

HARIJAN

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TWO ANNAS

SHRI VINOBA AT SHIVARAMPALLI III ECONOMIC EQUALITY

[A summary of the speech delivered by Shri Vinoba on the 10th April 1951, the third day of the Sarvodaya Conference.]

Shri Jawaharlal's Message

"I send my best wishes to the Sarvodaya Conference. Darkness seems to have pervaded all the world over at present. In our country, too, the old light has gone dim, and there is darkness, more or less. Gigantic problems besiege us on all sides. At such a critical time every one of us should endeavour to seek for light. In this attempt, *Sarvodaya* can help a great deal and naturally our eyes turn towards it."

Shri Vinoba commenced with a reference to the above message of Shri Jawaharlal. In that brief message Jawaharlalji had poured the whole of his heart with characteristic courtesy and humility. "We can understand what he hints at when he refers to the old light," Vinoba said; "he also states that at the present critical time the country looks to *Sarvodaya*, that is, to this Sarvodaya Samaj. From my brief contact with Jawaharlalji, I have been impressed with his earnest endeavour to walk along the path shown by Bapu. Even when Bapu was alive he did not accept all his ideas. And, perhaps, it is so till this day. But I have always felt that Jawaharlalji's pole star is what stands as the core of Bapu's teaching, namely, that all nations should live in harmony; there should be no enmity between them; they should work for the common good in mutual co-operation; there should be no feeling of racial hierarchy or hatred. Jawaharlalji strives to put these principles into practice. And I feel that in this task he feels perhaps a sense of loneliness." Vinoba explained that the reason why Jawaharlalji had expressed hope in *Sarvodaya* was that they were actually engaged in carrying out Bapu's constructive programme. Hence, if there was no light elsewhere there should surely be a little of it with them, and they must be always seeking it and succeeding in getting some at least. Vinoba assured him that they were with him in his efforts to establish peace in the world and harmony and amity among nations. His message was a reminder to the Sarvodaya Samaj to be watchful and vigilant in their task. Without professing so much he had pointed to them the direction in which they should proceed. The direction was, "Seek light, search after Truth".

An Unfortunate Incident

Vinoba then referred to an unfortunate incident that had taken place earlier at the meeting. One of the speakers at the Conference had been made to retire without finishing his speech. Vinoba expressed his disapproval of this conduct of the audience. It could not always happen that every speaker could give them a new thing in his speech. If that was the test to be applied, it was courtesy on the part of the audience that they heard Vinoba patiently; for, out of a hundred words that he

uttered hardly one might give something new. But they tolerated his ninety-nine words for the sake of that one. "And there might be some, who might find nothing new in my speech. But we hear the words of good men with respect and love, for, even if we don't always get new ideas, we know each other in such gatherings and we develop mutual love. If we get something new in a speech, we should take it up. If we do not get anything new we should get the consolation of having the benefit of an exchange of views." Maybe there might be digression in some cases. The Chairman was there to regulate it, and if the Chairman tolerated it, the audience should assume that he did not consider it worthwhile to interfere. Vinoba could show another remedy in case a member of the audience did not feel interested in a speech. He could resort to *takli*. The *takli* could relieve him of the fatigue of hearing. Vinoba hoped that such incidents would not be repeated in future in the Sarvodaya Samaj.

Development of Kindness

He had been asked, Vinoba said, to express his views on the subject of economic equality. It was a wide topic, but he would try to place it in brief before them. The recorded history of man did not extend to more than ten thousand years at the most, although more than a million years had elapsed since human life had emerged on the earth. During that period man had recorded a continuous progress and had developed several virtues one after another in each age. The development took place first in individuals, and gradually they became a heritage of the whole society. After one virtue had developed to a sufficient intensity, aspiration for another virtue took root in the heart of man. And there began the work for its development. Vinoba's survey of the history of man of the last three thousand years or so led him to conclude that in every activity which man pursued, whether in the sphere of politics, sociology, education, family or any other, he had perceived all through the need of developing the quality of kindness. "All our great workers were very kind. All our *mahatmas* like Buddha and others, were kindness personified. All our great saints taught that kindness was the root of all *dharma* (duty and religious act). Thus we have all along been after the development of kindness. Even in the various empires that emerged, the necessity of developing kindness was recognized. Vinoba had viewed history from the standpoint of the development of various qualities; and he held that the history of man of the last three thousand years showed that humanity, amidst a multitude of good and bad qualities, had been all along evolving the quality of kindness in the end.

Economic Equality — The Need of the Age

Gradually man had to come to believe that the development of equality was the next need of the age. This idea had begun some two thousand years ago. Not that the word *equality* was altogether new. "The truth is that, as I said earlier, no saint, however great in the whole recorded history of man, had given any word (conception), which was altogether new and unknown

before. Man has been evolving for a million years, and all our conceptions are older than the history of man known to us."

No Eternal Principle Is New

In the course of a discussion, Vinoba related, Shri Pyarelalji once drew a comparison between Prophet Mohammed and Gandhiji. He said that just as Mohammed had transformed the beastly and depraved Arabs into 'men', so had Gandhiji done in the case of the Indians. Vinoba did not agree with either of the propositions. Neither the Indians nor the Arabs were beast-like. Both were 'men' and knew what the true *dharma* of man was; but both had become slack in its practice. The Prophet awakened the Arabs and inspired them to put this *dharma* into practice. Gandhiji also awakened the Indians and inspired them to act in accordance with it. But neither Gandhiji nor Mohammed had made men out of beasts, nor given a new conception. 'Kindness', 'Truth', 'Allah' all these conceptions were as old as the mountains. Even the word *satyagraha*, which might be regarded as a new word given to the world by Gandhiji, was made of two old words *satya* and *agraha*. Had Indians been sub-human, Gandhiji would have been obliged to coin a number of new words. What he wanted to convey to the audience was that Gandhiji practised some of the eternal principles discovered in the course of man's progress in civilization during millions of years, and inspired India to do the same.

Equality and Kindness

Vinoba said he only wanted to bring home to the workers the truth that though the idea of equality was very old, it had attracted their attention only recently. The idea was not new, but the difference lay in this that the ancients regarded equality as an ideal—ultimate end or *Brahma*, while they laid stress on the development of kindness as the *dharma* to be practised in life. But now they felt that the time had come when they had to practise equality in actual life. It should, however, be remembered that it had taken hundreds of years to develop kindness. In the meanwhile empires had risen and vanished, society had undergone innumerable changes, and even bloody revolutions entailing the rise and fall of numberless ideologies and institutions had taken place. Even so, the development of equality would take thousands of years.

There was also one more aspect of the question which they were apt to forget. They were prone to aver off hand that they were not interested in kindness, which old poets, religions and ancient teachers had eulogized. They wanted equality and not kindness, which bred egoism. But, Vinoba warned, if they wanted something about equality along with a decrial of kindness, they deprived themselves of a great spiritual force and created an unnecessary antagonism. They should realize that there was antagonism between equality and inequality, and not between equality and kindness. Their approach to equality, therefore, should be so devised that they might get for its furtherance the benefit of all the moral and spiritual power of those who had developed kindness. It was not necessary to set one's face against kindness; but to regard that through kindness, which they had practised hitherto, they had discovered that real kindness consisted in the establishment of equality. The practice of a little kindness was good in an order of inequality; it gave some consolation to the soul. But it was not enough, and it fell short of true kindness, which could be built only on the establishment of equality. If this approach was adopted, it would enable them to inherit the benefits of the assiduous efforts of their forefathers for the development of kindness, and utilize them for building up the new effort for equality. They should not, therefore, commit the mistake of destroying the old tradition of the development of kindness and plant the idea of equality as though it were quite new and opposed to the old one.

Cautioning against another illusion, Vinoba said, they should also not fall into the error of thinking that though

their ancestors had taken ages for the development of kindness they could create equality within a short period of five or ten years. They had not done anything beyond taking up for practice on the social level one more ideal. The ancients had accepted it as a remote aim, and practicable only by individuals. They believed that it was possible for an individual to realize perfect equality; he could even attain to the equality of the undifferentiated existence which is *Brahma*. They believed also that at some time equality would be established even socially, but the time was too remote. The people of the present age were taking a step forward to realize equality in actual life. In doing so, they should muster on their side the cumulative effort of their forefathers who had meditated on it with great patience. They too should ceaselessly meditate on that ideal. They had commenced a new stage on the path of evolution. It was like beginning a new chapter of a book. Hence they should bestow on it the same careful attention as a writer would do on the book. They knew how kindness could be illusory and gave rise on the one side to vaingloriousness, and on the other to poverty and pitiful conditions. If they were not watchful, the same might happen to equality and deprive them of the faculty of right discrimination. If equality destroyed the faculty of discrimination, it itself could not last long, and would prove to be an illusion. Again, if equality was brought about at the cost of discrimination, it would be necessary to recover the latter, entailing for the purpose, an effort extending to several centuries more. They, therefore, had to evolve an equality accompanied with right discrimination and partaking of the fully developed kindness. That would require constant self-examination and rejection of all the dross which tended to obscure the mind. Every trace of egoism that made for inequality and the sense of high and low would have to be hunted to its source and driven out. If they set about it humbly and sincerely, they would find to their surprise that each had a lot to do to approximate to the ideal. Even he, Vinoba said, who being a non-possessor of private property, might be supposed to have not much to do in the field of equality, so far as economic equality was concerned, would find a lot remaining to be done. A close examination of his mind would reveal that even he had so much leeway to make up. Then there were inequalities which arose from physical differences. They too would have to be resolved.

There was still another consideration, which was important for the success of an idea. They had to achieve a hundred times more equality in their individual lives than what they wanted to bring about in society. There could be no prospect for success until this was done. The human body was able to maintain a temperature 98° F., only because the source of all heat, namely the Sun, was hot to an infinite degree. They could well imagine what would happen to their bodies if the sun too were no warmer than the human body, i.e. 98° F. The *sevaks* therefore owed to themselves to be far ahead of the society in this respect. Then only would their noble aspirations and actions be successful. If they looked at the problem that way Prof. Bang would not be surprised that a man like Kishorlalbai should express his readiness to allow as the present target Rs 2000/- as the maximum income of an individual and Rs 10 lakhs as private property. When an idea was clothed in concrete terms, there were bound to be differences of opinion. Kishorlalbai was not going to insist on the acceptance of his maxima. He would not be least disturbed, if they could fix the limit of private property at Rs 10,000/- only and bring it about, say, within two or three years. On the contrary, he would be delighted to find that he was wrong in his estimate and that the situation after all was not as bad as he thought it to be and he would congratulate them for their achievement. But the development of moral qualities was not an easy matter. It was a programme for ages. Hence, the need to go about the work patiently, cautiously and discriminately.

HIMALAYAN LESSONS

IV

Bhona Bagi. A Wash-Out

A second night of this kind was out of the question. Some place had to be found. The previous evening mention had been made by someone of a lonely little shop on a mountain ridge about 2 miles away, called Bhona Bagi. So the first thing in the morning Swamiji and Bhawani-singh went off with local friends to look at it. They returned with a promising report, and the weather had now improved, so we bid farewell to the truck, which was to return to Pashulok, packed our luggage on mules, and set off. I had hoped to get a horse, but none was available.

The path in places was stiff and stony, for we had to reach an altitude of about 6,300 feet. Clouds were down and we could see no view, only the steep grass slopes and cheel pines with all their lower branches cut off, and looking at a distance, more like palm trees than pines.

Hope again was carrying us on her wings. Obviously the views of the snow mountains from this ridge would be glorious when the weather cleared, and the scent of the pine trees would be intoxicating when the sun came out. And here were cattle grazing all up and down the mountain sides, and little huts and cow-sheds dotted around. "An ideal place," we said to one another, "for a branch of Pashulok."

We reached the lonely shop. With stone walls mud-plastered, and stone slab roof, it stood there all by itself on the top of the ridge with an open stretch of grass and a little cattle-pond in front. We were all in a mood to make the very best of it. The front part of the shop formed a sort of common room, and the back part with its rows of shelves, accommodated our luggage, as well as afforded some space for sleeping. The rest of the rooms in the main building were encumbered with lumber — old tins, boxes, vessels and the rest — the dilapidated remains of a once flourishing country shop. The building also had a wing of two little empty rooms with very low doors. One of these became the kitchen, and the other had to accommodate the local school consisting of a jolly Brahman village teacher, who bubbled over all day with Sanskrit verses, together with his little pupils, who previously had been using the shop itself.

News of our coming had preceded us, with the result that local peasants began turning up, and what with them and the little school children, who all sat around gazing, there was hardly any room left for ourselves. We had reached a completely rural atmosphere. This was the real Himalayan life, absolutely different from the *hill-stations* which is all that so many outsiders ever see of the mountains. I felt very happy, but after some three hours of sitting and talking to those delightful people my body began to protest. Gradually our visitors melted away, and we had time and space to look around. We now noticed that the floor was ominously damp

in several places, and that the walls were none too dry. The rain had begun again, first of all gently, and then heavier and heavier. Sure enough the roof started leaking and all the damp places on the floor turned into puddles. Bishen and Brahmachariji had a hard time in the kitchen trying to make *rotis* — the wood was all damp, and water kept dripping from the roof on to the *tuva* which hissed with rhythmical regularity. Nevertheless they produced a hot meal for which we were all thankful, as that day also we had had to go without food since the early morning, like at Phakot. Now came the question of sleeping. There was one small bed with which I was indulged and, to make it long enough, I added the school teacher's wooden chair for my feet. The rest of the party gathered together old wooden planks, of which there were fortunately quite a number, and thus managed to have something dry on which to spread their beddings. All night long it rained and on into the next day. One of the party went down to Chamba Khal for the post, and came back with the news that the motor road over which we had come from Narendranagar was again breached, that our truck was unable to get back to Pashulok, and that no post had come through. All that day the rain continued, and all the next night and all the next day. By this time we were literally washed out, and on the fourth morning all bedraggled and exhausted we returned to Chamba Khal with the confidence that nothing could be worse than the house we were leaving behind us.

Fleas!!!

Seeing our plight the inhabitants of Chamba Khal hurriedly did what they could for us, and kind friends of a nearby village put at our disposal two rooms in a *bhains-shala* (buffalo-shed) half way between Chamba Khal and their home. At that time the herdsman was out cutting grass, and when he returned in the evening to find me sitting on his bed, and the two boys cooking food in his kitchen, his rage knew no bounds. The lethargic buffalo cows even came in for a taste of his fury, and the poor things became quite nervous, staring at him with large, bewildered, bloodshot eyes. If I had not been there, I am sure all our luggage would have been thrown down the mountain side, and the boys forcibly kicked out of the kitchen. Gradually his temper subsided, his bed was restored to him, and his kitchen outfit fixed up in the next room. Now we began to study our new abode. The roof did not leak, that was a great thing, but the space was very limited — one small room with all the luggage piled up in a heap, and a slip of a kitchen. The buffaloes we discovered, though kept in doors all the day, were tied up in the open at night, just outside our rooms; this appeared to be their regular routine with which we did not dare to interfere. A small bed was brought for me from the village, but for the rest of the party there was nothing for it but to sleep on the rather damp mud floor. Bishen and

Brahmachariji found just enough space between my bed and the pile of luggage, and Swamiji and Bhawanisingh slept in the tiny kitchen with their heads in the *chulha*. No sooner had the relaxation of approaching sleep come upon me, than fleas began creeping over my body. All night long they went on creeping and biting, and the boys on the floor were no better off, as I could hear by their fidgetting and scratching. In the morning when we all compared notes, we found that the two in the kitchen had been equally tormented. This condition of things we discovered was due to the proximity of the buffaloes. I did not know before that buffaloes harboured fleas, but now I do, and shall not forget it!

Straightway we began to hunt for some other building, but none was to be found. As to the weather the rain had at last subsided, but the motor road had become so badly breached that all communication with the plains was cut off, and we were told it would take a whole fortnight before motor traffic could be resumed.

(To be continued)

MIRA

HARIJAN

June 30

1951

WRONG APPROACH

The following is taken from "Uttar Pradesh Newsletter" of the *Times of India*, dated May 22, 1951:

Last year, 80,000 boys and girls sat for the High School Examination. This year, their number rose to 1,00,000. And in the coming year it may reach—so the educational authorities estimate—1,50,000.

And as the number of under-graduates and ex-high school boys jumps, their "price" slumps.

How much is a school-leaving certificate worth these days? Let an ex-high school boy who works as a "water-sprayer" answer.

He says: "It is Re 1-8 a day, during summer and none during the rest of the year. Because that is what I earn by spraying water on *khas tattis* during the summer months."

And how much is an under-graduate worth these days? If you put this question to one of the tribe who has just secured the job of a *chaprasi* his reply will be: "Formerly it was Rs 85 a month; now it is only Rs 45. I was then a clerk and now I am only a *chaprasi*."

But there are not as many *khas tattis* to spray water on as there are ex-high school boys without work; nor is the job of a *chaprasi* waiting for every unemployed under-graduate.

What is the outlook for the luckless lot? "Bleak"—if you look at the lengthening waiting list at Lucknow's employment exchange. On an average 2,500 more people crowd the queue before the exchange every month. And the exchange officials are able to find jobs for barely 500 of them. Result: The queue for jobs that do not exist is getting longer.

Meanwhile high schools—and intermediate colleges—are getting on with their job of producing more boys without jobs.

What is wrong here is not that a high-school boy has to accept the job of a water sprayer at

Re 1-8 per day, or that an undergraduate has to be a *chaprasi* at Rs 45 per month. Indeed, if we want education to spread universally, having regard to the present standard of high-school and collegiate education, no water-sprayer should have less education than that of a high-school boy, nor should a *chaprasi* be less educated than an undergraduate. And if different occupations are doomed to have different scales of payment, the two cannot complain if they receive the remuneration appropriate for their respective jobs.

The present condition looks 'bleak' for two reasons: (i) because only a few water-sprayers and *chaprasis* are matriculates and under-graduates, and so a comparison is made on the ground of 'education'; and (ii) 'the educated' by their very training are made less efficient and sturdy water-sprayers and *chaprasis* than their uneducated colleagues. The result is that both the employer and the employee are more satisfied when the worker is uneducated than when he is educated.

What is needed is (i) that the superiority complex of the educated must go; he must cease to think that a water-sprayer's or a *chaprasi*'s job is not a proper kind of employment for a matriculate or an undergraduate, or that it is less honourable than the work of a copying or a despatching clerk. If there is to be eight years' compulsory education the whole nation will be educated; every boy and every girl, even a road labourer, a sweeper, and a cart-driver will be a matriculate or an undergraduate, that is, will have the amount of information and literary equipment of the present-day matriculate or undergraduate. Since the illiterate coolie will disappear, all work will have to be done by 'ladies and gentlemen'; (ii) the education must therefore be improved so as not to decrease the educated person's efficiency and inclination for jobs requiring physical and unattractive labour; and (iii) the differences in scales of remuneration of different jobs must not be so wide as at present. Indeed, if differences are to be allowed, better remuneration should be paid for more strenuous or less attractive work than for less hard and more pleasant work. Thus a sweeper and a *chaprasi* are justified in asking for better wages than a clerk, and if all are equally educated, there is no reason why the clerk should receive Rs 75, the *chaprasi* Rs 45 and the sweeper Rs 30. The order might more justifiably be the other way. We might draw a lesson in this connection from the rules of remission and rations to prisoners in jails, where the sweeper and the hard-work prisoners get more remissions and rations than the medium and light-work prisoners. The jail system based on remissions and adequate provision of prime necessities of life is more natural and just than a social system based on money and liberal provision of sports, cinemas and drinks.

Wardha, 18-6-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

Abu Road Disturbances

A few weeks ago, Abu Road had become a scene of popular disturbances which were quelled by police firing and methods of repression usually attendant upon police rule. The acts of the police were severely criticized by district leaders, some having even compared them with the Jalianwala Bagh tragedy. Though that was a gross exaggeration, even moderate and responsible unofficial investigators had passed stringent criticism against the conduct of some of the officials and the police in general.

The Government of Bombay held an official enquiry. Though, I understand, that an unpopular officer has been removed, the official enquiry has exonerated the police of excesses. The report has not satisfied even Shri Santbal, the most balanced, restrained and impartial of the moderate critics. He observes:

"I must confess that the Press Note does not remove the impression I had independently formed that the conduct of some of the policemen after the injury to the D.S.P. and during the execution of the curfew order was regrettable, revengeful and unrestrained." (Gujarati *Vishwavatsalya*, 16-6-'51).

Besides the usual methods of official enquiries, exaggerations on the part of popular agitators are also responsible for such unsatisfactory results. In this age of publicity and propaganda, reporters of news are not satisfied with their productions, unless they have made them sensational reading. In the false dazzling glow of exaggeration, even the little true light that might have been at the back of the picture is made invisible and discreditable.

Leaders agitating for particular causes on behalf of the people would do well to have a meticulous regard for accuracy. A little understatement is better than a little overdoing. In a majority of cases in which prosecutions fail and the accused go unpunished, it is not that the accused had not committed the offence, but in the absence of or along with reliable and truthful evidence, a good deal of concocted evidence is put forth, making the whole a doubtful story. My advice to the popular leaders of Abu Road is to carefully observe the rules of the Satyagraha code in their agitation. If they suffer in spite of such observance, they must regard the suffering as inevitable and necessary for the success of their cause. Let them observe truth, with the faith that it must succeed in the end.

I also request the Bombay Government to remember that they have annexed Abu to a certain extent against, or without consulting, the wishes of the people in general. It is up to them to win the goodwill of the masses with tact, justice and measures for their benefit. If the people—the masses—feel, whether rightly or wrongly, that they would be happier with their association with Rajasthan, the Bombay Government must not stand in their way. If they feel that the masses are given a wrong lead and against their true interests, they must be won over by reasoning, persuasion, actual proofs and acts of service.

Wardha, 20-6-'51

K. G. M.

COMMUNALISM

"The following appeared in the *National Herald* of Lucknow of 11th May 1951:

'I appeared for the Praveshika examination of the Prayag Mahila Vidyapith, Allahabad, from the Kasturba Balika Vidyalaya, Lucknow. Our centre for examination was Mahila Vidyalaya College.

'Our cooking test was held on May 3. That day I spent nearly Rs 10/- and prepared the food as directed. I waited to be examined, as my number was 7, but the examiner called me after 20 or 25 girls.

'The food cooked by me was served in beautiful plates but my grief knew no bounds when the examiner, instead of tasting my dishes, placed them near her feet below the table and gave them to the sweeper. The reason was that I am a Muslim.

'When I was cooking the food near other Hindu girls a person asked me my name and then asked me to prepare the food at a distance from the Hindu examinees. I am deeply grieved at this disgraceful treatment.

Mukhtar Begum Siddiqui.'

"Obviously, the examiner is guilty of two offences mentioned in paragraphs 3 and 4 above. How did she test the merit of the work of this particular examinee, and on what basis did she assess the candidate's merits in this particular subject? Who can also say what effect it might have produced on the aggregate marks of the examinee and its influence on the entire examination result?

"But what is really heart-rending is the spirit which led the examiner, who must, I believe, be a teacher, to inflict such an injury on her innocent examinee as she did. It was a wanton insult to a young lady. Perhaps it is not an isolated case. It is this behaviour of the Hindus which has been responsible for the demand, foundation and existence of separate institutions for different communities and castes. In the long run it means complete division of the people into separate blocs resulting in either partitions or States within States. Needless to add that this was the very seed which developed into the two-nation theory and culminated in the partition of India. If it is not dug out from the very bottom, however deep it may be, any idea to erect the edifice of a Secular State is mere day-dreaming. If India is to grow into a united nation, this arrogance has to go."

Shri Suresh Ramabhai sent me the above note several weeks ago. Before publishing it, I deemed it proper to verify the allegations, and wrote to the heads of the Prayag Mahila Vidyapith, Allahabad, and the Kasturba Balika Vidyalaya, Lucknow, asking for their comments. None of them has responded. Hence, I must assume that the young lady's complaint is truthful.

The Prayag Mahila Vidyapith is an old institution and, I believe, under the control of some of the prominent leaders and men of letters of U.P. The Principal is a celebrated Hindi poetess. I hope she visualizes the shock which Mukhtar Begum Siddiqui's feelings must have received by this insulting conduct of the examiner.

The founders of the institution from which she was sent up have chosen to name it after Kasturba. I do not know how they have taken this behaviour towards their student. If they

take the insult lying, it would be better to drop Kasturba's name. They must not send their students for the examinations of this Mahila Vidyapith, unless equality of treatment and a just mode of examination are assured, and proper amends are made for the insult.

The incident itself might look trivial. It might be made to appear that a young girl of not much importance has been slighted by an otherwise qualified but orthodox examiner. It must not be made too much of. But the danger lies in this very proneness to minimize it. This seemingly small insult might well become the seat of a fatal disease.

The incident has taken place in the capital of U. P. This makes it all the more important. It strengthens the prevailing opinion that the leaders and administration of U. P. have been dangerously gravitating towards reactionary communalism. The communal riots and the desecration and forcible possession of places of worship grow from such beginnings.

The Mahila Vidyapith, Prayag, would do well to unreservedly apologize to the young lady, and make proper arrangements to re-examine her, if necessary.

Wardha, 18-6-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

MAN OR MONKEY

[The following has been taken from *The Band of Hope Chronicle* of February 1951, p. 12. — V. G. D.]

'What is n-e-o-p-a-l-l-i-u-m?' asked Tom White.

'Neopallium. That's what makes you different from a monkey, Tom.'

'Hairly hide?' queried Tom.

'Certainly not,' laughed the patcher of shoes. 'Read that paragraph at the top of the page. It was written by a doctor who was a member of the British Parliament; so he was no fool.'

'Very few men, except medical men,' read Tom slowly, 'have ever seen the brain of a human being, and few doctors have seen the brain of a monkey. Suppose I submitted to you the brain of a newborn baby, and that of an adult chimpanzee on the same dish, practically none of you would notice much difference in appearance. They are almost exactly the same in size and shape. Suppose, however, that I made microscopic sections of the two brains, and showed them to you, you would notice certain cell groups in the human organ that are absent from that of the ape.'

'That's interesting, Mr Bentley, but where is the neopallium?' commented Tom.

'Let me illustrate,' said the cobbler. 'Look at my closed fist and think of it as the brain of a chimpanzee of mature age. Now I cover my fist closely with my handkerchief. Think of it now as the brain of a human infant.'

'Then you mean, Sir, that the human baby brain inside is like a grown monkey's, but it has an outer covering that makes all the difference.'

'Exactly, Tom, that covering layer of cell tissue over the surface of the human brain, which the monkey does not possess, is called the neopallium.'

'What is it for?' asked Tom.

'Its group of nerve centres are the seat of the highest human faculties and mental functions—judgment, self-control, the sense of values, and self-criticism. These things make us different from the monkey.'

'Then if I lose my neopallium, I'd be like a monkey!' laughed Tom. 'I'd better take care of it.'

'Yes, don't abuse your brain. Read that paragraph at the bottom of the opposite page.'

'The first effect of alcohol in small doses is to narcotize, or send to sleep, the cells of the highest level of the human brain. When you take a moderate dose of alcohol in wine, beer, or whisky, you are affecting and putting out of action in whole or in part the very portion of your anatomy which is distinctively human, the part that marks you off from the beasts of the field.'

'You read well, Tom, but we'll have to stop. Here comes a customer.'

'May I come again, sir, I want to ask a lot of questions?—Meanwhile I will try to be a man and not a monkey.'

ON WAY TO SHIVARAMPALLI

(A DIARY OF VINOBA'S ITINERARY)

XIII

April 2, Koocharam (Twenty-sixth halt, 8 miles)

A small but ideal village, surrounded by hills, with big roads and well-laid out drains. Harijan houses are not segregated from others as is often the case in other places. These houses were also equally clean from within and without; so also the well. Vinobaji's temperature had not come down yet. He had continued his tour in spite of fever. He believed that walk, perspiration, bath, rest, prayer, and necessary change in the diet would eliminate the fever. We requested Vinobaji to take rest and not attend the prayer today as the prayer-ground was about a furlong away. But he could not consent to disappoint the several hundred villagers that had come all along from the surrounding villages. Though feeling very weak, he recited the prayers,—first in Sanskrit, and then in Telugu. In spite of the recent hailstorm, resulting in the destruction of crops, and demolition of houses, and the consequential depression and despair of people devoid of means, several hundred villagers including women and children of the surrounding villages had gathered to listen to the message of *Sarvodaya*. It was a visible sign of the faith in God which lies deeply buried in the souls of the people, and becomes irrepressible when a man of God comes near. The faith was reverberated in Vinoba who also felt himself hallowed by the sight of these simple and pious *kisans*. Emotions attendant upon a thanksgiving occasion characterized his post-prayer speech.

It was not difficult, Vinoba said, to attribute good fortune to God's kindness and mercy, when they had good crops. But surely the hailstorm too did not come without His will! How could God be cruel also? Or, was it also an act of mercy? And he felt that God did so in order to see how people helped one another on such calamitous occasions. He wanted to see to what extent the quality of kindness, which He incessantly kept on showering on His creatures, had permeated in them. Did it infect men even partially? Men would not be worthy of His compassion, if they failed to help one another on such occasions.

It was their duty, Vinoba said, to run to the scene of calamity, and render what assistance they could. It was not proper to look to the Government to run to their aid, themselves remaining inactive. No doubt Government had to do their part of the duty. But they must remember that while government had their limitations, the strength of the people was unlimited. Do people wait for Government medical aid to arrive, if their child fell ill? They would at once begin to do whatever they themselves could. The same should be the case in a calamity, when it visited the whole society, which was but their extended family. Let them realize that God wanted to test them, and they lost a great opportunity if they did not successfully stand the test.

None should ever think that want of effort on his part would not make much difference. He himself would be the loser, was the proper way of thinking.

Every citizen had to see whether he had paid any thought and performed any act for his country and his society. That was the sign of Swaraj. If they were really free, they would think that way. Those who did not do

so were yet slaves in bondage. Vinoba explained this on the analogy of the body. The eyes, hands, feet and other organs performed their respective functions without waiting for the rest. "If the ears become deaf, and fail to work, would the eyes say, since the ears did not work, why should they? They would refuse to see. What will happen to the Swaraj of the body, if the eyes did so?"

"But I often find people in our country just engaged in censuring others for the non-performance of their duties, and refusing to perform their own parts on that plea. This makes me feel that Swaraj is still far off for us. If a lion had entered a house and had been beaten off, the house became free from its danger. That would give the members of the house the scope for attending to their various duties. The retreat of the lion would not mean the end of duties, but the beginning thereof. If they wanted to eat, the members could then cook their food without fear. But they could not escape cooking. But if they argued that since the lion had left there was no need of cooking, it would be foolish. Similarly every village, every house, and every individual must think about its or his responsibilities in Swaraj. The leaving of the British was like the leaving of the lion."

The people must realize, Vinoba continued, that their Government could not be rich in resources if they were poor. It was the people who could make their Government strong. The people must approach problems with that outlook, and help their Government to prosper. The Government of the United States was rich and prosperous because their people had made it so. "Government can and should help you in getting technical training, advice, instruction in various industrial occupations, fighting diseases of crops, animals etc. When there are already some literates in your village, the spreading of literary education should be done by the people themselves. You must stand on your own legs—through self-help and mutual co-operation."

The Jamiul-Mema friends came here to acquaint Vinobaji with the condition of the Muslims. According to them, relief work was badly needed in the district of Osmanabad and in the city of Hyderabad too. They desired Vinobaji to depute a worker of the calibre of Shri Satyambhai, who was working among the Meos in the north. But such workers were rare, and no trick could create the likes of Satyambhai.

As it was now certain that they could reach Hyderabad as scheduled Vinobaji was pressed to take a couple of days' rest at Koocharam. But Vinoba would not listen to any departure in the time-table. And so we proceeded to the next stage.

April 3, Medchal (Twenty-seventh halt, 8 miles)

This brought us into the district of Hyderabad. The enthusiasm of the workers knew no bounds. Many came from Hyderabad to offer their respects. In the early hours of the morning, the lakes, and the green fields of paddy simply charmed our eyes. The lakes are full. "Waters from all corners flow into them even as good qualities from all sides flow into the saints," said Tulsidas. And in spite of their huge store, the lakes are modest and serene, like the saints. The paddy fields have covered all footpaths, so that pedestrians get confused in finding their way, even as different ideologies mislead the people in seeking the true road. But the Royal Road is never covered and lost, and Vinoba wanted to show that there existed a Royal Road to *Sarvodaya* through truth and non-violence.

The joy of nature's beauty had made me unconscious of the arrival of our destination. I was awakened from my ecstasy by the *Ramadhan*, the music, the band, *niranjans*, the garlands, and the cries of welcome which filled the air.

We felt relieved on finding that Vinoba's fever had completely gone, and as he felt, and it proved, that it had gone for good.

An ailing Muslim had come to pay his respects to Vinobaji. Vinoba enquired of him about the condition of

Muslims. He replied, "Conditions have much improved since you last visited Hyderabad. But there are men amongst Muslims themselves who excite the masses. Some papers even now play to the tune of Pakistan. These are responsible for incidents such as happened at Udgir, Yadgir, and Jalna. Why can they not abandon cow-sacrifice? Their behaviour is suicidal. The Muslim does not as yet consider this country as his motherland. In this he acts quite against the teachings of Islam, which does not permit the faithful to limit himself to a particular country. By accepting Pakistan, they have acted against the teachings of Islam. They have not rendered any service to Islam by dividing the country. But what else could be expected of them? After all, what is their age? They were only 1,300 years old. And they were taught only to destroy. They had not as yet been able to show anything constructive. I am definitely of opinion that the Muslims of Hyderabad as well as of India should not form any separate party of their own. They should join the Congress organization of the country; and serve their brothers through this organization alone."

The workers of the district of Hyderabad who had assembled here today, wanted guidance, on some of the burning problems of the day. But before they discussed these problems, one of them asked, "Why have you undertaken this tour on foot?" "In order to have your *darshan*," said Vinobaji. "I wanted to meet you, who are so many images of *Narayana*. How could I meet you all if I had not walked? How could I have seen the country vividly and known it intimately? You have also to take a lesson from this. Why should there be so much dependence upon conveyance every time? Possibly, it is because you are in a hurry to do much work. But if there is haste on this side, there is haste also on the other side, the side of God. Formerly, men easily lived for a hundred years. But now they depart even before they complete their 50 or 60. A daily walk will surely add to longevity. It is better to spend the amount in obtaining more nourishment than in Railway travels."

Q.: What do you think about the controls? At times villagers do not get their ration for two months at the ration shop. What should be done in such circumstances?

Vinoba: Villages need not import any food from outside. But the villages also should not be looted as at present. Why do you make the payment in coin instead of in kind? If I were here, I would ask the villagers to refuse to do any work. "We shall not work unless you give us food," I would advise them to demand. Either you feed them and take the work or you allow them to starve. Is it a joke that people should be expected to go without food for two months? There would have been a revolution elsewhere. But who shall awaken the labourers? If you engage the labourer, pay him in kind, and that too in corn. I have more than once said, do away with money. Do not fall a prey to it. Money is a liar. It has no value. It is just printed paper. It is not a correct way of saying that the prices of grain go up or down. It is the price of money that goes high or low. Let us free the village from its slavery to it. If you will, you can protect your village in this way. I am neither you nor your Government. I am but a friend to give a few words of advice.

The fact is, our people do not prepare any scheme, do not carry out any plan. India would not have become poor, if we had a right plan. You have a *panchayat* in your village. Does it ever think about the production in the village? People are not accustomed to think beyond the family. They are not trained to think about the village. They have not yet started a life of *human* society. For even animals look after their families.

On a question about the Communists, Vinobaji said, "The Communist is the friend of the *chitwala*, *millwala*, and *moneywala*. The occupations of the poor are being snatched under his very nose. He does not prevent it. He does not want to prevent it. Communism presupposes that communes will have to be established in villages. For this, the villages will have to be made self-supporting.

But the Communists aim at snatching away the wealth from the moneyed people. Have the moneyed class any real wealth? It is the *kisan* who produces and possesses wealth. He is being trapped by the moneyed class because he sells away his produce to them. He is hardly able to store even the grain necessary for his food. You must find out ways and means to protect the villagers from the citizens, in order to make them self-sufficient and happy. To achieve this purpose you will have to consider the village as a unit and plan accordingly. The Communist is a partisan of the citiwallas. He creates dissensions in the village and teaches people to hate one another.

Is there anything in Communism which is for the good of the people, but is not included in *Sarvodaya*? *Sarvodaya* wants that every one should be able to have the same measure of happiness that was available to others. Does Communism want anything more than this? Has any Communist spent some years in a village, and shown any increase in its produce? If so, let him come forward and say so. But he wants to do exactly the opposite. He rejoices in increasing the hardships of the villagers, for then he gets one more opportunity to excite the people against the Government. The recent hailstorm has caused so much agony to all, but the Communist is happy that he can exploit the occasion against the Government.

Q.: Congress has always professed to serve the poor. But today people challenge us and ask us why the profession is not fulfilled. What answer shall we give?

Vinobaji: The profession is not bad. But if it works according to the profession, no reply would be needed to the allegation. Congressmen, these days, take the name of *Sarvodaya* also. But no work is being done on those lines. They have no work except to enrol one-rupee members. I feel anxious about the future of the Congress. It has to its credit past attainments. Hence, its prestige has not yet been lost, and it is reaping the benefits of the unexhausted balance. But what do you do now? You paint signboards on cloth saying "State Congress—*Zindabad*." But the cloth on which it is painted is lifeless. How then can the State Congress become *Zindabad*? But let alone the Congress. It is after power today. Like Allah, who does not tolerate *sharkat* (a second with Himself), Congressmen also do not tolerate other parties stepping in. They do not therefore work in co-operation with others. But there must be people here, who are not in the Congress, but who want to serve the village. Why should not they all unite and apply themselves to the service of the village?

In his post-prayer speech, Vinoba referred to his fever, which had left him after four days. He had been advised to take rest. But he did not wish to disturb the programme. He believed that the fever was one of the ways of God for testing his devotees. And if the devotee did not succumb, God also gave him the necessary strength to bear the strain. Thus he had continued his tour, and the fever too had disappeared and he hoped to reach Shivarampalli after a couple of days, as scheduled. Of course, that also was only an imagination, Vinoba said. They did not know what God willed.

"When I left Wardha," Vinoba said, "I started in God's name, and had built upon Him, and it is by His strength alone that my work has gone on so smoothly. Man has no strength of his own. The Lord bestows strength on us if we have faith in Him."

In this connection he mentioned an incident from the Prophet's life, wherein he had failed to carry out a promise. Giving the reason, Mohammed had said that he had forgotten that day, to say, "God willing", as was his custom. That was why the word '*Inshalla*' (God willing) was customarily used among the Muslims. Mohammed had been guilty of presuming to do a thing himself, and God showed that he had no strength except

through Him. Of course, the use must be accompanied with that faith. "And," Vinoba continued, "when we are so helpless in our personal affairs, how do we expect to carry out the nation's affairs without the will of the Lord? It is for this reason that whenever I think about these affairs (of the nation), I realize day after day the importance of not forgetting the Lord. After Swaraj, our country had to face very big problems. Some of them have been solved, but there are still many, as perplexing as before, and I have not the slightest doubt, that without seeking and achieving the assistance of the Lord, we shall not at all be able to resolve these problems. A friend asked me, "Whatever you want to say, why do you not say directly? Why do you associate it with the prayers?" I replied, "It is only the strength of prayer that I possess. I therefore want all to join me in the prayers and if at all there is any strength in my post-prayer utterances, it is that of the prayer and prayer alone. Independent of the prayer I have never had any experience of any strength in my words. This thought has been constantly filling my mind these days. I therefore have shared it with you this evening."

He also advised the Telugu workers to study Potna's *Bhagawat*. He was surprised that many of the educated—some of whom were Congress workers also—had not even read that book of the masses. It would help them in purifying their mind which was essential to increase the efficiency of a worker. It was all the more necessary, if they wanted to work amongst the villagers, to know the favourite book of the people.

He also spoke a few words to the ladies, whose attendance was fairly large. "Since my tour in Hyderabad, I have been observing what havoc the drink evil is playing here. When I ponder over the way to free people from this evil, I feel that women have a great part to play in this. Mothers have great powers. Maybe the power of Satyagraha is more evident in women than in men. I want to tell you, sisters, that if you rfake up your mind, you can rid your men of this evil. Unfortunately, it has become a convention in India, that howsoever dissolute the husband may be, the wife should not say a word, but suffer quietly. Women wrongly imagine this to be the duty of a pious wife. It is quite proper that the wife should serve her husband, even if he is dissolute; but that is so because it is through such service alone that she can win him to the right path. But service does not mean that the wife should not try to reform the husband. Only when the wife realizes her responsibility to reform the husband can she be credited with the knowledge of *dharma*.

Finally, Vinobaji asked the ladies the reason for their not spinning. Till the end of his life, Gandhiji had advocated the *charkha*. It was three years since his death. The mills were not producing sufficient cloth. They had been producing less than formerly. Hence there was scarcity of cloth. It was, therefore, no good depending upon mill-cloth. 'I want to tell you in the most unambiguous and definite terms that you will be rendering great service to your village and your country, if you will spin in your cottage!'"

D. M.

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