risk attached to such funds. Vinoba made it clear that he did not mention this to censure any one. They followed precedents laid down by Gandhiji. But Vinoba urged that Gandhiji should not become the terminus of their practice and principles. They must develop Gandhiji's ideals further.

1. Physical Labour and Freedom from Money Bondage

Thus he was led, he said, to the principles of non-possesion and emancipation from money. Since he was touring at that time he did not know how he should undertake the experiment in the light of the new principles he had discovered. But God came to his help, he said, and visited him with a disease. A man of complete detachment and equipoise must be free from disease. His disease meant that there was some defect in his mental equipoise and thoughts. He took the disease as a command of God, expressed in His peculiar language, and so decided to dispense with medicine for the cure of the disease. He settled down at Paunar and gave up touring. The disease, Vinoba informed, was not yet completely cured; it was, however, considerably checked.

He started his new experiment of physical labour in his Paunar Ashram. If he could evolve, he thought, a way to free the institutions working under his guidance from the slavery of money, that would itself be a piece of important service to the nation. He selected agriculture by way of physical labour and gradually he came to do five to six hours' work per day. Vinoba held that sufficient attention was not paid to agriculture in pre-independence days by constructive workers. It could be excused then, but it was now imperative to enter the field of agriculture in order to identify themselves with the life of the agriculturists.

Earlier in the session Shri R. K. Patil had posed the question whether constructive workers saw the necessity of making a change in the form and methods of constructive work after the attainment of Independence. Vinoba offered two answers. First, faith in money should be replaced by that in physical labour. And secondly, constructive workers should now become cultivators. These two, though not unnecessary even before independence, had become imperative thereafter.

Vinoba was gratified by the results of his experiment. It had its effects on the inmates of the Sevagram Ashram also. They resolved that they would not accept money donations and restrict themselves to accepting donations shaped only by physical labour after the end of the current year. Emphasizing the importance of this resolve, Vinoba said that if the Ashram was to continue in any form after Gandhiji, it must show its progressive character in its activities and should present to the world something that the world needed most. Their highest ideals should be practised there. With this aspiration the Ashramites had made their resolve.

Village Self-sufficiency

However, Vinoba observed, mere emancipation of constructive institutions from money was not their sole work. The institutions were only the gateways to enter the life of the villager. Village life, too, must be freed from the bazaar as much as possible. Of course, it was not possible to completely eliminate the bazaar. But it would be a great thing if village self-sufficiency could be achieved in respect of food, cloth, houses and ordinary simple instruments and tools. In it lay the remedy for the many ills that beset the present-day life of the people. There might be better plans and schemes for attaining prosperity, but to Vinoba it was the only one which came to his mind.

He urged the old and physically tired workers to co-operate in this task. It did not matter if their body could not co-operate. But they should remain youthful in mind and spirit. His first submission to the constructive workers, old and young, was to strive to run institutions on the principles of non-possession and physical labour.

Vinoba realized the difficulty of attaining freedom from the bondage of money. Money had been compared by a correspondent to God. It was as omnipotent as God, and it was as futile to deny its power as to deny the existence of God. Indeed, since God was invisible, He could be denied but not money, which was present in every direction in which you cast your eyes. The doubt expressed by the correspondent merely suggested that it was necessary to work with circumspection and mutual co-operation. Only if constructive workers showed their combined zeal in this direction, would *Sarvodaya* ideas spread and a non-violent revolution be wrought. Not that there could not be a revolution by other means. "But," he said, "since we are pledged to non-violence the revolution will not then be achieved through us. It is therefore our imperative duty to work for emancipation from money. God inspired non-violence in us; He gave us an opportunity to work under the able guidance of a great man. It is therefore up to us to add to the rich legacy that he (the great man) has left us working with the resolve of 'do or die'. It is not for us to

worry about the exact success of our effort. To do so would be attachment to fruits."

Vinoba pointed out that the experiment in agriculture had already started at Wardha and other people had also been attracted to it. He saw a ray of hope in the fact that young men, without any previous training or tradition, felt attracted by the programme, and came and worked with him enthusiastically. It indicated God's kind concern for the people of India. It was therefore the duty of all to courageously join in the task.

2. Peace Brigades

Vinoba next referred to the Peace Brigade work. One of its duties was to rush to the scene of storm when a disturbance broke out. But that was a duty in an emergency. There was also another part of its duties, which was constructive and everyday work. Along with the various centres of constructive work, there should be a few Peace Brigade centres distributed among them. The duty of the Brigade members should be to continually move in surrounding areas. They might visit a village only once in a week but visit it they should, and form contacts with the village people. They should meet and console people who were stricken with poverty, oppression, disease, disputes, or who were too much mentally disturbed, like the refugees. The workers might meet together once in a month, exchange their notes and start again on their itinerary. This was, Vinoba said, his conception of a non-violent army.

Non-violent Organization

Vinoba did not wish to go into the details of how these Brigades should be organized, and the exact programme for them. Like Tulsidas who declared that the name *Rama* was more powerful than Rama Himself, he also believed in the power of the word. The word here was *shanti* — peace. They should take that word, and draw up their own programme and create a proper organization to implement it according to their own lights. They might send their scheme to the *Sarvodaya* office. The office might send its advice which they would be free to accept or reject at their discretion. That was his idea of a non-violent organization. Vinoba said, it did not involve compulsory carrying out of instructions issued from above nor any disciplinary action for failure to do so; but only friendly advice and the implementation of a programme, which they themselves approved. That was, he said, the way to build a non-violent organization, an organization free and yet strong. It pre-supposed however that the advisers would be men of wisdom and integrity, actually acting on their own advice, and able to carry conviction to others. He desired *shanti senas* to be organized on these lines.

3. Yarn Offering

Vinoba referred next to *sutanjali*, the third item on the five-fold programme. He looked upon the offering of a hank per individual as a measure of the acceptance of the *Sarvodaya* idea by the public. Though no fee was attached to the membership of the Sarvodaya Samaj, people had not joined it in large numbers. There were many who accepted the *Sarvodaya* ideology and worked for it, but did not care to have their names on its register. They, too, belonged to the Sarvodaya Samaj. "It may be assumed," he said, "that they all approve of the *Sarvodaya* idea, believe in truth and non-violence, wish success and permanence of all that Gandhiji worked and stood for, and draw their inspiration from him." Vinoba urged that if all such persons offered annually as a concrete token of their devotion a hank of self-spun yarn at the *Sarvodaya mela*, and popularized this manner of offering as widely as possible throughout the country, it would prove to be a source of immense strength. It would bring them into contact with millions. Virtually they were so many voters of the *Sarvodaya* way. "We would have their addresses, and it will be the duty of the *Sarvodaya* workers to establish contact with them. With their help and through them, they could further expand their work." Speaking of the tremendous potentiality of this programme, Vinoba said that it would release immense social energy, and forces would be at work which would revolutionize society, and do it so imperceptibly that people might not so much as feel it.

The idea of yarn-offering came to his mind from the old tradition in our country which prescribed that pilgrims should not go to a place of pilgrimage without taking with them some article by way of offering. Let each man and woman, he exhorted, offer one hank of yarn so that there would be as many hanks as the number of approvers of the *Sarvodaya mela*." The idea enthused him intensely for he saw great potentialities in the popularization of that practice. It does not matter if our voice reaches only thousands and not *lakhs*. In that case, our method of work will be of an intensive type. If the propaganda spread among, say, a *lakh* of people, our work would be partly extensive and partly intensive. Extensiveness or intensity of an activity depends on whether we are able to take our message to a few or to many."

4. Scavenging

The fourth item Vinoba spoke about was cleanliness. It was necessary to create conditions which would do away with the need of a separate class of *bhangis* for this work. Cleanliness, which included scavenging, should be done by the people themselves. Vinoba said he could not adequately describe what immense good that change would do to the country. Besides putting an end to untouchability once for all, it would make available easily and everywhere an excellent manure which would help us grow more food, one of our principal desiderata at the present moment. It was a work in which Socialists, Government officials and all bodies could and should join irrespective of their political or ideological differences. It would be an achievement of universal application and importance.

5. Internal Purity

Next Vinoba referred to the item of internal purity, — purity in our everyday social dealings — for which the suggestion had come from Shri Kishorlalbhai. Dishonesty and corruption were rampant. The question was how could an individual extricate himself from its slough. The movement aimed at organizing people who would be ready to pledge themselves to the elimination of all dishonesty and clandestine practices from their dealings. Individuals might find it very hard to resist these evils. But people collectively, and within certain limits determined individuals, should be able to do it. If people who were so pledged combined and formed themselves into groups it was sure to make its impact on the moral atmosphere of the country and transform it. Vinoba said that the whole society as such could never be wholly corrupt. This must be for them an article of fundamental faith. Most people were driven to it willy-nilly by the vicious economic order, which was in fact economic disorder, by which they were besieged on all sides. If, however, even a handful of people woke up to their responsibilities and showed it to the world that they had remained firm in the midst of that raging storm of dishonesty and corruption, the clouds would begin to fade away, and the weather would change. All wished for a change. But the change could not descend from heaven, nor could mere wish, however noble, be potent to reform the Government, if it was not reinforced by individual and combined effort. In the absence of effort it would only result in the atrophy of their power of initiative and perpetuate the gloom of despair. They should all, therefore, devote themselves energetically to this "honest life movement".

The Power of the Sarvodaya Samaj

Winding up, Vinoba asked the workers to remember that they were a big organization though not in its usual sense. "It may be that you are not big so far as numbers are concerned. Though there are no obligations attached to it, only four thousand have had their names registered.

But," he said, "this shows that people come to it after a good deal of deliberation, and conscious of what it means." The Sarvodaya Samaj was like a call to the path of devotion to God. The Lord has said in the *Gita*, "Even if the vilest of men surrenders to Me with undistracted devotion, he must be reckoned as righteous, for he has made a perfect decision." It was the same with the Sarvodaya Samaj. Even a habitual drinker could join it for it would show that he had made up his mind to leave the habit. The size of the *Samaj* might be small, but it had a sanction. People looked to it with hope. Hence they had the support of not only of their own will-power but also of that of others. "Look at it in this way, and you will understand that our power is by no means small. We are strong and can further our work. Have faith that the work we have undertaken is bound to succeed for it is blessed by the Lord."

Sarva-seva Sangh

Vinoba next referred to the Sarva-seva Sangh and expressed the opinion that though seemingly not well organized, it was fairly strong. Its workers were to be found throughout India. It was true that relatively with the vast fields of service in our country, the workers were woefully few. Even so, as compared to the other countries of the world, the workers in India were quite numerous. There was therefore no room for despondency. On the contrary, it should inspire us to take to our work even more devotedly.

The Hidden Stream of Love

He confessed to a momentary feeling of depression, at the way they conducted themselves in the meetings of the Sarva-seva Sangh. It would seem that there was too much discussion and debate, at times very pungent, and that they did not work in unison. But it was a transitory feeling, for he was convinced that the exterior was delusive as in the depth of the heart there flowed in each one the stream of love. "Feeble as we are, Bapu had bestowed his blessings on each one of us and made every one of us work. His name and his work have a claim and possession on our souls, and that will keep us bound to one another."

II

THREE DANGERS FACING KHADI

[Summary of the speech delivered by Shri Vinoba on 9-4-'51, the second day of the third Sarvodaya Conference.]

Shri Vinoba commenced with a reference to a discussion he had that day with Shri R. K. Patil, who disclosed the intention of the Government to intensify *khadi* production. His own advice to the Government, Vinoba said, was that they should take whatever action they contemplated in the matter without wasting time in discussions and controversies. Experience gained in the course of actual work would give a more correct perspective than any amount of discussions. There had been unpardonable delay in the matter.

While conceding the importance of independent thinking and acting, Vinoba desired them to realize also the need of taking into account the experience of the masters of a subject. Gandhiji was the master who had discovered *khadi* and its rationale. If Gandhiji had not discovered *khadi*, Vinoba, speaking as an ordinary man, did not believe that it would have struck them independently. He would not say the same about non-violence. Had Gandhiji not come with it, it was possible that somebody else might have done so, because, non-violence had become a historical necessity under the particular set of circumstances then prevailing. There was no alternative to it. The same could not be said of *khadi*. It was Gandhiji's unique imagination, genius and efforts which gave *khadi* a practical shape. Gandhiji was no more alive, but the full picture of his life and character and deeds was before them. A collection of his ideas about *khadi* was available in book-form. Vinoba advised constructive workers to study them seriously. While they could certainly make improvements on it, he felt that their intellect would not make a new contribution unless they thoroughly understood the basic ideas of that seer of *khadi*.

Vinoba gave a brief resume of *khadi* from the time of its revival by Gandhiji. He pointed out how ignorant they were not to know even the distinction between a handloom and a spinning wheel. The crude spindle which they employed in the beginning was big enough to be used as a lethal weapon. The slivers which they got made by professional *pinjaris* (carders) measured about 2 feet long. The *pinjaris* could card 12 lb. of slivers per day. Some of them span half a pound, some 30 tolas, and the yarn was of 5 to 6 counts. The *khadi* made of even such yarn pleased them and was worn with great enthusiasm and pleasure. Vinoba's younger brother Shivaji was the best spinner among them, and he could spin very thin yarn, namely of 10 counts. Out of his yarn they got woven a pair of *dhotis* of 54-inch width, and presented it to Shri Jamnalalj. A propagandist that Shri Jamnalalji was, he went about displaying that *dhoti*, and praising the spinning and weaving activities they were then carrying on. Such was the extent of their poverty of technical knowledge about *khadi* for nearly twenty years!

"Khadi had now reached a stage," Vinoba said, "when it could be looked upon from the point of view of economics. The credit for all this belongs to the genius of Gandhiji. If he had not suggested it, the *khadi* idea could never have struck me at least. Because it was so completely against the current of the times, that it would have been ridiculous to think of it. After all we were 'intelligent' men, who had received western education and read political economy. Hence, it was impossible for a thing like *khadi* to enter our brains. Hence it is that I recommend a thorough study of Gandhiji's thoughts on the subject of *khadi* before or along with employing our own minds on it."

Charkha to Agriculture

Vinoba next desired to draw the attention of the *sevaks* to certain internal dangers which had appeared recently in the wake of *khadi*. The first danger, he said, originated from the recent shift in our programme in favour of agriculture. Some of the workers felt that agriculture was more important, and self-sufficiency in cloth might not be too much stressed. The time had come to encourage the pick-axe in place of the *charkha*. Indeed, he himself said that unless agriculture received their attention it would not be rescued from its present degradation. Moreover, it was the only way to achieve identity of interest with the villagers, to attain self-sufficiency, and to do away with money. The value of agriculture was thus great. Nevertheless, if he were asked to assign to agriculture the place of the *charkha* he would say that he (Vinoba) had not understood the *charkha* that way. Food was important but it could not replace water, which had its own superiority over food. The relation of the *charkha* to agriculture was like that of water to food. Vinoba said that *Sarvodaya* was pitched against the prevailing trend of things in every field. It represented their rebellion against the prevailing order. Agriculture could not be an adequate symbol of that rebellion. The *charkha* alone could symbolize it. This was the distinction between the two. And the *sevaks* would do well to bear it in mind lest it should endanger their work. Vinoba warned those who were out to emphasize agriculture at the expense of the *charkha*. That, he said, was a dangerous error.

Charkha to Samagra Seva

Another danger arose, he said, from a lop-headed appreciation of the idea of *samagra seva* (total constructive work), which they had been preaching for some time. There was a tendency to undertake too many things at a time with the result that the *charkha* was unable to occupy its due place in their individual lives

as also in the life of the nation; and the pity of it was that that result did not produce even a sense of regret in the workers. They did not realize that this failure flowed directly from their want of devotion to this central item of their work. On the other hand, they let themselves have the complacent satisfaction that they were doing something or the other for the whole day. Work was done in bits; a little *safai* (sanitation), some agriculture, a visit to the Harijan *basti*, some amount of teaching and so on. Various items of a miscellaneous nature filled their day and the *charkha* languished for want of proper attention. This was a misunderstanding of the idea of 'total service'. Vinoba said that he had warned the workers when this idea was first mooted. He had pointed out that *samagra seva* did not mean tackling all things simultaneously. It meant that round about a selected item should grow and develop other items of work gradually and naturally. This was *samagra vritti* i.e. doing work with a total outlook. Every item should be a focus for the growth of other work. It was like the form of *Vedic* worship in which, for instance, if there was a hymn to *Agni*, the latter was not worshipped exclusively or as a separate deity, but comprehensively so that all other deities with their various powers were automatically included in its worship and the entire cosmos manifested itself with all its majesty and splendour. Likewise, the *charkha* must not be exclusive but all-inclusive.

Explaining his point further, Vinoba recalled his visit, many years ago, to Anantpur (M. P.) where Shri Jethalal Govindji had a *khadi* centre. The work there had come to a stop, and Vinoba was asked to investigate into the causes. Vinoba examined the work carefully and pointed out that one of the reasons why the work had ceased to grow was that Jethalalbhai had concentrated exclusively on *khadi*, to the utter neglect of all other details of life. For instance, the villagers eased themselves in the open, and yet the glaring indecency had not attracted his notice. He was fully occupied with *khadi* work, and had no eye for anything else. Vinoba said that that was an instance of exclusive concentration which was opposed to all-round vigilance. Indeed it was not concentration, but a sort of narrow polarized vision. While narrowness was not desirable, it did not mean that they could dispense with concentration. Both concentration and an all-embracing outlook were necessary. The point Vinoba desired to emphasize was that the adoption of a comprehensive outlook should not result in laxity in *khadi* work. If the execution of many jobs created a sense of disregard for *khadi* work, the latter would be in danger. This was, then, another danger facing *khadi*.

Improvement of Implements

The third danger, Vinoba said, appeared in the form of a passion for the improvement of tools. Vinoba also wanted improvement of tools. He had applied his mind to the problem and also spoken about it. But he had devoted his attention, so far he could, to small implements, which every one could use. He had tried to make them more efficient and speedy. He had experimented with the *takli* and had succeeded in evolving its technique. Then he turned his attention to carding and developed the process of *tunai*. The process of making slivers had now reached a stage when every one could make his own slivers within a few minutes. Even a young boy did not need to depend on others in this respect. Then he set himself to the problem of strengthening the yarn, and discovered *dubata*, i.e. double-twisted yarn. In all these experiments, he said, his purpose was to bring the industry of *khadi* within the easy reach of all. All the same, he did not mean to disparage the present experiments to accelerate the speed of the various tools. What he objected to was the defeatist mentality which he feared lurked behind them. Some of them had come to believe that with the tools as they were at present it was impossible to make any headway, and the reason why our progress was arrested was that our tools were very slow. This defeatism tended to destroy our faith in the present tools and bred disappointment. This was the third danger.

Khadi, the Support of the Helpless

Vinoba said that he had placed his analysis of the problem of *khadi* before the workers, so that they could shake off their lethargy in thought and revitalize it. People would scoff at them and say that the *charkha* was useless; that India had lost her independence in spite of the *charkha*; that it was no more than an old woman's means of livelihood. Vinoba said that personally he had derived great satisfaction from the last gibe. He was happy to know that the *charkha* had placed in his hands the means to realize his oneness with even an old woman. He was pleased to think that he had taken shelter with the same saviour as afforded protection to a helpless old woman. People might well laugh at them. It did not matter. Did not they laugh at Mira? Even parents reproached her that she had brought a blot on the fair name of the family. But did she mind?

Although he had recently taken to agriculture, the value of the *charkha* had not decreased for him. On the other hand he had now given it a place in the prayer. At Paramdham while they prayed, they also plied the *charkha*. Some people had raised doubts that that would disturb their concentration and the desire for economic production would diminish the sacredness of the prayer. His answer was that it was a matter for experience, and that it had the support of the *Gita* which had declared: The *act* of offering is Life, the *oblation* is Life and Life verily is attained by him through concentration on the *work* of Life. Where the currents of life and work meet together, whatever a man does becomes for him Worship and a means to reach the Lord. Liberation comes to him automatically and inevitably. He had started his work on the basis of that assurance of the *Gita* and the result had been encouraging.

Concluding his speech Vinoba once again exhorted the constructive workers to remember that whatever other things they might do, the *charkha* was their foundation and they should stick to it with all their might, for if they forgot the *charkha*, they would also lose the key to non-violence. Without the *charkha*, *ahimsa* would be a vain hope.

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