

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

NOT SERIOUSLY MEANT ?

I have received letters and articles from educationists of several years' standing referring to my articles on the Medium of Education at the university stage and on Secondary Education. They have found fault with me not for writing what I have done but for not writing sufficiently strongly on these matters.

On the question of Medium of University Education they say that I congratulated the Dr. Tarachand Committee for a step which was forced upon it and not taken by it, inasmuch as the Committee was expressly told by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad that the Government had decided that English was to remain the medium of education for five years only and that the question to be decided by it was whether thereafter education should be imparted through the federal language or through the regional languages. Thus the Committee had no choice left to depart from the five year period. But it is alleged, the Committee did not see eye to eye with the Maulana Saheb's policy, and what they have done is to do their best to frustrate that policy so that at the end of five years Government should be compelled to allow a further period for the English medium. If the Committee had accepted the Maulana Saheb's direction heartily, it could not have, with any show of reason, proposed that English should be exclusively the medium of instruction and examination for five years. It should have, as critics say, seen what I have suggested, namely, that they must make the beginning of imparting education through Indian languages from the very next year or at the latest after two, in the First Year classes. But they have simply recommended that they should make preparations for the change during the next five years. How will they do it? Is it possible that, if they do not begin teaching through an Indian language from an earlier period, it would be possible for them at once to take the final year students of the year 1953, to classes where lectures were given in Indian languages? If the intention is that after five years they will begin from the First Year class and then proceed year after year to a higher class, it means that they are making preparations for making out a case for extension of the English medium for a further period of five years.

I confess I did not read this meaning, as they say, "between the lines". I am unwilling to entertain the suspicion that the Tarachand Committee's

resolution was not intended to be seriously carried out, though I saw some defects in it and also propaganda in the Press by educationists who are unwilling to give up English and who feel nervous about the results ensuing from the abandonment of that language as the medium of education. They almost think that India will revert to the dark ages the moment it gives up the English medium. Some of them think that India will cease to be one if English was given up. They also seem to have curious notions about the development of a language. They seem to think that a language has to be first developed in a lexicographer's or philologist's library before it can bring out respectable literature or deal with technical subjects of Science or Law. They do not seem to have an adequate idea of the contribution, which peasants, labourers, artisans, petty traders etc. make in coining technical terms and enriching the vocabulary. They forget that language develops with actual use and the necessity to use it. They do not realize that education could be given in the mother-tongue or the national language although the actual text-books to be read as also the technical terms to be used for the time being are either English or English and Indian both.

I would like to place before them the experience of the Gujarat Vidyapith in this connection. Though the experiments were of short duration and the workers were only a handful, and though it too suffered from not having all its professors earnest enough to teach through an Indian language so that English persisted in some of the subjects, yet the progress it made was fully satisfactory. During the few years of its active working, one professor published a translation of a text-book on Economics. Though that book was not original, it laid the foundation of thinking on economic subjects in the mother-tongue, with the result that we have now an original text-book on Economics by Shri Narahari Parikh. May be, as is the case with books written in Europe, this book will be considered as representative of one particular school of Economists. But it is, nevertheless, a complete text-book. Another professor, Shri R. V. Pathak produced an original book on Logic and a third on Advanced Accounting. There were also good books on Commercial Geography and Statistics, and original works on Education, Philosophy, etc. Some of these books are prescribed as text-books by the Bombay University and the Education Department. The Gujarat Vidyapith also produced, besides its popular dictionaries of the Gujarati and Hindustani Languages, glossaries of

technical terms on Physics, Chemistry, Economics, Mathematics and some other subjects. Without the knowledge of English, Muni Jinavijayaji, Pandit Sukhalalji and Pandit Becharadas edited works in the Prakrit language. Some of these received high encomiums from scholars in Germany and England. The late Professor Dharmanand Kosambi who had lived in U. S. A. and Russia, and knew both English and Russian, never thought that he could not deliver his best lectures on Buddhism in Hindi or Marathi. The Constitution of the Gujarat Vidyapith was drafted originally in Gujarati and its wording has not raised any difficulty in its interpretation.

I confess that during that period, most of us held views about the coining of technical terms similar to what several protagonists of Indian languages hold today, namely, of coining as far as possible Gujarati or Sanskrit words for even international and current foreign words. Consequently, some of these books were couched in new technical terms. We have revised our opinions since and come to hold that in the best interests of the nation, the rejection of every foreign word was advantageous neither to the growth and enrichment of our own language, nor to our people, nor to the cause of education. So our attitude towards foreign words has become more liberal than what it was about 25 years ago.

We have grown to these opinions by experience. And so, when I say that the introduction of an Indian language as medium of instruction at any stage whatsoever is not an unsurmountably difficult task, I say so with a degree of confidence. I believe that the professors and teachers of the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapith and the Kashi Vidyapith will fully support my propositions from their own experience. The contribution of the professors of these Vidyapiths in the shape of excellent text-books in their respective languages is by no means mean. All that is wanted is the will. Given that, within a few months, the professors and teachers, unless they themselves had not merely crammed their prescribed text-books, would find that teaching in their own tongue was the easiest and the most natural way and that the want of text-books and of ready-made technical terms was not, after all, so great a handicap, as they think it to be. Apart from the fact that perhaps more books are already available in the various Indian languages, than the learned professors are aware of, and that at any rate there are sufficient books for making a beginning, I submit that until you begin actually to teach through your own languages, you will never be able to produce good text-books, whether original or translated.

I wish to warn the authorities ruling the various universities and the Governments concerned that they would be doing the greatest harm to the people and to their own reputation if they thought of deceiving the nation by resolutions which they did not mean to work out.

The question of Secondary Education I shall deal with next week.

Wardha, 21-6-48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

DIFFICULT TO PLEASE ALL

When I adopted Shri B. F. Bharucha's suggestion to inscribe the words, "Founded by Mahatma Gandhi" on the title-page of these papers, little did I realize that I was inviting a flood of letters with advices and rebukes not mutually reconcilable. Here are a few samples:

"Change 'Mahatma Gandhi' into 'Mahatma Gandhiji', as the former is not sufficiently reverent."

"Drop the word 'Mahatma' and say simply 'Gandhiji', as the title was distasteful to our dear Bapuji."

"Put a photo of Gandhiji along with the name."

"Drop the words 'Mahatma Gandhi'. Simply place his photo underneath the words 'Founded by'."

"Drop the words altogether, and instead put an outline map of India on the title-page, with a miniature photo of Gandhiji in its heart to symbolize his relationship with India."

"Drop these superfluous words. India has not forgotten and will not forget that these papers were founded by Gandhiji."

"Give up this trick of exploiting Gandhiji's name to attract customers for your papers. Instead of it, make them more deserving by printing old or unpublished writings of Gandhiji, also anecdotes about and tributes to Gandhiji. Give of and speak about Gandhiji more than other subjects."

"Do not make *Harijan* an organ of writers like yourself, and do not fill it all with Vinoba. It is the duty of Gandhiji's nearer companions like Pyarelal, Sushila Nayyar, Kumarappa, Rajkumari and others to contribute more frequently to it, even if they are busy with other activities. They owe this to Gandhiji and the readers of *Harijan*."

"Give a decent saying of Gandhiji instead of these permanently printed words every week."

These suggestions remind me of the story in Aesop's Fables of the father and the son who lost their animal in trying to please every adviser who met them on the way.

I accepted Shri B. F. Bharucha's suggestion as a pertinent and innocent statement of fact. These simple words may not now be removed. It is unnecessary to give a photo. I regret that it should have occurred to any one to insinuate an ulterior motive in this simple act. I am rather over-conscious of my limitations than is good for my mission, my usefulness to the people, or my personal growth. I am fully aware that *Harijan* will not thrive, if it does not deserve to, even by reprints of Gandhiji's articles and by printing anecdotes about and tributes to him; nor by the mere writings of his nearest companions; if the papers do not supply a present necessity in our life; far less will it thrive by the mere printing of the four words under the title. This is not to suggest that the various suggestions have no worth. All those named as also myself will surely take appropriate note of the suggestions. But it is impossible for me to promise that I shall be able to please every one. I wish to please the readers, but it

would be as a bye-product. My first concern will be to serve the cause of Truth, Non-violence and Restraint, and to serve the people, even at the risk of displeasing them at times. If God wills, He will allow me to work. Otherwise, let His will be done, not mine.

Wardha, 17-6-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

SHRI VINOBA AT AJMER-III

(6)

11-5-'48

SINDHI REFUGEES

Addressing the prayer-meeting Shri Vinoba said that he had been moving among the refugees for the last two days. They had lost everything in Pakistan. Some arrangements had been made for them, but they were unhappy still, and Shri Vinoba believed that their unhappiness was real. They complained that the local people did not show that sympathy towards them which they had shown in the beginning. He would request the people of Ajmer to have larger hearts. In order to understand the feelings and inconveniences of others, one must look upon them from the point of view of those persons, that is, in the case before them, from the Sindhis' point of view. Though they could not keep the Sindhis in their former prosperous style, they should at least be able to get the sympathy and the goodwill of the people. Even sympathy and goodwill gave consolation to a person in difficulty, even if the difficulty itself could not be fully removed.

He also wanted to say a few words to the Sindhis. Having regard to their large numbers, they should understand that it was no easy matter for the people of Ajmer to give them complete satisfaction. They, too, had their own difficulties. A refugee had told him that there was no reason why the people of Ajmer should find it difficult to accommodate them, because several Muslims had left Ajmer and they, the Sindhis, had taken their place. Shri Vinoba agreed that while some people had arrived others had left. But they both together did not solve the problem, but rather rendered it more difficult; because those who had left were artisans and labourers and those who had arrived were businessmen. The result was that those who were needed in Ajmer had left and those who were not wanted had come in, thus making the problem doubly complicated. The only way to solve that difficulty was that the refugees should be prepared and have the courage to become artisans. Then only could they live there with happiness. A person was received as a guest if he stayed for a couple of days only. If he looked to become a permanent member of the family, he would be expected to take part in the household work and management. If he did not do so, the host would lose the enthusiasm to keep him. Shri Vinoba was aware that amongst the refugees there were some who were aged and had during their whole life done nothing except trade. It was necessary that they should get some business-occupation; but they could get it if, instead of insisting on living together in one place, they distributed themselves in several towns and cities. Those who were still young, he would advise to turn artisans and be prepared to do physical labour.

Shri Vinoba added that he did not give his advice to the Sindhis only. It was a problem for the whole of India. If young men did not have faith in doing honest labour and be themselves producers of articles of necessity, but looked only to commerce and services, India would never be free from economic unrest and disturbances, both of which were perhaps increasing every day. Some day the disturbances might appear as Hindu-Muslim riots, but on another day they might take the form of Sindhi-Marwari riots or something else. Though the forms might vary, the main problem remained the same, viz. that the poor people who were burdened with the obligation of producing goods and becoming objects of exploitation, did not have even a full feed, while others who did not take any part in the actual production of goods, not only had more to eat but even aspired to live a life of ease and also to lay by something for the future. India was a great land whose population was already 30 crores and was ever increasing. There was hardly an acre of agricultural land per head. If, therefore, the people did not simultaneously grow in bodily labour and productive industries, they could never be happy. It was said that there was happiness in heaven; that they could ride there in palanquins. Shri Vinoba said, he had no love for such happiness. He did not want a heaven in which one sat in a palanquin carried by others. He wanted a heaven where every man walked on his own legs, worked with his own hands, rode on the shoulders of nobody else and took the fruits of nobody else's labour. The Vedic sages had said, कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेत् शतं समाः । (Aspire to live a hundred years by performing actions in this manner). It meant that he alone was entitled to live, who worked. He, who had no faith in labour and pursued pleasures, became entitled to death. Some people were short-lived because of extreme poverty and overwork; some were short-lived because of indigestion caused by a life of idleness and ease. The condition did not show a good social order. God had given man hands to work with and the intellect to guide him in that work. Each one must use both the gifts if India was to be happy. Otherwise, the problems which would arise in future would be so great as to make the present refugee problem quite a minor one. He prayed to God to save us and give proper guidance.

D. D.

Inter-Communal Marriages

1. Shri Vrindavan Chandra (*Brahmana*), a khadi and village worker of Orissa since 1937, with Shrimati Saraswati Devi (*Harijan*) of Shri Gopabandhu Chaudhari's Sevaghar at Bari-Cuttuck in Orissa, on 17-6-'48.

2. Shri Gaurshyam Samantaraj (*Kshatriya*) of the Jivram Khadi Vidyalay at Bhadrak (Orissa), with Shrimati Sitamani (*Brahmana*), daughter of Shri Kripasindhu of Talpada (Orissa) on 12-6-'48.

3. Shri Indravadan Thakore (Hindu), Editor of the *Prajabandhu*, Ahmedabad, with Shri Khurshed Medora (Parsi) also of Ahmedabad.

Wardha, 18-6-'48

K. G. M.

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CONGRESS IN OFFICE AND OUTSIDE

I notice on all sides that relations between the Congress in Government Offices and institutions and those outside them are far from cordial. So are also the relations between those holding offices in Congress Committees and those who are outside of them. Each section is jealous of the two others.

Then there are also two other classes of Congressmen who are outside these all; one, of persons who have served the Congress during their younger days with earnest devotion and loyalty in order to achieve the goal of independence and the establishment of a just and pure administration. The attainment of independence has, instead of bringing them joy and peace, made them dejected and unhappy, because they feel that the great Congress institution which they helped to build up and grow strong had failed the people on the attainment of power and, by reason of internal demoralization, is not fulfilling those noble ideals which it had proclaimed before. They witness with sorrowful eyes that the Congress organization has become a handy tool for achieving selfish ends and consolidating powerful political groups. They themselves have ceased to be active workers, but cannot rest in peace while they see corrupt practices rampant on all sides. The second class is the ordinary citizen. He is not interested in this or that party or group. What he desires is good Government—courteous behaviour, speedy disposal of people's applications, and an administration which is uncorrupt and so ordered as to enhance the convenience of the people. Not only does he not see any improvement in these matters, he feels that the matters are getting from bad to worse. There are some people whom no amount of money could buy; but there are less of those on whom no amount of influence could work. May be that Government heads have good excuses for explaining these drawbacks. But that is no consolation to the people who remain unsatisfied. The result is that the name of the Congress is daily getting unpopular among the people.

I think that the main situation is recognized by all to be so. My purpose in mentioning the fact is to seek the reasons for this regrettable state of affairs and find a solution for it.

Some of the main reasons for jealousy between the Congress in office and the Congress in Committees are to my mind the following:

The holding of office has become less a burden to the holder than a source of profit—both monetary as well as prestigial. Every place in a Government institution or officially appointed committee brings to the holder some allowance, salary, power of conferring benefit upon others, making appointments, or getting others to do something

for himself which he could not have got done otherwise. The duties which he has to perform are comparatively light; and, curiously enough, where the responsibilities are great and serious, the manner of appointments followed even in the Congress Governments is, in spite of its ideals to the contrary, on the principle of caste and communal representation. Thus, in the issue of tickets to candidates, appointments of ministers, even appointments of small temporary committees, everyone thinks in terms of a person from this community or region and a person from that community or region rather than in terms of a person of this capacity and a person of that capacity. This is so because party consolidation demands it and because every place is a 'job'. The result is that only a few are free from eagerness to obtain some office. And since the number of offices though ever increasing is still not as great as the number of people who expect them; those who are left out become a disgruntled body. Disappointed in getting office, they try to secure it in the executive bodies of the Congress Committees and to make these bodies work as rival institutions to the Congress in office. Thus a sort of diarchy has been brought into existence. The Congress Committees want to control the Congress in office and the latter want to preserve its own position and power against the former.

Thus the Congress Committees are also seats of power, and so every man with a political ambition wants to be on these Committees. But there too the number of aspirants is far greater than the places to be filled up and so come into existence various groups within the Congress. These groups are formed not on differences of ideology or approach, but on personal loyalty to one or other rival leaders. The former grouping has been expressly prohibited under the new constitution, leading to secession of the Socialists. So the only different types of groups that are possible are those around particular persons. In any case, the Congress is unable to present itself before the people as a united, self-disciplined body. Everywhere there is a group in opposition to the group in power, and the opposition between the two is not less bitter or critical mutually than between rival political parties formed on difference of principles. Perhaps it is worse. Because, the only thing that they do is to lower the prestige of the Congress itself in the eyes of the public by carrying on propaganda of a personal nature against their rivals. Both groups are mostly composed of the same type of people and resort to similar methods to displace the other. The group in power vainly tries to destroy the other by resorting to disciplinary action whenever it can get an opportunity to do so. No institution can have a healthy growth under such circumstances; and if the Congress would keep its past glory and add to it, it is very essential to have group politics absolutely extinguished from its body. When parties are formed by rival leaders claiming allegiance to common principles and still fighting among themselves, they not only do disservice to the people

but ultimately kill the institution to which they belong. I regret to say that I find that in several provinces this is actually taking place. Congressmen must realize and take serious notice of the fact that with the rising generation, i. e. with those who are in the latter teens and in twenties, an opinion has been gaining ground that the Congress is becoming ineffective and is not worthy enough for a young man to belong to. Unless the Congress purifies itself, it will dwindle into a body of persons almost in the pay of a few influential persons. It might be able to retain power for a time because of the great respect which the whole nation, including the young men, has for some of the top ranking leaders like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Shri C. Rajagopalachari etc. But, then, Congress will shine with a lustre borrowed from her children instead of making her children shine with a lustre received from hers. This power will not last long, and once the Congress is thrown out, it may never be able to get strong again.

The necessity of raising the morale of the Congress and making it an institution of service and self-sacrifice is greater than that of making it the ruler of the country. If it is to exist as an institution for the good of the people, it must be capable of attracting to itself the best elements among the youth of the country, those fired with high ideals and spirit of service. It was not the expectation of power that those who are 55 and more now joined the Congress movement under the leadership of Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendra Nath Bannerji, Lokamanya Tilak or Gandhiji, between 1903 and 1918. They joined it when it was unsafe to belong to it; when to belong to it meant some loss or sacrifice or personal dedication. The Congress must not lose that virtue even when it is vested with power.

If to become a Congressman was risky in 1905 to '42, it should be still more risky to be so when it governs India. The risk should be of the type exemplified in England in the career of Dr. Hugh Dalton. A slight dereliction, even unintentional, should mean dismissal of the most needed man in the Government.

But this does not exhaust the reasons contributing to the deterioration of the Congress. There are others also which are perhaps of a deeper origin and may well be the cause of the causes mentioned here.

I shall speak of them next week.

Wardha, 14-6-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

Sanskrit Journals

The undersigned will feel obliged if any reader will inform him if there are in India at present published any journals in Sanskrit, and if so, which and where. Some years ago he had seen a few numbers of a weekly published from Benares called *Sanskritam*. He would like to see a few specimen numbers of it, if available.

Wardha, 24-6-'48

K. G. M.

MOTHER TONGUES v. NATIONAL LANGUAGE

All are agreed that the natural and true medium of instruction for a child is its mother-tongue and that it should be the medium at least up to the end of the High School course. The opinion appears to divide itself at the University stage.

Thanks to Gandhiji's unique effort it has been now agreed that English has to go, as the medium. It only persists as a relic of the past and as the sign of our unpreparedness to change it immediately. But what should replace it? The question demands quick and clear reply.

There are mainly two schools on this question— (1) the mother-tongue school and (2) the national language school. The mother-tongue school maintains that universities for various regions of Free India are being contemplated and planned. As a matter of fact, regions themselves are newly taking shape, and a new map of India is emerging under the stress of the great Gandhian Revolution of our generation. All hope and try to evolve such regions as are linguistically at least one unit. Therefore, it is more proper to say that not *regional* but *linguistic* universities are being planned for. They have to decide their medium of instruction, as the politicians have to decide the formation of linguistic provinces. Nobody can refuse to admit that linguistic provinces and regional universities are vitally inter-linked; and they may be mutually helpful each in its own way. But should they be co-extensive? Should a province be only on a linguistic basis? What about multi-lingual provinces then? The question is, no doubt, fraught with great complexity and many vital dangers. But that is more political and administrative. It must not confuse us on the educational side. We must boldly restore to our great regional languages the status which is naturally theirs.

The second, viz. the national language school says that at the university stage the medium may better be the *Lingua Indica* Hindustani. It will ensure national unity, facilitate better supply of able professoriate, a broader field for its choice, and easy migration to students from one province to another. They fear that though the natural and scientifically true medium is the mother-tongue, like the separate communal electorate, it might breed linguistic disruption.

Is this fear well founded? Again, are they all agreed on the question of the National Language? Is not that question itself a matter of communal and cultural disruption among them? Also, is it at all a practical proposition to adopt Hindustani immediately as the medium for the universities, at least outside the Hindustani areas? Comparatively speaking, are not the provincial languages better equipped today than Hindustani? These are some of the questions that face the second school and its stand. And it cannot answer them without compromising itself and its position. But I must leave out this point here.

The crux of the problem is really deeper than the plane from which it is discussed. The real difficulty is that we are taken unawares in this field too, as in so many others of our national life. We are not prepared to execute this reform of the mother-tongue medium, much more so for Hindustani. Therefore, the supporter of Hindustani simply harps on the fear of disruption without making any preparation for executing his idea; and the supporter of the mother-tongue also piously proclaims his belief, but as it were, helplessly succumbs to the existing—viz. English; and it seems without remorse. He also does not work for executing his idea. The result is that English persists and nobody seems to be sorry for it.

How then can we proceed with our linguistic universities? What should we do to arrange the transition from English to the provincial languages? What should be the line of work during this interim period of transition from English to the mother-tongue? The Father of the Nation, the seer that he was, foresaw this all and gave us the surest way out of the difficulty. He said:

"There seems to be mania for establishing new universities. . . . I do believe that there should be such universities if these rich provincial languages and the people who speak them are to attain their full height.

"At the same time I fear that we betray ourselves into undue haste in accomplishing the object. The first step should be linguistic political redistribution of provinces. The separate administration will naturally lead to the establishment of universities where there are none.

"There should be a proper background for new universities. They should have feeders in the shape of schools and colleges which will impart instruction through the medium of their respective provincial languages. Then only can there be a proper milieu. University is at the top. A majestic top can only be sustained if there is a sound foundation".

—*Harijan*, 2-11-'47

And as he says further on, let us not run for "a pile of majestic buildings and treasures of gold and silver," which is not what makes a university, but sit down to do what is first first. We have to devise a new pattern of a university for free India. One of the chief things to do for it is at least to work out the change-over from English to the mother-tongue. It requires planned approach and solid work. This is not going to rain upon us from heavens. The existing universities should begin to work for it. We must be frank to ourselves that any quick and revolutionary change from the existing is not possible. For that "it should have a large reservoir of teachers to draw upon" which we do not possess. Without that the new universities, in spite of our best intentions in the world, are bound to be mere poor replica of the existing on a smaller regional basis. How are we to get necessary teachers, necessary text-books in the regional languages? It is no use going on debating over the medium question. That stage is past. The

existing universities must begin to change the medium of their instruction and examination from whichever point they can. And the new universities, if at all they come into being, cannot do so and have no justification for it, unless they promise to work through the mother-tongue and not English. Let it be remembered that the existing universities are what they are because of the one thing, the introduction of English as the medium of instruction by the English in 1858. The change sought to be made by Free India is to be visualized in that background. It means freeing the soul of our people from the baneful dead weight of a medium foreign in almost all senses of the word.

Ahmedabad, 4-5-'48

MAGANBHAI DESAI

SANSKRIT THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE FOR INDIA

The subject of a national language of India has for many years been the subject of intense public debate and will soon come up for final decision before the Constituent Assembly. In view of its vital importance to the welfare of the Indian people, widest discussion is to be welcomed. In December last, addressing the session of the Inter-University Board, I suggested that Sanskrit might be suitable for use as our national language. That suggestion had a mixed reception and by those not favourably disposed, it was said that it was a dead language and it would be difficult to learn. I note, however, that Shri Vinoba Bhave, speaking last month before the New Delhi Ladies Club (vide *Harijan* dated the 16th May, 1948), recognized that in the olden days Sanskrit had been the medium of inter-provincial intercourse in India, and he very rightly referred to the great example of Shankaracharya in this connection. Shri Vinoba, however, expressed the opinion that "the work amongst the masses could not be done through Sanskrit, so the only language which should become the national language was Hindustani". In the same number of the *Harijan* is published the appeal addressed by the Maharashtra Rashtra Bhasha Sabha to the Constituent Assembly with comments thereupon by the editor. It seems to me that in this discussion insufficient attention is paid to one particular aspect of the matter which is of crucial importance, and that is the role which we want to assign to our national language. If it is merely intended that the national language should be that language which should be used by the Central Government in its Secretariat and in its official correspondence with the units of the Federation and also, if possible, in the Central Legislature and the Central Supreme Court of Justice, then of course the problem is very much simplified. Any particular language may be chosen for this purpose. Any person desirous of entering the service of or having any business relations with the Central Government, would make himself familiar with that language, and I presume that in all units of the Federation arrangements would be made to carry on correspondence with the Central

Government in that particular language. I say so because it is noticeable that throughout all this public discussion opinion seems to be unanimous that the Provincial or regional languages should be encouraged to the utmost, and should form not only the medium of instruction in the schools and colleges but should also be the official language in the Provincial Legislatures, Law Courts, and Administrative Departments. With this development of regional languages, the growth and development side by side of a national language which should be commonly understood and spoken throughout the length and breadth of India, would be a very difficult proposition. Every language not only requires preliminary acquisition but also habitual usage for its mastery. My experience in Orissa convinces me that unless and until the national language is either effectively imposed upon the people in every unit of the Federation, just as English was imposed throughout the country in every province by the British rulers, or is a language which makes a wide popular appeal to the Indian mass mind, it is difficult to achieve the end. Even if you teach the national language in schools, people will soon forget it for want of usage. The currency of English language even in a very limited circle in India has been induced by its continuous usage in official circles, and domestic life in every province and it is continuously propagated through a strong English press and platform. Do we or do we not desire our new national language to replace the English language with its usage widened a thousandfold? If we do, then the national language should be used not merely for purposes of the Central Government but should also be used effectively in the daily life of the people. Otherwise, the wide spreading of the national language will remain a mere pious hope. It is true that Hindustani is spoken widely in Northern India. It is my mother-tongue; all my predilections are in its favour. But in non-Hindustani-speaking areas, I apprehend, it does not make a popular appeal. In such areas we do not find a single newspaper published in Hindustani, nor is it used on the public platform, nor do people use it for domestic intercourse, just as English is even now used daily among the English-knowing people throughout India. Even radio broadcasts from different centres are in the local regional language. It was from this point of view that I thought that Sanskrit has a great advantage because among the vast masses of the people it is considered the traditional language of culture and it has in our past history occupied the position of a national language. It excites universal reverence. Leaving aside Tamil, almost all the provincial languages are either founded upon it or have drawn vastly upon its treasure-house of words and phrases. If you limit the national language merely for purposes of inter-provincial intercourse, Sanskrit should serve that purpose admirably. And then I go further and say that one who knows Sanskrit will find it very easy indeed to acquaint himself with most of the

provincial languages without much difficulty. It may sound a paradox, but it is nevertheless true, that knowledge of Sanskrit opens the doors wide to the knowledge of almost every provincial language in India. I am myself imperfectly acquainted with it, but I am assured by competent scholars that it would be easy to devise methods by which it can be learnt without great difficulty.

Puri, 22-5-'48

KAILAS NATH KATJU

[NOTE: Dr. Kailas Nath Katju, our Governor till now for Orissa, and hereafter for West Bengal, ponders carefully before he presents a case. When he pleads for a cause, it cannot be lightly dismissed. And, apart from the fact that Sanskrit is too weighty a language to be so dismissed, it should be a surprise if any one, who is acquainted with Sanskrit, goes to Orissa and hears the Oriyan language, does not feel Sanskrit catching him, at least for the time being. It is a peculiar feature of the Oriyan language that some of the verbal and other forms of that language are exactly the same as in classical Sanskrit. The Oriyan alphabet is also fuller than that of Hindustani and other North Indian languages. It is the same as that of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra etc. One feels nearer Sanskrit in Orissa than in any other province. I was not therefore quite surprised when shortly after taking up office in Orissa Dr. Katju became enthused with Sanskrit. But I am afraid neither enthusiasm nor religious veneration, nor love for the beautiful Sanskrit literature and its sweet accents should be allowed to blur our thinking regarding the necessities of our times in respect of the national language.]

Circumstances permitting, I shall examine the question of Sanskrit more fully in a future article. It will be sufficient here to state that all the controversies, excepting that of the Urdu script which centre round Hindustani-Hindi-Urdu, will appear in their full force with Sanskrit also. It does not solve the intricate problems of style and the coining of technical terms.

15-6-'48

—K. G. M.]

No Suspicion

To,

The Editor, *Harijan*

In your article *Language and Script Controversy* (June 20th), in referring to my apprehension resulting from relegating a subordinate position to the Urdu script, you have said that I suspect that the Maharashtra Rashtra Bhasha Sabha might have intended such result. This is unfair both to me as also to the Sabha. I attribute no motive to the Sabha. My only contention was that it did not foresee the result.

With reference to the Roman script, I would not include myself among those whom you charge with having made the subject a matter of delicate sentiment. I consider the matter objectively as standing no chance of acceptance, unless forced upon the people arbitrarily by Government. And the popular objection would be as much on grounds of reasonable sentiment as on the imperfection of the Roman script.

Maganbhai Desai

(I accept I need not have attributed suspicion to Shri Maganbhai. I regret the mistake. —K. G. M.)

PENANCE FOR FAILURES OF COMRADES

[A section from *History of Satyagrahashram*
by M. K. Gandhi]

25-4-'32

After considering the pros and cons of this subject I have come to the conclusion that under certain circumstances it is necessary to perform penance in the form of fasts etc. I believe that on the whole the Ashram has been benefited by such penances. But it must also be remembered that one must possess the qualification for undertaking a penitential fast or other observance. Any one may not go on a penitential fast at will. Whether such qualification is possessed can be decided only on the examination of the particular circumstances and the character of the person. Generally, the following conditions seem to be essential for qualifying a person to undertake a fast:

31-5-'32

(1) One who performs penance for a failing of another must have love for that person. If he has such love, but the guilty person cannot appreciate it or has adopted an inimical attitude towards him, there cannot be penance for his sake. As he regards himself as an enemy of the penance-doer, he would hate the latter. There is therefore a possibility of the fast having an effect quite contrary to that expected, or of taking the form of a kind of brute force upon him and regarded by him as a form of coercion. Moreover, if every one is supposed to be entitled to undertake penance for the failings of another without bearing any personal relation and attachment for him, there would be no end to the programme of penance. May be, such penance for the sins of the whole world might befit a Mahatma, but here we are concerned with the ordinary man.

(2) The wrong must also be related to the penance-doer. What is meant is that one should not do penance for a failing with which he is not in any way concerned. Thus, suppose A and B are friends. B is a member of the Ashram. A is altogether unconnected with the Ashram. B is guilty of a failure towards the Ashram. Under these circumstances, A has neither the obligation nor the right to undertake penance for B's fault. His interference might even complicate the situation both for the Ashram and B. He may not even possess the necessary material to decide B's guilt. By accepting B's entry into the Ashram, A must be regarded as having passed to the Ashram his responsibility, whatever it might be, for the proper conduct of B as well as for any penance for his failures.

(3) The performer of a penance for another's fault must be himself free from such fault. The saying "The pot may not call the kettle black," is applicable here.

(4) The performer of the penance must otherwise also be a man of purity and have a reputation

for it in the mind of the faulty. Penance for another presupposes purity; and if the guilty man has no respect for the performer of penance, the fast might easily have an unhealthy effect upon him.

3-6-'32

(5) The penance-doer must not be personally interested in the offence. Thus, if A has promised to pay B ten rupees, non-payment of it is a fault. Nevertheless B may not perform penance for such failure of A.

(6) The penance-doer must not have any anger in him. If a father commences a fast with anger for a fault of his son, it is not penance. There should be nothing but compassion in a penance, the object being the purification of oneself as well as of the guilty person.

(7) The wrong act must be patent, accepted as such by all and spiritually harmful, and the doer must be aware of it. There should be no penance on inferential guilt. To do so might at times result in dangerous consequences. There should be no room for doubt in regard to the fault. Moreover, one should not do penance for an act, which one regards wrong as his personal faith or opinion. It is possible that what one holds to be wrong today he might regard as innocent tomorrow. So the wrong must be such as is accepted by the society to be so. I might regard the non-wearing of *khadi* to be extremely wrong. But my companion might see nothing wrong in it, or might not magnify it as a virtue, and so might wear it indifferently or not wear it at all. If I regard this as a failure and fast for it, it is not penance but coercion. There can also be no penance where the accused person is not conscious of having committed a wrong.

The discussion of this topic is necessary for an institution in which there is no place for punishment, or which strives to perform every activity with a religious attitude. In such institutions the penance of the heads of the Ashram takes the place of penal measures. It would be impossible to keep the institution chaste otherwise. Punishment and disciplinary action might make an outer show of orderliness and progress, but it cannot take it towards internal purity. Penance would preserve it both internally and externally and make the institution firmer day by day. Hence the necessity for some such rules as those given above.

(Translated from Gujarati)

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