

HARIJAN

Editor: PYARELAL

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TWO ANNAS

HARIJAN

Harijan was Bapu's voice. It was the mirror of his soul. It became his "weekly letter" to friends all over the world and a compendium of his orders of the day to co-workers. For himself it was an exercise and discipline in non-violent thinking and truthful expression. And since silence he regarded as the highest form of speech, *Harijan* became the vehicle of his silence too, and very often served causes by its silence no less than by its writing.

Harijan was not a journal in the commonly accepted sense of the word. Writing for writing's sake Bapu always deprecated. Abstract or academic dissertations never issued from his pen. In fact thinking unrelated to immediate duty before one he held to be waste of energy, a disease of the mind. Writing with him was always an adjunct to action. It carried behind it a lifetime of endeavour and experiment in quest of truth through the practice of non-violence.

My association with *Harijan* as editor was only an extension and a necessary corollary of my association with him. The privilege consisted in gathering the ripe wisdom that dropped from his lips and to interpret it and his actions, with appropriate commentary and research wherever necessary. As a rule nothing was ever published without his previous scrutiny or possibility of a subsequent check up.

It is clear, therefore, that as Rajaji pointed out last week, with Bapu gone, *Harijan* cannot continue in its present form any longer. In consultation with friends and revered elders I have, therefore, decided to suspend its publication in its present form till its ultimate future can be decided. In *His Last Will and Testament* to the nation, which appeared in the last week's *Harijan*, Gandhiji gave us a plan for giving concrete expression to organized non-violence on a national scale. Resurrected *Harijan* may well become the mouthpiece and organ of that plan.

That still leaves unsettled the question whether there will be need, in the new set up, for English *Harijan*. Bapu himself, as time went by, attached more and more importance to Indian language editions of *Harijan* as was evidenced by his increasing insistence on doing his original writing in Hindustani and Gujarati which was translated into English for the *Harijan*. English in his case was necessary to convey his message to the world outside and to reach the hearts of our alien administrators. That phase of our national struggle is now over. Non-violent India can now convey

Bapu's message to the world only by translating it into action here. For that English is not only unnecessary but can even be a hindrance. We must speak our tongue to be true to ourselves.

New Delhi, 16-2-'48

PYARELAL

TO SUBSCRIBERS AND AGENTS

Subscribers and agents will please note from the article *Harijan* by Shri Pyarelalji that the publication of the *Harijan* and its Gujarati and Hindustani editions, viz. the *Harijanbandhu* and the *Harijansevak* is suspended for the time being. Decision regarding resumption of publication or otherwise will be taken at Wardha next month. As disposal of balances of subscriptions and Agent's deposits depends on that decision, it will be announced in due course.

20-2-'48

J. DESAI

THE DAY BEFORE

[Last week we published a letter written by Gandhiji to Shri Mashruwala on the 29th of January, 1948, the day before he departed from this earth. Gandhiji had mentioned in the letter that he had written the same day to Shri Shankaran of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh, to comfort him in his grief. The letter is originally in Hindustani and is reproduced here in English. Of pertinent interest is Gandhiji's view of death as expounded by him to Shri Shankaran while offering consolation to him.

—Mg. ED.]

New Delhi,
January 29, 1948

Brother Shankaran,

Chi. Kishorlal gave me news of the death of your daughter Sulochana. I had no idea at all of it. What can I write to you? What comfort could I give? Death is a true friend. It is only our ignorance that causes us grief. Sulochana's spirit was yesterday, is today and will remain tomorrow. The body, of course, must die. Sulochana has gone taking her failings with her, leaving the good in her behind. Let us not forget that (or her). Be even more true in the discharge of your duty.

With Blessings,

BAPU

SELECTIONS FROM GANDHI

By: Nirmal Kumar Bose

With a Foreword by Gandhiji wherein he says: "The selections made by the author show the thoroughness with which he had gone into the subject. Those who are interested in my writings will not fail to appreciate the author's labours."

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A SACRED INJUNCTION

The following is the text of a statement that has been issued to the Press jointly by Shri Ramdas Gandhi, Shri Devdas Gandhi and Shri Pyarelal:

With the ceremony at the Triveni Sangam at 1-55 p. m. on February 12 concluded the fortnight's ritual prescribed by Hindu custom. Hundreds of thousands witnessed grief-stricken and in solemn silence the final parting. Those of us who were near could see the little bones rapidly flow away as the urn was turned over and the contents allowed to drop and disappear beyond recall in the bosom of the great river. They were the bones collected with due ritual on February 2 from the pyre after it had burned for fourteen hours and had been left undisturbed for another twentyseven hours.

The prescribed form of cremation always leaves a small residue of bones, which are later carefully gathered and ritually consigned to any one of the celebrated sacred rivers. In the Indian languages these bones, always mixed as they are with flower petals and incense, are described as flowers. The ashes, as distinct from such bones as it is possible to separate, are also collected, particularly in the case of great persons, and consigned to a flowing river.

GANDHIJI'S OWN INJUNCTION

Anxious thought was given by some of those who had been intimately connected with Gandhiji throughout his life to suggestions that a few of his bones be preserved. The illustration of the relics of the Buddha was quoted by friends who pressed the idea upon us.

Some of Gandhiji's closest associates asked to be permitted personally to possess a part of the bones or even a single small piece. Every one, however, was good enough to leave the matter to our final decision. We sought the advice of associates and friends held in high esteem by the people. Opinion was naturally divided but the preponderant view inclined towards the conservative Hindu procedure. Calm reflection led us to the same conclusion. But the decisive factor with us was Gandhiji's own oft-repeated injunction in the matter. We could not possibly reconcile ourselves to a departure from what we knew was a specific wish of his which he trusted those of his kith and kin who survived him to carry out in letter and spirit. We have not, therefore, permitted any part of the bones to be kept by any one.

RELICS PRESERVED

Let those who may feel disappointed know that there will never be any dearth of relics. For instance, special care is being taken to preserve, for as long as they will last, the clothes, bearing huge patches of blood, which Bapu wore when the three bullets riddled him.

The ashes, which were also collected, were, as is known to all, distributed to the provinces and consigned to the various other celebrated rivers in the country. A portion of those ashes are still in our custody and their disposal awaits consultation with the country's leaders and other elders. As was

announced in an earlier statement, portions may be sent abroad to countries adjacent to India from where Indian residents have expressed a strong desire to have them.

We are still too sad and too full of anguish over the appalling tragedy and the circumstances attending it to be in a position to dilate upon the future. Our philosophy, however, is not that of despair but of optimism, hope and faith.

THANKS

We and some of those closely associated with us have been receiving messages of sympathy from all parts of India and the world, including Pakistan. Similar messages have been addressed to the Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Gandhiji's life-long host and friend Mr. G. D. Birla, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and to other leaders. The senders of many of those messages have asked for their sympathies to be conveyed to us and to those recognized as belonging to Gandhiji's large family circle which transcends ties of blood. In the name, therefore, of all those we wish to take this opportunity to express publicly our heart-felt gratitude to the countless persons whose spontaneous messages of love and fellow-feeling have done so much to lighten the burden of our sorrow.

New Delhi, 15-2-'48

THE FRUITS OF HATRED

[The following article by Sidney Shalett condensed from *Collier's* in the *Reader's Digest* of September, 1946 gives us a further glimpse of the chamber of horrors which mankind must enter if not love but hatred continues to be the ruling factor in human affairs.

—V. G. D.]

Suppose that on December 5, 1958 a man dies in a New York hospital after a short, violent illness, during which he becomes delirious with pneumonia, breaks out with ugly sores and coughs up blood. In the post-mortem doctors diagnose his ailment as plague—the 'Black Death' of the fourteenth century. They are puzzled because there hasn't been a case of plague in the U. S. A. for many years.

Suppose also that this incident coincides with an apparently unrelated event in a fast moving international situation: The convoys of the new Axis have just flown home after unsatisfactory meetings with the U. S. Secretary of State. Some observers are warning that war may come any moment in the form of a cataclysmic robot-atom attack.

Later that day another man dies of plague in New York, and alarmed doctors all over the city begin reporting cases which they suddenly realize have all the symptoms of Black Death. Six men die of it the next day and deaths are reported in Miami and Detroit.

Suddenly the nation seems in the grip of an unbelievable series of epidemics. What the Pittsburgh health authorities had thought an ordinary

food-poisoning wave is diagnosed as an epidemic of dread and rare botulism. Workers at the new underground atomic research laboratories and arsenals in the New Mexican desert begin dropping from Cholera, Tularemia and Psittacosis. In the Texas cow country, rinderpest breaks out among the cattle—the first such cases in North America.

The foregoing is an imaginative picture of what might happen if there is a third World War. The first blow would have been struck not with the atom bomb but with BW—biological warfare.

Saboteurs would already have done their work at water and milk supplies. Soon enemy planes, balloons and rockets, spraying mists of germs over cities, are combined with poison gas attacks and bombings. Even bomb fragments are tainted. If a bullet or a fragment scratches a man, he is likely to die from disease.

The picture is perhaps far-fetched. But it is possible on the basis of scientific knowledge not twelve years hence but *today*.

Biological warfare is officially defined as "the employment of bacteria, fungi, viruses, rickettsiac (certain organisms usually lice or tick-borne) and toxic agents derived from living organisms to produce death or disease in man, animals or growing plants." Some authorities, particularly civilian officials view germ warfare as a horrible and inhuman thing, which should not be used. Major General Alden H. Waitt, Chief of U. S. Chemical Warfare Service, is spokesman for another school of thought. He says: "It is neither consistent nor intelligent to talk about the horrors of biological warfare and then condone atomic warfare. I am entirely out of sympathy with talk about the humanity or inhumanity of a weapon. The thing that really is inhuman is war itself."

Most authorities agree that BW is a very real and significant menace; that it is something which small 'have-not' nations could cook up clandestinely, using university laboratories and even breweries and distilleries as secret factories.

BW experiments, in which Britain, Canada and the U. S. A. co-operated as a means of better understanding defensive measures, were conducted during the war in great secrecy. Lately reports have been released from which the following picture emerges:

In considering offensive use of disease by artificial means, it is elementary that scientists would select the most virulent strains of the most damaging agents, and enhance their virulence by 'unnatural mixtures'. Typhoid for instance, which usually is contracted through food or water can be given both extra staying and spreading quality by dissemination through artificial mist; this way you merely have to breathe the germ. The dread anacrobe which normally spreads botulism through food can be made more deadly if conveyed through an open wound or the lungs; therefore why not put it on a bullet or spread it by mist?

All BW agents do not produce agony or quick death. In conducting biological warfare therefore

a nation theoretically could tailor its tactics to fit its purpose. It could, if it wished, select an agent which would disable a population temporarily, such as dysentery, or the staphylococcal agents which produce the type of poisoning commonly miscalled 'ptomaine'. In this event, an invading army might find the defending soldiers and civilians physically too weak to resist but not in danger of dying. Or the BW strategists could select diseases producing more protracted but non-fatal results, such as undulant fever.

Finally, if truly vicious and positive results were desired, one could attack with the 'killers'—cholera, plague, botulism or psittacosis. As one authority pointed out, you can brew concoctions with germs '1000 times more deadly' than poison gases; you can't see them, smell them, taste them or detect them except by cultures, and by the time you get suspicious and make a culture half your population might be dead.

In December, 1943 the U. S. Office of Strategic Services reported to the Chiefs of Staff that the Germans were believed to be considering attacking the British Isles with rocket-borne BW agents. That report got the Allies into bacteriological research with both feet.

Chemical Warfare Service, through its 'Special Profits Division', established 4 BW installations by the summer of 1944. The germ detectives also got together with the Air Forces in Utah to carry out realistic experiments with 'simulated' germ bombs. Clusters of aerosol (mist) bombs, loaded with harmless but stain-producing organisms, which would spread exactly in the manner of virulent substances, were dropped. The organisms left their trail as they spread, and researches could trace the results.

Paradoxically enough, as usually is the case when man dabbles in new ways of increasing the horrors of war, civilization already has benefited from some of the discoveries of BW. The scientists amassed knowledge about the spread of influenza that has contributed greatly to development of a promising flu vaccine.

A highly effective botulinus toxoid was developed, and our knowledge of cures for anthrax, brucellosis, psittacosis, tularemia and other diseases was advanced. In the plant field, through learning how to wipe out an enemy's growing food supplies, some valuable weed-killers were discovered. And in the animal field, a new method of large-scale production of a vaccine that absolutely controls rinderpest—the costly cattle plague—will alone pay for the whole deal.

The cost of BW research in this war, it is estimated, was under 50 million dollars. BW, compared with other weapons—the two-thousand-million dollar atomic bomb for example—is relatively inexpensive.

That also is the great danger of BW in the hands of a poor have-not nation, which could not afford an atomic-bomb project.

HARIJAN

February 22

1948

HIS FINAL RESTING PLACE

What remained of the mortal remains of Bapu was consigned to the sacred waters of the Triyeni according to the Hindu rites. The decision was taken not without much deliberation, heart-searching and consultation with revered friends, who by virtue of their erudition in matters religious and spiritual, devotion to Bapu and his ideals and above all by their saintly lives and character had a right to speak on the matter with authority. In doing so we knew, we would be doing counter to the most cherished sentiments of many. We realized too that no individual, by virtue of blood or any other personal tie, had any special right over him. He had long since ceased to belong to his family. Home he had none, or rather, one might say the whole world was his home and mankind his family. If anyone had a special claim upon him, it was the disinherited ones of the earth—the oppressed, the lowliest and the lost. What could not be shared with even 'unto this last', he held of little account and not worth having. He would not have liked his *asthis* to lie under costly mausoleums. If at all, he would have liked them to rest in the hut of some poor, unnamed, pure-hearted Harijan—disdained by the world but loved of Rama—his (Bapu's) Rama who always dwells among those whom the world rejects, but whom He rejects not when they turn to Him. Such a one it was clear, could not be found by searching. And it was as well. For, Bapu hated making a fetish of the perishable body whether dead or alive.

When, therefore, suggestions and requests began to pour in for the preservation of Bapu's *asthis*, some of us felt ourselves in a great dilemma. Among those who made the suggestions were some whom we revered next only to Bapu, whom Bapu himself would have liked to deny nothing and whose word is almost law to us. The sole question that we set before ourselves was: what would Bapu himself have to say if he were there? And the reply came emphatic and clear. He belonged to no particular class or community or even country. He belonged to the whole world and we know he aspired to serve and identify himself with God's entire creation. The only custodian of his last physical remains, therefore, could be the elements. And what place could serve better as his final resting place than the immaculate bosom of the great sacred rivers of India? So, sacred Triveni, was chosen, among other places, where rest too Kasturba's remains and remains of the countless, voiceless millions whose joys and sorrows he had made his own and to whose service his life was dedicated.

The immersion was made total—no portion whatever being kept. We have the habit of seeking an easy, soothing balm for our conscience by erecting temples to the memory of those whom we deny in our daily lives. Let not that be Bapu's fate. Those who are anxious to have a portion in him have now to have it on equal terms with the millions by adopting his way of life and by identifying themselves with the cause of *Daridranarayana* of which he became a living symbol.

New Delhi, 13-2-'48

PYARELAL

SOME HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS

When people were nervous at the prospect of a famine in and round about the place where I was working in Noakhali, I gathered them together and gave them the assurance that none of them need die of starvation, even though famine might sweep over the whole of Bengal or for that matter India, if they did what they were told. If any had to starve in spite of it, I would share my meal with them.

The plan succeeded in as much as it helped to restore confidence and arrested panic by removing the feeling of helplessness and desperation. The threatened food scarcity—as often happens—did not after all turn out to be as severe as was feared. An identical or analogous plan, I feel confident, could be tried to meet the food crisis that threatens Madras today.

Cocoa-nut and *Tal*, palm and banana are the wealth of South India. Our entire sea-board up to a depth of 40 miles is covered with jungles of these precious trees and constitutes nature's inexhaustible larder. *Tal* and palm give life-sustaining sweet juice, rich in minerals and anti-beriberi vitamin B complex. When cooked over fire, it gives sugar. In Bihar alone the number of palm trees is computed to be over one crore. Out of these 25 lakhs used to be tapped for toddy, while the remaining 75 lakhs were left altogether untapped. Imagine the amount of employment it would bring to the poor, and the acreage it would set free from sugarcane to grow more food, if these trees were properly utilized instead of crores being sunk in erecting costly sugar plants.

Then take cocoa-nut. It is claimed to be nature's complete food. An English friend, the wife of a Punjab civilian, used often to describe to Gandhiji how she had found that she could keep fit living on two whole cocoa-nuts alone per day. Some of our friends in Noakhali told us how they had managed to survive by adding two cocoa-nuts to a handful of rice and green vegetable during the worst of the 1943 food crisis. We made a further experiment. In Noakhali cocoa-nut was to be found in plenty. The bulk of it used to be sold in the weekly bazaar at the rate of 7 to 12 cocoa-nuts for a rupee. Part was used as *dabs* to provide hospitality to chance visitors. We had started expressing oil from ripe, green cocoa-nuts as a home occupation in answer to the cry of hungry children who starved although they were willing to work. The kernel of

green cocoa-nuts was shredded by means of a scraper with serrated edge. The scrapings were then kneaded with a little water and the 'milk' expressed by straining through a piece of cloth. What remained was the cake—*chhoba*. We dried it by sunning. Previously it used to be thrown away. By boiling the 'milk', oil separated out and formed a solid mass when left overnight in cold weather. The remaining liquid on being further cooked yielded "cheese" or "butter" (*machka*)—a sweet, delicious substance—very nourishing and very appetizing.

The oil-cake and cheese (*chhoba* and *machka*)—bye-products of cocoa-nut oil, between them represent the entire nourishing content of the cocoa-nut less the oil which is found to be in excess of human requirement in the natural state. An ounce of it was found on experiment to be equal in nourishing content to 2 ozs. of rice. Dehydrated and salted, *machka* and *chhoba* can be kept over long periods without deterioration. Preserved with a little sugar or palm *gur* it becomes a delicate sweet. Cocoa-nut shell can take a high polish, the finished product rivalling in brilliance and beauty, tortoise shell. It can be turned into a number of artistic things. Coir string and rope have a universal use. Homemade fresh oil of green cocoa-nuts is a fragrant delicacy and an appetizing article of food. The annual crop of cocoa-nut in the Madras Presidency may be roughly set down at 1,228.5 million nos. This should yield 1,00,000 tons of *machka* and *chhoba* cake equivalent to 32,000 million calories of food value. If the bye-products of homemade cocoa-nut oil—shell and coir are fully utilized, not only can homemade fresh oil be had at a competitive price, but thousands of maunds of food, rich in sugar, protein and mineral salts can be had for nothing for the poorest of the poor.

Equal in importance, if not more, is the groundnut crop. The annual yield for Madras Presidency is 16,84,000 tons. Out of this 7,03,800 tons is exported. 4,75,000 tons is used for expressing oil. 2,85,000 tons of oil-cake that is annually produced in Madras is used either as fertilizer or cattle feed. If care is taken to maintain conditions of absolute cleanliness and purity during the various processes of oil extraction and skin is removed from the kernels before oil is expressed, the cake can provide thousands of maunds of concentrated high protein value food. Once during the Second Round Table Conference in London, when I was trying to obtain for Gandhiji almond butter, I found that groundnut cake alone or in combination was being sold as 'almond butter'. The calorie value per ounce of groundnut cake is 235 cal.

What is true of groundnut oil-cake is in varying degrees true of gingelly and linseed cake, too. We tried both in the Ashram and found that they answered all right.

The trouble with the groundnut in its natural state is that it contains too much fat. The fat can either be separated by extracting the oil in the

ghani by the indigenous process or by one of the several chemical processes in vogue, defatted kernels in appearance and appetizing value being just like they are in nature.

Banana and jack fruit are nature's sealed food. Ripe or unripe banana has high nutritive value. Ripe banana and ripe jack fruit pulp can be dried as figs. Unripe banana can be dried and ground into flour to make *chapatis*. Jack fruit seed too can be stored. It is rich and appetizing food.

The total annual yield of bananas for Madras is 11,19,000 tons. In Noakhali we found that while rice sold at as. 14 per seer, sweet potatoes sold at as. 2 per seer. Considering that the calorie value of sweet potato is about one third that of rice, still it could be used to provide food calories at 42% the price of rice. We devised a famine fare consisting of 2 *chhataks* of rice, one of *chhoba-machka*, 4 *chhataks* of sweet potatoes, 6 *chhataks* of green vegetables—mostly growing wild like *kochu-lati*, *sampla*, pumpkin and greens, all cooked into *khichri*. It answered well. Madras has banana and jack fruit and yams, elephant's foot (*sooran* and *zamikand*) and other tubers. Banana can be to Madras probably what sweet potato was to Noakhali. Yams and other tubers can easily be 'riced' and preserved by dehydration. A mixed fare of rice one part, tubers and bananas two parts, cocoa-nut or groundnut whole or as oil-cake one part, green vegetables three parts can easily provide a life-sustaining meal at a fraction of the cost entailed when rice alone is used.

To these must be added supplementing individual food stocks by everybody growing seasonal vegetables for him or herself in backyard kitchen gardens or in spare spaces, e. g. dried-up river beds, embankments of tanks and so on. Ground space can further be economized by thoughtful expedients. I have actually seen pumpkin and tomatoe creepers planted on the banks or inner slopes of tanks and *khals*, bamboo frames being erected over the surface of water for the creeper to spread. Tanks and ponds which can be put to no other use can be used to cultivate *sinhara* and white lotus. Both are very prolific and need no labour in cultivation. The fruit of the former and stem of the latter are both excellent food.

New Delhi, 7-2-'48

PYARELAL

Correction

In the article *The Fateful Friday* in the *Harijan* of 15th February, page 30, column two, line seventeen from bottom in the sentence *All of a sudden someone from the crowd roughly elbowed his way into the cordon from the right* should read *someone ... from the left* etc.

On page 31 column 2 in the same number drop words Dr. Rajendraprasad at the end of line fifteen and before Shri Jairamdas in line thirtysix respectively.

BAPU AS A SCHOOLMASTER

When I joined Bapu towards the end of December, one of his first questions was whether I knew Hindi. As I replied in the negative, he said that knowledge of Hindi would enhance my usefulness and to my great surprise, he set out to teach me Hindi himself. I felt flattered but was it fair, I asked myself, to add this to the many burdens and responsibilities he was carrying? If he could at all spare a few minutes daily for me, why should I not use them to seek his light on my life's many problems and paradoxes? After all I could learn Hindi from anyone else just as well—perhaps better for as he taught or spoke to me, his radiant face and earnest manner often attracted my attention more than his words.

But there was no arguing with Bapu and I soon found that a schoolmaster's role interested him. During the first fortnight he gave me a lesson with religious regularity. To the merriment of all of us, he would often greet me on my arrival with the words, "Hindi, Hindi". He wished me to devote my spare time, even at home, to Hindi and said that in due course he would want me to render an account of how I spent my time outside my working hours. "Bapu," I said, "my hours here are long in all conscience and when I go home, I want sometimes the satisfaction of doing nothing." Then, in an accommodating spirit, he exempted me from home task though for my own pleasure and profit I sometimes kept reading out his soul-stirring prayer speeches to family gatherings at home.

No mistake escaped his scrutiny. In a few days I proudly displayed my first Hindi letter addressed to Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru, hoping that it would draw a compliment from him, for teacher and pupil alike, but he was not a man to be pleased with anything short of perfection. He pointed out a bad mistake in the first line, addressing her as वेन instead of वेन. Slow and sure, he said, was better than quick and uncertain. I remarked that I was an erring child and he a strict schoolmaster.

Bapu laid inordinate emphasis on my hand-writing, maybe, because his own was none too good. He would give minute instructions as to how to improve it. For instance, he would say that I must draw an angle of 45° in the curve of न. He wanted me to emulate the printed words and write as well. When I pleaded my inability, he said that no amount of difficulties should deter us from striving for an ideal. He recalled the instances of Lucy in the Second English Reader who tried again and again till she reached her goal, and of Demosthenes who, once a stammerer, practised the art of speech, with pebbles in his mouth, before the rivers and in the end distinguished himself as the greatest orator of his age. I claimed that my hand-writing was at least better than his, which I likened to Chinese figures. Yes, I thought, but that was the only distinction between them and his hand-writing!

These Hindi lessons with Bapu were a source of unmixed delight to me, and as I found, of some

relaxation to him. Always conducted in good humour, they served to establish a close personal link between us. Even when he embarked on his fast, he wished to continue his tuition work. For once, however, I was adamant and said, "Bapu, you must now conserve every ounce of your energy. Pandit Sunderlal has agreed to officiate for you." "But he does not know how to teach," said Bapu with a faint smile. The Pandit intervened with the apt remark that he would learn to teach and Bapu then obligingly consented, insisting that he must have reports on my progress from time to time. Even on the fifth day of his fast, when his condition was causing anxiety, he asked me how I had been progressing and looked happy when I said that I was doing well.

How wonderful and homely Bapu was! The greatest man of the age had descended to the level of a Hindi tutor to an insignificant child. Verily, nothing was too big—nothing too small for Bapu.

New Delhi, 16-2-'48

P. B. CHANDWANI

THE MASTER AT WORK

On the morning of the 29th January I reached my place of work in Birla House—a little late and afraid of Bapu's displeasure hid myself and straightaway started the day's work as if nothing had happened. At 2-30 p. m. Bapu saw his engagement list and said that I could bring an American lady press correspondent whose name was down for an interview at the time. She introduced herself as the "Torturer"—a title Bapu had banteringly conferred on her earlier in Bengal. She discussed with him the doctrine of trusteeship. Bapu had once said that the rich should be trustees for the poor. How did he define a trustee? "A trustee is one who discharges the obligations of his trust faithfully and in the best interests of his wards," replied Bapu. Did he know of any industrialist who lived up to that ideal? No, though some were striving in that direction, his host, Shri G. D. Birla, for instance. "I hope he is not deceiving me. If I saw him do so, I would not live under his roof." Did he still cherish the wish and hope to live the full span of life? He had lost that wish, he said, in view of the prevailing darkness. He was, however, groping for light. If things took a turn for the better and the people responded to his call and co-operated to usher in a new era of peace and amity, he would again wish—indeed, he would be "commanded" to wish to live the full span.

"Would you advise America to give up the manufacture of atom bombs?" she finally asked. "Most certainly," replied Gandhiji. "As things are, the war ended disastrously and the victors are vanquished by jealousy and lust for power. Already a third war is being canvassed, which may prove even more disastrous. *Ahimsa* is a mightier weapon by far than the atom bomb. Even if the people of Hiroshima could have died in their thousands with prayer and goodwill in their hearts, the situation would have been transformed as if by a miracle."

At this stage Bapu saw that his interviewer Miss Margaret's time was up but she cleverly

presented some portraits taken by her for his autograph and thus stole a couple of minutes more to complete her string of questions.

Then came the turn of another American lady, the General Secretary of the World Headquarters of the Y. W. C. A. in Switzerland. She asked Bapu what America with her interest in India and her wellbeing could do for India. Gandhiji said that American visitors should endeavour to see India through Indian spectacles. They could go round and offer friendly and constructive criticism but to describe its dirty spots as India would be a caricature. Here Bapu recalled the instance of Emily Kinnaird, who had invited herself to be G.'s guest in Bombay. She was content with the vegetarian food and modest comforts she could get and always insisted on walking with him to the prayer ground. Till the moment of her death, she continued to write long and delightful letters to Bapu, pouring out her heart and spirit.

Asked what foreign missions could do in the new set-up for Indian Christians or Christian Indians as they would now like to be called, Bapu replied that the best course would be to leave them to their own resources, to help them settle down as sons of the soil.

Later I saw a deputation of the blind having just finished their interview with Bapu. They were refugees from Pakistan and among them I recognized my dear old friend, Shri Bodharaj, the Head Master of the Government Blind School at Lahore. I spoke to them and saw them visibly moved and comforted by Bapu's sympathy. To him verily all are alike, if anything, he is partial to the poor and the blind.

The evening prayer over, I sat down, as was my wont, to collect my points and record the post-prayer speech in English. Somehow this process took an unconscionably long time on Thursday and Bapu complained that it was getting late for him. It was past 8 p. m. when I started preparing the fair copy for Bapu. He went to the bath-room where, sitting on the commode, he read a few pages as they were ready. On his return I marked that he had not only touched up the draft but numbered the pages. Such close attention to details only enhanced his greatness—in fact nothing was too big and nothing too small for him. While I was still completing the fair copy, Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru, after a few minutes with him, came up to my table and I rose to greet her and exchange a few words with her. Bapu rated me for it and said that I had no pity on him. "Bapu," I replied, "you know I am myself anxious to go home without wasting a minute." "But you have already wasted more than a minute," rejoined Bapu. "You should not allow yourself to be thus interrupted in your work." Walking home at that late hour at night, I felt that working under Bapu the discipline was stricter than I had ever known or might be able to endure.

On the ill-fated Friday, however, as I sat not far from him, doing my work and stealing occasional glances at him, I was so buoyed up by his

kingly presence that I rebuked myself for my occasional peevishness. Earlier he had told me that he would teach me many new things, a *bhanga*'s work among them. This lesson seemed intolerably disagreeable for me to learn and as the plan of a visit to Sevagram began to mature, I fought shy of accompanying him. But today he seemed so grand and majestic—indeed so handsome—that a look at him conquered me and I strove to reconcile myself to the prospect of being initiated into the noble art of scavenging at Sevagram.

My daily work involved going through a pile of newspapers to give him in a few minutes at his convenience the gist of things that really mattered. So on Friday he vouchsafed to me just four minutes for this purpose and I hurried through the job, giving him also the substance of a few Sindhi letters addressed to him. Other matters simultaneously claimed his attention and I was wondering whether he was at all listening to me. To my surprise, however, when Dr. Choithram Gidwani led a Sindhi deputation at 2-30 p. m. Bapu was able to recall, almost word by word, the contents of one letter as related to him. It seemed to be a feat of memory, which men half his age would envy.

The deputation narrated the woes of Sindhis and spoke of the vexatious restrictions imposed by the Government on their evacuation. Bapu said in an exceedingly tender voice that all this had distressed him beyond measure. Outwardly he seemed light and happy but his heart was smitten with grief at the wave of insanity which was sweeping over the land. Either this must end or he must perish. Superficial critics have accused Gandhiji of partiality towards the Muslims and even of indifference to the lot of the Hindu and Sikh refugees. But his approach to such problems and his ways of life and thought are unique. In fact with his all-embracing, broad vision and intense humanity he has so identified himself with his fellowmen as to feel our sufferings and carry our burdens as his own.

At this interview he also referred, in a lighter vein, to the advice offered to him by a refugee to retire to the Himalayas. Chuckling with laughter he observed that nothing would be better in one sense: he would develop into a double *Mhatma* and attract larger crowds. But what he wanted was not vain glory or ease but such comfort and strength as he could extract out of the prevailing darkness and misery.

We went to the prayer ground soon after 5 p. m. The tragedy that followed in a few minutes has been graphically described in Shri Pyarelalji's *The Fateful Friday*. The next day as I touched the holy feet at the pyre, I prayed to make us all worthy of our beloved Master and to give us the purity of purpose and strength of will to carry out his mission on earth. And with every spurt of the sacred flames I prayed again and again that while consuming his mortal remains they might also burn out all the impurities and any lingering ill-will from our hearts.

New Delhi, 9-2-'48

P. B. CHANDWANI

LEST WE FORGET

II
DEATH AND REBIRTH

(a)

Before we become a nation possessing an effective voice in the councils of nations, we must be prepared to contemplate with equanimity, not a thousand murders of innocent men and women but many thousands. Only then can we attain a status in the world that shall not be surpassed by any other nation.

(b)

The self-sacrifice of one innocent man is a million times more potent than the self-sacrifice of a million men who die in the act of killing others.

(c)

I hope there will be non-violent non-co-operators enough in India of whom it will be written: 'They suffered bullets without anger and with prayer on their lips even for the ignorant murderer.'

(d)

I am not aching for martyrdom but if it comes in my way in the prosecution of what I consider to be the supreme duty in the defence of the faith of love, I shall have earned it.

(e)

I do not want to be reborn. But if I have to be reborn, I should be born an untouchable so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings and the affronts levelled at them in order that I may endeavour to free myself and them from that miserable condition.

III

'MY STATUE!'

(a)

I MUST DISSENT EMPHATICALLY FROM ANY PROPOSAL TO SPEND ANY MONEY ON PREPARING A STATUE OF ME, ESPECIALLY AT A TIME WHEN PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH FOOD AND CLOTHING. IN BOMBAY THE BEAUTIFUL, INSANITATION REIGNS. THERE IS SO MUCH OVERCROWDING THAT POOR PEOPLE ARE PACKED LIKE SARDINES. WISE USE OF TEN LAKHS OF RUPEES WILL CONSIST IN ITS BEING SPENT ON SOME PUBLIC UTILITY. THAT WOULD BE THE BEST STATUE.

(*Harijan*, XI-34, p. 329, 21 September, 1947.)

(b)

It is blasphemy to talk of such a man as dead. The permanent essence of him abides with us for ever. Let us erect for the only Lokamanya of India an *imperishable monument* by weaving into our own lives his bravery, his simplicity, his wonderful industry and his love of his country (1976).

[The italics are mine. V. G. D.]

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NO MORE SORROWING

Friends from far and near, who have been close associates and workers of Gandhiji in the various constructive measures which were part of his life's mission; have been writing to me letters of extreme pathos and sorrow. They seem to feel bewildered and helpless at the sudden tragedy which seems to have overwhelmed them. While I sincerely appreciate the depth of their feeling and the extent of their dejection, I should like to ask them to face the blow in the manner in which Gandhiji's teachings and his own attitude towards personal and national misfortunes in the past beckon to us. If they viewed the matter in this light, they would find that any prolonged nursing of sorrow or continued feeling of demoralization is entirely out of place.

The nation has seen through the thirteen days of the mourning with exemplary discipline and sustained concentration. This is as was to be expected. At the same time, the end of the period of mourning unmistakably signifies to us the crying need of settling down immediately to the many constructive tasks which Gandhiji had made his own, and which it is our sacred obligation to continue, alas! no longer under his personal guidance, but still under the inspiration of his teachings and the wise counsel which he always gave us when he was living. The path of duty, therefore, lies in ceasing to reflect over our loss or to nurse our grief, but to undertake with renewed vigour and enthusiasm the completion of the constructive work which Gandhiji has left unfulfilled, but which, I am confident, he would have liked us to pursue with single-minded devotion and undivided attention. I hope, therefore, that these kind friends would heed my advice and take up anew the threads of the work where they left, completely overpowered by the shattering blow which they had to bear.

I also deplore with all the emphasis at my command the many attempts that are being made to raise temples or erect memorials which would savour of idolatry. I am sure nothing would have displeased Gandhiji more than these attempts. He has often expressed his views on such matters in no uncertain terms. I would, therefore, request those who contemplate taking any of these steps or embarking on any similar undertakings to desist from carrying out their intentions. The surest and most pleasing memorial to Gandhiji is to follow his inimitable teachings and to devote oneself to the constructive ideas which he preached and practised. It is only thus that we can really enshrine Gandhiji in our hearts and after all where we shall all like him to be, always.

14-2-'48

VALLABHBHAI PATEL

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