

HARIJAN

12 Pages

Editor: PYARELAL

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TWO ANNAS

PROUD OR INSANE ?

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Who would not like to know Gujarat as proud ? It is permissible affectionately to call her insane. As I write these lines in sorrow, the picture that comes before my mind is not of proud but of insane Gujarat.

Shri Parikshitlal is a servant of the Harijans. He aspires in that capacity to serve Gujarat but is baffled by the madness that has seized her people. One hears of living Harijans but in Parikshitlal's story, Harijans dead are also untouchables. On the cremation ground, at any rate, there should be no distinctions between man and man. Once the dead body is reduced to ashes, all uncleanness vanishes. In spite of this, must Harijans be excluded from the common cremation ground ? After much difficulty the *Mahajans* of Navsari were persuaded to permit the body of an old Harijan to be cremated on the common ground. As a matter of fact, there was neither room for favour on one side nor for rejoicing on the other. But one has, at times, to be thankful for small mercies. It is well that the agitation in this case bore fruit.

The other instance is an unmixing tragedy. I do not propose to give the name of the village where it took place. The despicable part of it is that even if an epidemic breaks out among the cattle, it is the poor Harijans who are held responsible. The so-called caste Hindus will not take the trouble even to see the obvious cause of the disease. Grass grows in abundance during the rainy season. It is infested with all kinds of insects. The starved cattle go mad at the sight of green grass and devour it, insects and all. Is it any wonder that they fall ill and die ? The cause of the epidemic is obvious. The cattle of the Harijans suffer no less and yet the latter are held responsible for the calamity. They are subjected to maltreatment in the shape of abuse and assault from the caste Hindus. This, in brief, is the gist of a woeful tale, described in a letter before me. How I wish that my words could reach the ears of the villagers concerned !

Now that reformers are at the helm of government, much of the terrible ignorance of the villagers could be dispelled, if only the officials would make the effort. If the *Mahajans* shed their superstition and the Government and Harijan workers do their duty and the Harijans are roused from their slumbers, it will be possible to deliver Gujarat from this dreadful evil.

New Delhi, 13-9-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

UNCERTIFIED KHADI v. MILL CLOTH

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A Gujarati friend asks :

"Ever so many national organizations insist that not only should their staff be dressed in Khadi, but that even books should be Khadi-bound. Since certified Khadi can only be had from the recognized *bhandars* on payment of a certain quota of yarn, they naturally resort to uncertified Khadi. Is this right ? Is not mill cloth preferable to uncertified Khadi ? Is not insistence on Khadi that results in buying it from uncertified shops really a false pretence ?"

When, among other things, there is a dearth of Khadi, it is improper to insist on its use for purposes of bookbinding etc. When there was an abundance of Khadi, it was I who recommended its use for all such purposes. The entire Congress Camp in Ahmedabad in 1921, was bedecked in Khadi. Today it would be madness to attempt such a thing. Time and circumstances alter methods.

But I do not understand the writer's plea for mill cloth as opposed to uncertified Khadi. What is uncertified Khadi ? Is it not hand-spun and hand-woven cloth though uncertified ? That there may be fraud about it, is another matter. The Charkha Sangh cannot guarantee cent per cent purity in even certified Khadi. Nothing in this world is proof against deceit, has been true throughout the ages. Drawbacks in uncertified Khadi are well known. In it there is no fixity of wages to the spinners and the weavers. Those who sell it, make what profits they like. Often do persons set up shops, merely to spite the Charkha Sangh *bhandars*. Nevertheless, where there is no fraud, all cloth which is hand-spun and hand-woven must be called Khadi. What a person spins and has woven into cloth for himself, is not certified in the legal sense and yet it is Khadi in the highest and purest sense of the term. It would be a crime on that person's part, to use mill cloth instead of the cloth made from the labour of his own hands.

The upshot is that exclusion of mill cloth must be maintained. Uncertified Khadi should be avoided as far as possible, but where certified Khadi is not available and the choice lies between mill cloth and uncertified home-spun, preference should be given to the latter, assuming of course that it is pure Khadi. You may condemn, if you like, as uncertified, cloth made out of the labour of one's own hands; but the fact remains that it is a purer production than certified Khadi. And, if all span enough to have cloth woven for their requirements, what need would there then be for the Charkha Sangh ?

Heaven and earth would then ring with cries of victory to the Charkha Sangh.

New Delhi, 12-9-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

THE MOTHER OF KHADDAR

A retired economic botanist (for cotton and *rabi* cereals) to the U. P. Government in a letter to Gandhiji writes:

"In the past you have frequently emphasized the use of Khaddar for the general public, both in the villages and the cities. The Government Agricultural Departments in their zeal for the export of fine quality cotton and the supply of cotton bales to the local spinning mills instead of improving the local *desi* strains through the new Plant Breeding methods have adopted a line of discarding or relegating to the background our country cotton strains and replacing them with foreign American varieties as is found all over the Punjab. American cotton types are undoubtedly producers of better staples, fit for superior cloth of higher counts through mill manufacture. But our old *desi* strains have certain advantages of hardiness and acclimatization, viz. fitness for providing thatchings for roofs in the villages, in addition to providing raw material for local spinning of yarn and weaving of cloth on ordinary handlooms.

"By improving the *desi* varieties of cotton through modern scientific methods, it is possible to raise their spinning worth from 6 and 8 counts to about 22s."

The writer, who has been connected with the cotton breeding work in one of the provinces of Upper India, has been successfully evolving through cross fertilization methods in one of the Government Cotton Research Stations, a cotton strain with a quality of fibre fit for spinning from 18 to 22 counts. The fine quality cottons, he points out, mostly give a lower ginning percentage, i. e. the proportion of lint to seed; while short staple cottons give a higher ginning figure. He has been able to combine the better spinning quality of 22s with a pretty high ginning figure of 38 per cent of lint.

The friend goes on to remark:

"In the light of my almost 35 years of continuous and uninterrupted association with the cotton plant in India, supplemented by observations made personally in Egypt and the United States, I feel convinced that if proper efforts are made by devoting full attention to the study and improvement of the indigenous cotton strains, there are definite possibilities of getting unexpected and brighter results."

He has sent a sample of C520 which is a newly improved *desi* Bengal variety. On being turned into slivers by *tunai*, it has easily given yarn up to 40 counts.

The suggestion made by the writer is worthy of consideration by the Provincial Governments. The struggle between handicrafts and industrial production is not merely one between two sets of

technical processes but between two dissimilar and competing systems of economy which, in many cases, are mutually exclusive. In the past economics favourable to handicrafts have too often been sacrificed to the requirements of mass production. The development of huge cotton tracts by the expenditure of millions of pounds, to provide long staple cotton to Indian and foreign textile industry, is an instance in point.

It is a well-known fact that the staple that is best suited for mill-spinning is not needed for hand-spinning. Hand-spinning can produce better results with the so-called lower grades of cotton. The fact was established through a series of interesting tests made at the time of the Paris Exhibition of 1864. The curious may turn to the pages of Forbes Watson for a detailed account of those tests. A hardy, improved, indigenous variety of cotton of fair staple and high ginning percentage and yield that can be grown individually for local consumption is the mother of Khaddar. It is the prime necessity for its success.

New Delhi, 7-9-'46

PYARELAL

SUGGESTIONS FOR JAILS

A friend who was at one time superintendent of a jail makes the following suggestions which are worth consideration for meeting the present food and cloth shortage:

1. Utilizing every bit of land in all jails, Borstal institutions, mental hospitals, reformatories etc. for cultivation of more tubers, e. g. potatoes, yams, carrots, radishes etc., which are rich in calcium, minerals and vitamins and could be substituted for rice or wheat at one meal.
2. Preventing waste in cooked food by providing a longer interval between the morning and evening meals and even restricting the prisoners to two meals in consultation with them.
3. Discontinuing the use of the best prisoners for the personal service of jail officials.
4. Paying more attention to and supervising more carefully the cultivation of eatables and cotton in order to reduce the quantity of food and cloth, purchased in the market.
5. Having ideal dairies in every jail and stopping jail officials from keeping cows. These officials may be permitted to purchase milk from jail dairies.
6. Securing co-operation, non-existent today, of departments of agriculture and livestock industries and veterinary in order to co-ordinate work.
7. Making use of the acres of arable lands attached to some jails for emergency use.
8. Introducing the compost system and stopping waste of manure from dairies.
9. Growing fodder for animals on the premises and acquiring grazing lands for each institution, the present misuse and abuse in the jail department at all stages to be stopped.

LEPROSY AND CONTAMINATION

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Dr. R. G. Cochrane, Principal of the Missionary Medical College for Women in Vellore writes:

"My good friend Mr. Jagadisan has brought to my attention a paragraph in the *Hindu* of Madras of August, the 26th. It reads: 'Bihar is going to have a separate jail for the leper prisoners, it is learnt, to save other prisoners from contamination. Arrangements are being made in the first instance, it is understood, to segregate about 100 such prisoners at Govindpur in the District of Manbhum. I was so pained by the news that I could not resist the urge to write to you, for, you have been a consistent champion of those who suffer from leprosy and indeed, of all persons in society who are undeservedly stigmatized. I feel that I should write to you and say that it will be a great pity if the Bihar Government were to build a separate jail for prisoners with leprosy. It is a gratuitous measure whose only effect will be the strengthening of the public's prejudice against leprosy. On examination, it is likely to be found that 80% at least of the prisoners with leprosy are non-infective, and, therefore, there is absolutely no reason, why these should be separated from the other prisoners. With regard to the prisoners who suffer from infective leprosy, the main precautions are that the prisoner should not come into contact with healthy persons, during night and should avoid, direct, close contact during the day. As leprosy is a mildly contagious disease, even its infective types, a prisoner with infective leprosy could be more easily dealt with than prisoners with other infective diseases. And yet, if the report is true, the Bihar Government is going to act on the fear of 'contamination'. The very use of this word indicates a mediaeval attitude to leprosy. It is a great pity that statements are being continually published to suggest that leprosy patients are contaminated in some way or other.

"We in Madras, enthusiastically supported by Mr. Jagadisan, are doing all we can to protest against the discrimination of the patient suffering from leprosy on the grounds of social stigma. It is no more of a disgrace to get leprosy than to get measles, and not until the general public realize that it is not a rapidly spreading plague, as it is commonly believed to be, shall we make any advance in the control of leprosy. I am very grateful to hear from Mr. Jagadisan that you have now put leprosy work as an integral part of the Nation's Constructive Programme. Your remark that the leprosy patient is as much a part of society as the tallest of us, moves me deeply. May I hope that India's leaders will follow your footsteps and do the right thing by the leprosy patient?"

It is to be hoped that the information about Bihar is not true and that, if it is, this letter of his will dissipate the fear of leprosy. "Superstitions die hard." In this land of faith and superstitions, both flourish abundantly. Hence, they often intermingle and the contamination of superstitions — a multitude — seems to have overlaid faith so much

so that, it is hard to distinguish between the two. But my faith which burns too bright for the army of superstitions to touch it, tells me that leprosy is no contamination. We must learn the laws governing infectious and contagious diseases and obey them.

Dr. Cochrane is, I believe, a medical philanthropist. He knows a great deal about leprosy and lepers. I fancy that the National Governments will not be wrong in accepting his judgment that, of all the diseases of the kind, leprosy is the least among them. In its virulent form, it deprives a patient of his limbs and defies ordinary medical treatment. What nature does is yet unknown. But the ordinary man does not need to bother about this difficult matter. Enough if he realizes that a leper is as much his brother as any other, and he is on no account to be shunned.

New Delhi, 11-9-'46

COLLECTIVE PRAYER

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Q. You believe in mass prayer. Is congregational worship as practised today, a true prayer? In my opinion, it is a degrading thing and therefore dangerous. Jesus said: "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, but enter into thine inner chamber and having shut thy door pray to the Father which is in secret." Most people in a crowd are inattentive and unable to concentrate. Prayer then becomes hypocrisy. The *yogi* is aware of this. Should not the masses, therefore, be taught self-examination which is the true prayer?

A. I hold that congregational worship held by me, is true prayer for a collection of men. The convener is a believer and no hypocrite. If he were one, the prayer would be tainted at the source. The men and women who attend do not go to any orthodox prayer house from which they might have to gain an earthly end. The bulk of them have no contact with the convener. Hence it is presumed, they do not come for show. They join in because they believe that they somehow or other, acquire merit by having common prayer. That most or some persons are inattentive or unable to concentrate, is very true. That merely shows that they are beginners. Neither inattention nor inability to concentrate are any proof of hypocrisy or falsity. It would be, if they pretended to be attentive when they were not. On the contrary, many have often asked me what they should do, when they are unable to concentrate.

The saying of Jesus quoted in the question, is wholly inapplicable. Jesus was referring to individual prayer and to hypocrisy underlying it. There is nothing in the verse quoted, against collective prayer. I have remarked often enough that without individual prayer, collective prayer is not of much use. I hold that individual prayer is a prelude to collective, as the latter, when it is effective, must lead to the individual. In other words, when a man has got to the stage of heart prayer, he prays always, whether in the secret or in the multitude.

I do not know what the questioner's *yogi* does or does not. I know that the masses when they are in tune with the Infinite, naturally resort to self-examination. All real prayer must have that end.

New Delhi, 14-9-'46

HARIJAN

September 22

1946

CHARKHA JAYANTI

(By M. K. Gandhi)

What is known as Charkha Jayanti is not Gandhi Jayanti even though the date always coincides with the day of my birth. The reason for this is clear. In ancient times the Charkha had nothing to do with Independence. If anything, it had a background of slavery. Poor women used perforce to have to spin in order to get even a piece of dry bread. They used to get such *cowrie* shells as the government of the day chose to throw at them. I remember in my childhood, watching the then Thakore Saheb of Rajkot, literally throw money to the poor on a particular day. I used to enjoy the fun which it was to me. I can picture in my imagination, how in olden times the poor spinners would have a few shells thrown at them which they would pick up greedily.

In 1908, in South Africa, I conceived the idea that if poverty-stricken India were to be freed from the alien yoke, India must learn to look upon the spinning wheel and hand-spun yarn as the symbol, not of slavery but of freedom. It should also mean butter to bread. It took very little to bring home this truth to Shri Narandas Gandhi and he has, therefore, understood the true significance of Charkha Jayanti. My birthday, so far as I know, was never celebrated before the date got connected with Charkha Jayanti. In South Africa where I had become fairly known, no one ever took any notice of it. It was here that it was joined with Charkha Jayanti. The English day of my birthday has also been included. Therefore, the Jayanti week this year, is being celebrated from 22-9-'46 to 2-10-'46. Narandas Gandhi has played the chief role in this and, as I write these lines, the days of celebration come to mind. In my opinion, however, the real celebration will come only when the music of the wheel which is the symbol of Independence and non-violence will be heard in every home. If a few or even a crore of poor women spin in order to earn a pittance, what can the celebration mean to them and what achievement can that be? This can well happen even under a despotic rule and is today visible, wherever capital holds sway. Millionaires are sustained by the charity, they dole out to the poor, may be even in the form of wages.

The celebration will only be truly worth-while when the rich and the poor alike understand that all are equal in the eyes of God, that each one, in his own place, must earn his bread by labour, and that the independence of all will be protected, not by guns and ammunition but by the bullets, in the shape of cones of hand-spun yarn, i. e. not by violence but by non-violence.

If we consider the atmosphere in the world today, this may sound ludicrous. But if we look within, this is the truth and the eternal truth. For the moment, it is Narandas Gandhi and other devotees of the Charkha, who are trying to demonstrate it through their faith. Let all understand and celebrate the Jayanti in the same spirit as fires these devoted workers.

New Delhi, 14-9-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

STOP IT

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A Hindi journalist writes to ask me that since a trilingual dictionary, such as is appearing in the *Harijan* is already on the market, where is the need of the latter? If the dictionary referred to answers the purpose, I agree that the *Harijan* effort is not worth-while. If such a dictionary is in existence, I shall be sorry and surprised that none of my co-workers was aware of the fact. Now I am trying to get hold of the book in question and if it answers my purpose, I shall certainly own the mistake and end the unnecessary labour.

Another friend, writing in English, has drawn my attention to the same dictionary and in addition, he complains that my Hindustani is in reality Urdu and, therefore, I am daily becoming more and more unpopular in the Hindi-loving world. The same criticism assails me from the Urdu world. They say that while I call my language Hindustani, I do nothing but displace Urdu words by Sanskritized Hindi ones. I welcome both criticisms. My Hindustani is neither Urdu nor Hindi. It is sought to be a proper mixture of the two. But the river that I desire to flow from the meeting of the waters of Hindi and Urdu is today, I admit, invisible. Scholars tell me that it flowed at one time but that, it has now disappeared. Be that as it may, the aim of propaganda for Hindustani is that the two languages, whose grammar is one but whose words are derived from different sources, should not remain apart, but should so mingle as to become one river. Success of this attempt depends on the labours of the Hindustani Prachar workers. If there is soundness in their effort, it will not have gone in vain. Ultimate success always rests in the hands of God. And, if we realize that He is the Doer as also the Destroyer, why should we worry?

This work has not been undertaken with a view to gaining popularity with the people. True service seeks no praise nor is it frightened by criticism. That is no service which swells with pride at applause or withers under criticism. A true servant finds his reward in single-eyed service. I would, therefore appeal to my critics to help rather than find fault with me in this good work, so that the blending of the two streams may further enrich and enlighten this great land. It will not offend God if, in addition to calling Him 'Ishwar,' I name him 'Khuda' or 'Allah' and, at the same time, increase my knowledge of Him.

New Delhi, 13-9-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

TIRED OF SATYAGRAHA?

(By M. K. Gandhi)

News comes from Durban that a group of Indians has sprung up in South Africa, who have lost faith in Satyagraha. They cherish the dream that they can overthrow the rule of the White man there, only by joining forces with the Negroes, the coloured people, other Asiatics and European sympathizers and adopting violent means. The rumour, if there is any truth in it, is disturbing and a definite fly in the ointment. All, whether they believe in non-violence or not, should realize that Indians in South Africa gained world-wide esteem, simply because, in spite of being a handful, they showed infinite capacity for suffering and did not, through losing their patience, resort to sabotage and violence. They learnt the wholesome lesson that true well-being springs from suffering and that victory lies in unity. From my own experience, my firm advice to Indians in South Africa is that they should, on no account, be lured away into throwing aside the matchless weapon of Satyagraha.

This does not, however, imply that they are not to accept the help of the coloured people, Negroes and any other sympathizers or that they will not help them in their need, should occasion arise. The only condition is that Satyagraha should be their one and only weapon. If they go astray from the path of non-violence, they will conform to the description of the poor woman, who, as an Indian proverb goes, went in search of a son and succeeded in losing her husband!

New Delhi, 11-9-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

PANDIT NEHRU'S STATEMENT

I am informed by a friend in Durban that my name has been freely used there by some people in support of a violent struggle, in place of the present non-violent campaign being carried on in South Africa and that the association of Africans and others for this violent struggle is being sought. I am surprised to learn this, because I am quite clear that it will be fatal for the Indians in South Africa to adopt violent methods in their struggle. If the non-violent method is desirable in India, it is far more necessary in South Africa in the conditions prevailing there. I have often asked Indians in South Africa, to co-operate with Africans there, and I hope they will do so. The issue raised in South Africa is something much more than an Indian issue. It is an issue which affects all Asians and, of course, all Africans. Therefore, this co-operation is necessary between all those affected. But co-operation can only be effective and succeed on the basis of peaceful methods and it would be folly to indulge in violence.

Acknowledgment

The treasurer of the A. I. C. C. asks me to say that he has received Rs. 2400 on behalf of the President of the Congress from the Indian community in Manila, Philippine Islands, for the purpose of famine relief.

M. K. G.

WEEKLY LETTER

IF I WERE A DICTATOR

"If I were a dictator, religion and State would be separate. I swear by my religion. I will die for it. But it is my personal affair. The State has nothing to do with it," remarked Gandhiji sometime back in answer to a question by a missionary friend who asked whether in Free India there would be complete religious freedom and whether religion would be separate from the State. "The State would look after your secular welfare, health, communications, foreign relations, currency and so on, but not your or my religion. That is everybody's personal concern." He then went on to describe his conception of religion. "You must watch my life, how I live, eat, sit, talk, behave in general. The sum total of all those in me is my religion," he said.

Asked which movement, e.g., women's, political, scientific or religious would have had the most far-reaching influence in the world of tomorrow and would be considered 50 years hence as having had the greatest impact on world affairs as a whole and for the greatest good of mankind, he said, it was wrong to bracket religious movement with the rest. "It is religious movement that would dominate the future," he added. "It would do so today but it does not, for religion has been reduced to a Saturday or a Sunday affair; it has to be lived every moment of one's life. Such religion, when it comes, will dominate the world."

"Do you feel there is any special significance in the increasing number and magnitude of labour strikes, especially in India of late?" he was asked next. "What do you think will be the outcome of this labour trouble in India?"

"Strikes have today become a universal plague," he replied. "There are strikes everywhere, America and England not excepted. But in India they have a special significance. We are living under an unnatural condition. As soon as the lid is removed and there is a crevice letting in the fresh air of freedom, there will be an increasing number of strikes. The fundamental reason for this spreading strike fever is that life here as elsewhere, is today uprooted from its basis, the basis of religion and what an English writer has called 'cash nexus' has taken its place. And that is a precarious bond. But even when the religious basis is there, there will be strikes, because it is scarcely conceivable that religion will have become for all the basis of life. So, there will be attempts at exploitation on the one hand, and strikes on the other. But these strikes will then be of a purely non-violent character. Such strikes never do harm to anyone. It was such a strike perhaps that brought General Smuts to his knees. "If you had hurt an Englishman," said Jan Smuts, "I would have shot you, even deported your people. As it is, I have put you in prison and tried to subdue you and your people in every way. But how long can I go on like this when you do not retaliate?" And so he had to come to terms with a mere coolie on behalf of coolies as all Indians were then called in South Africa."

AN INCIDENT AND ITS MORAL

Gandhiji has cultivated the habit of standing sentinel over himself every moment of his life. Daily he holds a silent tribunal within himself and calls himself to strict account before it for the littlest of his little actions. Nothing escapes his scrutiny and he shows himself no mercy. In fact he believes in viewing one's own shortcomings through a convex lens and those of others through a concave—the one occasion where exaggeration becomes a duty. An illustration of it was afforded the other day at the evening prayer. It has been an old practice of his to sell by auction after the evening public prayer, ornaments presented to him for the Harijan cause. He had discontinued the practice of late to save time. But it made him feel unhappy to think that he was saving his time at the cost of the Harijans who were his special wards and so, for the last 14 days, he has been disposing of one jewel every day, thereby nearly doubling the daily takings for the Harijans. Thus jewels worth Rs. 3071 in the aggregate have been auctioned at sums ranging from Rs. 100 to Rs. 400.

But on Saturday last, owing to rainy weather, the crowd was much smaller than usual. The prayer was held under a dripping *shamiana* and the daily auction was omitted. Afterwards Gandhiji blamed himself for it. Did it not betoken a lack of faith, he asked himself at the prayer gathering on the following day. He was afraid lest the auctions should not fetch a good price as the gathering was small. Why could he not have faith? His South African friend Downes, scheduled to speak from a church pulpit at 7 p. m. in Durban, began his address at the stroke of seven with an audience of one only. That was faith. "A man of faith," he concluded, "will remain steadfast to truth, even though the whole world might appear to be enveloped in falsehood. May God bless you with that faith is my constant prayer. Pray for me also that I too may find that faith in spite of temporary aberration."

A SIGN?

What originated as a brain wave in Kanu Gandhi's mind has succeeded beyond expectation. The eleven days' spinning course, announced by him, evoked an immediate response. 159 applications were received by the 11th, after which further admissions were closed in terms of the announcement. Many had consequently to turn back disappointed. Requests have since been received for a night class for those who cannot attend during the day-time and arrangements for the same are under consideration. Instruction is at present being given to them in spinning and the allied processes, beginning with hand separation of seed and *tunai*. The trainees come in two batches: one in the morning from 7 to 11 and the other in the afternoon from 2 to 5. Men predominate in the former, women in the latter batch. About 60 per cent of the men who attend in the morning are Government servants. Most of the trainees are from the well-to-do class and are obviously actuated by an altruistic motive. To see them bending over their work in sweltering

heat under the thin shelter of a *shamiana* is a pure joy. The response was so unexpected that the organizers found it difficult to improvise proper implements in the beginning. The difficulty has since been overcome. Gandhiji inspects them at work daily in the morning and at evening and sums up his observations in the course of his address before the evening prayer gathering. In the course of his remarks yesterday he said that the sight of 144 of them attending the spinning classes daily, in the fullness of faith, made him hug the hope that one day the whole of India would be clad in Khadi. When he started the spinning revival of 1918, India was buying 60 crores worth of foreign cloth, excluding Indian mill cloth. This was the largest single import. Next came sugar with 18 crores and then hardware with 7 crores. Today, with the inflated prices the price of all mill cloth, indigenous and foreign, was probably 300 crores. Gandhiji asked his audience to ponder and realize what wealth this would mean to India, if 300 crores worth of cloth was produced by their own hands in the villages. There was a veritable mint of gold for them and if Khadi became universal, the villages would rise to unknown heights. Today our masses were poverty-stricken, without the luster of hope or intelligence in their eyes. The pure hands of the spinners could create this miracle for them and everyone could help. They should have understanding hearts and seeing eyes to detect the beauty in Khaddar even if it is coarse and not be allured by mill finery which could never clothe their nakedness in the true sense of the term. The only way to clothe their nakedness and drive away hunger was for them to grow their own food and make their own cloth. If this happy consummation could be achieved, the eyes of the whole world would be turned towards India. Today everything seemed to be going wrong in this land. He referred to the story that had appeared in the Press of the mad gunmen in Bombay who caused death of several innocent people. This shameful news must have been flashed across the radio to the world and they must hang their heads in sorrow. But, said Gandhiji, if they would only listen to him, all would be well with India. If all purified themselves and all thought of themselves as Indians, then they will have succeeded in learning the true lesson of the charkha.

In a written message in Hindustani, full of the fire of passion, that was read out on Monday, he observed: "Before the Charkha class in full swing, everything else appears dull and lifeless to me. For I behold my Rama dancing in every thread drawn. I find Swaraj in it. When I contemplate the strength of the yarn drawn by 40 crores of hands, my heart is filled with an ecstasy of joy. O, but 20 crores of Indians will not take to spinning," you say. Is it not a sign of our ignorance and lack of faith to refuse to believe in the possibility? Is it an impossible thing to expect every one of half the population to spin for an hour a day? If we have not the capacity to sacrifice even this much for our Motherland, what is our love of country worth?"

New Delhi, 16-9-'46

PYARELAL

OVER-POPULATION OR UNDER-PRODUCTION ?

It has become a fashion these days to ascribe the recurring famines in India to over-population. That theory has been 'challenged more than once and seems to have an escapist odour about it. Chapter and verse can be cited to show that India's undeveloped potential of food production is more than adequate to feed her growing population for a good while yet to come. A correspondent points attention to the following facts about our agriculture in this connection.

1. It has been demonstrated by experiments in Government Agricultural Farms that by sowing improved seeds, 29 per cent increase can be affected on the existing yield.

2. If the export of oil-seed, oil-cake, bones, etc. were stopped and the animal droppings saved for the soil as manure by providing the villagers with wood fuel instead of cowdung for domestic cooking etc., the existing crop output could be doubled.

3. By further development of canal irrigation and by building sufficient wells and tanks, two crops could be grown where at present, there is only one. Out of 245 crore acres in India, at present only 32 crores are under double crop.

4. A comparison of yield per acre in India and other countries respectively points to the same thing.

Here are figures for rice per acre :

Egypt	3447 lbs.
Japan	3909 "
Italy	4810 "
Formosa	2407 "
India	939 "

The figures for wheat are :

Japan	2010 lbs.
Italy	1374 "
Canada	1197 "
England	2085 "
India	774 "

5. Government statements further indicate that owing to lack of proper storage facilities, the annual loss of food grains due to the inroads of rats, insect pests, etc. comes to about 10 lakhs of tons per year.

6. The extent of cultivable land which is at present not under cultivation is 9 crore acres.

7. Lastly comes the invasion of 'money crops'. In 1900 the area under commercial crops was 165 lakh acres. In 1930 the figures rose to 240 lakh acres. During this period the land under oil-seeds increased from 130 lakh acres to 160 lakh acres. In 1942, 32% of the entire yield of oil-seeds and jute was for export, of linseed 71% and of groundnuts 15%. In other words, so much soil fertility was bartered away for commercial gain, without the possibility of returning in any shape or form to the soil what was taken out of the soil, thus impairing it permanently. This is not agriculture but downright robbery of the soil at the cost of posterity. If our agriculture could be rescued from the invasion of 'money crops' it would go a long way towards meeting the recurring threat of food shortage.

New Delhi, 7-9-'46

PYARELAL

RAMA THE SON OF DASHARATHA

(By M. K. Gandhi)

An Arya Samajist writes :

"How can the Rama whom you believe to be immortal, be Rama, the son of Dasharatha and the husband of Sita? I often attend your prayer gathering with this dilemma always confronting me and because of it, I am unable to join in the *Ramadhun*. This hurts me for you are right when you say that all should take part in it. Cannot you make the *Ramadhun*, such that all can join in the recital?"

I have already explained what I mean by all. It applies to all those who can join in it from the heart and recite it in tune. The others should remain silent. But this is a small matter. The important question is as to how Rama the son of Dasharatha can be deemed immortal. This question was raised by Saint Tulsidasa himself and answered by him. The answer cannot in reality be reasoned out. It does not lend itself to intellectual satisfaction. It is a matter of heart speaking to heart. I worshipped Rama as Sita's husband in the first instance, but as my knowledge and experience of Him grew, my Rama became immortal and omnipresent. This does not mean that Rama ceased to be Sita's husband; but the meaning of Sita's husband expanded with the vision of Rama. This is how the world evolves. Rama cannot become omnipresent for the man who regards him merely as the son of Dasharatha. But for the believer in Rama as God, the father of the omnipresent Rama also becomes omnipresent — the father and son become one. It may be said that this is all a matter of imagination. "To each man according to his faith", is all that I can say. If all religions are one at source, we have to synthesize them. Today they are looked upon as separate and that is why we kill each other. When we are tired of religion, we become atheists and then, apart from the little self, nothing, not even God, exists. But when we acquire true understanding, the little self perishes and God becomes all in all. Rama then is and is not the son of Dasharatha, the husband of Sita, the brother of Bharata and Lakshmana and yet is God, the unborn and eternal. All honour then to those who not believing in Rama as the son of Dasharatha still come to join in the collective prayers. This matter of Rama is one which transcends reason. I have merely tried to give to the reader my belief for what it is worth.

New Delhi, 16-9-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

FOR AGENTS

Agents are requested to take note of the following :

1. Please remember that agents have to deposit with us an amount covering the price of their demand for two months. A month's deposit will be treated as fixed and the other as current. Every week the cost of the copies sent to them would be deducted from the current deposit.

2. The amounts for the deposits are usually sent by the agents by cheques. Please note that we do not accept cheques. The amount should be remitted either by M. O., Postal Order or by a bank draft.

MANAGER

Notes

Blank Minute Books

A student writes:

"It has become a fashion for all to pose as political workers. And politics consist in speeches and participation in election campaigns. You would be pained to know that the minute books of Congress Committees are entirely blank, except for proceedings of annual sittings. It is all power politics. Students also get drawn into its vortex. What is your ideal of a political worker?"

I have all along stressed the need for constructive work and to that end, I drew up a list of items for the guidance of all workers. I hold that if the constructive programme were worked with vigour and understanding, the result would be far more than mere political Swaraj. Speeches and election campaigns would be almost unnecessary, if our workers had established Congress in the hearts of the people through service. Then there will be more service than power and the weekly or fortnightly meetings of Congress committees will be filled with a recital of the activities and achievements of committees in the wide field of work.

New Delhi, 14-9-'46

Is It Not Cowardice?

Q. Non-violence in your opinion is not cowardice, but it is a form of resistance to injustice. You have admitted that it is wrong to arrest and imprison innocent persons which civil resisters are. And you have cheerfully courted arrest and imprisonment. Is this not inconsistent and cowardly?

A. Evidently you do not know the working of non-violence. An unjust law is itself a species of violence. Arrest for its breach is more so. Now the law of non-violence says that violence should be resisted not by counter-violence but by non-violence. Any breach of a law carries with it a penalty. It does not become unjust, merely because I say so. Nevertheless, in my opinion, it is unjust. The State has the right to enforce it, whilst it is on the statute book. I must resist it non-violently. This I do, by breaking the law and by peacefully submitting to arrest and imprisonment. I call such behaviour an act of bravery to the extent required. That imprisonment for a man like me today carries no suffering with it is irrelevant, if it may be assumed that ordinary prison-treatment would make no difference in my mental condition. Thus non-resistance in the case under discussion, is an essential condition of non-violence, not a symptom of cowardice. Resistance in the shape of refusing to be arrested etc. on the other hand, will in this case be certainly blustering, thoughtless violence and might be classified as cowardly brag. New Delhi, 14-9-'46

An Appeal to Correspondents

Some good people waste money on sending wires, asking me to secure seats on the Interim Government, others in matters of strikes in various places, yet others in matters of fasting. To all these I would say that they not only take unnecessary trouble and waste money but pile work on an overworked group of co-workers and helpers, without securing needed help from me. I have no wish to influence the National Cabinet in the choice of co-ministers and

I hold that it would be wrong on my part or anybody else's, to do so. The members of the Cabinet should be left undisturbed in their choice if they are to render national service in an efficient and honest manner. In matters of strikes and fasts, my views are well known. These should give sufficient guidance when and where required. It is impossible and improper for me to give opinion on incomplete and one-sided data. And I have no time for studying individual cases. I have only limited capacity left in me. I assure correspondents that it is being exercised to the full extent without needing further additions.

New Delhi, 15-9-'46

Karachi Khadi Bhandar

Numerous letters have been received with reference to the note in the *Harijan* of 25-8-'46 entitled "Disloyalty to Khadi". I am making inquiries and hope to announce the result as soon as they are completed.

M. K. G.

The Peace of the Charkha

Shri Vichitra Narayan has sent Gandhiji a letter from a doctor friend of his. Dr. Bhupal Singh no longer practises for his eyesight has become very weak. He has consistently served the poor. The gist of his letter, given below, is interesting.

He avers that he has found the charkha very efficacious in the treatment of nervous disorders. Patients suffering from such are generally unable to concentrate, they are mentally disturbed and disinclined to do any work. The doctor's experience is that in these cases the spinning wheel is of greater help than medicines. The hum of the charkha has a soothing effect, spinning needs concentration and the product of their labour seems to restore self-confidence in the patients. Mental improvement naturally has a salutary effect on the body too. The writer feels that diseases like hysteria and neurasthenia are more prevalent in cities where such health-giving activity as spinning is discarded. The incidence of nervous disorders in the villages is far less.

Dr. Bhupal Singh's faith in the charkha is of long standing. During his many years of practice, he often used to take yarn from paying patients for his fees instead of money.

New Delhi, 16-9-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

A. K.

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