The Place of Khadi Now

Reg. No. B3092

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)
Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XV. No. 20 AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, JULY 14, 1951 TWO ANNAS

SHRI VINOBA AT SHIVARAMPALLI

V

Learn the Language of the People

The post-prayer speech of Shri Vinoba on 7th April '51 was combined with the opening of the small exhibition of village industries organized along with the Sarvodaya Conference. Vinobaji began with relating the benefit the party had derived by travelling on foot and coming into contact with several hamlets and seeing with their own eyes the conditions in which the villagers lived. Although his command over Telugu was not sufficient to enable him to converse in that language, Vinobaji said, the little that he had studied of it enabled him to speak a few sentences and recite the *Gita* in Telugu. This pleased the villagers. They felt that they had among them one of their own men. When he commenced his study of the South Indian languages he did not aim to do so in order to be a scholar of those languages. He knew that it was wellnigh impossible for a man to be erudite in several languages in a brief period. He did it only as a token of his love for the people, whatever might be their tongue. An attempt to speak in a people's own language helped in the bond of love between him and the people. Vinoba hinted that workers should always endeavour to learn the language of the people among whom they worked.

Village Conditions

They knew, Vinoba proceeded, that the condition of the villagers was far from satisfactory. But what they saw with their own eyes was much worse than what they knew from a distance. In several villages the people had not a single vocation left to them except agriculture. He did see a few ones in which people had two or three petty industries. He saw women spinning in some of the villages. He also met a few men who did it. He also came across a few persons clad in their home-made clothes. This convinced him that spinning and weaving was and is even now an industry capable of being carried on in every village. But instead of its being restored to them, there was the apprehension that even these few villages who still struggled with it would lose it as soon as means of road transport improved and city goods began to flood these villages. This had happened in other villages, and the same fate hanged over these. It was a very disconcerting sight.

Adoption of Villages

Vinoba further said that had he not to reach Shivarampalli at the scheduled time, he would have preferred to stay in some of the villages for a few days each in order to organize some activity there. It did not please him to leave a village with a problem, which he felt he could solve if he had more time. But he could not help it. As far as possible he tried to raise everywhere workers from the locality itself. But that was not possible in every village. His advice to town-dwellers was that even if they could not give up their residence in and connection with cities and towns each worker should adopt a village as his own for his work. Let him have a small house in it. He might go to the town even daily for his engagements, but he should regard the village as his own *gaon* (homeland). Even this partial identification with the village would have a very beneficial effect on village fortunes.

He had often wondered, Vinoba continued, why it should not be possible for the Congress to keep its offices in a village instead of in a town or city. They could select a village with a post office and an easy approach to the town. That vicinity itself would be a precursor and incentive to village service. Gandhiji had exhorted workers to go to villages. He found villages hopefully looking for the time when Gandhiji's men would go to their help. Some people did go to them occasionally. But it was not in the spirit of service. It was done with political or exploitary motives. They went to them for getting their votes, or for some object of their own. Such visits could not enthuse the villagers. What was needed was staying with them without any selfish object for the good of the villagers themselves. He read in the eyes of the villager the appeal, 'Brothers, *swaraj* has come. Now come and befriend those in whose name and for whose sake you ostensibly obtained *swaraj*.'

(The rest of the speech was an important pronouncement on *khadi*, and has been adopted as the main article of this week. At its conclusion, Vinoba declared the Exhibition open.)

(Translated from Hindi)

OUR NATIONAL LANGUAGE

(By B. G. Kher)

"If we have all to live and work as members of a single united nation, we must first understand one another and the vehicle of thought for this understanding is a common language," observed Shri B. G. Kher, Chief Minister of Bombay, presiding over the *Pramanapatra Vitaranotsava* of the Hindustani Prachar Samiti, Tumkur (Mysore), on June 12.

The Chief Minister added that they were forutnate enough to have agreed on a common national language and script and on its name. Prachar Sabhas, he added, were necessary to take its knowledge to every door and every home and he was glad that there were already 27 such institutions doing that work. Stating that the importance of the study of Hindi had increased since the achievement of Swaraj, Shri Kher said:

The question of the spread of Hindi all over our country was very close to the heart of the Father of our Nation and making Hindi a national language was one of the items of his constructive programme. He knew that if all the children of Bharat could talk with each other in a common language they would come closer and be strongly united. He started Hindi *prachar* in South India — in this region of the ancient Dravidian languages — as early as 1918 and since then through the efforts of the *pracharaks*,

whose number is ever growing, the movement is being carried on vigorously. Your centre is one of the prominent centres on this side for the promotion of Hindi, and I am happy to associate myself with you in this national movement of great importance.

Our Constitution has directed that "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 interference with its genius, the forms, the style and expressions used in Hindustani and the other languages of India specified in the VIII Schedule and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages." The languages specified in the VIII Schedule are the following:

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 14. Urdu.

In the words of our President just as several rivers join together in a united stream and flow together, in the same way must Hindi be moulded and spread all over India as the common language of the people. We will succeed in our objective if people co-operate and assist us in this. We have to bring into action, as early as possible, this important special directive in practical life and see that every single man, woman and child is able to understand and hold conversation in the national language.

The importance of a common language in daily life cannot be exaggerated. In his excellent treatise, *Languages in History and Politics*, A. C. Woolner observes:

> "So long as letters are confined to the few, the literary language of the educated may be quite different from that of the masses of the people. When literacy expands and includes more and more people whose whole life is not devoted to letters, a dead language or a foreign language ceases to be satisfactory as a medium of expression — while a national literary language can exercise an enormous influence on the speech of daily life."

Fortunately, as I said, because of the provision in the Constitution the controversy about the name and script of our national language is now dead. But there is another danger against which we must guard.

Because of the name of our national language is Hindi, certain Hindi-speaking provinces are trying to foist their special brand of Hindi on the whole country as its national language. But a part can never take the place of the whole and these friends must realize that the Hindi which is contemplated by the Constitution will be a matter of slow growth and cannot be identical with the Hindi either of the Uttar Pradesh or of Bihar or of Madhya Pradesh. All these will make a valuable contribution to the formation of the national language, but they are not the "national language". In order to make this distinction clear Mahatma Gandhi proposed to call the national language Hindi-Hindustani or Hindustani. As both these expressions had different connotations it is a matter of great good fortune that we have now agreed upon the common name *Hindi*.

I had occasion to speak on this subject at Madras in 1939 at the Convocation of the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha and while referring to the Hindi-Urdu name controversy, I had quoted Vajpeyi's following passage. (I take the liberty of doing so again):

> "For a long time Hindus were used to writing Hindi in Nagari characters and Mussalmans in Persian. But gradually Mussalmani Hindi began to separate itself from Hindu Hindi. Amir Khusro or Insha or Nazir, when they wrote in Hindi, even in Persian script, had their eyes fixed on Hindustan and therefore their writings are not replete with foreign ideas. But other Mohammedan writers who were brought up in the Semitic atmosphere or were themselves descendants of Semitized Persians or Turks, naturally brought in Semitic ideas into their poetry and thus the Hindu Hindi and the Mussalmani Hindi were created. Another name for Mussalmani Hindi is Urdu."

This is significant. It is a pointer to the way in which our national language will develop in course of time. We must all contribute to the growth of the common language of our conversation and literature and this postulates that we must be proficient in our own regional languages.

There are people who suggest that we should do away with our regional languages. That would be suicidal. India is a land of many languages rich in literature of great value and one should study as many of the languages of our country as one can and understand the culture and have the key to the store-house of knowledge and literature in them all. It is certainly the duty of each of us to study his own mother-tongue which should be the medium of our early education and the State must provide sufficient facilities for this. But in our enthusiasm for the development of our regional languages we must not forget that we have also our duty to our nation. We have a diversity of natural regions, religions, climates, customs, costumes and so many other dividing factors but there is a unity that pervades throughout this diversity. If the unity goes, the diversity would become a calamity and we must avoid it. So far as language is concerned, each of the regional languages must flourish, but simultaneously we have to see that Hindi, the lingua franca of our nation, this common link between our young and old, between the poor and the rich, between the officers and merchants in big cities and the toiling rural peasants, this common link is also strengthened. Under British rule the English language was our common language, but even after a long study of 7 to 11 years how many

understood or could speak it? Hindi is a language which is our own and which is closely associated with most of our own regional languages. It is more or less known to us all, we can master it in a short time. The study of English has its own international importance and English will continue to be studied by those to whom its knowledge is necessary and indispensable but it cannot be a common language for us all and all cannot and will not be able to study it.

A recent report of the National Geographic Society announced that Hindi is spoken by more than 160 million persons in the world and it stands second to English which is spoken by about 260 million. While we are proud that our national language stands second in the world, we cannot remain satisfied at that. Our ideal must be to enrich and raise this national language of ours to a higher status. The need has already been stressed by our leaders and our Constitution. In our enthusiasm for the growth of Hindi we should remember that our national language is not only for the scholars. If it is to be a national language in the true sense of the word, spoken, understood and appreciated by all — a living language, we must avoid the tendency of indiscriminately bringing unnecessary words either from Persian or from Sanskrit.

A few centuries back, there was a tendency in England to introduce Greek or Latin words in place and out of place in English and the people saw that it was detrimental to the development of that language and was against national interest. They saw to it that the language of the books did not differ from the language spoken by the people and today we find an evergrowing tendency to use words of Anglo-Saxon origin and to draw upon Greek, Latin, French and German, and even Hindi words, to develop their language, only as and when these words are necessary. We have a lesson to learn from this. If Hindi is to be a living language understood by all, it should develop in a natural way by drawing upon the various regional languages, a homogeneous combination, the greatest common factor of the various regional languages, each one of which is rich by itself. Our national language should retain all familiar Urdu words and we shall draw upon Sanskrit where need be, but we shall at the same time not close the door to Marathi, Gujarati, Kannada and other languages in enriching our national language. I would not, for example, press the use of the Marathi word *dinanka* in place of *tarikh* or *kawad* for *darwaza* or *apana* for *bazar* as some would have us do. Hindi, as I envisage it, could easily use the English words *table*, *station* etc.; such words as *ticket*, *laltain* have become very familiar to literates and illiterates alike.

Very few people have a true idea of the effects on the vocabulary and syntax of most regional languages of the impact of Persian and Arabic during the Muslim domination of India. Such words as *goonah*, *majah*, *arj*, *hooshiar*, *bag* or *bageecha*, *saman*, *malik*, *kursee*, *sardee*, *chehra*, *chadar*, *nokar*, *tabla*, *doulat*, *taleem*, *parda* are now no more Persian — they are Hindi — absolutely national, being adopted and assimilated and transformed. It is absurd to think of driving them out. Our Hindi should represent a unique illustration of unity in diversity. If Hindi is to be highly Sanskritized or to be purely Persianized, why not have Sanskrit itself? Why was Sanskrit replaced in the course of centuries by Prakrit, Marathi, Gujarati, Kannada and other regional languages? We cannot afford to go back. History shows that a language in order to be living, useful and forceful must combine in it the culture and subtleties of all its component languages. If Hindi is to serve as a powerful national language as intended by our Constitution, it must be the people's language. It will, therefore, borrow freely words and expressions from all the classical and living Indian languages and if necessary, in subjects like mathematics and science even words from foreign languages. It must grow naturally and combine in itself the wealth and lustre of all these languages.

Simplicity is an ornament for a language, something to be proud of and an asset in every respect. I want our Hindi to be the people's Hindi not because we are incapable of making it a difficult and ununderstandable language. We can do this but that would be our own ruin. If we want Hindi to bring the citizens all over India closer together by bonds of a common language, then that language must be such that it can be studied easily by every one, in the shortest possible time so that it can be used freely and understood easily.

We must provide for the study of the national language in our educational institutions, in our schools, in the colleges and in the universities. Educationists have observed that children under ten can pick up any number of languages very easily. I have already observed this in my limited experience. In Switzerland every one has to study three languages — French, German and Italian — and those who require it also study English. It ought not to be difficult, therefore, for a child, which will be taught in its own mother-tongue, to pick up Hindi and one or two regional languages. In higher standards classical languages and also English can be studied. We must also educate the grown-up people in Hindi. A good deal of work has been done, but more systematic attempts must be made to achieve this objective. As Hindi takes the place of English as the language of our administration, in our courts, judicature, in the commercial houses, it will naturally develop into a very powerful medium of expression. But this will not happen of its own accord. Conscious attempts

must be made to achieve this objective as quickly as possible. The nation cannot wait for 10 or 20 years before its administration is carried on in the national language and yet the momentum which English had received makes many of our educated people dread the prospect of doing without English. It is not difficult to achieve our object if we all determine to do so. How can a free people continue to live freely, to think freely and to grow to their full stature if they have to rely on a foreign language for their life's work ?

Evolving and developing a common national language is only one of the needs of our country's reconstruction. Our Constitution has defined social justice as the keystone of our national administration. Mahatma Gandhi showed us a way to unity and true happiness which is so difficult to follow; but if the strife, competition, greed and racial pride which disfigure humanity today are to be overcome, the implementation of the whole of his constructive programme is our only means of salvation and each of your certificate-holders should resolve to dedicate himself to this noble task.

HARIJAN

July 14 1951

THE PLACE OF KHADI NOW *

(By Vinoba)

My faith in *khadi* has become stronger than ever from what I saw in the Hyderabad State. There is somewhere an idea lurking in the mind of even some tried workers that though *khadi* has not lost its importance, yet it is perhaps necessary to lay more stress on matters other than *khadi* and it is possible that *khadi* may even become impracticable. I found this idea to be erroneous. I enquired of villagers, I asked also the workers if they could suggest some occupation other than *khadi*, which could give the villagers some relief, some additional income, some self-confidence that they had something sure to rely upon. But none could point to anything. And the reason is obvious. A thing which man uses for all the 24 hours, which he does not go without even if he has nothing to eat, having become an indispensable emblem of civilization, and the raw material whereof is spread in his own village is the only article to give him the best and the surest occupation. Instead of that occupation being reserved to him, it has been and is being snatched away from his hands. So too other industries for which he has abundant raw materials. Under these circumstances, what else is there, except village industries in general and *khadi* in particular, which it is possible to provide to him ? I have given deep thought to this and found none. No doubt, manure-making and the utilization of human night-soil and urine can also give him some occupation, but even that can never take the place of *khadi*. This truth became clear to me almost as an axiom and whoever cares to study villages will discover it for himself.

But it is not sufficient merely to realize this and sleep over it. The workers must make up their minds to deliver the message of *khadi* to every tiller in every village and do so with relentless perseverance. If they have a feeling that it is perhaps unnecessary to insist on *khadi* as there are other village industries also, I ask them to go to the villages and investigate the matter and decide for themselves. I believe they will find nothing to take the place of *khadi*. I have talked with the Socialists and other young men also. I asked them whether, even after an equitable distribution of land, — which, of course, is necessary — they expected that agriculture alone could give the agriculturist sufficient occupation and income. Also, whether they expected to provide to every village within ten or fifteen years sufficient mechanical energy and machinery to give work to millions. They had to confess that it was not possible. But the inference which these friends drew from these facts was that they should take power into their hands and start their Socialist programme so that after some years they might be able to give the villagers better conditions. I regard this attitude of neglecting what is immediately possible for them to carry out as that of sitting inactively in the present in the hope of being able to achieve something ten or fifteen years after.

My exhortation to you, therefore, is to realize that the *khadi-mantra* (message of *khadi*) which Gandhiji gave us has not become less important now than what it was before *Swaraj*, but rather the other way. The mills, which produced 17 yd. *per capita* have come down to 12 yd., and they have declared that they would not be able to produce even that much now because of strikes and other difficulties. It is thus clear that the mills cannot be relied on for the production of sufficient cloth. And nothing has happened since Gandhiji's death to make us feel that we can solve our various problems if we kept *khadi* apart. I would like to discuss with any one who has a scheme to show that we can manage better without *khadi*. But if there is no such scheme, I urge you to renew your faith in *khadi*, and co-operate with us in developing the science and technique of *khadi*.

(Translated from Hindi)

* Part of Vinoba's speech at Shivarampalli on 7th April, 1951, on the occasion of the opening of the Sarvodaya Exhibition.

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Pages xvi + 406 Price Rs. 5-8-0 Postage etc. 14 as.
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Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD

THE CHARKHA JAYANTI

According to the Hindu Calendar, *Bhadrapad vadya* 12th (which falls this year on 27th September next), the birthday of Gandhiji, is observed as the *Charkha Dwadashi* or the *Charkha Jayanti*. Although Gandhiji is no longer with us, he has left us his precious legacy of the *charkha* or the spinning wheel. Shortly after his death I had made an appeal to create one crore of spinners in the country to preserve the legacy he left us, as that would be the most fitting memorial to him.

The *Charkha Dwadashi* is the fittest occasion for working in the direction of this ideal. In this plan of creating one crore spinners in the country the share of Saurashtra would come to one *lakh*.

With this object in view the whole country, and particularly Saurashtra should celebrate the *Charkha Dwadashi* and constructive workers should see that their surroundings resound with the humming of the spinning wheel.

It was in 1935 that the National School (of Rajkot) first proposed and carried out a sixty-six-day programme in connection with the *Charkha Jayanti*. Every subsequent year, a day was added to this period and the programme has thus gone on advancing. This programme has been adopted by the Charkha Sangh also. It is now observed every year through all the various provinces in the country. Bapuji used to give inspiration from year to year to make this programme a success. Now that he is no longer with us, it is incumbent on us to keep the legacy intact and discharge our duty by the wheel. I may give below what Gandhiji wrote in connection with the *Charkha Jayanti* in 1947 :

> " The *Charkha* is the royal road to political, economic and social freedom. But it is clear that the masses have not adopted it. If the people had adopted it as a symbol of non-violence, the tragic condition which prevails today would never have come. What shall the believer in the *charkha* do in this atmosphere? *Dharma* teaches that when the surrounding atmosphere is adverse, the faith of the devotee becomes brighter. How many such may there be? My spinning continues. I do not miss my daily half hour."

This year's programme will commence on the 10th of July at 7-30 a.m. with prayers. Every one should, with full understanding and taking into consideration all its implications, resolve to spin these eighty days with his full energy, and intimate his resolution to do so to the undersigned.

Those who subscribe to this fund for *Daridranarayana* every year are requested to send eighty coins this year. It is now well known that the Saurashtra Khadi Mandal owes its existence to this fund and the development of *khadi* work there is also due to it.

This fund has been utilized during the last three years in the work of the Saurashtra Constructive Committee, which co-ordinates all the constructive institutions and activities in Saurashtra. The work under the Committee has made good progress during the above period.

Rs 90,242-12-0 in 1948-49 and Rs 1,27,177-15-3 in 1949-50 were received in this *Gandhi Jayanti* fund for *Daridranarayana*. Besides this, Rs 1,15,000/- in 1948-49 and Rs 80,000/- in 1949-50 were received from the Saurashtra Government. The accounts for 1948-49 have been published in the last August number of the *Swarajdharma*, organ of the Saurashtra Constructive Committee. Last year, besides the sum of Rs 80,000/- from the Saurashtra Government a sum of Rs 80,000/- was received from the Gandhi Memorial Trust also. The accounts for 1949-50 will be published shortly.

The Saurashtra Constructive Committee has an annual budget of three *lakhs* of rupees. The understanding is that the Saurashtra Government will contribute a third of the sum, the Gandhi Memorial Trust will give a grant of another third and the remaining third to be realized through the collections during the period of the *Charkha Jayanti* celebrations. It is hoped that those who are interested in and sympathize with the work of the Constructive Committee will send their contributions in the form of coins to fill the bowl of *Daridranarayana*.

We hope to secure some prominent leader to attend the celebration of the closing day of the programme.

Rajkot, 1-7-'51 NARANDAS K. GANDHI

(Translated from Gujarati)

ON WAY TO SHIVARAMPALLI

(A DIARY OF VINOBA'S ITINERARY)

XV

April 5, Secunderabad (Twenty-ninth Halt, 10 miles)

Our original plan was to halt at Tirumalgiri instead of at Bolaram. But as this was changed, we halted for a few minutes at Tirumalgiri on account of a pressing invitation of its workers. This appointment was fixed up with Vinobaji at 9 p.m. yesterday. During the few hours of the night the people had erected a beautiful platform adorned with buntings all over. Vinoba spent there only a few minutes, during which he had a very good time with children. There was also another appointment in a nearby village on way to Secunderabad. It had once a large population of Muslims. But they had fled away during the Police Action, and now they feared to return to it, being apprehensive that they might have to suffer harassment from the public on account of the atrocities that they are alleged to have committed during the Razakar regime. Vinobaji advised the Muslim leaders to persuade the refugees to come and stay in the village without fear.

A Discourse on Education

At Secunderabad we were lodged in a school. Some college students from Hyderabad came to see Vinobaji in the afternoon. They had a long summer vacation now and they did not know how they should occupy themselves during the vacation. Vinobaji referred to his talk with them in his post-prayer speech. It was a discourse on education and one of the most inspiring of his talks on education that I had heard during the last several years.

The following is a detailed report of this illuminating address, which deserves to be carefully pondered over by students, educationists and Governments alike.

Towns and Villages

Vinoba commenced with a reference to the immense benefit he had derived by undertaking the foot-journey. He had come across towns as well as villages. A great thing which struck him was that every village had some distinguishing feature about it. No two villages were alike. " Just as in nature, we see the same sun rise every morning, and yet we never feel anything stale about it and are never tired of watching and enjoying it day after day, so too, though every one of these small colonies of men is called a village, you do not feel that having seen a few villages, you are tired of seeing any more. There is a novelty and freshness about each one of them, which is absent in the case of towns and cities. Every town presents the same pattern. Rows of similar houses, buildings and shops filled and adorned with showy foreign goods, roads and streets crowded with distracted-looking people, motor-cars running speedily to and

fro, cinema houses with their exciting placards, shrill, noisy songs, radio programmes and the like. There is the same hunt for pleasure and excitement and the same absence of happiness and satisfaction. If you see one or two cities, it is enough." He felt, Vinoba said, quite out of his element in a city and was reminded of Jnaneswara's description of a beast from the jungle let loose in a king's palace. It felt bewildered and lonely, and ultimately concealed itself in a corner. However, he could not keep cities outside his field of work. He was anxious to meet city-people also. They were repositories of great power and much could be done through them.

Education in the Cities

The most important problem which always rose in his mind in a city was the training of its youth. A college student had seen him that day. He was a thoughtful boy. He studied at the college because his father insisted upon his taking a degree and he had talents enough to pass examinations with credit. But he felt no joy whatever in his studies, for he saw no relation between life and the subjects of his studies. He did not know what and where he would be after taking all that training. The students had at present a long summer vacation of more than three months, and the boy had no programme of work for the period. He sought Vinoba's advice as to how he could make use of his vacation. His was not a solitary case. It was the same story everywhere. It showed that people had paid no thought whatever to their system of education.

"Now just think over this! Every one with a gift for commenting on public affairs says that the greatest need at present of the country is to produce more food. Now this is the period for preparing the soil for agricultural operations. While the cultivator is busily working in the hot sun, so that the field might be ready for sowing before the rains, the students have neither studies to do nor any programme of work during the whole period! I wonder whether the schools and colleges are in the sky, or on the earth; if they are set on the earth, whether they bear any relation with the soil of the country."

Thoughtful students perceived this incongruity and were justifiably perplexed by the absence of co-ordination between life and the education they received. Though every leader expatiated on the necessities of our country, our youth learnt the same English, mathematics and other academic subjects and text-books which have no bearing on their actual conditions of life. Thoughtful students rightly regarded this to be a waste of their time. Youth was a period of dreaming great dreams and nurturing high aspirations. They read lives of great men and selected one of them as their hero. That was right and necessary for every young man full of vitality. A young boy or girl without such dreams and aspirations was just a creature, not yet developed into manhood.

The difference between a man and an animal was, Vinoba explained, that man being a biped had only his feet on the earth, his head rose into the sky. While his legs traversed the ground, his head encompassed the heavens. And he wanted the fancies of his head to materialize in the concrete world. This aspiration was the distinguishing characteristic of a promising boy or girl.

"This is the way," Vinoba continued, "life evolves. A thing is first conceived in the mind. It develops into an idea, and unfolds its form in the imagination. Then it begins to be expressed in speech. For a long time the idea is merely talked of, unfollowed by action. Thereafter it permeates the organs of action and begins to materialize in concrete forms." The youthful period was a period of conceiving, developing, expressing and criticizing ideas. Youth seemed to criticize its leaders and elders without reserve. A young man had no doubt that the leaders were superior to him in knowledge, experience and talents, and so he respected them. Nevertheless he appeared to criticize them as if he was wiser than they. This was a natural process. His frank unrestrained criticism was impersonal, and without malice, — just the expression of the idea uppermost in his mind at the moment, — like the bursting of poetry. It was indicative of his inner inspiraton and natural instinct and genius. Vinoba would say that it was God speaking through him and not the deliberations of the apparent speaker. After he had passed through this period of life he would gradually reach the stage when he would begin to act. All programmes of action passed through these stages. The students felt disappointed with their education because they did not see the connection between their studies and their dreams and aspirations.

Education was expected to look to two things: since education was imparted at public expense, it must have some use in life. The training which they received should make them efficient enough to give the benefit of their education to the people. They should be able to return ten-fold of what they had received. Education was like the operation of sowing a seed. A good seed and a proper sowing resulted in yielding several times more seeds. So should education do. It must repay several times the cost and labour expended upon it. This was the first thing which education was expected to yield.

The second thing expected of education was that it should provide all the food which a student needed for his development at his age. The present education did not and could not fulfil this need. It provided scope merely for the exercise of memory and some reasoning. But the mind had other and more important powers besides these and they too had to be cultivated and brought to the fore. There was a body of scientific knowledge on each one of these subjects and an appropriate discipline for the development of each, but the present-day education nowhere took any account of it. In fact, all the powers originated from the mind. So said the *Rishis* and we might verify it by our own experience. "An *Upanishadic* text says: अनंतं हि मनः अनंता विश्वेदेवाः। (Mind is infinite; and infinite are the cosmic powers). The self is *Satchchidananda* (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss) and in its vicinity, the mind reflected its numberless attributes. That is why great men have numberless capacities."

Thus there was a great scope for the development of capacities, which lay hidden in the mind. But the prevalent education paid no attehtion to that. Wise men had told them that the principal truth which they had to learn was that they were distinct from the body, the mind and the intellect. The knowledge of the Self was the supreme educational attainment. "If even a little of this great experience is acquired, the development of all other qualities becomes quite easy. There is no trace of the value of this greatest truth in our education. The student must learn to distinguish his self from the body, and even from his emotions, passions and mental processes. When a new idea arises in the mind, he should not forthwith publicize it, but allow it to grow and examine it patiently and purify it of its useless part and then place before the world only what is true and useful. This was a great task. If education does not teach this, it is meaningless, because it fails in its main purpose. The central aim which education should address itself to is to enable the student to observe whether he is really progressing, that is, whether he is really developing all the noble potentialities which are man's heritage and whether he recognizes himself as distinct from the material environs and his corporal instrument, and whether he can exercise his will over them. In the *Upanishads* we find that a student was not regarded as a *snataka* (graduate) even after he had acquired all the learning unless he had actually fulfilled the aims of education in terms of the being and the inner development. Not only had he to be a master of the letters, but a master also of the Will. He should be able to successfully observe his *vratas* (pledged intentions) as an evidence of his mastery over himself. Like an able rider, he should be able to have full control over his body, senses and mind. The mastery over oneself, self-discipline and the proper use of the powers of the self — this is the

greatest art, and should form the most important object of education. He who acquires it is a *vrata-snataka* (graduate in self-regulation), the master of academic learning being only a *vidya-snataka*. The point is that there are many *vratas* (self-regulations) for which we have to prepare ourselves by acquiring the strength necessary for their observance. And finally we must test ourselves by actually observing them. A student who has successfully passed this test proves to be really qualified for the effective service of his people. He alone becomes a good citizen and wherever he goes and whatever job he undertakes, he does so with confidence and courage. Today we find that a student, the moment he leaves the portals of the college, finds himself engulfed in the gloom of darkness. He might succeed in fixing himself somewhere, but he fails to find the work which really suits his liking and for which he is naturally equipped, nor exactly does he get anywhere near the goal which he had set for himself. Circumstances toss him about and he crash-lands somewhere. It is all a game of chance. But the *vrata-snataka*, the student who has been successful in the *vratas* (self-regulations) secures mastery over the self, and acquires training in the arts of practical life, in agriculture and weaving etc., will not enter the world with his head stooping downwards like a crest-fallen wretch, but will march forward with open chest, and his heart full of the ardour born of self-confidence. He will move about proudly, his face beaming with the determination of a hero, "the earth itself will go down as it were under his lordly foot-fall" as a Sanskrit poet puts it.

"This does not mean that he would be haughty and insolent. Humility will also be his, because one who really acquires knowledge realizes that knowledge is limitless and that he has got only an infinitesimal part of it. Therefore, a man who has real knowledge is more humble than the one who has none. He knows that knowledge is as vast as an ocean, and his own is only a drop. He perceives that he has to continue his march along this road till the end of his life, and yet what he will get will be a mere trifle compared to the vast amount that will still remain to be done. And consequently he will be humble. In Sanskrit a scholar was called *vinita*, that is, humble and they said "प्रजानां विनयाधानात्।" (the people must be made rich in humility). If education does not produce this result, it is not learning. Humility, politeness is thus an essential qualification.

But along with humility, he will also have determination, self-confidence, fortitude, fearlessness etc. That is to say he must have *dhriti* (holding power) along with *buddhi* (intelligence), so that he will enter life like a victorious hero. There is a *Vedic* text, whch is recited at the end of *Vedic* studies. मह्यं नमन्ताम् प्रदिशश्चतस्रः। (The four directions will bow down before me). This self-confidence is expected to develop through education. If he possesses it, he will be able to serve the world. He will not feel life to be a burden. He will feel perfectly satisfied with what he learns. Learning, like eating, produces immediate satisfaction. As soon as you begin to eat you begin to feel happy. Happiness is not deferred to a period of even 2 or 3 days. So, too, is the case with knowledge. As soon as a person begins to feel that he has really learnt something, his face brightens up, and his appetite for it increases. He does not feel that his time is wasted. He does not look to the day when his studies will be over, and he will be able to bid good-bye to his studies. Really, once a person had tasted of the spring of knowledge, he should always be seeking more of it continuously and till the end of his life. The *Upanishads* tell the student that after his student life is over he should continue to increase his knowledge in the *grihasthashrama* (the life of the house-holder). The *grihastha* (house-holder) was a step in advance of the *brahmachari* (student). The *grihastha* who always increased his knowledge would be not only rendering what service he could directly, but would contribute towards making the society righteous. He would have a sacred place in his house, where he would be studying regularly. Thus the *Upanishads* clearly contemplate the continuation of study after the regular training period was over. Acquisition of knowledge must continue till the end of life." He who had once tasted of the spring of knowledge could never think of giving it up, Shri Vinoba continued. The *Upanishadic Rishi* had linked the duty to learn and teach (स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च) along with every other duty and virtue. Thus he did not counsel merely righteousness (*rita*), truthfulness (*satya*), self-discipline (*tapas*) but enjoined, "Be righteous and learn and teach," "Be truthful, and learn and teach," "Practise self-discipline, and learn and teach," "Serve the world, and learn and teach," "Keep the sacrificial fire, and learn and teach," and so on. The gist of it was that the householder was expected to carry further the mission of knowledge throughout his life. This was apt, Vinoba said. The expectation was in no way unusual. For one who had tasted the flavour of knowledge during one's student days, would only wish to add to it with the passage of time. Moreover, when he entered into life and became a citizen, he studied a number of things.

But the studious habit had almost disappeared from the country, Vinoba observed. This ancient country had developed a number of lores during ages when all other countries were immersed in utter darkness. It had created a tradition of studiousness. Students in those times used to get up very early in the morning and engage themselves in studies. This tradition was alive till the other day. But it was no more so. It was now rare to come across a man, who had made a deep study of any subject.

"We have won Independence and many responsibilities have devolved on us in its wake. They can be discharged satisfactorily, only if we have experts in every branch of knowledge. Our country will progress only if we continue to exert ourselves and take great pains in exploring the various branches of knowledge. But I see very few painstaking and hardworking scholars. The main reason for this state of affairs is the modern system of education. For, when a pupil spends some five years in its routine, he loses all interest and becomes dry. His physical strength diminishes, his mental faculties become stunted, his sense organs are weakened and the worst of it all, he loses all vitality. He has not even an inkling of the soul, far less its distinctness from the body. And when he does not know how to keep his senses under his control, of what worth is his education?

"There is no pleasure in relating this. I do it with a heavy heart. I am pained to see that our country where learning had once attained very great heights has fallen so low in respect of the very desire for learning. Poet Rabindranath has sung of our country:

"प्रथम प्रभात उदित तव गगने, प्रथम सामरव तव तपोवने,
प्रथम प्रचारित तव वनगहने, ज्ञान धर्म कत काव्य कहिनी
— अयि भुवनमनमोहिनी।"

"Oh Wonderful Mother! It was here that the Sun first rose in the sky, the sweet melodies of the *Sama Veda* were first sung; and the rays of learning of this country spread throughout the world." With these words reverberating in my mind it is with great pain that I describe this sad state of our country.

"I wonder how the old educational system that was in vogue in the British regime is still current in our country. I know that many things which existed in the pre-Independence days might also continue in the post-*Swarajya* era. But I could not imagine that even the old educational system would continue. I thought that immediately we got *swarajya*, the educational system would be changed. If education continued as before even after Independence that Independence had no meaning. That we can continue and tolerate a system which we kept on condemning for years in the past and which every one considered harmful to the nation, as being, if not deliberately designed to keep us in slavery, practically responsible for the same results, means that we do

not seriously ponder over the matter. We are so much overpowered by other problems that our brains have ceased to function properly. But I assure you that if the problem of education is rightly tackled, all other problems will be easily solved."

Vinoba concluded his speech with a request to the people to proclaim with a united voice that they did not want the present system of education and wanted an immediate radical change in it.

D. M.

SOME CHARKHA SANGH DECISIONS

The following are a few of the resolutions of general interest passed at the meeting of the Trustees of the A. I. S. A., held at Shivarampalli on 6th & 7th April last.

1. *Assistant Secretaries*

Like other provinces, the Kerala branch of the Sangh has also been divided into three *vibhags* or divisions, with an organizer for each. The five-year term of office of Shri Shrinivasan, the present branch secretary, expires shortly, and the question of the appointment of his successor was discussed. It was decided that since the branch was now divided into 'divisions' the appointment of a new secretary would no longer be necessary. But it was decided to appoint Shri Shrinivasan as an Assistant Secretary of the Charkha Sangh, to help the Secretary in his work. This is a new post. It was agreed that such assistants have now become necessary to lighten the work of the Secretary. More appointments to this post will be made as men qualified for this duty become available.

2. *Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Self-sufficiency*

The Gandhi Smarak Nidhi had enquired of the Sangh as to how the Nidhi could help the programme of self-sufficiency in cloth. The greatest difficulty in this work is that of weaving. It was, therefore, decided to advise the Nidhi to give whatever help it could towards meeting the various expenses attendant on the efforts to tackle this problem.

3. *Abolition of Agent's Office*

In the early days of the Charkha Sangh, (honorary) agents used to be appointed in the various provinces to carry on its work. The beginnings of the work were made by them. But simultaneously, or subsequently as and when it became necessary, whole-time secretaries were also appointed and gradually the brunt of the work fell on their shoulders. Later on, in some cases, the agents relinquished their posts, and though a few were filled up, most of them have remained vacant ever since. Thus, there are only two agents operating at present. Besides, in the Constitution of the Sangh there is no provision for the agents. This situation was fully discussed and it was unanimously decided that the practice of appointing provincial agents be now abandoned. It was further decided that hereafter the trustees of the Sangh should themselves individually undertake the responsibility of guiding and generally promoting the work of the Sangh in the various areas.

4. *Congress and Khadi*

The reader will remember that some years ago when the Constitution of the Congress was changed, the 'qualified member' was enjoined to put on *khadi*. It did not stipulate that it must be 'certified *khadi*'. Later on the article was amended and the word *certified* was inserted; but at the same time the Congress Working Committee recognized a few organizations other than the A. I. S. A., as bodies competent to certify *khadi*. This extension was bound to have an adverse effect on preserving the genuineness of *khadi*. Now again, the latest Congress Constitution has once more removed the word *certified* from the relevant article. It was to be presumed that this decision had been taken after full deliberation. However, the Secretary of the Charkha Sangh requested the Congress President to clarify the Congress policy in this regard. He specifically asked the latter whether this change permitted the qualified member to use any *khadi* as purchased from whomsoever. There has been no response to this enquiry from the Congress. The matter was fully discussed by the Trustees and the meeting unanimously agreed that the omission of the word *certified* injured and would injure the cause of genuine *khadi*, to ensure which *khadi* must mean only ceritfied *khadi*, — the sole certifying agency being the A. I. S. A. This step of the Congress is against the best interests of *khadi*, and the A. I. S. A. has requested the Congress to affix the stipulation 'certified by the A. I. S. A.' to the word *khadi*.

5. *Provincial Khadi Vidyalayas*

At one time every province had a Khadi Vidyalaya. But for want of able managers and *acharyas* (principals) there are now only two *Khadi* Vidyalayas, run by the Charkha Sangh. The situation was reviewed and it was decided that efforts should be made to start the Vidyalayas again in every province and in the syllabus to be revised for them, such other items of constructive work as were consistent with the Samagra-Gram-Seva point of view and were possible to be locally worked out should also be provided.

6. *Capital for Certified Institutions*

Certified institutions find it difficult to expand their *khadi* work for want of sufficient capital. Subscriptions are difficult to obtain. In case they borrow, the debt can not be paid back without curtailing the quantity of work. The rules of the Charkha Sangh forbid them from earning any profit in order to increase their capital. The meeting recognized the need to find out effective ways and means to enable them to increase their capital. Two ways have been proposed: (i) throwing a part of the burden on the customers; and (ii) seeking Government help.

This experiment is for the present proposed for three years only, and its benefit will be given to only a few of the financially weak but otherwise efficient institutions.

(i) At present certified institutions doing *khadi*-work are allowed as costs of administration only such amount as will leave them neither profit nor loss. They can make a saving and add it to their capital only by keeping the cost of administration below the sanctioned limit. If, however, the expenses exceed the sanctioned amount, the loss has to be borne by the institution. This arrangement will continue as at present. But, it was decided that hereafter the institutions be authorized to charge half an anna per rupee on its retail sale. This will enable the institution to increase its capital. The rise in the cost, in this arrangement, will have to be borne by the customers.

(ii) The Government policy regarding *khadi* appears, at present, to be aimed at providing some work to the unemployed or underemployed poor villagers. Naturally they will provide financial help in *khadi*-work to serve the same purpose, that is, to increase the earnings of the poor villagers. The Charkha Sangh therefore suggests to the governments that they should help the certified *khadi* institutions recommended by the Charkha Sangh by contributing as subsidy 4 per cent of the disbursements by the former as wages to their spinners, carders, and weavers. In case the Government has advanced loans to the institutions, this subsidy should be used to pay them off. The Charkha Sangh has also prepared a draft of the conditions on which such subsidy should be given by Government.

(Translated from Hindi) SECRETARY
All-India Spinners' Association

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Subscription Rates — Inland: One year, Rs. 6; Six months, Rs. 3; Foreign: One year, Rs. 8 or 14 s. or $ 2.
Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad 9.