

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

NOTES

Pandit Jawaharlalji and Sardar Vallabhbhai

Our Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister have been giving for some time past speeches and talks which are very important, instructive, full of wisdom and inspiring. The former in the international field and the latter in the intra-national one have been bringing about radical changes and laying down great principles and moral standards. Both together have been preparing our country to take in the affairs of the world that great position of responsibility and importance, which she held in the past and which naturally belongs to her by her geographical position, large population, noble traditions and above all by having been the mother of Gandhiji.

Sardar Vallabhbhai with his mature wisdom is trying to make Congressmen and the people to shed impurity and mend their ways. And the promptness with which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru acted in regard to the Indonesian question, the lead which he gave to the Asian Powers by his deep understanding of international politics and noble idealism must make us not only proud of our great Prime Minister, but also convince us how correct Gandhiji was in his expectations about him.

I wish it were possible to reproduce at least important parts of the speeches of both these leaders in the columns of the *Harijan* from time to time. But, important as they are, want of space prevents me from doing so. The matter which appears in the *Harijan* is, I believe, such as is vital and yet not to be found in other papers. The speeches of the leaders are promptly and fully reported in important dailies, and the *Harijan* would simply have to copy them from one of these after they had become old. These dailies are, therefore, better vehicles for reading them.

I hope the readers of the *Harijan* do read these speeches elsewhere.

Bombay, 21-1-'49

The Durban Disturbance

Durban became a scene of serious racial disturbances some days ago. It must become an eye-opener to the Indians both there and here. We cannot live in unity and peace elsewhere if we do not do so in India. We cannot get justice and equality elsewhere if we do not have it here.

I understand that the Indians in South Africa, East Africa and other places abroad are copying

there all the evils of the mother country. For instance, there are Hindu Mahasabhaites and Pakistanis or Muslim Leaguers in South Africa and East Africa also. One wonders what is the Hindu Raj or Muslim Raj, or the partition which any of them want to bring about there! I understand that most of the Muslims in South Africa are in India citizens of the Indian Union and they must look to the Indian Government for their protection there. But yet, I am told, they feel like belonging to Pakistan as distinguished from India. Now this is not only injurious to the cause of both Hindus and Muslims there, and of coloured people in general but is also ridiculous. For, they must know that India and Pakistan must work together for the interests of all the coloured people there. They must realize that all Asians in South Africa must stand as one people — one community in South Africa if they want to establish their full citizenship rights there. Their Asianism also must be regarded a temporary affair, i. e. until they have acquired their full citizenship rights in the States of Africa. Their being Indians, Pakistanis, Afghans, Burmese, Chinese or others must be a matter of small consequence, merely a historical past, on the African scene. Its importance is less there than what attaches in India to being a Punjabi, a Sindhi, a Bengali or a Gujarati. If they attach too much importance to these accidents, they do so at their own peril there. Their Government which resists their claims will very conveniently exploit these internal discords and jealousies for its own advantage. If they are united among themselves as Asians, they will know how to unite with the coloured Africans, and if they all are united, they will also discover the way to create amity and unity between the Whites and the coloured, which should be our ultimate goal. Let us remember that all humanity is one, irrespective of differences of colour, race, religion, original habitat etc.

Bombay, 21-1-'49

Thanks

I thank very much the various contributors who in response to my request sent special articles for the issue of 30th January. The first to reach me was from the First Citizen of India. I regret a few of them came too late to be included in that issue. They will be published as soon as convenient. I hope they will excuse me for the delay.

Wardha, 29-1-'49

Twelfth February

I am desired on behalf of the Sarvodaya Samaj to remind readers of the suggestions for the observance of twelfth February published on sixteenth January. They are reproduced below:

"At places where Bapu's ashes have been immersed, *melas* should similarly be held on the twelfth of February, 1949 and the occasion be utilized to imbibe in the minds of the people Bapu's ideals of *Sarvodaya*."

I understand people surrounding Wardha will gather at Pavnar before noon with their *bhajan* parties. Shri Vinoba is expected to conduct the prayer at noon. Pilgrims have been desired to place a hank of self-spun yarn at the foot of the memorial column erected. Each hank will be six hundred and forty rounds with the name and address of the spinner. I suggest organizers should particularly give a place of honour to Harijans, non-Hindus and refugees at such functions.

K. G. M.

Purity of Public Individuals and Institutions

Gandhiji's philosophy of life may be summed up in five short and simple words: "Be clean within and without". For, he seemed to believe wholeheartedly in the truth of the proverb, "Cleanliness is next to godliness". Indeed, he himself was a living and luminous commentary on the wisdom and veracity of this saying.

Therefore, Gandhiji expected every one—particularly, public men and women and the institutions with which they were associated, as these in a way set the pace for the general people's morals and manners—to be "like Caesar's wife" above the suspicion, stigma and stain of sordidness, internal as well as external, of any kind. And it must be said that many an individual and organization that felt the plastic but powerful touch of his personality, strove, during his lifetime, to pursue the ideal of purity of twenty-carat gold.

But, unfortunately, there has been a decided lowering of the moral standard ever since he passed away, about a year ago. The result is that not a few among those who swore by Gandhiji's name have now begun, as an eminent dispassionate critic once observed, to look like straw-stuffed kings, who glittered on the stage only because the floodlight of his radiant soul was thrown on them.

Is it not absolutely essential then, that in the initial stages of our career as a free nation, we should establish traditions, which will help to preserve the probity and purity of the Gandhian pattern in our individual lives as well as in our administration? A mere *material* memorial to Mahatmaji will not make him immortal. It is we who in our lives and labours have to re-create him hourly in the image of immortality by scrupulously pursuing the Gandhian ideal of integrity—in other words, of cleanliness within and without.

G. M.

TRUTH AND NON-VIOLENCE—II

TRUTH

1. Abstract Truth has no value unless it incarnates in human beings who represent it by proving their readiness to die for it. (*Young India*, 22-12-'21, page 424)

SEEING TRUTH IN FRAGMENTS

2. Does not God Himself appear to different individuals in different aspects? Still we know that He is one. But Truth is the right designation of God. Hence there is nothing wrong in everyone following Truth according to his own lights. Indeed, it is his duty to do so. Then if there is a mistake on the part of anyone so following Truth, it will be automatically set right. For, the quest of Truth involves *tapas*—self-suffering, sometimes even unto death. There can be no place in it for even a trace of self-interest. In such selfless search for Truth nobody can lose his bearings for long. Directly he takes to the wrong path he stumbles, and is thus directed to the right path. (*From Yeravda Mandir*, page 3)

3. Q. With regard to your Satyagraha doctrine so far as I understand it, it involves the pursuit of Truth and in that pursuit you invite suffering on yourself and do not cause violence to anybody else.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. However honestly a man may strive in his search for Truth, his notions of Truth may be different from the notions of others. Who then is to determine the Truth?

A. The individual himself would determine that.

Q. Different individuals would have different views as to Truth. Would that not lead to confusion?

A. I do not think so.

Q. Honestly striving after Truth is different in every case?

A. That is why the non-violence part was a necessary corollary. Without that there would be confusion and worse. (*Young India*—1919-20, Tagore & Co's edition, page 29)

THE DIFFUSION OF TRUTH

4. Q. Should we not confine our pursuit of Truth to ourselves and not press it upon the world, because we know that it is ultimately limited in character?

A. You cannot so circumscribe Truth even if you try. Every expression of Truth has in it the seeds of propagation, even as the sun cannot hide its light. (*Studies in Gandhism*, page 206)

5. Spiritual experiences are shared by us whether we wish it or not—by our lives, not by our speech, which is a most imperfect vehicle of experience. Spiritual experiences are deeper even than thought. (*Sabarmati*—1928, page 19)

VOLUNTARY SUFFERING FOR THE SAKE OF LOVE

6. In the application of Satyagraha, I discovered in the earliest stages that pursuit of Truth did not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent, but that he must be weaned from error by patience

and sympathy. For, what appears to be Truth to one may appear to be error to another. And patience means self-suffering. So the doctrine came to mean vindication of Truth, not by infliction of suffering on the opponent, but on one's self. (*Young India*—1919-22, Tagore & Co.'s edition, page 6)

7. The Satyagrahi seeks to convert his opponent by sheer force of character and suffering. The purer and the more he suffers, the quicker the progress. (*Young India*, 18-9-'24, page 306)

8. Nations like individuals can only be made through the agony of the Cross and in no other way. Joy comes not out of infliction of pain on others but out of pain voluntarily borne by oneself. (*Young India*, 31-12-'31, page 418)

9. Suffering, cheerfully endured, ceases to be suffering and is transmuted into an ineffable joy. (*Young India*, 13-10-'21, page 327)

SATYAGRAHA

10. I have no set theory to go by. I have not worked out the science of Satyagraha in its entirety. I am still groping. You can join me in my quest if it appeals to you and you feel the call. (*Harijan*, 27-5-'39, page 136)

11. If we are to make progress, we must not repeat history but make new history. We must add to the inheritance left by our ancestors. If we make new discoveries and inventions in the phenomenal world, must we declare our bankruptcy in the spiritual domain? Is it impossible to multiply exceptions so as to make them the rule? Must man always be brute first and man after, if at all? (*Young India*, 6-5-'26, page 164)

NON-VIOLENCE AND DEMOCRACY

12. True democracy or the Swaraj of the masses can never come through untruthful and violent means for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through the suppression and extermination of the antagonist. That does not make for individual freedom. Individual freedom can have the fullest play under a regime of unadulterated *ahimsa*. (*Harijan*, 27-5-'39, page 143)

13. While violence is directed towards the injury, including the destruction, of the aggressor, and is successful only when it is stronger than that of the opponent, non-violent action can be taken in respect of an opponent, however powerfully organized for violence. Violence *per se* of the weak has never been known to succeed against the stronger in violence. Success of non-violent action of the very weak is a daily occurrence. (*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government—1942-44*, page 179)

14. Indeed the weakest State can render itself immune from attack if it learns the art of non-violence. But a small State, no matter how powerfully armed it is, cannot exist in the midst of a powerful combination of well-armed States. It has to be absorbed by or be under the protection of one of the members of such a combination. (*Harijan*, 7-10-'39, page 293)

15. Science of war leads one to dictatorship pure and simple. Science of non-violence alone can lead one to pure democracy. England, France and America have to make their choice. That is the challenge of the two dictators (Hitler and Mussolini).

Russia is out of the picture just now. Russia has a dictator who dreams of peace and thinks he will wade to it through a sea of blood. No one can say what Russian dictatorship will mean to the world. (*Harijan*, 15-10-'38, page 290)

NON-VIOLENCE IN PRACTICE

16. A believer in non-violence is pledged not to resort to violence or physical force either directly or indirectly in defence of anything, but is not precluded from helping men and institutions that are themselves not based on non-violence. If the reverse were the case, I would, for instance, be precluded from helping India to attain Swaraj because the future Parliament of India under Swaraj, I know for certain, will be having some military and police forces; or, to take a domestic example, I may not help a son to secure justice, because forsooth he is not a believer in non-violence.

There are not wanting men who do believe that complete non-violence means complete cessation of all activity. Not such, however, is my doctrine of non-violence. My business is to refrain from doing any violence myself, and to induce by persuasion and service, as many of God's creatures as I can, to join me in the belief and practice. But I would be untrue to my faith if I refused to assist in a just cause any men and measures that did not entirely coincide with the principle of non-violence. I would be promoting violence, if finding some to be in the right, I did not assist them by means strictly non-violent against those who had treacherously plotted against them. Even when both parties believe in violence, there is often such a thing as justice on one side or the other. A robbed man has justice on his side, even though he may be preparing to regain his lost property by force. And it would be accounted as a triumph of non-violence, if the injured party could be persuaded to regain his property by methods of Satyagraha, i. e. love or soul-force rather than a free fight. (*Young India*, 1-6-'21, page 173)

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HIGH TIDE OF DISHONESTY

It has been urged that just as the receiver and the payer of bribe are both equally guilty in law, so should also both the purchaser and the seller at black-market price be regarded equally guilty of an antisocial act. There is some justification for this plea made on behalf of the trader. I have heard instances in which selfish purchasers have offered sellers black-market prices if the latter obtained for them quantities in excess of those permitted by law.

But what shall we say about adulteration? Is the purchaser equally to blame with the seller for adulterated articles? Adulterated milk is a long-standing dishonest practice. But fortunately the usual adulterant with milk is only water which is a harmless substance. Adulteration of ghee with *vanaspati* is not merely dishonest but also harmful. Maybe, it is not positively poisonous. It was thought that there is an alternative available for it in the shape of simple oil. But oil too has been for some time become an object of adulteration, and that, too, with an absolutely inedible and poisonous substance in the shape of "white oil". It is a refined form of kerosene oil. I have been continually receiving letters complaining that pure edible oil has become as difficult to get now as pure ghee.

Has the trading community lost all sense of *dharma* (duty to the society) and morals? Why have they become so callous, so selfish, so very blind to the wellbeing of their countrymen, and so brutally shameless?

We all know the fratricidal wave that passed over India in 1946-'47. It required Gandhiji's "Do or Die" mission from East Bengal to Kashmir, and two fasts unto death to control it. He both did it and died for it.

May it be that the high tide of dishonesty and asocialism in trade and other walks of life demands similar acts of self-immolation and martyrdom by some earnest souls? Will the conscience of the trading community not awaken unless it is violently shaken by some earnest servant of the people?

Let us all realize that we have got to rise to a higher moral level than the present. Our present degeneration can only lead to chaos and collapse on all sides. Our condition will not be better than that of China, unless we improve — not economically — but morally first.

And to this end, all those who believe in the ideal of *Sarvodaya* must work earnestly and devotedly. No sacrifice is too great if it can raise the moral and social sense of the people even to a hundredth part of an inch and I earnestly appeal to traders, the great bulk of whom belong to the same class of people as Gandhiji, to turn their

ears inwards and hear the voice of conscience. They cannot save themselves while others suffer by their misdeeds.

Bombay, 21-1-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

PROSELYTIZATION

Some months ago Shri Parikshitlal Majmudar, the well-known servant of the Harijans in Gujarat, had sent to me for publication an appeal addressed to the Christian missionaries. In view of the removal of untouchability by law, he asked them to help the fulfilment of the law and the cause of the Harijans by closing their special schools for the Harijans. He pleaded that their schools, if at all, should be converted now into general schools open for all and should be in localities accessible to all. They should also help the Harijan workers by advising and inducing the Harijans to send their children to general schools.

I felt that though the law and the Government policy were now clear, the attitude of the *savarnas* was not as friendly as it ought to be, and so the Christian missionaries should not be dissuaded from carrying on their educational activities, and that there was no harm in special Harijan schools also being run side by side with general schools. I consulted Shri Thakkarbapa also in the matter, and he agreed with me and asked Shri Parikshitlal Majmudar to withhold the appeal for the time being.

In the appeal Shri Parikshitlal Majmudar referred to the proselytizing activity carried on by the missionaries under the guise of education. In fact that was their principal object, education, medical aid and other humanitarian services being employed only as means to the former. Shri Parikshitlal Majmudar's urge to make the appeal arose from the anti-Hindu attitude behind this service.

If I were convinced that conversion to Christianity was in the spiritual interest of the Harijans, I, for one, would not mind even their change of the religious label. It is of the utmost importance that a person should get the spark which would create in him an urge to lead a life of goodness, that is of truthfulness, righteousness, hope, love, charity, service, humility and other virtues, and if for any reason, conversion to another religion can impart it, it is better that he should live a pure and enlightened life through conversion rather than carry on an impure and dark one in the faith of his forefathers.

But the several institutional religions of the world have as such long ceased to possess any special capacity to impart such spark to their respective followers. Instead of being a force for binding men together into a great and common fellowship, they have become a disruptive force, creating dissensions among people and dividing them into different societies. They have given different names for the One Who is Nameless, and devised different patterns for worshipping Him, and they teach that the name of the Nameless One and the pattern of worship which they have inherited from

their *gurus* is the only true and efficacious one. No wonder then that thereafter they adopt different types of personal names, dress, rules of etiquette, mode of living, marriage, inheritance and other social details, so that they may become as distinctly different as possible from the fellow-beings of a different religious label. A Walji becomes William or Walli Mahomed, a Dulaji—Donald or Daulat-khan, a Muli—Mary or Mariam and so on. It is well known that the Harijans do not generally have even the well-sounding names of the Hindus. They are content with calling their children Walia, Dhulia, Kukda, Ramla, and so on. Young children attending these schools are arbitrarily assigned by their Christian teachers well-sounding European names such as William, James, George, Valentine, Mary, Lily and so on. Even men of upper societies are known to have become fascinated by such names. It cannot be wondered at that young children accept these names favourably. Then, gradually, they are induced to believe that they have become Christians. And thus the school becomes a factory for manufacturing Christians!

I write this on the strength of a complaint sent by the *chamaras* (hide-tanners) of a village in Gujarat.

I request the Christian missionary institutions to consider their position and duty in a true religious spirit. Gandhiji used to say that he was a full Christian without accepting baptism in any Church, and a full Muslim without uttering the *kalma*; he was also as full a Sikh, a Buddhist and a Jain as any devout follower of any of them, and he never failed to declare that he was also a *sanatani* Vaishnava Hindu in which he was born. The truth was that he was a devotee and follower of Truth and not of any labelled institution or system.

We may happen to have been born in a society with a particular religious label. But let us not make the mistake of attaching too much importance to it. And if we cannot drop the consciousness and pride of the label inherited by us, let us at least refrain from affixing it to persons who are without it, and let us not under any circumstances induce anyone to cast off one's old label and take the one given by us. It is a disservice to the people of India to create institutions which will divide them socially into unmiscible groups.

Even the acceptance of Christ or Mahomed as an agent between God and oneself should not be accompanied with change of names, mode of life, rules of marriage, inheritance etc. The sting of conversion will have gone if the change of faith does not mean complete break off from the old society.

The Hindus also would do well not to attach importance to the pattern in which one wants to approach God. Even as they do not care if one Hindu worships Rama and another Krishna or Shiva, so too they should not mind if one of their members pays homage to Christ or Mahomed and should not expel him from their society. It will remove the incentive to proselytization.

Bombay, 2-1-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE SEVAGRAM PACIFIST CONFERENCE

1. A Conference of Pacifists has been held at Sevagram on January 26th to the 28th under the the presidency of Dr. Rajendraprasad, attended by over 40 persons from all parts of India and several from Europe and America. The Conference endorses the plan approved before his death by Gandhiji to convene a World Meeting of men and women who accept the principle of non-violence; we decide that the main meeting shall be held at Santiniketan from December 1 to 8, 1949; that opportunities be arranged for the delegates from outside India to visit religious, social, educational and other institutions and personalities during the latter part of December, especially those connected with Gandhiji's life and work; and that the delegates meet together again for a few days in early January, 1950 at Sevagram. We invite the public to take part in the preparations for this meeting and to form local groups or committees to discuss the application of the principles of non-violence to the conflicts among classes and nations. We hope they will correspond with the Organizing Secretary of the World Pacifist Meeting, Hiralal Bose, 1, Upper Wood Street, Calcutta.

2. Fifty active workers for peace have been invited from Asia, Africa, Europe, America and Australia to attend the World Meeting of Pacifists to be held in India next winter. It was the desire of Gandhiji that India, as the inviting country, should have the privilege of paying the full expenses of those who accept the invitation; we note that the expenses of a number of the foreign delegates are being met by their own countries; we shall still need Rs. 2,50,000 (Rupees two lakhs and fifty thousand) to meet expenses in India and the travel of some of those coming from other countries; and we invite those who are concerned for world peace to respond generously to this appeal.

3. This Conference urges our Governments and peoples to remind themselves constantly of the remarkable success of the use of non-violence in the attainment of Indian freedom and earnestly to seek those forms of non-violent expression which are needed today to settle difficult problems and situations; the Conference views with concern the introduction of military training in educational institutions; we are conscious of our own failure to express truth and non-violence in our own lives; but we desire to unite with all men of goodwill in seeking for positive measures to induce peace-mindedness in the people generally, especially in the rising generation.

4. This Conference is convinced that there is a clear need for a fellowship in India whose primary concern will be to help in the realization of a world order based on truth and non-violence. Membership will be open to all who accept truth and non-violence as a rule of life.

The main purposes of such a fellowship will be:

1. To strive for the realization in India of an order of society based on truth and non-violence;
2. To work for the removal of the causes of conflict among groups and nations;
3. To aid in the healing of the wounds of conflict;

4. To promote international understanding and a world-wide acceptance of truth and non-violence as a basis of living through such means as the personal interchange of experiences; and to organize local or general Peace Units for allaying conflicts in an effective manner;

5. To undertake any other measures consistently with truth and non-violence for establishing world peace.

5. The Executive Committee of the World Pacifist Meeting is requested to give effect to the above resolutions.

SUCCESS OF THE COMPOST SCHEME

Referring to the article *Why even good Schemes Become Useless?* and the article published in the *Harijansevak* of 22-8-'48 by Shri Balwantsinghi of Sevagram, there is no doubt that in order to ensure the success of the compost scheme, all its activities must be carried out in a language which our cultivator brothers can properly understand. Therefore, the cultivators of Bengal should be addressed in Bengali, the cultivators of Maharashtra in Marathi and the cultivators of Gujarat in Gujarati; and so far as I know, this is the procedure being adopted all over. Recently a conference of compost specialists was held at Nagpur on the 5th, 6th and 7th July, 1948 at which measures to overcome the difficulties experienced by experts in the various parts of the country in making the compost scheme completely successful and thereby making compost a useful and living manure were discussed. Most of the discussions at this conference took place in English owing to the lack of adequate technical words in our Indian languages. But it is wrong to presume that thereby either the conveners or the members taking part in the discussion have any less regard or respect for their mother-tongues.

The second question raised by the learned writer and finding a practical solution to it have been engaging the attention of persons concerned with the scheme for quite a long time. We are ourselves trying to find a simple and useful means to this end. Removal of glass, brickbats and pieces from town refuse at the time of its conversion into manure increases its cost to such an extent that its use becomes financially uneconomic. The suggestion made by the writer cannot be brought into practice successfully at least today when the urban population is not enlightened enough to deposit its refuse at a fixed spot, viz. the dust-bin, the main reason for this being the lack of a sense of social cleanliness and neglect in the discharge of one's civic duties. It is a common sight in every town that there is more refuse lying near the dust-bin than actually inside it. Taking into account this sad state of affairs, it is wrong to hope, that if the municipal bodies provide separate dust-bins, it will be possible to collect refuse material useful for the soil and manure separated from the harmful and undesirable matter. Therefore it is very essential to educate every citizen to collect the useful and non-useful portions of town wastes separately before this suggestion can be put into actual practice.

If we are to keep pace with other advanced nations of the world, the need of the moment is that not only our cultivators but all Indians — rural and urban residents alike — must properly understand that it is their sacred duty to repay to Mother Earth the loan of plant food borrowed in the shape of vegetation and food. Once this awakening takes place, all residents of our land will be able to understand the importance of compost like the Chinese and the Japanese.

In the attainment of complete success in this mission we very badly need social education and demonstrational propaganda as well as a sense of discipline, nationalism and duty among the administration, local bodies and social workers.

Jubbulpore

K. S. K. RAO

Government Biochemist, Compost Scheme.

[NOTE: I do not see much difference between the opinions of Shri Balwantsingh and Sri Krishna Rao. The reason advanced that want of proper technology in the Indian languages is responsible for the use of the English language is hardly right. It is best to acknowledge the facts and these are that we are so much used to speak in English that several of us find it difficult to speak in the mother-tongue; and secondly in meetings where high class officers of several provinces, many of whom cannot understand or speak the common language, meet in conference, nothing else is practicable. And this will continue as long as we do not earnestly attempt to speak in the common language. As to technical terms, let us remember that there are several agriculturists intelligent enough to understand scientific principles of practical importance without bothering about technical terms, and can not only learn from but also give something to the experts themselves from their rich experience. But they are unable to take advantage of such conferences on account of the hurdle of English.]

Shri Krishna Rao complains of the ignorance and negligence of the people. Shri Balwantsingh also emphasizes this fact. It is necessary to train the people in this respect in every manner. This should be a part of the adult education campaign. This adult education has to be imparted not only to the illiterates but even to the degree-holders of universities and members and office-bearers of municipalities and legislatures and Government servants.

Shri Krishna Rao has argued that removal of glass etc. from town refuse at the time of conversion into the manure would make it extremely costly. There is some truth in it. But then, the remedy is partly for the purchaser to pay a little higher price for obtaining the right substance, and secondly, since the owners of refuse are responsible for the cleaning expenses its cost should be charged to the city and town people. It is not proper that the cultivator should have to purchase at an apparently lower rate a substance which is really harmful for his fields.

Bombay, 1-1-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA]

THE ESSENCE OF RELIGIONS

Leaving ultimate problems to metaphysicians and dogmas to theologians, let us turn to the indubitable facts of life to get at the essence of religions.

In the heart of every creature we find a desire for happiness without limit. The lower species follow this instinctively while in man it becomes a self-conscious effort. So it is evident that this desire for perfect wellbeing lies at the very heart of the universe manifesting itself more and more as life evolves.

In his ignorance man seeks it chiefly for himself in his savage state, and gradually following the moral tendency of self-sacrifice more and more is able to form a family, a tribe, and a nation and a citizenship of the world, thus making more humane laws for the guidance of society.

All this is possible through a curbing of his desire for personal happiness at the expense of his fellow-beings. In other words, the individual begins to recognize slowly the right of other beings also to gain that happiness.

That is how the urge of the life of the universe, call it God or whatever we like, gradually expands till the more evolved members of human society begin to find that they are able to attain to greater and greater happiness through a conscious recognition of the universal urge for welfare, even by a complete surrender of the personal desire.

In fact, the more evolved individual had already begun to find that perfect happiness was impossible for him when he sought it selfishly for himself, because he was opposed therein by all other creatures who similarly sought it for themselves and because the objects of desire were limited and perishing, while the desire was infinite. And even if a strong, energetic and intelligent person could take a great deal by trampling over others, he had to guard it through a similar struggle and had to leave everything behind at death. Not only that but each object gained ceased to yield that full happiness which he expected from it.

Somehow the universe which had placed this urge in him seemed to be frustrating it all along. This is the "contradiction of life" as Tolstoy puts it. Therefore, being disappointed, the individual changed his method and found that as he tried to desire and work for the welfare of his fellows and did not stand in the way of their happiness, he gained that happiness more than before. So he made the discovery that he failed in achieving perfect happiness because he was opposing the will of the universe which desired the happiness of all and not only of one at the expense of others.

And as he began to recognize this will of the universe or God, and tried to harmonize himself with it and to follow it, the personal happiness which he had missed welled up within him more and more.

When we love ourselves we desire our own welfare; but when we desire the wellbeing of others, then we love others. And when we recognize this universal will and try to follow its dictates, we are beginning to recognize God and follow His will.

That is how through justice at first and mercy and forgiveness and compassion and love later on,

we are able to find God. The approach is through righteousness, as all religions teach; and prayer, devotion, and meditation are the moods of self-surrender and identification with the spirit of the universe.

There is strife and struggle in the animal world which man has inherited; but there is also the moral element dimly visible even in the animal stages. Owing to the thick veil of ignorance which surrounds the personality as its very condition, beings strive against each other in trying to gain their desires. Thus they cause pain and suffering to others and rouse violent reactions in them which bring pain and suffering to themselves sooner or later. Not only that but invisible links are formed which bring about opportunities for retribution, here and hereafter, whether we can see it or not. At any rate, suffering overtakes us, sooner or later, if we have caused it to others.

Through this pain we begin to learn that others too suffer through us as we suffer from them. So this pain in time becomes the means of awakening sympathy in us for others when our consciousness has been clarified through the stress of pain and desire for happiness. That is how the moral sense evolves in us as intelligence has done in the animal and human species. And when this sympathy arises and grows, which is an indication of the unity of all life, man attains first to justice and then love. And as love is God, man attains to God whom he has found through this awakening of consciousness within himself.

To sum up: Man found little happiness or none, but suffering instead, when he did not obey the will of God, or did so partially. He found it fully when he began to see that will and began to follow it finding the complete happiness which he sought before in vain.

Is this a mere speculation? And what are its proofs? Firstly, the witness of all the seers and prophets of all times who found it revealed to them. Secondly, our own reason when it becomes clarified. Thirdly, and which is most important, positive experience. Let any one try to live unselfishly and serve his fellow-beings in obedience to this will of God for an hour in a day, for a day in a week, for a week in a month, for a month in a year: and if he does not find himself much happier than before, though he suffers loss and even death in extreme cases, let him reject this teaching as false and useless.

This is the essence of religions. It can be found by any earnest seeker, through a comparative study of religions, as earnest souls like Leo Tolstoy and M. K. Gandhi have done.

But if we are unable to do this, and feel no urge for it then we shall find it one day, however remote, through the path of passing pleasure and more lasting pain, which is the process of God who is the life of this universe.

In its essence the heart of the universe is absolute Being, Sentience and Bliss (or Peace). In manifestation it is the desire for happiness which is Love, the purpose being the formation of personality. And every creature strives for it and finally attains that full happiness by seeing the life

of God in every one, but without losing itself utterly retaining a thin translucent veil of personality.

This is the Essence of Religion.

Simla, 1944 A STUDENT OF RELIGIONS
LETTERS FROM YERAVDA MANDIR

(By M. K. Gandhi)

I

[Gandhiji used to call his prison a *mandir* or temple, the temple for him of liberty spiritual as well as political. When he was in Yeravda mandir in 1932 Mahadev Desai joined him in March, and kept a diary in which besides entering the events of the day he copied *in extenso* or in part the numerous letters Gandhiji wrote to members of the Ashram as well as outsiders. For instance he noted that on the 14th of March Gandhiji wrote as many as 42 letters to Ashramites besides the half-a-dozen letters written to others. In course of an English letter to an Ashramite, he wrote the following. V. G. D.]

In working out plans of self-restraint, attention must not for a moment be withdrawn from the fact that we are all sparks of the divine and therefore partake of its nature, and since there can be no such thing as self-indulgence with divine, it must of necessity be foreign to human nature. If we get a heart-grasp of that elementary fact, we should have no difficulty in attaining self-control, and that is exactly what is implied in the Gita verses we sing every evening. You will recall that one of the verses says that the craving for self-indulgence abates only when one sees God face to face.

II

[To a couple who sent a printed letter to him, mentioning the fact of their marriage and asking for his blessing]

We wish you would both render disinterested service. That the request for blessings should have been made on a printed card detracts from its value. If you seek blessings you should write in your own hand and state some good resolutions you have made to mark the auspicious event. (Translated from Gujarati)

III

Beauty must be praised, but the praise should be mute. And you must enjoy it by giving it up (तेन त्यक्तेन युजियतः). A man who is not moved by the beauty of the sky is incapable of being moved by anything at all. But one would prove himself to be a fool if he began to build a flight of steps in a vain attempt to reach the heavens. (Translated from Gujarati)

IV

[Addressed to a girl who wanted to observe *brahmacharya*]

In observing *brahmacharya* the chief thing is to realize the brotherhood of all men. We are all the children of our Father. And therefore marriage is not to be thought of. Take food as you would take medicine, and not in order to gratify the palate. Keep mind and body fully engaged in acts

of service. Meditate on God as Truth (सत्यनारायण). If you clearly see that it is your duty to shave the head clean, by all means remove the hair and never care for what people would say. Your devotion to God should express itself as ministry to man.

Passions are our real enemies, with whom we must wage eternal quarrel. This war alone is the theme of the Mahabharata. (Translated from Hindi)

[The six internal enemies of man are enumerated in the following verse:

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभो मदमोहौ च मत्सरः ।

'Lust, anger, greed, pride, delusion and envy.' Christianity lists these as the seven deadly sins: pride, wrath, envy, lust, gluttony, avarice and sloth. V. G. D.]

V

[Addressed to the children in the Ashram. Written on March 21, 1932]

Do you remember my definition of God? Instead of saying that God is Truth, I say that Truth is God. This was not always clear to me. I realized it only 4 years ago, but my conduct has been unconsciously based on that realization. I have known God only as Truth. There was a time when I had doubts about the existence of God, but I never doubted the existence of Truth. This Truth is not something material but pure intelligence. It rules over the universe; therefore It is Ishvara (the Lord) . . . This is for me almost a matter of experience. I say almost, because I have not seen Truth face to face. I have had only glimpses of it. But my faith is indomitable. (Translated from Gujarati)

VI

[To a sufferer from asthma]

Write to Dr. . . . But I may suggest that you must fast for three days and break the fast with milk and orange juice. (Translated from Gujarati)

[After dictating this letter Gandhiji said, 'I have made this experiment on my clients who besides legal advice received medical advice also. There was one Lutavansinh who observed a fast and then lived on rice, milk and marmalade for a month. At the end of the month he was free from asthma. I also induced him to give up tobacco.'

V. G. D.]

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