

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XII. No. 10

AHMEDABAD—SUNDAY, MAY 9, 1948

TWO ANNAS

## QUESTION BOX

### MILITARY TRAINING

Q. One can understand the State making provision for the military training of such young men and women who desire it. But what is the duty of a person who believes in the establishment of a society based on non-violence or who is a votary of non-violence, if such training is made compulsory?

A. I have already said in my article *Conscription in Free India* (vide *Harijan* dated 2nd May, 1948) that there should be no compulsion on a person to take such training or render such service as would require inevitable breach of truth and non-violence. But assuming that this objection is overruled and the State is empowered to impose compulsory military training or service, it is evident that a satyagrahi would resist such law in a civil manner and suffer the penalty of the breach.

The present public mind may be described thus. A majority of the people will vote in favour of compulsory military training and the right to bear arms. They have greater faith—however suicidal though it might be ultimately—in weapons of violence and the knowledge of using them than on non-violence. Those who have implicit faith in non-violence are very few indeed. Hence there is every chance of compulsory military training receiving the support of a great majority. But in spite of this mentality, if military training and service were made voluntary or if easy conditions of escaping from it were provided, there would be a very large section of the people who would try to escape from this training on account of the difficult life and hard discipline involved in military training and on account of their love for lazy and easy-going life. Consequently, I am of opinion that those only should get relief from this kind of training and service who have a conscientious objection to violence and absolute faith in satyagraha. I would not, therefore, consider as unreasonable the imposition of such conditions as would as an alternative necessitate the taking of such training and the rendering of such service as could be compared with the hard life and service of persons in the military. It should not be possible to say of non-violence that its path is so easy that even a coward might go along it.

Wardha, 29-4-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

## "NO DEPARTURE FROM GANDHIJI"

A correspondent writes as follows:

"On reading Shri Acharya Vinoba's speech on *The Language of Prayer* published in the *Harijan* of 11th April, I feel like reminding the readers of Gandhiji's views on the subject. I give below a relevant extract from one of Gandhiji's replies to a correspondent:

'It is in this case (i. e. prayer) the attitude that matters, not words uttered or muttered. And often the association of words that have been handed down from ancient times has an effect which in their rendering into one's mother-tongue they will lose altogether. Thus the *Gayatri* translated and recited in, say, Gujarati, will not have the same effect as the original. The utterance of the words Rama will instantaneously affect millions of Hindus, whom the word God, although they may understand the meaning, will leave untouched. Words after all acquire power by long usage and sacredness associated with their use. There is much, therefore, to be said for the retention of the old Sanskrit formulae for the most prevalent mantras or verses. That the meaning of them should be properly understood goes without saying.'

"With due respect to Acharya Vinoba, I suggest that Gandhiji held quite a different view on the matter as is clear from the foregoing. So far as I have understood him, Gandhiji held the view that prayers should be in the original scriptural texts and he always insisted that every Hindu should study Sanskrit to be a better Hindu. Further, in the open public prayers conducted by him, verses from the *Gita*, *Quran*, *Zend Avesta* and the Buddhist scriptures were all recited in their originals in spite of the fact that only a few among the audience could understand them. Had he held the Acharya's views, I have no doubt that he would have allowed recitation of the translations of the said verses instead of the originals—a practical man eminently that he was. Now then, it raises another issue. I hold the view that those ideas which Bapuji did not cherish can have no place in the *Harijan*. Shri K. G. Mashruwala has, of course, already warned the public against accepting all that appears in the *Harijan* as the correct interpretation of Gandhiji's views. All the same, the public at large do expect correct exposition and interpretation of Gandhiji and what he stood for, in the columns of the *Harijan* and the allied weeklies. My plea, therefore, is that utmost care should be bestowed on the selection of matter and articles for publication in the



*Harijan*. Public memory is short and they will forget the warning of the good editor. Is it Bapu's view? should be the question asked whenever something comes for publication. If the answer is "no", well, it has no place. This does not mean, however, that Acharyaji or anybody else for that matter, should not hold different views from Gandhiji. They can. Only they are taboo so far as the *Harijan* is concerned. Supposing that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru contributes an article advocating the elimination of the *Urdu* script from Hindustani and that *Devanagari* should alone be the script of any lingua franca, in my opinion, the article should be regretfully rejected, despite the eminence of the contributor and also the possibility of the correctness of his views. The pure and simple reason is that Bapuji had always insisted on the adoption of both the scripts. I hope I have made myself clear. I am anxious to see that the *Harijan* still continues to be 'Bapu's Voice' and that will easily be so if the greatest care is exercised by us.

"I have written this as a humble follower of Gandhiji, and therefore, stand always to be corrected, if I am wrong in my above estimate and I assure you that there is no carping spirit behind this letter."

The correspondent has raised two points; the first is about the question of the language of one's prayer. I am prepared to admit that Gandhiji did hold at one time the view quoted by the correspondent, though I do not know where he has taken his quotation from. At any rate, I am not in a position to point out immediately when he modified those views and if he publicly expressed his modified views anywhere. It is possible also that he might see no inconsistency between the quoted view and Shri Vinoba's views, and might reconcile both. But we may leave aside these conjectures. It is sufficient to point out that for some years past he had admitted the Marathi verses of the *Gita* in the evening prayer of the Sevagram Ashram. Also in the morning prayer of the Ashram, where it is customary to recite the whole of the *Gita* in the course of a week, the Marathi *Gita* has displaced the Sanskrit *Gita* for some years past. It was found that even those whose mother-tongue was not Marathi found it easier to understand the meaning of the *Gita* through its Marathi translation than through Sanskrit which they could understand only imperfectly, if at all. I believe that in most of the Ashrams in Maharashtra and Gujarat prayers have been conducted for several years past in the provincial languages instead of or in addition to Sanskrit. It was in 1928 or 1929 that at my suggestion the prayers in the National School at Vile Parle (Bombay) were changed from Sanskrit into Gujarati to the great advantage of reciters and hearers. I have no doubt that if the scriptures are to be read, understood and followed and not merely recited as a daily routine, the prayers should be conducted in a language which the people understand while they speak.

The second point which arises from the above is of greater importance. It is whether the *Harijan*

may depart or appear to depart from Gandhiji on any point on which his last opinion was definitely known. I would request the reader to remember again what I stated when I entered upon the responsibility of editing the paper.

"The reader will not take whatever I or other writers of the *Harijan* say to be Gandhism, or an authorized interpretation of Gandhiji. If he finds an inconsistency between what will appear under our signatures and what Gandhiji said, he should consider each on its merits and accept what appeals to his head and heart. I have no authority to interpret him, and the reader will bear patiently with me if I do not seem to follow him in every detail."

What applies to me, applies equally to views expressed by others in the *Harijan*.

The correspondent would insist that the *Harijan* should never depart from Gandhiji in any matter whatsoever even if there was a possibility of the other view being correct. This cannot be done without being disloyal to Gandhiji himself by suppressing truth itself and suggesting to the world that if Gandhiji had been alive after 30th January, 1948, he would not have changed his opinion afterwards because Truth (at any rate on that matter) had revealed itself completely by that date in him. I must request the reader to test views expressed in the *Harijan* not merely by comparing and contrasting them with those expressed by Gandhiji during his lifetime (which also is needed and welcome), but also by constantly applying the standard which Gandhiji and all who pursue light have applied to themselves namely, whether they are the outcome of the life experience and reasoning faculty of one who seeks truth in the spirit of *sarvodaya* (the wellbeing of all) and is himself disciplined to truth, non-violence and other rules of self-restraint.

Wardha, 28-4-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

### Gandhi Idols

Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel have done well in asking our countrymen to desist from commemorating Gandhiji in a manner which may savour of idolatry.

I suggest that Gandhiji's faithful likeness in paintings and statues might be preserved in museums, or kept in public places, but idol worship should not be permitted. I knew that Gandhiji was not for idol worship. He worshipped Truth and Spirit.

The *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and the *Gita* do not inculcate idol worship. Even the *Puranas* have said in veiled terms that the images of the deity are imaginary (*kalpita*). Let us not deify Gandhiji, but honour his memory by honestly treading the path he opened for us.

Let us not waste our country's meagre wealth in making temples and images in his memory but use the national contributions for the uplift of our people.

A STUDENT OF RELIGIONS



## MAHADEV DESAI (BOMBAY) MEMORIAL TRUST

At a meeting of the friends and admirers of the late Shri Mahadev Desai held at the Indian Merchants' Chamber Hall, Bombay, on 8th March, 1945, an appeal was issued for collecting Rs. 15 lakhs to commemorate the memory of Shri Mahadevbhai.

The Committee has been able to collect only Rs. 3,23,330-10-9 so far. Out of this amount Rs. 4,369-12-0 have been spent on office expenses, postage and stationery and stamp on the Trust Deed and a sum of Rs. 16,142 collected on behalf of the Gujarat Memorial Committee have been remitted to them. The balance of Rs. 3,02,818-12-9 has been transferred to the names of the Trustees.

It was decided that Gandhiji should nominate the Trustees for this Trust. He has accordingly nominated Shri Vaikunth L. Mehta, Shri Dahyabhai V. Patel and Shri Shantikumar N. Morarjee as the Trustees of Shri Mahadev Desai (Bombay) Memorial Trust.

The Deed of Trust was signed by the Trustees on the 18th of November, 1947, in Bombay. The aims and objects of the Trust are as follows:

To educate the people for rendering service to the poor by means and methods which have come to be known as the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and by all or any of the following means:

(a) To publish an authoritative biography of Mahadevbhai as also literature based on his notes, records and unfinished writings and to undertake the publication of literature on the ideals and the social philosophy of Gandhiji based mainly on material collected by Mahadevbhai and after collecting such material as is available elsewhere.

(b) To popularize and spread the teachings of Gandhiji through lecture series, study circles or other means and to establish a museum of articles produced in accordance with the principle of decentralized production advocated by Gandhiji, to engage workers to carry out these activities and to provide them with suitable remuneration.

Any suggestions to carry out the above objects will be welcome. All correspondence should be addressed to Shri Shantikumar N. Morarjee, Trustee, Mahadev Desai (Bombay) Memorial Trust, Scindia House, Ballard Estate, Bombay, where the office of the Trust is located.

Any one wishing to see the Deed of Trust can do so during office hours at the above address.

### SELECTIONS FROM GANDHI

By Nirmal Kumar Bose

(With a Foreword by Gandhiji)

Price Rs. 4-0-0

Postage etc. 0-10-0

### DELHI DIARY

[Prayer Speeches from 10-9-'47 to 30-1-'48]

As the explanation of the title indicates in this Diary are collected the prayer speeches delivered by Gandhiji to his prayer audiences during his last stay in Delhi.

With a foreword by Babu Rajendraprasad

Price Rupees Three

Postage etc. Annas Ten

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD

## TIGHT ROPE DANCING

Our foreign trade is in an unstable equilibrium. We are importing great many intermediate goods so as to manufacture articles which can be exported to bring us more food. This appears a most unsatisfactory position. India ranks as the second largest market of the United Kingdom. She has received more than twice such machinery as has any other country from the United Kingdom and perhaps ranks highest as a purchaser in this regard. In regard to textile machinery, India's share was nearly 30 per cent of United Kingdom's total export and this represents more than three times the value sent to the next best importer.

We do not object to importing our needs from outside but when we are told by the president of the All India Organization of Industrial Employers that to balance our import we shall have now to export our manufactured goods, we appear to be on dangerous ground, especially if our imports are of food and other primary necessities, because it is these imports that ultimately lead to conflict between nations. The economic complexion of our country is rapidly changing under the national Government and one fears that the change is for the worse. A balanced economy should be broad-based in regard to primary necessities. Our production, especially in regard to food and clothing, should not depend much on foreign imports. It is no argument to say that by exporting textile manufactures we can import more food. We have to consider the implications of such a course.

While we welcome the Government's effort to grow more food, we would point out that even here we have to restrict our dependence on foreign imports such as petroleum, crude oil, etc. for tractors and chemical fertilizers because these again ultimately land us in an economy where there is danger of international conflict.

The efforts directed towards river management and extension of cultivation into waste lands etc. are good, but at the same time we should make sure that our food lands are not being utilized for commercial uses with a view to exporting such commercial products to obtain cereals. This again is a wrong approach to the problem.

With much of our pasture land gone we have to grow fodder crops for the stall-feeding of cattle. This too is a pressure on cultivable lands that should have priority over commercial crops.

Attempts to conserve our food resources should include banning of rice mills, sugar mills, and *vanaspati* oil mills which ultimately destroy the nutritive values of the materials we already possess and therefore increasing of any of these types of concerns really goes against the policy of growing more food. We cannot invite people to make determined effort to create food on the one hand and also support the destruction of food values on the other.

Hence our economic organization requires a properly thought out plan to co-ordinate the various factors of production so as to lead to the welfare of the masses and not necessarily enriching a few materially. The present efforts to industrialize



the country with foreign imports and export our manufactures with the idea of enabling us to import more food is economic tight rope dancing which may give the spectators a few moments of exhilaration but may prove disastrous to the performer. Let not our country attempt these tricks.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

## HARIJAN

May 9

1948

### THE TRAGEDY OF KASHMIR

Whenever I look at pictures of that beautiful little country in Europe, Switzerland, my mind invariably turns to Kashmir. In pre-war days Switzerland was the country *par excellence* where one wanted to spend one's holidays whether in winter or summer, spring or autumn. Few can resist the lure of winter sports once they have tasted the exhilaration they create nor does one feel the cold even at heights of 5000 feet above sea level because of the lovely sunshine which has made certain places in Switzerland ideal for sufferers from tuberculosis. Summer in Switzerland by the side of the lakes or trekking in the valleys or mountain-climbing is ideal and spring and autumn have a beauty all their own for lovers of nature.

All this beauty even on a grander scale is in Kashmir and with the development of communications and residences could be made available on a vast scale. That lovely land could be the most attractive holiday resort and ideal places could certainly be located for sanatoria for patients suffering from T. B.

But the country is today being ruined owing to the cruel raids to which the poor peace-loving inhabitants of the country are being subjected. War despoils as nothing else and yet man, reasonable and intelligent though he is supposed to be, has not yet found the strength to settle his disputes in any other manner.

A peaceful Kashmir, allowed to develop along peaceful lines would, with its immense potentialities and unrivalled beauties of nature be an asset to Pakistan no less than to India. As a paradise for holiday-makers, as a health resort, it could be a meeting ground not only for citizens of both India and Pakistan but for travellers from all over the world.

Even at this late hour cannot wiser counsels prevail and cannot India and Pakistan settle the question of Kashmir without resort to arms and without reference to anyone other than their own good sense? No problem is incapable of solution if the will to solve it is there.

New Delhi, 18-4-'48

A. K.

#### "Founded by Mahatma Gandhi"

At the suggestion of the well-known national worker Shri B. F. Bharucha, the above words will hereafter appear on the *Harijan* weeklies. I hope it will meet with general approval.

Wardha, 3-5-'48

K. G. M.

### GANDHIJI'S UTTERANCES ON THE QUESTION OF KASHMIR

"In his post-prayer speech this evening Gandhiji talked of Kashmir. He said that he had seen in the newspapers some reference to an arbitration over the issue of Kashmir. Were the Union and Pakistan always to depend on a third party to settle their disputes? How long would they go on quarrelling?"

"There was some talk about the division of Kashmir. It was fantastic. It was more than enough that India had been divided into two. One would have thought it impossible for man to divide a country which God had made one. Yet it had happened and the Congress and the League had both decided upon it though for different reasons. But that did not mean that the process of dividing should be further extended. If Kashmir was to be divided, why not other states? Where would this process end?"

"..... Let them (Pakistan) and the Union representatives sit down and thrash out the Kashmir affair as they had already done in the case of many other things. If they could not do so, why could they not choose from among themselves good, true persons who would direct their steps? The first step was an open and sincere confession of past lapses. Hearty repentance broke the edge of a guilt and led the way to proper understanding. ...." (Post-prayer speech, 25-12-'47, published in the *Harijan* dated 4-1-'48).

"Will not the Pakistan Government and the Union Government close ranks and come to an amicable settlement with the assistance of impartial Indians? Or, has impartiality fled from India? I am sure it has not." (*Ibid* 29-12-'47, published in the *Harijan* dated 11-1-'48)

### SHRI K. NATARAJAN

Widespread regret will be felt at the death of Shri K. Natarajan which took place on 29th April at his residence at Bandra. There were only three Indian journalists who by their learning, ability and character commanded universal respect not only from their countrymen, but even outside India, viz. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar of Madras, Mr. Ramanand Chatterji of Bengal and Mr. Natarajan who adopted Bombay over fifty years ago. Mahatma Gandhi held him in very high regard and Mr. Natarajan had the greatest affection and respect for Gandhiji. A great scholar, an earnest social reformer and of a deeply religious nature the late Shri Natarajan always lived up to the motto which adorned the *Indian Social Reformer*: "I will be as harsh as truth and as uncompromising as justice; I am in earnest; I will not equivocate; I will not excuse; I will not retreat a single inch—and I will be heard." He had retired from public life some years back but his literary pursuits continued till the end. His personal contact was uplifting and ennobling;—serene, self-poised and simple would be a good description of Shri Natarajan. We offer our heart-felt sympathy to his daughter Miss Kamakoti Natarajan, who admired and followed Gandhiji into the prison, and to the other members of his family. May his soul rest in peace!

Bombay, 4-5-'48

B. G. KHER



## WOMEN AND MILITARY TRAINING

I confess to a sense of sorrow at the increasing desire in women to go in for military training. In one sense this cannot be wondered at because the recent tragic happenings have shown that anger arouses the lowest passions in man and when he is thus roused his first victims are women. The abduction of women and children constitutes a grave stigma on our society and to think that we have to resort to police and military aid to retrieve these human beings is truly humiliating. When anger and passions have cooled down it should surely be possible for the guilty to atone for the error of their ways by voluntary return of their erstwhile prey. In any event women are scared and they want to be able to protect themselves. With the majority of mankind, they imagine, they will be safer and stronger if they know how to use firearms.

Military training, which disciplines them, which teaches them co-operative endeavour, which gives them lessons in First Aid and Ambulance work in the field, which will make them self-reliant and fearless, is all to the good. But for women to want to learn the use of firearms goes against the best traditions of all that the ancient culture and civilization of the womankind of every land have stood for. I would like to draw the attention of my sisters to the lesson Gandhiji taught us during his long ministry on earth. Sita, as he often used to say, withstood the might of Ravana not through any earthly weapons but because of her unassailable purity. Women will, I hope, always rely on their strength of character and soul force and not give up the way of non-violence, not only for the sake of their own sex but for the sake of the country and the world.

New Delhi, 18-4-'48

A. K.

## A CALL TO DAILY PRAYER FOR PEACE

Messrs. Horace Alexander, and Hiralal Bose, Joint Secretaries of the All India Pacifist Conference, Rasulia (C. P.), write:

"A few months before his death, Gandhiji wrote to one of those who was making the plans for this world meeting, and who had asked him for suggestions of ways in which preparations could be made for the meeting:

'May it not be wise therefore for sincere peace-lovers to pray in their own homes, every day if you like, even for five minutes at the same time throughout the world?'

"We suggest, therefore, that those, both in India and in other parts of the world, who believe in prayer and who wish to carry on Gandhiji's work and to be united with his spirit, should keep the time from 5 p. m. to 5.5 p. m., Indian time, each day, and should during those five minutes pray to God to cleanse their own hearts of all hatred and malice and envy and greed and of all those things in their own lives that make for war and strife. And let those who for any reason are unable to pray for peace each day for five minutes resolve that they will do some work for peace every day—for peace in their homes and families, peace among classes and communities, peace

among the nations. Thus may we in some degree carry on the great work for which Gandhiji suffered and died. Those in countries outside India can work out the appropriate time for the prayer."

Wardha, 28-4-'48 K. G. MASHRUWALA  
IN THE PEACE COMMITTEE AT DELHI

[Shri Vinoba attended the meetings of the Delhi Peace Committee on the 2nd and 4th of April, 1948. Before the conclusion of the meeting on the 4th, Shri Vinoba gave expression to the following views.]

Shri Vinoba said that there was unanimity of opinion on the necessity of speedy rehabilitation of the refugees. If the work did not proceed rapidly, there must be something wrong somewhere. The hitch would have to be investigated by going into details.

For the moment, Shri Vinoba wanted to emphasize only two points. The first was that in settling their programmes and policies, they should not take into account what Pakistan does or fails to do. If they did that they surrendered themselves into the other State's hands. They must keep the initiative in their own hands, and do what they thought was right to do.

The people generally trusted their leaders and acted as they advised. To guide the people rightly was, therefore, the responsibility of the leaders. Strength developed by right acts.

Secondly, he agreed to a degree with the suggestion made by one of the speakers that they should forget whether they were Hindus or Muslims, and remember only that they were Indians. Shri Vinoba would go further and say that they were men first and everything else afterwards. He said this because there was some risk even in the proud assertion of being 'Indian', which might cause harm in the future.

## MAHATMA GANDHI—AN AVATAR

Myths are growing round this great soul in the common mind, as they have "always grown round every great man after his death.

To believe him to be an *avatar* in the mythological sense is what Gandhiji could never have accepted. He never claimed Godhood for himself, nor even that his truth and *ahimsa* were perfect, although there is no one known to us in modern times who can compare with him in these qualities. He even ridiculed the title of *Mahatma* which people foisted on him.

In a sense, all great men and prophets and saints are *avatars* (manifestations of the Lord). As said in the *Gita*: "Whatever being possesses greatness or is glorious or exalted, know that person to be born of a part of My (the Lord's) *tejas* (light and glory and power)." This is further elucidated when, after describing all great things in the world, the Lord says: "I hold and pervade the whole world by only a part of Myself." This is the only rational doctrine of *avatar*. When each blade of grass, and every toad and lizard is a manifestation of the Divine, why should it be denied to really great souls who have lived and worked for humanity?

But this is altogether a different thing from regarding Gandhiji as an *avatar* in the mythological and superstitious sense in which our people are inclined to take it.

18-3-'48

A STUDENT OF RELIGIONS



## THE BIRLA HOUSE AT DELHI

I have read reports of an agitation for acquiring this house as a national monument. I am told that Shri Ghanashyamdas Birla is unwilling to part with his house.

For some years past Gandhiji used to be a guest of the Birlas, whenever he happened to visit a place where this family possessed a house. Some time before the arrival of the Cabinet Mission, Gandhiji announced that thenceforth he would as far as possible stay in a Harijan locality during his tours.

Accordingly, when he broke journey at Bombay on his way from Poona to Delhi in April 1946, although it was only a few hours' halt, arrangements had to be made for his stay in the Harijan locality at Worli. In New Delhi, too, he was encamped at the Valmiki Mandir in the Bhangi Colony. Thereafter he always stayed in that Mandir whenever he was in Delhi. He left Delhi some days before August 15, 1947 and could not return to it until after the great Delhi disturbance.

When he reached Delhi, he was not quite aware of the ghastly events that had taken place in the capital of India. He expected to be lodged in the Bhangi Colony. But that place had been occupied by refugees, and the Government found it necessary to accommodate him once again at the Birla House. He accepted the arrangement not by choice, but under the pressure of circumstances. Mentally he had left the Birla House camp long since. It was a mere accident that he was murdered on or about that place. He was not murdered because he was staying at the Birla House, or did not stay in the Bhangi Colony. Those who were aiming at his life would have tried to take it wherever they could have got a convenient opportunity for the purpose. It could have been a street or a railway station, or a boat in the midst of a river. Accidentally it happened to be an open space of the Birla House.

It was Gandhiji who was great—a *Mahatma*. The place where he was born, the various places where he lived during his life of seventy-eight years, and the place where he died had nothing special about them. Several people had, perhaps, been born before and after him in the very same room in which he was born at Porbandar, and lived in the places where he had lived, and might have died in the house where he died. Not one of them has been claimed as a *Mahatma* of even second or third rank below him.

What can ennoble us or inspire us to elevate ourselves is the life and deeds, the character and thoughts, the teachings and institutions of Gandhiji, and running through these all his quest of Truth and his universal love, his active non-violence. His decision to remove himself from the luxurious house of the Birlas on Mount Pleasant in Bombay to the three-roomed tin-shed at Worli has a lesson for us all. Not so the merest accident of his having been shot at a place, which he had mentally abandoned long since. That accident cannot, should not be made a ground for coercing its owner to part with it.

I am aware of the popular sentiment which is traditionally trained to transfer their love and devotion for a beloved friend from him to things and places associated with him. Though my own sentiments are of a different nature, I am prepared to look at the matter from the point of view of others. But the Birla point of view cannot be excluded in these others. Their sentiment is entitled to be considered with equal respect.

I happen to be today in my ancestral house at Akola. It is associated with the memories of my late father, brother, nephew and my own childhood. My father was a devout follower of a particular religious sect, and used frequently to receive divines of his sect as his guests. My brother was a nationalist, and for years this house was the only place in Akola for lodging and boarding Congress leaders. He had had the privilege of receiving amongst others Pandit Motilal Nehru, Shri Vithalbhair Patel, Dr. Ansari from the departed ones, and Sardar Patel, Shri C. Rajagopalachari and several others from those who are still with us. There is hardly a room in the house in which some great leader had not sat, slept, dined, or held consultations. The family had also the honour of housing Gandhiji during his three visits to Akola. His son, Shri Manilal Gandhi, was married in this very house with my niece.

It so happens that the actual place where my bed is spread today is the same where Gandhiji's had been arranged at the time of his first visit. All these and so many other memories rush to my mind.

The memories of my father, brother and nephew are as dear and sacred to the members of the Mashruwala family as those of Gandhiji and the great leaders. To the people in general our personal family associations may count for nought. They are interested only in the national associations. But it is not—cannot be—so to us. Whether these memories cause pleasure or pain, they are a part of our life. And it is so, although there is no attempt on our part to treat any part of the house or any piece of furniture as unusable by the family because of its associations with some dear or great one.

These are not things which could be compensated with money. It would be only when our own regard for the dear ones and the great ones had diminished and economic considerations had become more important in our eyes than sentiment, that the family would be willing to part with the possession of the house for money. Even if the House of Parliament unanimously voted for compulsory acquisition of the house for the nation, it would, in my opinion, be an unjust use of the State power, if my family was unwilling to part with it. It would amount to punishing the family for having become for several years hosts of great leaders. It would be a warning to public-spirited persons that if they wanted to retain their ancestral property to themselves, they should not receive great leaders in it. I look at the Birla House question from the same angle.



If the fact that the Birlas belong to the class of capitalists, and we live in times when any agitation could be popularized if it aims to hit a capitalist, energizes the makers of the proposal to put forth this demand, at least Gandhiji's name should not be associated with it. It should be remembered that even if Shri Ghanashyamdas Birla were the worst capitalist that ever walked in this world, still he had won the love of Gandhiji whom people want to adore and whose memory it is sought to preserve. He who was fit enough to be recognized by Gandhiji amongst his sons in a special sense ought not surely be a particular object of contempt to those who claim to be his followers and admirers.

A fancy passes through my mind. Suppose by chance Gandhiji had been conscious for a few minutes after the shooting, and the attendants had sought to take him inside the house. I fancy that he was quite capable of saying: "Do not remove me into the house. Let me die under the sky which I love so much and where thousands of refugees are passing their days and nights. Or, if it is necessary to remove me into a building, please take me to a Harijan's hut. Let it not be said by the future generations that with all his loud assertions about identifying himself with the humblest of Harijans, Gandhi died in a princely palace."

From the reports that have come to me from those who were present at the spot it appears that there is not much truth in the story that Gandhiji was alive when he was removed into the Birla House. But whatever may be the truth about this, I do not think that anyone will doubt that, apart from an accident, the prospect of having to die in a palace would not have been a pleasing one to him. Akola, 18-4-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

### A PRECEDENT

The article in the *Harijan* of 11th April, 1948, *What should God have Done*, reminds me of something else which happened a very long time ago in Islam, and which might be of interest to the readers of the *Harijan*. Reference to this can be seen in the *Kasidah* of Haji Abdu El Yezdi translated by Sir Richard F. Burton and published by Hutchinson & Company in 1914. Actually this is not a translation but an original poem of Sir Richard. In this volume, on page 15, in section two, stanzas 13 and 14, the poet writes as follows:

"I am the Truth! I am the Truth!"  
we hear the God-drunk gnostic cry.

"The microcosm abides in ME;  
Eternal Allah's nought but I!"

Mansur was wise, but wiser they  
who smote him with the hurled stones;

And, though his blood a witness bore,  
No wisdom-might could mend his bones.

In elucidation of this event, the author writes in his note No. 2 on page 93 as follows:

"Mansur el-Hallaj (the cotton-cleaner) was stoned for uttering the pantheistic dogma *Ana'l Hakik* (I am the Truth, i. e. God), *wa laysa fi jubbati il' Allah* (and within my coat is nought but God). His blood traced on the ground the first-quoted sentence."

JAMSHED SOHRAB VATCHA

[Note—It should be noted that there is a difference between "Within my coat is nought but

God," and "Eternal Allah's nought but I." I am afraid that the poet, like several other students of philosophy, has not realized this difference.

Akola, 21-4-'48

—K. G. M.]

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### II

[Here is the second instalment of the questions addressed to Shri Vinoba by the Delhi Congress workers and his answers thereto.]

### GOVERNMENT AND CONSTRUCTIVE ACTIVITIES

Q. 5. The Congress has lost prestige in the eyes of the people since the attainment of independence. When we approach the people with the constructive programmes, they tell us that now that the Government is national with power to spend money, we should approach the Government for furthering and providing funds for the constructive activities.

A. Let us consider what it was that gave prestige to the Congress in the eyes of the people. I put it that it was the sacrifice which Congressmen had made for the country. We have now forgotten this important factor of the prestige. We obtained independence and are now acting as if we wanted to lose it. We seem to say that our full-moon is now over, and so let us now advance towards the new-moon phase! Congressmen have begun to think in terms of reaping a harvest.

It is an error to suppose that Government has too much money. The British handed over this concern to India only after it had become insolvent. We have not obtained the goodwill of the British Government, but their bad-will and insolvency. What is the wealth of the Government? There are thirty crores of people in India. How much money can it spend per head on them? The Sargent Committee produced a programme of universal education extending over a period of forty years. The expense of implementing that programme was so big that it was regarded as impossible of execution. So, Gandhiji had to remark that the very method of this education was wrong. If a child was a burden at the time of training, it would remain a burden even afterwards. Before education it was a burden, during education it continues to be a burden, and so after education too it would remain a burden. So, Gandhiji devised a new plan, whereby the child would earn while it was being trained and thereby contribute a large share of its training expenses. The medium which he suggested was also so appropriate that it could become a good means for the full and all round training of the child. There can be no doubt that craft is the best medium of education. And yet some people say that it is exacting child-labour. My answer is, suppose in the course of training a child has to turn a *chakki* (grinding stone), shall I say that the child might turn the *chakki* without putting grain into it, because that would produce flour and it would amount to child-labour? Is it sinful for a child to produce food or cloth or any other useful product while it is being trained? Why should it not produce something useful if it is also a good medium of instruction?

Everyone must contribute towards production of wealth. India could prosper only under that condition. Poet Tagore has said somewhere that in the division of wealth we all take part, but in its multiplication only a few have to bear the strain,



Gandhiji had shown an easy way of multiplying the goods, namely through the *charkha* and village industries. But when I speak of the *charkha* men in the Refugee Camp tell me that spinning is woman's work. Cooking food is also woman's work. Eating food, then, is man's work! What a fine division of labour has man devised! Had that been God's plan, He would have given four hands to every woman and two mouths to every man! But he has not done so. In the same way, the people of Delhi here will call me a lunatic if I say that they should use hand-ground flour. They would say that it could not be done in a city. It was village work. But flour is needed as much by the city people as by the villagers. If, as has been said about gods, the people of Delhi did not eat or drink but were satisfied only with looking at food and water, I would feel hesitation in asking them to grind. Since it is not so, I am going to advise you that you must grind your own corn and spin your own yarn and then only you will be able to retain your wealth. This is the Village Industries Programme. If you will accept it, then alone the poor people will enjoy freedom.

Independence consists in being self-reliant. For our encouragement Lokamanya Tilak invented the slogan, "Swaraj is my birth-right." But had it been really our birth-right we should have had it as soon as we were born. We know, however, that when the child is born it is not independent. It has to rely absolutely upon others. So we must understand that independence is not a birth-right, but a right to be achieved by effort.

This is a revolutionary programme. It involves the change of the whole atmosphere. It cannot be done by Government alone. At the most it could render some assistance. I would consider it sufficient if it does not put in obstacles. The real work is to be done by the people themselves. Let us do that work and not find fault with the Government. It is not difficult to hunt out faults, but that does not mend matters. This house belongs to us all and everyone must work to complete its construction.

#### SARVODAYA SAMAJ

Q. 6. We want to know what is the Sarvodaya Samaj which has been recently founded in Wardha. What are the conditions of its membership and rules, etc.?

A. I shall gladly answer the question. Sarvodaya Samaj means the whole of the human society. The Samaj has only one aim: the wellbeing of everyone. And it imposes only one condition: the means to achieve it should be consistent with truth and non-violence. No falsehood or violence should be employed either in our personal or social or public activities. Whoever believes in this principle is a *sevak* of the Samaj. There is no authority in the Samaj, no artificial organization, no elections. Whatever a member does, he will do it in his own name. He can do it alone or found an institution for it. Several items of work have been shown and he can select whichever he chooses. He may not confine himself to the list. He may choose other things also. If he maintains the condition regarding truth and non-violence, he is a *sevak* of the

Sarvodaya Samaj, whatever work he might do. This requires introspection, self-examination. He might have gone wrong before, but if he makes up his mind to abjure falsehood and violence, he could become a *sevak* of the Sarvodaya Samaj and help in bringing the kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

#### THE GOONDA PROBLEM

Q. 7. In spite of our attempts for Hindu-Muslim unity, Muslim *goondas* are again seen creating mischief in the streets of Delhi. What shall we do?

A. We should go to the places where this is reported. But you must understand that there are not *goondas* amongst the Muslims only. There are *goondas* among the Hindus also. *Goondas* are a special class which is common to all communities and so whatever steps you might take against the Hindu *goondas* you might take against the Muslim *goondas* also. Secondly, you must not assume a person to be a *goonda* without proof. Go to the place, get exact information and then try to do what is needful through the Government or the local people.

#### DEARTH OF HOUSES

Q. 8. The refugees are extremely unhappy for want of houses. If there is any room available, the owner wants *pugree*. These people have no means of paying *pugree*. As long as some satisfactory arrangement is not made for the residence of the refugees, how can we ask them to leave Delhi?

A. I know that it is a difficult problem and I shall not be able to give an answer off-hand. The Government is putting in its best efforts, and I can say only how the citizens of Delhi can assist in the matter. If the citizens of Delhi go to the refugee camps and form personal acquaintances with the refugees, they might be able to find that there were some whom they could easily accommodate as neighbours. It is the duty of everyone to do good deeds. Good works cannot be performed by opening a Good Works Department, as military work can be done by opening a Military Department. It is to be done by everyone. There might be some risk in bringing a stranger into the house. But with all circumspection we must be prepared to take some risk. Every important work involves the undertaking of some risk.

#### CONTENTS

	PAGE
QUESTION BOX	...
"NO DEPARTURE FROM "GANDHIJI"	... K. G. MASHRUWALA 89
MAHADEV DESAI (BOMBAY) MEMORIAL TRUST	... K. G. MASHRUWALA 89
TIGHT ROPE DANCING	91
THE TRAGEDY OF KASHMIR	... J. C. KUMARAPPA 91
GANDHIJI'S UTTERANCES ON THE QUESTION OF KASHMIR	... A. K. 92
SHRI K. NATARAJAN	92
WOMEN AND MILITARY TRAINING	... B. G. KHER 92
A CALL TO DAILY PRAYER FOR PEACE	... A. K. 93
IN THE PEACE COMMITTEE AT DELHI	... K. G. MASHRUWALA 93
MAHATMA GANDHI — AN AVATAR	... VINOBA 93
THE BIRLA HOUSE AT DELHI	... A STUDENT OF RELIGIONS 93
A PRECEDENT	... K. G. MASHRUWALA 94
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	... JAMSHED SOHRAB VATCHA 95
NOTES:	95
GANDHI IDOLS	... VINOBA
"FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI"	... A STUDENT OF RELIGIONS 90
	... K. G. M. 92