

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

IN THE SIXTH MONTH

After a few days (26th July according to the Indian and 30th according to the Christian calendar) it will be six months since the loss of Gandhiji. Time has flown so rapidly that to several of us it looks as if the event took place just a few days ago. But the immobility of our memory in relation to his death will not prevent time from running its course with its usual regularity. Months will be succeeded by years, and years by decades, until not a single person will be alive who was born before 30th January 1948.

I know some, and there must be many more whom I do not know, who have hardly passed a day without shedding tears and feeling miserable on account of being deprived of their dear Bapu. While some report that the appearance of the *Harijan* consoles them to a certain extent, to others it serves as a reminder of his loss and the intensifier of the grief.

But while there cannot be but sympathy for those who cannot help grieving and weeping, let us all—those who do so as also those, who, though feeling equally, are composed or hardened enough not to do so—remember that the more we love and feel for him, the more is our duty to live for him, and to atone for his death.

The Congress, Congress Governments, and Congressmen individually, the Constructive Workers and those who feel that they have a greater claim to be regarded as Gandhi-ites than others, the Brahmans and non-Brahmans, the Harijans, the Mussalmans and even the members of the Hindu Mahasabha and the R. S. S., all joined and will join again on every memory-stimulating day in paying glowing tributes to him. Poets and celebrated writers have been and will be inspired to compose beautiful pieces, which will make us feel proud of him or move us to the point of weeping.

And yet we may have done nothing to atone for his death.

Let us remember that he died and was killed because of the communalism in us. He lived and died for Hindu-Muslim Unity; he lived for the removal of untouchability; he lived for the happiness and uplift of the villagers and the seven lakhs

of villages; he lived to see that those who had more talents, or knowledge or wealth used them for the benefit of the poor and the ignorant. He lived for truth, non-violence and for peace in the world; for settlement of all disputes between man and man by not resorting to war and bloodshed, but by satyagraha and arbitration.

How far have we advanced in any of these directions? What have we done to diminish Hindu-Muslim and various intra-Hindu discords, provincial bitterness, and State disputes? How are we going to settle our differences, whether in matters of foreign and inter-State politics or inter-provincial and home politics? How are the Kashmir and the Hyderabad questions to be settled ultimately? What shall be the heart to heart relations between Pakistan and India? Will force, violence, intrigue, and diplomacy centering round power-politics be the means of settling them, or straight-forwardness, justice and the spirit of wellbeing of all? Is the UNO going to be a cabal of the Big Three or Four for power-politics, forcing smaller and weaker nations to follow them in their war programmes? Have our internal and external relations taken a turn towards friendship or more bitterness?

Our answers to these questions will indicate how we have atoned for Gandhiji's death.

My reference to high and political problems must not create the sense in the ordinary reader that I address this to the politicians. Let him remember that no politician, however good and noble, or however mischievous and ignoble, can succeed aught if he is unable to get applause and co-operation from the people. He ultimately trades upon the emotions of the credulous public. He scatters seeds of hatred among the people, and leads them to war and destruction, or sows seeds of love and understanding and gently takes them to peace and regeneration. Gandhiji was the careful farmer who did the latter. Let us not hear those who emphasize the caste, religious, regional, linguistic, cultural or other narrow labels which have been put upon us from time to time, and exploit them for hating our neighbour. Let us all feel men first and last, and everything else afterwards. Not one of the above distinctions is of fundamental importance.

Wardha, 6-7-48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

ASHRAM OBSERVANCES IN ACTION

[This is a translation of selected chapters from Gandhiji's Gujarati history of the Satyagraha Ashram published for the first time in May last. — V. G. D.]

1. TRUTH

Whenever some one was found telling a lie in the Ashram, effective steps were taken to deal with the situation as symptomatic of a serious disease. The Ashram does not believe in punishing wrongdoers, so much so that hesitation is felt even in asking them to leave the institution. Three lines of preventive action were therefore adopted.

The first thing attended to was the purity of the principal workers in charge, the idea being that if they were free from fault, the atmosphere about them was bound to be affected by their innocence. Untruth cannot stand before truth like darkness before the light of the sun.

Secondly we had recourse to confession. If some one was found practising untruth, the fact was brought to the notice of the congregation. This is a very useful measure if it is judiciously adopted. But one has to be careful about two things. First, the public confession must not be tainted by even a trace of force. Secondly, the confession should not lead to the person confessing taking leave of all sense of shame. If he comes to believe that mere confession has washed off his sin, he is no longer ashamed of it at all. There should be an ever present consciousness of the fact that the least little untruth is a dangerous thing.

Thirdly, the worker in charge of the Ashram as well as the wrongdoer would fast as a matter of penance. Of course it is a matter for the wrongdoer himself to decide whether or not he should undertake a fast. And as for the worker in charge, he is clearly responsible for intentional and unintentional wrongdoing in his institution. Untruth is more poisonous and more subtle than any poison gas whatever, but it dare not enter where the head of the institution is wide awake and has a spiritual outlook on life. Still if it is found to have effected an entrance, it is a warning to the principal worker, who may be sure that he must bear his share of responsibility for this infection. I for one believe that spiritual acts have clearly defined results precisely like combinations or processes in the natural sciences. Only as we have no such means of measurement in the former case as in the latter, we are not ready to believe or we only half-heartedly believe in the spiritual influences. Again, we are inclined to be lenient to ourselves with the result that our experiments are unsuccessful and we tend to move only in a circle like the oil-miller's bullock. Thus untruth gets a long lease of life, and at last we reach the melancholy conclusion that untruth is unavoidable. And what is unavoidable easily becomes necessary, so that not truth but untruth increases its prestige.

When therefore untruth was discovered in the Ashram, I readily pleaded guilty for it myself. That is to say, I have not still attained truth as

defined by me. It may be due to ignorance but it is clear that I have not fully understood truth and therefore neither even thought it out nor declared it, still less practised it. But granting all this, was I to leave the Ashram, and resort to some Himalayan cave and impose silence upon myself? That would be sheer cowardice. The quest for truth cannot be prosecuted in a cave. Silence makes no sense where it is necessary to speak. One may live in a cave in certain circumstances, but the common man can be tested only in society.

What then is the remedy to be tried to get rid of untruth? The only answer which suggests itself to me is bodily penance, that is fasting and the like. Bodily penance has a threefold influence, first over the penitent, secondly over the wrongdoer and thirdly over the congregation. The penitent becomes more alert, examines the innermost recesses of his own heart and takes steps to deal with any personal weakness that he may discover. If the wrongdoer has any pity, he becomes conscious of his own fault, is ashamed of it and resolves never to sin any more in the future. The congregation takes a course of self-introspection.

But bodily penance is only a means to an end, not an end in itself. By itself it cannot bring an erring person to the right path. It is profitable only if it is accompanied by a certain line of thinking, which is as follows:

Man tends to become a slave of his own body and engages in many activities and commits many sins for the sake of physical enjoyment. He should therefore mortify the flesh whenever there is an occasion of sin. A man given to physical enjoyment is subject to delusion. Even a slight renunciation of enjoyment in the shape of food will probably be helpful in breaking the power of that delusion. Fasting in order to produce this effect must be taken in its widest sense as the exercise of control over all the organs of sense with a view to the purification of oneself or others. Merely giving up food does not amount to a fast. And fasting for health is no fasting at all in this sense.

I have also found that frequent fasting tends to rob it of its efficacy, for then it becomes almost a mechanical process without any background of thought. Every fast therefore should be undertaken after due deliberation.

I have noted one special effect of fasting in my own case. I have fasted frequently; therefore my co-workers are nervous and are afraid that a fresh fast may place my life in danger. This fear makes them observe certain rules. I consider this as an undesirable consequence of fasting. I do not however think that self-control practised on account of such fear does any harm. This fear is inspired by love, and therefore it is a good thing if a person steers clear of wrongdoing even under the influence of such fear. Deliberate and voluntary reformation is of course extremely desirable, but it is only to be welcomed if a person avoids sin because he is afraid of causing pain to elders, as it involves no

employment of brute force. There are many cases of reformation undertaken primarily only to please one's dear ones becoming a permanent feature of men's lives.

One painful consequence of fasting must be taken into account. People sometimes do not avoid sin but only try to hide it for fear that someone else may fast if he comes to know of it.

After giving due weight to the pros and cons I hold that fasting and such other penances are necessary in certain cases. On the whole they have done the Ashram a signal service. But we must remember that undertaking a fast or similar penance implies certain qualifications in the penitent, which may be set forth as follows :

(To be continued)

SHRI VINOBA AT AJMER-V

13-5-'48

STUDY OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

At the prayer meeting this evening Shri Vinoba began by dealing with the question whether by taking part in the festivals of religions other than one's own, the faith in one's own religion would not become weak. Shri Vinoba said that there was no reason for such a result and that it was not the experience of those who had done so. He compared the act with that of a person who on visiting a friend's house bowed to his friend's mother. Would that diminish his veneration for his own mother? He respected the other's mother, because he had a great reverence for motherhood, and he saw the same motherhood in that lady which he saw in his own mother, and that made him pay her the homage. Similarly, when a man participated in the festivals of another religion and witnessed people gathering at a place with extreme faith and humility, and praying or worshipping God in accordance with their customs and beliefs, he realized that men of every religion experienced the same faith and emotions which he himself felt when he prayed or performed the rites and ceremonies of his own religion. Shri Vinoba knew a friend, who had not read anything except the *Tulsi Ramayan* in his life. Some one then suggested to him to read the *Bhagawat Puran*. He did so. Shri Vinoba asked him what the effect of reading the *Bhagawat* was upon his mind. He said that he found that the *Bhagawat* laid emphasis on *bhakti* (devotion) in the same way as Tulsidas has done in the *Ramayan*, and the result was that his love and veneration for *Ramayan* increased a hundred-fold, because he found the confirmation of the truth of its teaching in the *Bhagawat* also. Now if one looked only superficially at the *Bhagawat* it would be found that it was dedicated to the devotion of Krishna, while the *Ramayan* was dedicated to that of Rama. But the spirit and message of *bhakti* was the same in both. Similarly, when one took part in the festivals of another religion, he learnt that there was the same message of love, devotion and faith in God in Islam, Christianity and Sikhism as in the Hindu religion, and therefore he had every reason to have firm faith in his own religion. Surely, when several witnesses of widely different groups testify to the same thing, the evidence becomes stronger and

not weak. But after all, Shri Vinoba said, it was a question, the answer whereof must be found by actual experiment and experience, and so the questioner should go and see for himself festivals of other religions. He would find that his faith in his own religion thereby became stronger and not weak.

There was another advantage also in studying the books and doctrines of another religion and in participating in their rites and ceremonies. There were prayers, religious rejoicings, acts of charity, and pilgrimages to holy places prescribed in those religions in the same way as in Hinduism. May be, the name which they give to the Lord and the way and the language in which the prayers were said were different. But the difference would broaden the participator's outlook and make him more tolerant. It would destroy the narrow-mindedness which want of knowledge of others' customs often developed. A man showed himself at his best when he engaged himself in the faithful observance of his religious practices, and so if one wanted to see the best side of other people, association with them at the time that they were engaged in religious practices was the most suitable one.

Replying also to the question whether, if a person saw in another religion something superior to what was in his own, it would not weaken his faith in his own religion, Shri Vinoba said that if he was the owner of a garden and visited another garden and found that that garden had some fine trees which were not to be found in his own, surely, what he would do was to plant such trees in his own garden, and not to destroy either the other's or his own garden. In the same way, if one saw that there was something which his own religion lacked, then he would introduce it in his own religion and improve it. The discovery only proved that there was scope for improvement in every religion.

Sarva-dharma-samabhava (equal regard for all religions), according to Shri Vinoba, included four things: first, full faith in one's religion; secondly, equal respect for other religions; thirdly, the necessity of reforming every religion without which man could never progress; and fourthly, which resulted as a necessary consequence of the other three, resistance to irreligion. *Sarva-dharma-samabhava* would not be complete without any of these. The great masters of Hinduism had ceaselessly carried on the work of religious reform. The spirit of liberality and tolerance which one saw in Sanskrit literature was hardly to be seen in any other. The six famous systems of Indian philosophy were all produced in this land. The culture, which allowed as many as six schools of different philosophies, need not be afraid of enquiring what was found in other systems and import what was good in them and also impart to them what was good in its own. We need never be afraid of studying the religions and religious systems of every country with love. Ramakrishna Paramahansa practised the worship of every religion and came to the conclusion that there was fundamental unity in all religions. It did not diminish his faith in his own religion but strengthened it. They would have the same experience if they followed him.

D. D.

HARIJAN

July 18

1948

ABOLITION OF DIARCHY

I shall now think aloud about the means and methods of consolidating the Congress as a useful political organization and preventing its disruption.

The first essential thing, to my mind, is the abolition of diarchy. As is well-known, the Congress was divided in opinion for a long time about giving recognition to parliamentary activity under its auspices. Ultimately it came to stay. However, as the main object of the Congress was to rebel against the then Government, the parliamentary activity was not conceived of in terms of a mere opposition party in the Government, and, lest it might slip into such, it was thought necessary to control it strictly by a committee of top-rank leaders, who themselves remained outside the legislatures. It came to be popularly known as the High Command.

After the formation of Congress Ministries in several provinces in 1937, the position slightly changed. As the power at the centre had not been gained, the control of the provincial cabinets by a body of persons outside the legislatures was not yet altogether impracticable. But even at that stage the diarchical position had already begun to create trouble, as was seen in the Khare episode.

Since the complete transfer of power to India and the installation of Congress governments in every unit as well as at the Centre of the Union, the position has changed fundamentally. The top-rank leaders, who made, led and controlled the Congress, are themselves now part and parcel of government. If two or three top-rank leaders have kept out, it is rather for the ex-parliamentary organization of the Congress than for controlling the parliamentary organization.

The real position is this. Persons who are incapable of accepting, or do not wish to accept offices in government cannot control these leaders. With the Congress installed as Government, the President must necessarily be a person, who is personally a respected leader of the people and capable of being their Prime Minister. He must not be a mere titular head of the Congress getting himself elected somehow or a nominee of the virtual High Command. If he has not that capacity or, having it, does not choose to be a responsible member of the Government, but wants to be its controller from outside, he would either fail to do it, or would end in creating a parallel government or diarchy. In either case, it would be an opposition to the Government either working openly against it or secretly. It can only result in weakening the Congress. This has been actually happening at present. To my mind it is an illogical and an unhealthy position.

What applies to the President of the all-India Congress applies *mutatis mutandis* to the presidents of the various Provincial Congress Committees. The actual and true leader of the province must be the president of the Congress Committee of that province as also its Premier. If there are in that unit more provincial Congress Committees than one, the presidents of every provincial committee within it must be colleagues in the cabinet of that province. For instance, in Bombay either the presidents of the Bombay, Maharashtra, Karnatak and Gujarat P. C. C.s must be from some of the members of Shri Kher's Cabinet, Shri Kher himself being the President of one of them, or the Presidents of those committees should take the place of some of the members of the Bombay Cabinet. Similarly in C. P. & Berar. This necessarily means that the persons chosen as presidents must be men, who can actually lead the people of their province and are also capable of undertaking the responsibilities of the Premier or a Minister. No less capable worker can successfully function.

Since the Congress has chosen to function as a political party, it must work, when in office, as a party in power, and, when dethroned, as a party in opposition. Thus, it must now organize itself as a parliamentary body and not as a popular organization of the old type. This would also lead to the position that the Provincial Congress Committees should consist of members of the legislature with, as may be necessary, other capable or promising workers of the Congress organization outside the legislatures. Some of them would be capable local leaders or members of local boards, municipalities, education boards etc. Those outside the legislatures should be persons interested in making the Congress Government successful, not in the sense of somehow manoeuvring to keep the Congress in power, but in seeing that the administration is carried on in the interests of and for the happiness of the people and in accordance with the Congress policy, which now would be identical with the Government policy. District and smaller committees would have to be on the same principle. These bodies should work as an auxiliary organization to the Congress Government. If it is not possible for the Prime Minister to look to the day to day working of the P. C. C., there might be a Chairman or a Deputy President, or even a capable permanent paid worker. Possibly he would be one of the members of the legislature, or a Parliamentary Secretary.

This appears to me to be the only way of preventing the conflict, which is developing almost in every province, between the Congress governments and the Congress Committees as at present constituted.

Of course, this organization cannot be like the old Congress, in the sense of seeking enrollment of millions of members on its register. It is hardly necessary. It would have to be a restricted body in regard to membership. It would seek the patronage of the people for their votes by the way in which

it governs and lays its case before them. The people at large would not be members of any political party. This is as it should be. Popular organizations, like Constructive Associations, Lok Seva Sanghs etc. would also not bind themselves over to any particular political party. They would work in their own way, seeking from and giving to the Government of the day, what aid and co-operation they can.

More in the next week.

Wardha, 3-7-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

NOT BASIC EDUCATION

Among those who felt that my criticism of the two Committees of Dr. Tarachand ought to have been stronger than it was, are some from the Madras province. Shri N. Kuppaswami Aiyangar, one of the old Basic-educationists, regards the various steps taken by that Government, as meant "to sabotage basic education". He does not spare even the Hindustani Talimi Sangh itself for not offering spirited resistance to the Government policy. He says:

"You might remember that as early as 1941, as soon as I became aware of this state of affairs, I interviewed Gandhiji in Sevagram and requested him to give his view of the matter—I think you were with Gandhiji at that time. When Gandhiji asked Shri Aryanayakam as to why Congressmen accepted this proposal, he replied, "If the rich people wanted a different kind of education for their sons, how could we prevent it?" To which Gandhiji replied, "Whatever rich or foolish people may say, whatever Congressmen may do—I am clear in my mind that this diversion of pupils from Basic Schools to High Schools before they had undergone the full Basic Course is inconsistent with the scheme of Basic Education I have recommended."

"This view was published widely at that time.

"Ever since I have been trying to persuade the Hindustani Talimi Sangh to declare openly and inform the various Congress Governments about this view, but without success."

Though I do not remember the interview referred to, I have no doubt about Gandhiji's views in the matter. Bifurcation of education, particularly for linguistic purposes, before completion of the Basic Course is unsound educationally as well as socially, whether the education is for the rich or the poor, the town-dweller or the villager, boy or girl. I put forth this view not because that was Gandhiji's personal view but because of the soundness of the principle on which it is based.

But it is possible that the Madras Education Ministry might say that it has followed in this respect the decision arrived at by the All India Educational Conference recently held at New Delhi. One of the conclusions arrived at at that Conference was that "the period of compulsory basic education (which is eight years in the Sargent Report) must be reduced during the first stage to five years." The Ministry might also say that though the educationists of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh might

consider bifurcation at the end of five years to be educationally unsound, there are other educationists who think otherwise, and as it is a matter in which there is a difference of opinion among experts, the Government is entitled to accept what opinion it regards as more appropriate. The Wardha Scheme educationists have not the monopoly of understanding the principles of education.

I agree. But in that case the proper course would be to drop the word 'Basic Education' altogether. Like the word *khadi* the term 'Basic Education' has come to mean a particular system of education, enunciated by Gandhiji and promulgated through the Hindustani Talimi Sangh. It should be regarded as a sort of special terminology to be respected as a registered trade mark in commerce. If the term is dropped, the discussion would take place on a different level. Here the people are deliberately confused.

It is open to the Government to say that while it accepts some of the conceptions of the Wardha Scheme, it does not accept the fundamental points of that system. For instance, (i) Gandhiji laid all his emphasis on education *through* craft which should be so organized that a school with the full number of pupils in all the forms should pay the salaries of its teachers out of the price of the articles produced. The Government do not accept it. They are prepared to give the craft a place along with other subjects, and not more. Then, (ii) Gandhiji's system is inconsistent with the introduction of military training in schools (and even colleges), inasmuch as *Nai Talim* is based on the principle of evolving a society based for non-violence and peace, while the Congress Governments have not abjured militarism and adequate armament. Again, (iii) the Gandhian system would almost do away with English, except for a very limited number. The view of the Government is that the knowledge and importance of the English language must not be diminished to a considerable extent. Also, (iv) the *Nai Talim* of Gandhiji would not make much difference between the urban students and the village. He would, if possible, make the urban people more rural-minded rather than the villager more urbanized. The Government view, which it might claim to be progressive, is that even the villagers ought to be more urbanized than what they are now. Lastly (v) even if Gandhiji gave some scope for industrialization, he regarded it more or less as an inescapable evil. He did not welcome it. That is not the view of the Government. And thus it is this difference of ideology which accounts for different ways of approaching the problem of education by the Government.

If the Government put it so frankly, it would be all understandable. But that is exactly the reason why the Government should adopt a different terminology for their system of education and not call it Basic Education or the Wardha Scheme of Education, and should not use Gandhiji's name in association with it.

Wardha, 1-7-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

STRANGE METHOD OF PROHIBITION

A member of the Madras Legislative Assembly sends a copy of the following confidential circular issued by the Prohibition Department of that Province:

"The Government have authorized the Board to issue permits to possess foreign liquor for personal consumption to Indians, Anglo-Indians, Parsis and Jews with reference to Government Police. In the case of Indian Officers serving in Prohibition areas *who, out of feelings of delicacy, may not be anxious to apply openly for such permits, the Government desire that they may send their applications through the Board which will send them confidentially to the Joint Secretary to Government, Revenue Department by name, so that they may be put up to the Hon'ble Minister for Prohibition for orders. Orders will then be issued demi-officially to the Commissioner for communication to the officers concerned. I am to request you to be good enough to communicate the above instructions of the Government to all Indian Officers of your Department serving in Prohibition areas of this province.*" (Italics ours)

It is difficult to understand how prohibition can succeed if Government expect to do it through officers who themselves want to drink, and further wish to respect their "feelings of delicacy" by granting permits through the back door. The Government may as well appoint wine-merchants themselves as excise officers and anti-drink propagandists to implement the Prohibition policy!

On making an enquiry as to whether the practice in other provinces is also similar to that in Madras, I am informed by the Premier, C. P. and Berar, as follows:

"2. Under the Foreign Liquor Rules, 1938, Indian officers including those in the Excise Department, are not debarred from applying for and getting the required permit. In all, there are only 154 Indian permit-holders on the list excluding Indian Military officers, but none of them is from the Excise or Prohibition Department.

"3. My enquiries show that in no case was an application for permit sent confidentially to the personal address of the Secretary concerned to be put up to the Hon'ble Minister for Excise and in no case was his order communicated to the Prohibition Commissioner by a d. o. letter for the issue of the permit.

"4. Up to now no officer of the Excise Department holds a permit. It is under consideration whether at the time of recruitment to the Excise Department a condition may be prescribed that the officer shall not drink, if he is employed, and at the time of his appointment a declaration in writing may be taken from him to this effect."

Issue of permits even to officers of other departments, particularly in the judiciary and police, is indefensible. With what conscience can one, who himself breaks the policy every night, punish an offender placed before him by day? Permission on medical grounds, as is well-known, is a bogus affair. Few medical practitioners believe in teeto-

talism. It means that those who can pay the Civil Surgeon's fees may drink.

If the evil of drink has to be stopped as State policy and through State machinery, there should be no Government servant who wants to drink. Even Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Parsis etc., who are allowed some latitude under the prevailing laws in this respect, must, if they are in the Government service, be teetotallers.

At the same time I would like again and again to impress upon constructive workers and reformers not to expect too much out of Government machinery. All the items of the constructive programme, even where they appear to lie in the economic sphere, are moral, social and spiritual. They are part of the *Nayee Talim* of the people. The best of governments can only remove hurdles from the way, but the main regenerative work must be done by self-appointed servants of the people.

Wardha, 2-7-48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

THE SPINNING TERM

I received the appeal of Shri Narandas Gandhi referred to below too late to be included in the issue of the 11th. It came rather late even for this issue, and I have been obliged to summarize certain portions of it in my own language to find room for it.

It was in 1935, that the Rashtriya Shala of Rajkot began to observe a spinning term, every year, immediately preceding Gandhiji's birth-day according to the Gujarati calendar. The programme was to spin for as many days before the birth-day as the number of Gandhiji's age to be entered upon at next birthday. The number of hanks, and coins to be paid in subscription for the charkha fund was also to be the same as that number. Thus in 1935, Gandhiji was to enter upon the sixty-sixth year of age, and so the spinning term lasted for 66 days, the hanks, to be spun bore some relation with 66, and the subscription to be paid was also 66 pice, or annas or rupees, or some multiple of 66. Every year a day was added. Gandhiji would have entered the 80th year of age on the *Bhadarva Vad* 12th of this year (30th September, 1948). There is no reason to stop the annual function with the death of Gandhiji. Rather it must be observed with greater zeal and by greater numbers for the number of his admirers has certainly increased since his death. It must be remembered that the *Bhadarva Vad* 12th was not recognized as Gandhi Jayanti by Gandhiji himself. He lent his support to it and himself worked for it, because it was celebrated as Charkha *Dwadashi* or *Rentiya Baras*, i. e. the Charkha Celebration Day.

This is what Gandhiji himself wrote on 12th June last year at the time of the announcement of this term:

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

Shri Narandas Gandhi's appeal proceeds: "I appeal to everyone to resolve to spin for 80 days, with full zeal. I appeal to the members and staff of the Charkha Sangh, the Constructive workers, as well as Congress workers in Government service to resolve to spin, fully understanding the deep implications of the Charkha. Those who subscribe every year to this fund are requested to pay eighty coins this year.

"The following figures give the realizations of this fund from year to year:

Rs.	Rs.
1935... 2,555- 3-0	1941... 86,317 - 0 6
1936... 7,348-12-0	1942... 20,042 - 3-6
1937... 16,396-12-6	1943... 51,955 - 8-6
1938... 16,228- 4-3	1944... 9,536 - 6-6
1939... 16,877- 9-4	1945... 6,623 - 8-0
1940... 10,970- 1-0	1946... 45,362 -12-9
	1947... 11,255 - 7-9

Total Rs. 3,01,469 - 9-10

"The Kathiawad Khadi Mandal owes its foundation to this fund. The fund has been utilized for famine-relief, Rashtriya Shala, Constructive work and the Harijan Sevak Sangh. The Rashtriya Shala is the treasurer of the balance. The fund is to be used principally for khadi work in Kathiawad.

"A new body for organizing all-round constructive service in Saurashtra having been recently formed, it has been decided to use the realizations of the present year for furthering its work. It is hoped that subscribers will fill the *Davidranarayan's* bowl with a liberal hand.

"It is expected that some prominent leader of the nation will be available at the time of the presentation of the purse and the yarn."

Wardha, 10-7-48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

BHANGIS OF SAURASHTRA

The Secretary of the Saurashtra Harijan Sevak Sangh gives a very painful report of the atrocities committed on the *bhangis* of several villages in Saurashtra, under the superstitious belief that they are responsible for the cholera which has broken out in the form of a virulent epidemic in several parts of that province. A Committee consisting of the Secretary and two Government officers visited several villages to investigate the facts for themselves. This is the gist of their report:

At Waghaniya, the *bhangi* locality looks more like a hospital than residential quarters. One Harijan has been deeply wounded in the hand. A young woman has been so severely belaboured with canes that the marks have not disappeared even after a week. Another *bhangi* who had already a septic leg was beaten with a lathi on the raw wound. The police were not able to give any protection.

At another village of the same name in Junagadh State, the house of the *bhangi* has been burnt down along with his cot. His grinding-stone was broken into pieces and thrown into a well. Possibly, it was the only *bhangi* family living in the village. At Kunkavav a mob of three hundred having marched on the *bhangi* ward, the *bhangis* began to flee with fear. The mob pursued them and attacked

some of them. At Chuda, the *bhangis* were severely threatened that their houses would be burnt. One of the *bhangis* was saved by the help of the Police Inspector who took him to a safe place in his jeep. A *bhangi* of Barwala had to run for life a distance of 10 miles at night through thorny ways and to take shelter at Bagasra in a miserable plight. The Committee visited 16 villages but there are several other villages also where atrocities have been committed. At several places *bhangis* have fled for life to other places.

It is difficult to believe that these acts are merely the result of ignorance and superstition. Ignorance as well as superstition there is. But it appears to me that there is a designing hand behind it which exploits the superstition. My suspicion is that the people who have persecuted the *bhangis* have no superstitious beliefs personally but are unscrupulous helpmates of the designer behind. Perhaps, the motive is to estrange the *bhangis* from the other Hindus. The persecuted *bhangis* will be invited perhaps later on to accept conversion to another faith, or in any case to hate all the caste-Hindus as such.

The Secretary of the Sangh has suggested several measures to be taken by the Saurashtra Government for the protection of the *bhangis*. That may be all right and necessary as far as it goes. But I believe that it is not the fundamental remedy. This is a case in which a sincere servant of the *bhangis* has to draw a lesson from the life of Gandhiji. The Hindus must guarantee the safety of the *bhangis*. The villages in which they have been maltreated must apologize to the *bhangis* and request them to return to the villages. They must pay full compensation. Persons who have suffered on account of these outrages must be assured of unmolested life hereafter. As a penance they must also create institutions for their upliftment. A Harijan *sevak* of repute can, if he has an inner call, and the necessary qualification and love for the *bhangis* as well as their persecutors or passive onlookers, insist on the acceptance of these terms in the same way as Gandhiji did at Calcutta and Delhi for the protection of the Muslims. I do not write this with a view to instigate any one to perform an act of bravado, but simply to say that this is a fit case for such a measure. The sleeping conscience of man will demand many such penitential acts in order to awaken it to a sense of duty, justice and humanity.

Wardha, 4-7-48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

QUESTION BOX

HORSE-RACE COLLECTION FOR GANDHI FUND

Q. The Horse-race management at Mysore announced and advertised to give one day's collection to the Gandhi Memorial Fund. The President of the Mysore Committee accepted 55 thousand rupees, which was one day's collection of the race. Is it right?

A. If the facts are as stated in the question, it was not right.

Wardha, 3-7-48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

BAPU—MY SAVIOUR

I

The sweet and sacred memories of my beloved Bapu still continue to rush in upon me in an unending stream, and sometimes the onrush is so swift and sudden that I simply get submerged. It is difficult indeed to reconcile myself to the cruel fact of his passing away.

My association with Bapu now dates back to nearly 20 years when I first came into personal contact with him during his visit to Sind in 1929 and in the following year had the good luck of joining his Ashram at Sabarmati and also accompanying him on his Dandi March. Throughout this fairly long period, I have had the great pleasure and privilege of enjoying the closest possible intimacy with him. When I think of the love that Bapu with his characteristic magnanimity of heart lavished upon me all these years and the paternal care that he unfailingly took of me, I feel overwhelmed with a sense of profound gratitude towards him and my unworthiness of it all. I have indeed no words to describe what I owe to him. I have always looked upon him as my saviour and so really he proved himself to be times without number.

There have been many a crisis in my life and I cannot recall any in which Bapu's helping hand did not come to my rescue and prevented me from "going under". The most poignant crisis, however, confronted me when my dearly-beloved wife Vidya left for her heavenly home on July 20, 1943. Next to Bapu, she was a great source of inspiration to me. But for Bapu and her, my life would have certainly taken a different turn. To lose such a wife was a great blow for me. I reeled under it and did not know what to do and whom to run up to for solace and support. For, Bapu was then beyond my reach in the Agakhan Palace. I was, therefore, left to carry this heavy load of personal sorrow all by myself till he got released on May 6, 1944. At the time, however, I was taking treatment for the hardness of my hearing at Lucknow, but in my impatience to meet Bapu, I sent him a telegram at Bombay telling him how forlorn I felt and how, therefore, anxious I was to go to him even leaving my treatment unfinished. To this he sent a reply telegram saying:

"No forlornness permissible. God our eternal companion. You can come after ear-treatment. — Bapu".

This telegram undoubtedly put heart into me, but did not much relieve me of my soul's agony. I, therefore, poured out my anguish in a letter to him and this is the reply he made:

"Juhu, 2-6-1944

"My Dear Anand,

"Since you have written in English, I answer likewise. You must cease to grieve. You should summon to your aid all you have read and digested. Here is a true thought a lady has sent me. Inwardly digest it. Vidya is not dead. She has gone elsewhere,

leaving the body she was inhabiting' and taking another suitable to her estate.

"Of course, you will come when you have finished the course of treatment. I am making slow progress. Love, — Bapu."

The enclosure contained the following beautiful lines sent to him by one Mrs. Glen E. Snyder from Grimes, Iowa, with a view to console him on the death of revered Bā:

"You cannot say, you must not say That she is dead. She is just away!

With a cheery smile,
She has wandered into an unknown land
And left us dreaming how very fair
It needs must be, since she lingers there;
So think of her faring on, as dear,
In the love of There as the love of Here,
Think of her still as the same, and say
She is not dead, she is just away".

But howsoever much I may persuade myself to believe that "she is not dead, she is just away", my mind would still nurse the grief at her separation and remain disconsolate as ever. Bapu wrote another cheering letter after a few days which is also worth sharing with the readers:

"Poona, 20-6-1944

"वि० आनंद,

"You must not brood over Vidya's death nor get disconcerted. If she was the inspiration of your life whilst she was in the flesh, she must be more so, having gone to her resting place. That to me is the meaning of the true union of souls. The classic example is that of Jesus and in modern times of Ramakrishna. They became greater influences after their death. Their spirit did not die, nor is Vidya's dead. You must, therefore, leave off sorrowing and think of your duty in front of you. Do not think of running to me whilst you are having your treatment and whilst I am having mine. You will come when I go to Sevagram,

Love, — Bapu"

In his next, referring to Vidya, he wrote in Hindi:

"Panchagani 19-7-1944

"वि० आनंद,

Your letter just today. Vidya was a great saint. She had a heart of gold. Her desire for renunciation was immense, and her love was like an ocean. You have got to be worthy of her.

I hope to go to Sevagram in August.

Bapu's blessings."

ANAND T. HINGORANI

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