

# HARIJAN

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TWO ANNAS

## SHRI VINOBA AT RAJGHAT

### HIGH PRICES OF CLOTH AND FOOD

Vinobaji's usual post-prayer speech at Rajghat on Friday this time (6th August) referred to high prices in general and of cloth and food in particular, which had been causing great hardship to the poor.

When the control on cloth was lifted, Government and people put their trust in the mills. But, Shri Vinoba was constrained to say with regret, the mills had betrayed the trust. Betrayal of the interests of the people was their continuous record of the last forty years. In 1906, when the movement of Swadeshi and boycott of British goods began, mills made huge profits. Thereafter also, they took every opportunity of exploiting the difficulties or patriotic sentiments of the people to their own advantage. They did not consider the good of the nation.

It was difficult to say how far the new measures sought to be imposed by the Government would succeed in their aim. Such remedies succeeded only if there was honesty in men. In the absence of a high standard of character, every measure got frustrated. Purification of character was the first essential condition for the success of all effort for all-round happiness.

But he was convinced, Shri Vinoba said, that the correct solution of the cloth problem lay in the *charkha*. India was a producer of short-staple cotton, which the textile mills were unable to use. They therefore exported Indian cotton and purchased the more costly long-staple cotton from abroad. At times it was not even available. Then there was the difficulty of transport. Also, it necessarily needed employment of agents and sub-agents and a long chain of middlemen. *Khadi* was free from all these difficulties. It could use the short-staple cotton, needed few middlemen and little transport. Only if Government accepted the *khadi* principle and whole-heartedly encouraged its production and the people also accepted the *charkha* as a part of their daily self-help work, could the problem of cloth be satisfactorily solved.

As to the mill industry, to the extent it was necessary, it must be nationalized as soon as possible. Not that it could solve the poor man's problem. For that the *charkha* was the only remedy.

But cloth was not the principal topic, he wanted to speak about that day. He wanted to discuss the

problem of food prices. Controls led to black-marketing and decontrol to sky-rocketing prices. Thus the poor man was between the fire and the frying pan, his hardship remaining unallayed. In his opinion, the only way out of the situation was for the Government to collect land revenue in kind. Thereby it would always command a good stock of food of its own, and thus be in a position to control effectively the price of food. It would be a convenient mode of payment for the cultivator and would also be profitable to the Government. Under the present system, the Government collected revenue on settlements made several years ago, when the price of money was much higher than what it was now. If under a settlement made ten or fifteen years ago, the Government received Rs. 10 on a particular field, its purchasing power having now dwindled down to that of Rs. 3 of that period, the Government was really getting impoverished by collecting the revenue in money.

Indeed, it was a matter to be carefully considered whether there could ever be a good "settlement" in terms of money. "Settlement" presupposed something made *pakka*—firm, a long-term solution. It was impossible to do that in terms of money. Because, money was a veritable rogue, given to changing its face constantly. Its value always varied. One could never hope to come to a *pakka* settlement with a rogue. And yet it was strange that the world had appointed money to be its principal intermediary between transactions. It was this unreliable intermediary which had got both the Government and the people into the present mess. Money by itself was a valueless thing, incapable of being employed for any purpose by itself. And whatever imaginary price it was given varied from day to day. But a seer of grain retained a constant value as an article of necessity, except what change might take place in its nutritional efficiency, which was comparatively rare.

No doubt, collection of revenue in kind would require government to have its own godowns, shops etc. But governments had to discharge such administrative functions under any case, and they could do so. Government would be imitated by people—particularly villagers—by payment of wages in grain, with the result that there would be greater stability in prices of food stuffs.

(Translated from the original in Hindustani)

D. M.



## RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN BASIC SCHOOLS

On page 7 of the Revised Syllabus of the Training of Teachers for Basic Schools, we find the following paragraph under Cultural Studies:

"(c) Reverential study of the different religions of the world, showing how in essentials they meet in perfect harmony the Religion of Man."

Nowhere could be more suitable than the columns of the *Harijan* for discussing ways and means for carrying out of this part of Basic Education. The following remarks, therefore, which are in no way authoritative, are intended merely to initiate a discussion on this important subject by outlining what is being done in one Basic Training School. As we have only just begun the work, the scheme cannot be other than tentative, but something on the following lines is what we hope to work out during the next few years.

At the daily school assembly with which the day begins, we have a short reading from the scriptures of one of the great religions—a week of different passages from Hinduism, a week from Judaism, a week from Buddhism, Christianity, Islam etc. These passages are translated into the children's mother-tongue and as we take them in rotation each passage recurs about once in six weeks, so that the children get familiar with them without the daily repetition of the same passage, which is apt to be mechanical. Moreover, they are becoming familiar, not with one only but, with a number of great and beautiful passages. In addition to this, for about 10 or 15 minutes, twice a week, a story lesson is taken with the youngest children, in which are told, very simply, stories of Buddha, of Rama, of Jesus, of Mahommed and any other stories from the religions of the world, which are simple enough for young children to understand. In the top classes of the Junior Basic School (Grades 3 and 4) this can be developed further by the introduction of more difficult stories and parables and can be correlated with general knowledge by associating the various stories with the religious festivals as they occur. Whenever possible an attempt will be made to get a representative of the religion which is being celebrated to come and talk to the children about that religion and what the festival means to those who belong to it. Thus the festivals will cease to be just holidays and become opportunities for the study of comparative religion, for co-ordinating the knowledge they have already got, and (most important of all) for inter-religious contacts and fellowship.

In the senior Basic School (Grades 5 to 8) probably the best way of developing the subject will be to correlate it with history, showing where and when the different religions of the world took their rise and the part they have played in subsequent history. A wealth of useful material on this subject can be extracted from the pages of Pandit Nehru's *Glimpses of World History*.

I suggest that a course of this kind should be a part of the work of every Basic Training School.

The tone of the teachers throughout should be reverent but objective, the tone of the sincere and impartial historian, no attempt being made to criticize or to weigh the relative merits of the various religions. The passages and stories chosen should be the best available in every case so that the children may grow up with some conception of the heights to which human beings have been enabled to rise through faith in God. That their historical studies will also show them the depths to which human beings can sink, when vision gives place to fanaticism, faith to superstition, and devotion to formality, will be all to the good and will perhaps help them, when they are old enough to understand those things, to be broad-minded and tolerant, while at the same time grasping the greatness, majesty and universality of true religion.

Shillong, 17-7-'48

A. MARGARET BARR

## WHY GOOD PROJECTS FAIL

There was an All-India and C. P. Provincial Conference of experts and officers interested in compost manure on the 5th, 6th and 7th July last at Nagpur. As I was extremely and practically interested in that problem, I took the opportunity of attending it.

The C. P. Government has been carrying out a scheme of compost manure for the last three years. It is a good scheme and I have obtained very good results from the use of compost manure. But the system is capable of several improvements. I attended the Conference with a desire to put before experts some of my experiences. But the difficulty of language proved a great impediment and to a great extent I had to come back disappointed. Almost all the proceedings were carried on in English, of which I understand not a word. His Excellency the Governor of C. P. as well as the Ministers for Food of the Central and C. P. Governments very kindly gave a gist of their speeches in Hindi also, though I was perhaps the only person in the audience who did not understand English. But later this was found to take up much time and so I was requested not to ask for translations and get information from friends later on. The Health Minister was good enough to promise me to explain his speech in Hindi to me in private after the end of the proceedings. This offer of the Health Minister created merriment among hearers, who gave cheers. I did not resent this merriment. But it did put me a-thinking about the irony involved in the fact that those who had to carry out the scheme in actual practice and make it successful could not follow and participate in the deliberations while those who discussed it had nothing to offer except articles, instructions or orders on paper without ever themselves handling and testing the manure itself. I wonder how a scheme could ever be successful in this way. It may be that because several of the participators of the Conference were from South India, they



could not have followed Hindi or Hindustani. All the same, it is as clear as daylight that Government and experts must write and speak the language of the people through whom their schemes have to be implemented. If their discussions are carried on among themselves without the help of those who are the actual workers in the field, it can never achieve success except perhaps with the speed of a snail.

However, in the afternoon session of the Provincial Conference on the second day, proceedings were carried on in Hindi and I had an opportunity of participating in its discussions. It was a very small meeting. I placed before the meeting my pleasant as well as unpleasant experiences of compost manure. I am thankful to the meeting for hearing me politely and patiently, in spite of my unpolished language. But I was anxious to make my views reach those who were directly or indirectly concerned in the preparation of manure and these people were not present there. In my opinion every citizen is concerned in this matter because every house throws out refuse every day and consumes grains and vegetables.

I refer to compost manure which is made from the refuse and night-soil of cities. The town-people throw into the same dust-bin manure-producing refuse along with such things as broken glass, crockery, vessels, tins, pebbles, stones, etc. The sweeper collects all these things together in the same cart and all this is emptied in the same pit. The result is that Mother Earth receives in her food things which are both edible as well as non-edible for her. If we get a little grit in the rice or bread served to us, we are annoyed, and there are persons who would lose their temper for such carelessness of their mothers, sisters, wives or cooks. But we never consider what Mother Earth must be feeling for being served with a manure, which is her food, with things such as stones, broken glass etc. Indeed, the people in the cities do not perhaps even know what becomes of the sweeping of their houses when they have thrown it into the dust-bin. Perhaps they do not even know that it has anything to do with the production of food which they eat. If we were to succeed in our schemes and want to save the country from shortage of food, it is necessary to remove the ignorance of the educated city-dwellers and make them understand their relations with and responsibility to the cultivator. Unless they both co-operate, it will always be an unprofitable activity. The mixture of substances which are not useful for manure is a serious loss. The cultivator and the bullocks have to carry unnecessary weight in the name of manure but which is really useless substance to the great detriment of the soil in which it is spread. Pebbles and particularly broken glass are dangerous to the feet of bullocks and cultivators engaged in the field. If the foot is injured the animal or the man often becomes incapable of working for several days. I once injured my own finger with a piece of glass at the time of filling my cart with

manure. It became septic and had to be treated for about a fortnight.

When I referred to this at the Conference it was suggested by some that it was impossible to separate the two in the cities or before putting it into the manure-pit, and the *kisans* themselves must make some arrangement for separating the two! The good experts did not seem to realize that if it was impossible for the Municipalities to separate the two before throwing them into the pit and reserving two different pits for each kind of dirt, it was more difficult still for the cultivator to sift it either at the time of taking it away or after reaching his field. It is the duty of the Municipality as a public body doing public service to see that it gave the manure in the best possible condition for being used as food for the soil. This shows that there is a great need for the social training of the educated citizens as well as the illiterate domestic and public sweepers. It must be a part of the adult education programme. Since the cities are large-scale manufacturers of compost manure, city people should be made to realize the necessity of having separate dust-bins for things from which manure could be made, and for things not useful for manure. Pieces of glass could be re-utilized for manufacture of glass and stones and pebbles could be used for filling up pits or making of roads.

A pit of 20' x 6' x 3' might hold six tons of manure. But actually it is doubtful if the cultivator gets even as much as four tons out of it of good manure. Two tons have to be paid for and carried to the field not for improving but actually damaging the soil. It must be realized that this is as bad and dishonest as selling adulterated milk or other food. If the Government wants to make its scheme successful, and if the Municipalities want their towns to remain clean and their manure to obtain the best price and a hall-mark for its quality, they must take care to provide it to the cultivators in the best form. It does mean more trouble, but it will be more paying ultimately. Otherwise, after a short experience, cultivators will refuse to purchase city manure to the great loss of both the Municipalities as well as the fields.

Another drawback in the present system of manufacture of manure is that the lower layers of the manure-pit remain in a raw condition while the upper portion appears to have become ripe for use. This is dangerous for the health of the remover of the manure as well as for the soil. Care must therefore be taken to see that upper layers are so timed that the lower layers get sufficient time to become good manure. Municipalities and their experts as well as the city people and the scavengers have all to learn how to take care of the sweepings and refuse and dirt of their houses and latrines and to carry out their respective functions very carefully if we want to show good success within, say, a period of five years in the project of Grow More Food.

Sevagram, 7-7-48

BALWANTSINGH

(Translated from the original in Hindustani)



# HARIJAN

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## REVENUE IN KIND

The reader will find elsewhere in this issue the report of Shri Vinoba's speech at Rajghat on 6th August last, in which he has recommended the collection of land revenue in kind as a remedy against high prices of grains.

The reasoning behind the proposition is simple. If one wanted to keep the price of a commodity at a particular level, he must be prepared to sell and be in a position to supply it to the consumer, if the latter could not get it in the market. It means that he must have sufficient stocks in hand. Government is already attempting to do it through its system of 'procurement', imports and distribution through its ration shops. Procurement is not popular, because the cultivator always feels that the price paid by the government is less than what he would be able to get in the open market, and also that more quantity is compulsorily purchased from him than what is safe for him to sell to meet his own needs. This feeling persists even if government resells the grain through its ration shops at a price lower than its cost price. Moreover, it involves a double transaction. The cultivator sells part of his produce to procure cash for payment of the land revenue. This, I believe, is sold either to a wholesale dealer or to a consumer. With the cash so obtained he pays the revenue. And then Government makes its purchases for purposes of 'procurement'. All this could be saved or reduced if government resorted to collection of revenue in kind instead of cash.

But, I am aware, that the system of payment in kind is unpopular with the cultivator. This is on account of its association with the type of payment in kind generally in vogue in the country under the *batai* system. It is well known that under the *batai* the tenant cultivator has to bring all his produce of every variety of food grown by him on the common *khali* (threshing-floor) where the produce is weighed by the landlord's agent and divided in stipulated proportion between the landlord and the cultivator. This leads to harassment of the cultivator in various ways. The cultivator is saved from it, if he has to pay a stipulated rent in cash.

What is suggested now is not a return to the above system. It is not suggested that the government should collect a particular part of every edible substance grown by the cultivator in his field. The cultivator might have grown, say, in an acre of *jawari*-land, along with or instead of *jawari*, *tur*, cotton, *mirch* and sundry other things. It is not suggested that the Government should collect some portion of all these things; but that it should fix for a

number of years, in the same way as it has done in respect of revenue in cash, the equivalent of cash in terms of a few things like, rice, wheat, *jawari*, *bajri*, maize, and if necessary, also cotton, *tur*, gram, ground-nut etc. — things, which it wants to have control over for the absolute needs of the nation.

In fixing the equivalents of cash in terms of produce, two facts must be remembered. First, the present assessments were fixed when prices of grains were very low; or, to put it the other way, when the purchasing power of money was considerably higher than at present. It would not be unjust, therefore, to equate a rupee of the land revenue with what it could purchase of the various kinds of produce in a bad year sometime before the war. Secondly, inflation and high-prices have solved the difficult problem of rural indebtedness and made the cultivator comparatively prosperous in terms of money. The Government, on the other hand, is now a heavy loser, as it receives by way of revenue an equivalent of hardly a third of its previous worth. The result is that while the purchasing power of government, the producer of currency, is reduced — its commodity, the currency, being in abundance, — as also of all those employees, who receive only fixed salaries or wages, the purchasing power of every producer — whether of raw material or manufactured article — is so much raised that he does not care if his things are not sold promptly, or he has to purchase what he regards his indispensable needs at exorbitant prices. On account of the former, he is not interested in speeding up or increasing production, and on account of the latter, neither a policy of control or of decontrol becomes effective. Owing to the great exodus, the shortage of food, the expensive military operations and the various rehabilitation schemes, the Government is the greatest purchaser and importer, and it has to issue currency for all these purposes. Thus a good deal of money is produced every day, quickly to disappear in the box of the cultivator or the manufacturer. This process cannot stop, unless Government collects its dues directly in the shape of various articles thus reducing the necessity of issuing new currency. Thus, it might demand so many lbs of cloth, cement, essential chemicals etc. in payment of every rupee of income-tax. Further, it should also itself become a producer of some types of articles through nationalization and decentralization. Production of cloth through nationalization of mills and through the *charkha* is an important item of this type. Encouragement of small-scale village manufacture side by side with the nationalization of the large-scale factory, if any of the same or similar article, would give the government more effective control over prices and currency than what mere fixing of prices by executive orders and penal laws can.

New Delhi, 11-8-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA



## SUBSTITUTE FOR COMMUNAL RATIOS

"Owing to a number of facilities available in towns, town people easily beat village people in competitive examinations. Similarly Brahmans are able to score over non-Brahmans, because the age-long system of caste, which allowed only a small section of the population to attain scholarship and administrative ability, has given the former an almost hereditary advantage over the latter and enabled them to develop those faculties from generation to generation. Consequently, unless some special facilities are given to the hitherto backward sections of the people to come in line with the advanced ones, competitive tests of selection will not give them a fair chance to take advantage of the theoretical universalization of education and administration. The cry against 'communal tendencies,' 'proportionate representations,' 'provincialism' etc., and plea for 'pure merit and efficiency' is itself the cry of an interested community, namely the Brahmans.

"What applies to Brahmans and non-Brahmans applies also to *savarna* Hindus and Harijans, and to Bengalis and Biharis, Assamese etc. Adoption of some kind of communal, provincial and other narrow basis for some time at least seems to be the only way to create necessary conditions for a casteless and classless society. Can you suggest an alternative to the fixation of communal ratios for the encouragement of the backward sections?"

The above has been paraphrased from a correspondent's letter. There is some substance in the question. My suggestions, not only for admission to educational institutions, services etc., but for various other venues of this kind, are as under:

1. Except for those services, where a statutory percentage has been recognized for some years to come for Harijans, Anglo-Indians etc., neither an enquiry should be made nor any value be attached to the caste, community, religion, or province of the applicant.

2. To enable backward sections to come up in line with the advanced ones, the people might be classified on an economic basis in some such manner as follows:

- A — People with income of Rs. 300 per annum or less
- B — " " " between Rs. 300 & 1000
- C — " " " " Rs. 1000 & 5000
- D — " " " " exceeding Rs. 5000

Suitable and sufficient places might be specially reserved, and freeships, concession-fees, scholarships etc. provided for people of each of the classes A, B and, if necessary, C. These classes would cover a great majority of the present backward sections. These reservations and grants should be in addition to scholarships, prizes etc. open for all in general.

3. For admission to services etc., Shri R. R. Diwakar suggests a method which is worthy of consideration. He suggests that about 50 to 60 per cent of appointments might be made in order merit from the top; the rest might be made from the bottom; that is, from the second or pass class applicants in an order starting from below and

going upwards. It should be remembered that attainment of high rank at examinations is not always a guarantee of efficiency and ability and connotes nothing about the person's character. On the other hand, those who have not stood high in examinations are not necessarily less intelligent, efficient or able. There have been great scholars, statesmen and administrators, who have scored poor at examinations.

This mode of discrimination can well go on as long as there is great inequality or concentration of wealth, opportunities or particular type of ability in particular sections of the population. The only test to be applied equally to every one should be that of character, if a method of assessing it accurately could be discovered.

We should also remember that, everything said and done, these avenues touch a very small fraction of the people; that they become covetable because of the great difference between the lowest and the highest income in general and of public servants and degree-bearing professions in particular; and because of the neglect and under-development of villages as agriculture-cum-industrial units. The ultimate solution of the problem lies in reducing the difference between maximum and minimum incomes and development of agriculture, village industries and decentralization.

New Delhi, 10-8-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

## ETHICS OF MANUAL LABOUR

Shri Kanaiyalal Malpurwala has been organizing a spinning week in one or another of the wards of Bombay commencing from the 30th of every month since the death of Gandhiji. Last month it was held at the Majdoor Manzil of the Rashtriya Mill Majdoor Sangh. For the convenience of workers, instead of spinning consecutively for seven days it was decided to do so on every Saturday and Sunday for five weeks. The Ministers of the Bombay Government take interest in this function and one or another of them makes it a point of addressing the spinners either at the beginning or at the end of the week. Shri Kedarnathji, (known generally as simply Nathji) who has been taking interest in this work ever since its beginning, also addresses the spinners every time. His address to the labourers at the last function deserves to be considered by all. About 80 workers took part in this sacrificial spinning. They span 140 hanks during the period.

Shri Nathji said that the last month's function was significant for the fact that it was made successful with the help of manual workers. It was true that brain-workers led the world in several ways. But they lacked the practice and the will to work with their own hands. Manual labourers were trained to create things with their own hands and they learnt craft work very quickly and attained great swiftness in it. If a brain-worker was compelled by circumstances to work with his own hands, he felt helpless. He had used his intellect to get work from others and live on others' manual labour. Hence the manual labourer was less afraid of facing adversity, being self-reliant and able to cut his way through.



Even in war, there was not as much need for intellectual work as for work involving physical labour and strain. An agriculturist also had to do a good deal of physical labour. That was why soldiers and workers in armies were mostly drawn from these classes.

People used to doubt the utility of the *charkha* and asked Gandhiji as to how it could bring Swaraj. Such questions really arose out of unwillingness to do anything involving manual labour. Unwilling hands were generally prone to argue more on these matters. When Gandhiji put the counter-question, if *charkha* could not bring Swaraj, would they show what other work could do it, they had no answer.

Shri Nathji reminded them that the progress of a nation depended upon constructive work. Gandhiji kept this firmly in his mind and evolved his own ideology of economic order. It was not the ideology for the peace and happiness of India only, but for the peace and happiness of the whole world. As a result of intensive thinking, he discovered the *charkha*. There was a deep meaning in it. It was the symbol of *sarvodaya* (the well-being of all).

If they would cast their eyes on the world, they would find that every nation was puzzled on the question of how to subsist. No one could say what was to happen ten years hence. The policy of destruction which was going on everywhere was wrong, and could never bring happiness to mankind. It would be only when everyone realized that in order that one might live one should enable others also to live that these problems would be solved.

"The philosophy which rules the world today is that others should work for me and I should use my cunning and intelligence to get the utmost of their labour." Feudalism, zamindari, profiteerism, capitalism, usury, etc. had all arisen from this, the common aim underlying being achievement of happiness consistently with evasion of bodily labour. God had given limbs to everyone, but man was unwilling to put them to use. The law of Nature demanded physical labour from every one. And so the ethical code was that every one must labour for his wants. It was true that a person could not create with his own hands all that he needed. The corollary would be that each one should do something for others. Only when one had worked for others that he could be entitled to take something which the others had created. It should be a pledge with every one who wanted to live in conformity with the ethical code that he should not take from others anything without paying its full and just price. Only if every one behaved so could all disputes come to an end. The fundamental cause of all disputes was unwillingness to work.

If anybody thought that the rich were happy, he was mistaken. The worker was better equipped for happiness than the rich man, because he was always self-reliant. He had the self-confidence that he could maintain himself with the labour of his own hands. He did not feel helpless under trying circumstances. He therefore escaped from several worries which made the rich man helpless and an object of compassion.

"To a large extent the origin of sin lies in desiring to live on the labour of others. If we could understand

the importance of labour we would try to be as self-reliant as possible. We would desire to use our own limbs for our requirements and since it can be done only to a limited extent, we necessarily would not increase our wants to an unlimited extent. Gandhiji showed us the royal path to the solution of the complex problems and disputes of the world and also gave us as a symbol the easiest instrument leading to that path. The insistence of self-spinning is not a mere imaginary or day-dream idea of self-sufficiency. During the days of control, when the rich people felt scarcity of cloth, those who spun by their own hands never experienced it." There were several other merits also, he said, in the *charkha*. It gave a golden means of obtaining peace of mind for those who were distracted by troubles of various sorts. Those who took to the *charkha* with the proper understanding and became concentrated in it quickly recovered mental peace. What more grace of God could there be than attainment of mental peace!

"Gandhiji was a man of God. He was a man of action. One can honour him only by going along the path showed by him. A tribute to a *karmayogi* (man of action) like Gandhiji cannot be paid by words. It may be paid only through action. Dedication of one's life to one of the several items indicated by him is true tribute to him."

(Abridged from the original in Marathi)

## BAPU—MY SAVIOUR

### III

Ever since Vidya's passing away on July 20, 1943, I was observing the date (20th) with due solemnity. I would fast the whole day and in the evening feed the poor and give alms in her name. I was not sure however, if I could observe the day in the same way in the Ashram. So I consulted Bapu about it and this is the advice that I got from him:

"The best way to celebrate the date (20th) is for you to devote yourself wholly to spinning or some Ashram labour of your choice and connect *Ramanama* with it."

Asked if it would be proper to feed the poor etc. he wrote:

"Wholly unnecessary. You may give something for those who are in real need."

On the following day (20-10-'44), after the usual morning talk, Bapu wrote as follows:

"Today is the auspicious day for you. I had often made Vidya weep. She used to weep like you and ask me to show her God. I used to chide her and tell her that she would see God in the spinning-wheel, and not by sitting near me. She realized the truth of it at last.

"We are machines as well as the machinists. Our body is a machine and the soul a machinist. Today you have to take machine-like work from your body and report to me about it."

I could not understand Bapu saying that one would see God through the spinning-wheel, so on 21-10-'44 I requested him to further clarify the point. As a result, he gave me a fairly long talk and then wrote out the gist of it as follows:



"Whatever object a man meditates upon, he most assuredly sees God through it. The spinning-wheel is the best medium of all and its results are so 'obvious, too.'"

I then told Bapu that in spite of my constant effort to the contrary, utter loneliness had gripped me and I felt that I should have someone by me to relieve me of this oppressive feeling. True, God is our eternal companion; but man being what he is, he instinctively turns to the company of his own species to find support and strength. Thereupon Bapu wrote:

"It is because a man needs the support of his own kind that there exist institutions like Ashrams etc. That a man draws support from personal intercourse only is not so. Some find that support through correspondence, and some through meditation. And yet there are others who derive their sustenance from the holy sayings of the departed ones just as we do daily from Tulsidas."

Next day (22-10-'44) while autographing Vidya's dearly-cherished picture of *Hope*, he inscribed the following two lines on it:

"Hope is eternal. Its worship never goes in vain."

And on 23-10-'44, in response to my desire to be with him all my spare time so as to prevent my mind from wandering about, Bapu wrote:

"There is no harm in your being with me, but at that time you should ply the *takli*, just as Mahadev and Kripalani used to do. Then it will not be theft of God's time. *Takli* is our silent friend. It makes no noise and provides the world with all the thread it needs. While plying it, we can see as well as hear everything. I go even so far as to say that if you totally absorb yourself in work in this way, then by God's grace your hearing may also be restored to you. But when you become a *karma-yogi* like this, you would hardly care for your ears. My *Vanar-Guru* (Chinese Monkey model) deliberately closes his ears, for the surrounding noises come in its way."

From that day onward I used to pass practically the whole of my free time in Bapu's cottage and in his immediate presence. I must own that his sacred presence always exercised a magical influence upon me. It would soothe me at first, then inspire and encourage me to do the right thing in a right way, and also enable me to emerge from my narrow shell and share with Bapu, at least to some extent, his world-wide interests.

On the morning of 24-10-'44, I found Bapu in a particularly happy and jovial mood. He was vivaciously cutting jokes with a group of children. Finding me looking at him in considerable astonishment, he told me that he loved children immensely and was never so much at home anywhere as in their company. After the children had gone, I inquired from Bapu as to what was the secret of his perennial joy so that even in the midst of his numerous worries and responsibilities, he was able to retain his composure and cheerfulness intact. This is what he then wrote down in reply:

"The secret of my serenity and joyfulness consists in my utter reliance on God, that is, my immovable faith in Truth. I know that by myself I cannot do anything. There is God in me and whatever I do is done at His bidding. How can I then be unhappy? And I know, too, that whatever he does through me is all for my good. This knowledge also should serve to keep me happy. God took away Ba, that was for Ba's own good. Hence Ba's separation should not be a matter for sorrow for me. And so also you should consider it a sin to grieve over Vidya's death."

Thus Bapu daily continued to give me food for thought in order to bring peace to my distracted mind. He was equally concerned with my physical health, too. He well knew that I would not be really at peace so long as my defective hearing was not set right. Though time and again he would tell me to regard my deafness as a blessing from God, yet I would not leave off brooding over it. I regarded it a definite handicap and was naturally, therefore, very anxious to get rid of it, if I could. Bapu, therefore, consulted for my ears every *vaidya* and naturopath who happened to visit the Ashram at the time. Finally, he decided upon my taking a course of nature-cure treatment at Bhimavaram in Andhra Desh. I was to leave for it on 28-11-'44. And so as the day of my departure from the Ashram was drawing near, I was experiencing a sort of nervousness. So much had I grown accustomed to Bapu's sweet company and his daily inspiring discourses to me, that I found it very hard to tear myself away from him even though it was in obedience to his wishes. I felt I would be missing him very keenly and there would be nothing to compensate me for it. When I was thus in a state of perplexity, an idea occurred to me. Why not ask Bapu to write something for me daily and have it regularly sent on to me at Bhimavaram by post for the consolation of my mind? So early morning I hesitatingly broached the matter with him:

"Bapu I have got an idea. I don't know how far it would meet with your approval."

"Well, what is it?" gently asked Bapu, looking up from a pile of correspondence he was about to attend to.

"Bapu, it just occurred to me last night how nice would it be if you could daily write something for me. You know Bapu, I am more or less cut off from the world on account of my deafness. This daily personal contact with you has proved a veritable boon for me. It has given me new courage and greatly pacified my restless spirit. So I would very much wish this precious contact to continue in some form or the other even while I am away from you. That is why I am suggesting that you should write daily for me, be it even a few lines. It will go a long way to soothe me."

Bapu listened to me in a truly Bapu-like way. When I had finished, he said, "Your proposal is quite good. I will certainly consider it."

Bapu's favourable reply greatly eased my mind. Next day when I repeated my request to Bapu, he



said that it was still "under consideration". On the third day, however, I told him that I would be getting ready an album containing loose sheets for the purpose and keep it handy by his side so that whenever he felt the inclination or the urge to write, he should do so forthwith. Happily, Bapu assented to it and so I lost no time in getting the album prepared by an Ashramite friend. I handed it over to Bapu on 16-11-'44. For the following few days I remained quiet and left the whole thing to Bapu's sweet will. I have no words to describe the joy I felt when on 22-11-'44 morning Bapu told me with a beaming face:

"Anand, I have started writing for you, and I have done so from the 20th."

"Have you really? Oh, Bapu!" said I overcome with joy. Immediately my head went down before him in sheer gratefulness. I could not fail to appreciate his pointed reference to the date, viz. the 20th which I considered so auspicious for me and which, as I have already said, I used to celebrate every month in commemoration of Vidya's passing away. From that day (20-11-'44) on for close upon two years, Bapu continued to write daily a thought for me. Throughout the period of my stay at Bhimavaram for treatment and for a long time afterwards, a dear friend in the Ashram used to send me by post daily Bapu's thought of the previous day. These thoughts are most unique and the only ones of their kind. Bapu has churned them out like butter from his mind. For me, they constitute a blessing and the richest heritage from my beloved Bapu, and I have not a shadow of doubt that they would be regarded equally so by the entire world. I propose to bring out the first instalment of these thoughts in the near future under the title: *Bapuke Ashirvad*. But more about this grand book in my next. (To be continued)

Allahabad, 26-5-'48 ANAND T. HINGORANI

### Correction

On page 195 (column one) of *Harijan* of August 8, 1948, in the last line but one of (e) for *shut* read *shun*, and in line six of (g) for *human* read *humane*.

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## WORLD PACIFIST MEETING

SHANTINIKETAN—JANUARY 1949

In the course of an appeal for funds, Dr. Rajendraprasad says:

"A World Pacifist Meeting is to be held in India at Shantiniketan in January 1949. The original object was to enable a group of international pacifists and others to meet together under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi to find a way out of the present darkness. Unfortunately, his death has removed that possibility. However, the plans for the Meeting into which Gandhiji fully entered, are being pursued for we felt that it is all the more necessary that peace-workers can meet the close associates of Gandhiji and take counsel together.

"World Wars and the present trend of world events point to the fact that the spirit of man has gone astray. It seems that it is only by the mobilization of the powers of the spirit of man that a way can be found to free mankind from oppression and violence. It is our hope that a meeting, as proposed, of peace-workers from all over the world—who will have an opportunity for close personal intercourse with each other so as to strengthen their own conviction and the common mission—will generate new spiritual power in the world, so that a satisfactory way of life may be found for mankind.

"An All-India Invitation Committee, and an Executive Committee representative of the various communities in the country, have been formed with Horace Alexander and Hiralal Bose as secretaries and Bhagirath Kanoria as treasurer, to make the arrangements for this Meeting.

"Fuller details about this conference can be obtained from the Secretary to the Committee for World Pacifist Meeting, 1 Upper Wood Street, Calcutta 16.

"It is estimated that for expenses in connection with the conference in India a sum of Rs. 2,50,000 (two lakhs and fifty thousand rupees) will be needed. In view of the importance and international scope of the conference, I have no doubt that the public will not grudge a contribution. The object of this meeting, namely to find ways of achieving peace, concerns everyone. No donation therefore is too small and every anna will be gratefully accepted. Contributions may kindly be sent to Shri Bhagirath Kanoria, Treasurer, World Pacifist Meeting, 8 Royal Exchange Place, Calcutta."

27-7-'48

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