

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor : K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

VILLAGE SERVICE *

A 'village' in the popular mind is associated with small habitations in the rural areas. In India we have lakhs of villages. The population of these villages live generally in huts and they are mostly dependent upon agriculture both as a means of livelihood and as a way of life. There may be in the villages some small cottage industries generally allied to agriculture, but agriculture is the main occupation. These villages, generally speaking, lack all amenities. There are no medical facilities nor good communications and very few villages contain schools either. It is these villages which Gandhiji had chiefly in mind and it was their welfare which he had so much at heart. The great Kasturba National Trust founded by him for the welfare of the women and children of India living in villages is expressly limited to villages whose population does not exceed 2,000. It is in these villages that old and harmful social customs and superstitions prevail and where people are still so steeped in ignorance that the need for beneficent work is the greatest.

Townships or small towns with a population of 5,000 to 10,000 or even 15,000 should not definitely be regarded as villages. They have large numbers, if not hundreds, of pucca houses. They possess hospitals and dispensaries and high schools, if not Intermediate Colleges. There are plenty of shops and the residents carry on different occupations and do not depend wholly or even partially on agriculture. As compared to Calcutta and even because of proximity to Calcutta they may be stagnant pools but they are not villages. Most of them are centres of unions and some of them are small municipalities. Many residents of those places which are near to Calcutta or Howrah come over to the city daily as office workers or otherwise. To call these places villages will be a misnomer and to make such villages centres of village uplift activities will again, in my opinion, be a wrong procedure.

I suggest that my fellow Rotarians, if they are interested in the rural welfare movement, should definitely select one or more real, genuine villages for their good activities.

* From a note addressed to the Rotary Clubs of Calcutta and Howrah.

Then there is another experience which I should like to share with my fellow Rotarians. I have found that in this social welfare work it is not money that counts. It is the personal endeavour and personal identification with those whom you want to benefit that count. You may succeed in improving the villagers permanently, if you go and live among them, by your personal example and by your precept. But if you merely spend your money on them by establishing, let us say, a primary school or a social welfare centre, then it is really working, so to say, on sand. While the institution is there, villagers will take advantage of it, but as soon as it ceases to function, they will relapse into their ignorance and there will be no signs of improvement visible. This aspect of the problem influenced Gandhiji and he stressed the establishment of *ashrams* where wholtime workers might go and live among the villagers and share their daily life and inculcate in them habits of self-help.

Then again it is not sufficient that the residents of an *ashram* or a social welfare centre should themselves do some work for the benefit of the villagers, such as improving village sanitation, etc. What is necessary is that the villagers should themselves be made improvement-minded. Young men and women should be organized and should be taught and helped to work for themselves. The workers should go and with the help and active co-operation of the villagers themselves sow the seed of improvement so that in a few years the seed might grow into a good, healthy tree and continue to flourish on its own without extraneous help. I quite recognize that to ask a city man to go and live in a village may be a counsel of perfection. Very few people would be able to do so and such demand might be an idle one. But what cannot be done individually is perfectly feasible for a group of persons acting collectively. I would, therefore, suggest that a number of Rotarians interested in village welfare work should join together and establish a home of their own in one or more selected villages. That house should be permanently occupied and it should be made to appear as if another family had come to reside in the village. As many Rotarians or members of any particular group may go and live there day and night as they conveniently can, but

there must be in residence throughout the year at least one member in rotation. Supposing a group consists of 14 people, then they might among themselves settle the rota and one of them should go and pass at least one day and night every fortnight in this community centre in the village.....it should be just like another home in the village and in no way very grand or out of keeping with the normal village home. It should be a model of cleanliness and good sanitation and hygiene. It should have a small yard with a well for drinking water and some flowers so that the villagers might come and enjoy the company of the Rotarian family. The inmates should treat themselves just as one family in the village and take part in all the village festivals and all village activities and share the villagers' joys and sorrows. A medicine chest might be kept and household medicines distributed. The villagers should be organized for their own improvement.....

While advice should be available, the initiative in the field work should be theirs. There are immense possibilities in this procedure. There may be a regular village cleaning drive from time to time. A vocational centre might be established, a good primary school opened and cottage industries encouraged and developed.

Care, however, must be taken that the life that the inmates live should be just like the clean life of an ordinary villager. Food should be simple and by no means luxurious, nor should be so the apartments and the furniture in the house. There should be no air of patronage. Villagers should be made to feel that people who have come to live amongst them have come not in a patronizing mood to do good to them but really to ennoble themselves and enrich their own life by living among simple, truthful village folk. This is not merely conventional language. My experience has been that I learn and profit much more from visiting a village than any benefit that I may confer on the villagers themselves by my going there.

Work undertaken on these lines is bound to have far-reaching results. The home established will become a model for all other homes in the village and the villagers will learn how to improve themselves. Money will definitely be required, but.....this money should not be wasted, and it should be coupled with personal effort and personal example so that it may yield maximum results.

KAILASNATH KATJU

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THE SANTINIKETAN PILGRIMAGE

III

When a great and towering personality like Gurudev passes away leaving an orphaned institution behind, the question always arises as to what can or should take his place. A successor of an equal calibre is rarely, if ever, available. Moreover, Santiniketan was the child of Gurudev's poetical inspiration. It had not been built according to a cut and dried plan. It had gradually grown. While Gurudev was there he served as the living nexus between the various departments and activities of Santiniketan. They got naturally linked up through his all-enveloping and co-ordinating personality. What could be done to restore that inspiration? Gandhiji's reply was that Gurudev could not be made to order. No single individual could take Gurudev's place but they could all corporately represent his ideal if each one put the institution first in all things and himself last.

On the evening of the 19th December, the heads of the various departments met Gandhiji in an informal conference to place their difficulties before him and seek his guidance. Gandhiji asked them not to hesitate to tell him if the institution had fallen from the ideals which Gurudev had put before them. "Regard me as a blank slate. So far I have had only hearsay and hearsay has very little place in my life. Solid facts are what I want. Without a full knowledge of facts I shall be able to do little to help you."

Noting some hesitation on their part he resumed: "It is not that you have nothing to say. That would mean that the institution is perfect. But nothing in this world is perfect. Speak to me freely about the shortcomings. Good things speak for themselves, not the bad things, at any rate, not to me."

Nandababu broke the ice. The number of students in his department had been steadily increasing. Kalabhavana had begun as a studio. But it had now become a teaching institution. Teaching and administrative work made heavy inroads upon his time and the art suffered. The chief difficulty was to find a suitable successor who would command the willing allegiance of his colleagues and at the same time worthily represent the spirit of the institution.

Several other difficulties were mentioned. Rathibabu spoke about the finances. Kshitibabu complained that young men of promise who came there for training were lured away by the prospect of distinction and remuneration when their training was complete. "Santiniketan has become like the proverbial crow's nest hatching cuckoo's eggs." Anilbabu complained that the university department of the Vishvabharati had queered the pitch. Shri Bibhutibhusan Gupta mentioned the complication arising from the admission of day scholars. Shri Krishna Kripalani voiced the dilemma of the whole group when he complained that they felt like the crew

of a vessel without the helmsman. "We have no clear conception as to whither we are drifting, what we want to be."

After they had all finished Gandhiji began :

"I have followed every word of what you have said with the keenest interest and I have learned a lot from it. I do not propose to make detailed observations on what has been said or to give expression to all that is welling up in me just now but shall confine myself to one or two remarks of a general character.

"As I listened while Nandababu and Kshiti-mohanbabu were speaking, I said to myself : 'Here is a real difficulty but it is a difficulty of our own making.' If a person conducts a big department he is expected to transmit what he stands for to someone who can be termed as his successor. Yet it is the dominant cry of these two stalwarts that they are unable to find a suitable successor for their respective departments. True, these are departments of a special character. I know these departments and I know too Gurudev's views about them. Speaking generally, may I venture to suggest that there is no difficulty but can be overcome by *tapashcharya* ? It is almost an untranslatable word, the nearest approach to its true meaning being perhaps 'single-minded devotion'. But it means much more than that. Whenever, in the course of my multifarious activities, I have been confronted with a difficulty of this character, this single-minded devotion has solved my difficulty in a manner which I had never expected. During my twenty long years in God-forsaken South Africa, where under circumstances of the worst kind conceivable I found my God, it was my invariable experience that the right helper appeared at the right moment.

"It is my conviction which I arrived at after a long and laborious struggle that Gurudev as a person was much superior to his work or even his institution where he soared and sang. He poured his whole soul into it and nurtured it with his life's blood and yet I dare say that his greatness was not fully expressed by it or through it. That is perhaps true of all great and good men—they are better and greater than their works. If, then, you are to represent that goodness or greatness for which Gurudev stood but which he could not express fully even through this institution, you can do it only through *tapashcharya*.

"There is a remarkable string of verses in the *Tulsi Ramayana* to the effect that what is not possible through other means becomes possible through *tapashcharya*. This is said with reference to Parvati. Narada had prophesied that she would have for her companion-in-life one who answered to the description of Shiva. If instead of Shiva those characteristics were met in the person of a rogue her life would be ruined. How to avert such a calamity was the pro-

blem and it is in that context that the verses to which I have referred come. I commend these verses to you for your careful perusal. Only you will have to strip them of their orthodoxy.

"Finances were mentioned by you in the course of discussion. I will plead with you to dismiss from your thoughts the word 'finance' altogether. I am convinced that lack of finances never represented a real difficulty to a sincere worker. Finances follow—they dog your footsteps if you represent a real cause. Here, let me utter a warning. A worker may be real and yet the cause he represents may not be real. His handicap in that case will continue. There are, of course, seeming exceptions. The world is full of fools and successful rogues. But speaking of sincere men and women, it is my faith that if their cause is as worthy as their means, the handicap of finance need never deter them or damp their ardour. It is a big thing you have undertaken and in future you may have to undertake still bigger things and the question will be raised, "What about the finances?" I would plead with you in that event not to waste a thought on finances and you will find that the difficulty lies somewhere else rather than in the lack of finances. Set it right and the finances will take care of themselves."

To Shri Bibhutibhushan Gupta, Gandhiji said : "Yours is a common difficulty. You cannot ride two horses at the same time. If you mix day scholars with full time students, the former will overshadow and spoil the training of the latter. Your institution was not designed for the mixture."

"Then it was said by Krishna Kripalani," continued Gandhiji, "that they did not know what they were aiming at or stood for, what the sum total of the energies of Santiniketan and Shriniketan signified. My answer is that the ideal before you is not to represent Bengal or even India; you have to represent the whole world. Gurudev's claim was not smaller than that. He stood for humanity as a whole. He could not do that unless he represented India with its destitute, dumb millions. That should be your aspiration as well. Unless you represent the mass mind of India, you will not represent Gurudev as a man. You may represent him as a singer, as a painter, or as a great poet; but you won't represent him, and history will say of Gurudev that his institution was a failure. I do not want history to give that verdict."

Rathibabu had asked that Gandhiji should allot to Santiniketan a longer period of stay every year. "I agree," replied Gandhiji, "that if my claim that I am one of you is to be fully vindicated I ought to be here in your midst for a longer time. I would love to do so. But my future dispositions are in the hands of God."

PYARELAL

HARIJAN

August 7

1949

ANIMAL TRANSPORT

A correspondent from Katol (C. P.) writes :

"You have suggested in the columns of the *Harijan* that along with railway and motor transport, other means of transport should also be maintained. But it seems that Government bent upon mechanization would rather do the opposite of maintaining them. If you wish, you can get a lot of information about this in the administration of the municipalities of all towns. Animal transport has to face a number of hardships including rough treatment at *octroi* posts by municipal demigods, who have to be cajoled and satisfied in various ways by poor villagers. Railway and motor transport is generally free from these.

"Take this very place. The bullock-cart is the usual means of transport between Nagpur and Katol for carrying such market articles as cutlery, yarn, grain, etc. ex-Nagpur and oranges, mangoes, etc. ex-Katol. A section of one mile of the Nagpur-Katol road passes through the municipal limits of Kalameshwar. That municipality levies Re. 0-8-0 as *octroi* duty per cart each way, i.e. Re. 1 for a return journey while motor transport is free from this duty."

The well-known Harijan-sevak, Shri V. N. Barve, from Dhulia, supplements the above with the following :

"You have done well in stressing the importance of maintaining other means of transport also with railway and motor transport. Perhaps you might have learnt that a few days ago kerosene was distributed rather extravagantly in Bombay, so that people used kerosene stoves instead of coal, etc. for cooking and other purposes. The reason for this was, I found, that due to unavailability of wagons to export kerosene from Bombay, too much kerosene had accumulated in the city, and had to be disposed of. So it was all distributed locally. Had there been other means of transport also functioning, such a situation as 'plenty in Bombay and empty outside' would not have arisen. That railway and motor transport is cheaper than animal transport does make a problem requiring a solution."

The first letter shows how the policy of local self-government bodies far from encouraging animal transport is actually destructive to it and harmful to village uplift. It must be stopped in the first place. If one cannot oblige, one must not at least obstruct another.

The question of cheapness of railway and motor transport has to be considered from two sides. First, let us inquire why it is cheaper than animal transport. It will be seen that one great cause is that both railways and motors received and continuously receive help in various ways from government and local self-government bodies. For years together, financial aid and assurances were given to railways. Government acquires lands for them whenever necessary and constructs and maintains good roads at public cost in the interest of motor and railway traffic. At some places carts driven by bullocks are even prohibited the use of metal-

led roads. Nobody thinks what strain it is to bullocks pulling a loaded loosely built village cart on a dusty tract. There are extensive factories for building comfortable coaches, trucks, wagons, etc. Governors and ministers perform their opening ceremonies at a cost of not a few hundred rupees for each function. No attempts have been made to improve the cart, which retains the same provincial or other pattern, which the forefathers of the villagers devised centuries ago. No attempts are also made to raise a breed of stronger bullocks. Surat once claimed to have a breed of race-bullocks as distinguished from plough and load bullocks, as they have these two kinds of horses in Europe. I do not know if any such distinction was thought of elsewhere. If it is realized that the bullock has a better claim to our attention than the inanimate railways and motors to use the road, that mode of transport will not remain as cheap as at present. Imagine a railway train or a motor truck being made to go through village roads, and calculate what it would cost to make it move a mile.

Secondly, as I have pointed out in my article *Second Line*, this problem is not to be considered from the point of view of apparent money cost. If it is realized that railway and motor transport system alone is not adequate for the country's requirements, it is necessary that the nation's economy should be so adjusted that all the man and animal power is fully and productively employed irrespective of money cost as we might do in war. All methods of production are then utilized—even hand-knitting of socks and sweaters for the army. We bear the military expenditure, whatever it comes to, because both the people and the government rightly or wrongly think that if it is not so done, the country might be attacked, defeated and lost. The problem of village industries and animal transport should also be viewed in the same light. When a dear one is on death bed, even the poor man engages the services of a doctor, incurring expenses beyond his means. In war no sacrifice either in men or money is considered too great. The same analogy should apply in the consideration of this problem.

Matters of policy are not initially adjusted to budgets; budgets are adjusted to policies. If the nation decides to go to war, or to start huge armament factories, it finds money for it anyhow. If it decides that it must have prosperous village life, rich cultivation, milkful cows, handsome and strong bullocks, asses, camels, horses, better ploughs, efficient *charkhas*, looms, carts and other instruments and vehicles as an inevitable condition for growing more food the budget and not only the budget but education, research, social etiquette and customs, laws of marriage and inheritance, have all to be adjusted to make these possible. Cheapness is an elusive term. That which kills life cannot be cheap. We know at our bitter cost and experience how

expensive our killings and incendiarisms have been during the last three years. Life appeared in the world when the earth had sufficiently cooled and settled down, so that it might express itself and evolve and bloom as trees do in spring and crops in the monsoon. It could not do so and cannot subsist in a world which is flying with storms like the mad plane which crashed a few days ago in Bombay. Human life cannot evolve and prosper if it is continually trying to create, as if it were, biotic cyclones, hailstorms, dust storms and the like through its speedy machines and large scale productions and transport.

Wardha, 24-7-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

NOTES

Hunger for Income !

"Permits for drinks will be issued liberally for all foreigners intending to tour India as part of the campaign to stimulate tourist traffic to this country."

(*The Times of India*, 23-7-'49).

What may not a hungry person do ? says a Sanskrit proverb. No less a person than the sage Vishwamitra has been described in Sanskrit religious literature as having stolen the flesh of the hind leg of a dog's carcass from the hut of a *chandal* ! So in order to attract foreign tourists to our country, we might cater to their needs, whether virtuous or vicious ! Even when the whole country goes totally sober, the foreigner will be enabled to become mad with drink, wherever he moves about. One does not know what else might not be sought by him and provided by us. The reason is that we want his money. The more drinkers and pleasure-seekers come to our country, the more shall we gain both in finance and vice !

And since the tourist will also need some company to drink with him and some servants to serve him, they, too, I suppose, will be permitted to drink !

To what depths hunger for money and for 'higher standard of life' will make us sink ?

Wardha, 23-7-'49

Another Shock

To add to the above, another news item in today's papers reports :

"The Prime Minister is also believed to have told the Premiers that they would be well advised to proceed cautiously in certain spheres of reforms such as prohibition and the banning of racing. Pandit Nehru is understood to have asked the Premiers to consider whether it was necessary at the present juncture to close down turf clubs. According to him, the solution of the existing economic problems and the food question should have the highest priority before reforms like complete prohibition and closing down of racing could be undertaken. He urged them to go slow in certain spheres of reforms which could as well be delayed without serious detriment to the nation. He is understood to have urged that closure of turf clubs might have deleterious effects on horse-breeding which was essential both to defence and the civic needs of the country."

If there is any basis for this report, it makes very sad reading. This frantic effort for making

money anyhow will not carry us to the goal of prosperity. What we need is production of more food, more goods ; not more vices and luxury. Vice and prosperity cannot go together.

Does the race horse supply any *civic* need of our country ? And has it not practically become obsolete even in the army ? The most useful animal for the needs of the army and the people in India is the cow and the bullock. But it is woefully neglected and destroyed, and here we are told that turf clubs should not be closed in the interest of defence and civic needs of the country ! How is it possible to defend this policy ? Is it necessary to say that people cannot have sufficient money for gambling except by getting rich corruptly ? On the one hand we are asked to believe that the rich have not sufficient cash in hand to invest in industrial pursuits. And yet they have lakhs to squander after wines and horses ! The drink evil, I hear from every side, is on the increase among officers of all ranks, merchants, college students, as well as the rank and file. Even the names of some ministers, legislators and Congress leaders are freely mentioned. This change in policy seems to prove it. I wonder if I should conclude that the government goal is now shifted from raising the standard of *life* to raising the standard of *vice* !

Wardha, 25-7-'49

Food v. Controls

Judging from the type of correspondence that I have been receiving from scholarly writers down to the common citizen ever since the Governor-General and the Prime Minister and other government spokesmen issued appeals for producing more and consuming less cereals, it appears that there is a contest between Food and Controls. The same thing has happened before. The popular protest against controls varies in intensity directly with the government appeal for food.

Government cannot do better than accede to the popular demand. The evils of controls are self-evident ; the good, if any, they do is not discernible. They prompt the people to use the same kind of adjectives against the present administration as were once employed by Pandit Nehru to condemn the one which he has replaced.

Wardha, 28-7-'49

The Language of Delhi

I have seen criticism of the words "the language spoken in Delhi and the surrounding parts" used in our appeal on the National Language. Let me explain. I am responsible for this particular expression, and it was accepted by Shri Kakasaheb Kalelkar and Shri Vinoba without any discussion. This means that it did not strike any one of us that we were raising a new controversy. Indeed there was no desire to raise any.

The formal expression generally used by Gandhiji and adopted in various resolutions is "the language spoken by Hindus and Muslims

of the North of India". The words "North of India", I had a recollection, were often explained in the columns of the *Harijan*, as the language spoken round about Delhi and Meerut. The words which we have used are not to be understood as having a different meaning from the above. I was not aware that in not specifically mentioning Meerut, we were treading upon delicate ground. In my mind, Delhi and Meerut are associated together as a common linguistic area.

It might be worthwhile to relate a small story. I have noted Hindi writers using both the following grammatical forms:

ये काम करना हैं — करने हैं ।

बात कहना है — कहनी है ।

पाँच रुपये देना चाहिये — देने चाहियें । etc.

More than once a difference of opinion arose between me and my assistant as to which of these usages was correct. He belonged to the 'Hindi provinces' and ordinarily I must accept his opinion as conclusive. But I had my doubts. Pandit Dwarkaprasad Mishra (Home Minister, Nagpur) happened to pay me a visit and I consulted him. Besides removing the particular doubts referred to him, he advised me that generally the standard to be followed is the language spoken even by the villagers round about Delhi, etc. He explained to me that it was *Khari Boli* which was the basis of the present prose. 'When you speak to him and he begins to smile at your language, you might conclude that you have not used the *Khari Boli* usage.'

Personally I would have liked to use the exact expression *Khari Boli*. But that would have been an innovation and one does not know if that too had not been held controversial. So the expression which was always used by Gandhiji and others was retained. If the addition of the word 'Meerut' is regarded more satisfactory, I can say on behalf of us all that we have no objection to its inclusion.

Wardha, 28-7-'49

"Incidents of Gandhiji's Life"

This is the title of a book edited by Shri Chandrashankar Shukla and published by Vora & Co., Bombay. It is a collection of incidents related by fifty-four eye-witnesses of various countries from their personal recollections. The book was planned while Gandhiji was still alive and with his consent.

As Shri C. Rajagopalachari in an appreciative letter to the editor says,

'Everything has two phases, what it is in reality and what impressions others take of it. God alone knows which is more real or which is more important: Gandhiji as he really was and Gandhiji as others saw him from time to time. Your book will be an interesting collection of the latter.'

There is also another side to the publication of this type of Gandhian literature. It is referred to in a letter to me by Miss S. Schlesin:

"When I wrote that I did not invariably agree with what appeared in the *Harijan* I was thinking

more especially of the selection of matter regarding Bapu. Perhaps I may quote from a letter written by me last year to Mr. C. Shukla, declining, as I have consistently declined in such cases, to contribute to a book of reminiscences: 'My feeling is that Bapu has himself, in his writings and speeches, given us his message fully, clearly; he has also given us details in regard to his life. Nothing else is necessary. Nothing that any one can attempt to write about Bapu can do him justice. Indeed, this endless making of books about him can tend only to obscure the picture.' After reading some of the articles appearing in the *Harijan*, I would now add that the greatest care must be exercised as regards the publication of words uttered by Bapu to the inner circle. The inner circle would understand just what Bapu meant, however he expressed himself—the outer world could not so understand.

"Now as regards reminiscences. I think of two articles in the *Harijan*. A friend staying at the Ashram has lost his wife. Bapu calms his grief and finds time to write him a little message every day. He also has him examined by a specialist in regard to some affliction from which he suffers. Column after column was given to this under the heading of *Bapu, my Saviour*. Another reminiscence is that of a friend, a clerk in the Civil Service, I think, of many years' experience, who has offered to assist Bapu as regards secretarial work. The friend has mislaid a notebook at a moment when Bapu requires a reference to it; Bapu makes an impatient remark; the friend is hurt and confides in one of the Ashram members, who repeats the matter to Bapu; Bapu sends for the friend and makes all right again. This, too, occupied column upon column. There is nothing in either incident which is not of common daily occurrence everywhere, nothing which makes Bapu out from quite ordinary persons in this. One almost gains the impression that acts of kindness and courtesy are rare in India. Surely that cannot be so."

I quite appreciate Miss Schlesin's criticism and would much like her view to be adopted by writers of reminiscences. In addition to elusiveness always associated with memory, there is also a desire to give an artistic dress to incidents, and this often gives an untruthful picture of the event. I have seen this in some of the reminiscences about Gandhiji already published by various people. Nevertheless this kind of literature about Gandhiji will unavoidably appear, and what has happened to previous great teachers might happen in connection with Gandhiji also, namely, such an amount of apocryphal literature might gather round Gandhiji's name that it might become difficult to ascertain the "Truth about Gandhi". Be it said to the credit of Shri Chandrashankar Shukla that wherever possible he got the accounts as presented to him checked by others, when he could see that there were others also who were present at the time of the incident narrated. In fact, as he says in his Preface, he got two of the articles examined by Gandhiji himself.

But Miss S. Schlesin's advice must be borne in mind by all writers.

Wardha, 23-7-'49

"C. F. Andrews"

Some years ago a friend interested in the New Oxford movement sent me some Christian literature. One of the enclosed books was *What I Owe to Christ* by C. F. Andrews. I had known the Deenbandhu for some years, and naturally desired to know his life. I read it all over bit by bit, and as I read I thought that I should some day translate it in Gujarati. I have not been able to do it, and do not know whether I shall ever be. But it is a book which every traveller on God's path might read with profit.

It is a pleasure therefore to see that Shri Banarasidas Chaturvedi and Shri Marjorie Sykes have published a full biography of that friend of the forlorn, and the seeker of the Spirit. It carries a Foreword by Gandhiji, and I cannot do better than reproduce it below :

"Charlie Andrews was simple like a child, upright as a die and shy to a degree. For the biographers the work has been a labour of love. A life such as Andrews' needs no introduction. It is its own introduction.

New Delhi, 8-12-'47 M. K. Gandhi "

Before Charlie Andrews began to remember me definitely (as I think), I had had the privilege of meeting and talking to him three or four times. But a loving and friendly soul though he was, he could perhaps remember definitely only those whom he thought he would have to render some definite service. So generally he always seemed to meet me for the first time for some years. By and by, he began to locate me definitely in his memory. As this is a failing which also troubles me to a great degree, I get my consolation from him. Shri Vinoba would rather not call forgetfulness a failing but a capacity. "By forgetfulness you cross your hatred and sorrows and by memory you get your love and joys," Shri Vinoba would like to say. The Deenbandhu was loving and smiling, because he possessed the great capacity to forget every unnecessary detail.

The biography has been published by George Allen & Unwin, London.

Wardha, 23-7-'49

K. G. M.

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FRIENDLY WARNING

There is no use shutting one's eyes to the dangerous fact that the Congress is alienating itself from the masses. It is tending to become an adjunct of the "Big Business" concerns, confining its activities to the distribution of permits and licences. Panditji has said that people should not look upon the Government merely for solving their difficulties. He has asked for the co-operation of the people with Government. India is no longer a foreign-owned police State, it is a social service State. The Government have taken upon themselves the task of finding food and cloth for the people and in their attempt to fulfil that task they have been spending people's money lavishly. People who have given the Government Rs. 130 crores with a question for bridging the 4 per cent gap in food supplies and some 70 crores more for the maintenance of the costly systems of rationing, procurement, control, Grow-More-Food campaign, etc., certainly have the moral and legal right to demand at least a tangible scheme for the solution of their food and cloth difficulties. In a democratic country, the moral right to withhold their co-operation from a government which fails to fulfil even a fraction of their promises is inherent in the people.

The harassment of peasants in the enforcement of the cordons, the resultant and rampant corruption, the low procurement prices in comparison to open market prices and the widespread connivance and participation by a large section of Congress workers in black-market operations and corrupt practices have all contributed to the creation of a situation which has proved to be an ideal breeding ground for Communism.

Now, what is the remedy? The remedy is no doubt difficult but not impossible. We think the following measures would change the situation in favour of the Congress : (1) The quantity and quality of rationed food must improve at any cost with the assistance of the Centre, (2) black-marketing and smuggling by Congressmen and their financiers must stop, (3) discrimination between Congressmen and ordinary people in the grant of trade licenses and contracts must end, (4) a psychological atmosphere against corruption should be created by denying the black-marketeers the advantage of escaping punishment through legal loopholes where the substance of the case has been proved and (5) restoring administrative morals by a thorough overhaul of the administrative machinery and removal of corrupt and inefficient high officials from State Trading, Provincial Taxation and Police Departments. A careful enquiry into the past records of the present top officers in the administration will reveal how, through jobbery, nepotism and corruption, the present disaster has been invited. And finally (6) warning Party-bosses of drastic punishment, if they persist in their nefarious actions.

Frankly speaking the Congress is in danger of losing its sense of moral values altogether. The Party-system has sounded the death-knell to all the old traditions, and its current practice is to convert all tenets and principles to a cash basis, ignoring all questions regarding morality. In most provinces this foul disease is eating into the vitals of the State. The remedy lies in the hands of our leaders.

(The Modern Review, July, 1949)

ASHRAM ACTIVITIES

(By M. K. Gandhi)

I

Worship

(i)

If insistence on truth constitutes the root of the Ashram, prayer is the principal feeder of that root. The social (as distinguished from the individual) activities of the Ashram commence every day with the congregational morning worship at 4-15 to 4-45 a.m. and close with the evening prayer at 7 to 7-30 p.m. Ever since the Ashram was founded, not a single day has passed to my knowledge without this worship. I know of several occasions when owing to the rains only one responsible person was present on the prayer ground. All inmates are expected to attend the worship except in the case of illness or similar compelling reason for absence. This expectation has been pretty well fulfilled at the evening prayer, but not in the morning.

The time for morning worship was as a matter of experiment fixed at 4, 5, 6 and 7 a.m., one after another. But on account of my persistently strong attitude on the subject, it has been fixed at last at 4-20 a.m. With the first bell at 4 every one rises from bed and after washing the mouth and face reaches the prayer ground by 4-20.

I believe that in a country like India the sooner a man rises from bed the better. Indeed millions must necessarily rise early. If the peasant is a late riser, his crops will suffer damage. Cattle are attended to and cows are milked early in the morning. Such being the case, seekers of saving truth, servants of the people or monks may well be up at 2 or 3; it would be surprising if they are not. In all countries of the world devotees of God and tillers of the soil rise early. Devotees take the name of God and peasants work in their fields serving the world as well as themselves. To my mind both are worshippers. Devotees are deliberately such while cultivators by their industry worship God unawares, as it helps to sustain the world. If instead of working in the fields, they took to religious meditation, they would be failing in their duty and involving themselves and the world in ruin.

We may or may not look upon the cultivator as a devotee, but where peasants, labourers and other poor people have willy nilly to rise early, how can a worshipper of Truth or servant of the people be a late riser? Again in the

Ashram we are trying to co-ordinate work and worship. Therefore I am definitely of opinion that all able-bodied people in the Ashram must rise early even at the cost of inconvenience. Four a.m. is not early but the latest time when we must be up and doing.

Then again we had to take a decision on certain questions. Where should the prayers be offered? Should we erect a temple or meet in the open air? Then again should we raise a platform or sit in the sands or the dust? Should there be any images? At last we decided to sit on the sands under the canopy of the sky and not to install any image. Poverty is an Ashram observance. The Ashram exists in order to serve the starving millions. The poor have a place in it no less than others. It receives with open arms all who are willing to keep the rules. In such an institution the house of worship cannot be built with bricks and mortar; the sky must suffice for roof and the quarters for walls and pillars. A platform was planned but discarded later on, as its size would depend upon the indeterminate number of worshippers. And a big one would cost a large sum of money. Experience has shown the soundness of the decision not to build a house or even a platform. People from outside also attend the Ashram prayers, so that at times the multitude present cannot be accommodated on the biggest of platforms.

Again as the Ashram prayers are being increasingly imitated elsewhere, the sky-roofed temple has proved its utility. Morning and evening prayers are held wherever I go. Then there is such large attendance, especially in the evening, that prayers are possible only in open grounds. And if I had been in the habit of worshipping in a prayer hall only, I might perhaps never have thought of public prayers during my tours.

Then again all religions are accorded equal respect in the Ashram. Followers of all faiths are welcome there; they may or may not believe in the worship of images. No image is kept at the congregational worship of the Ashram in order to avoid hurting anybody's feelings. If an Ashramite wishes to keep an image in his room, he is free to do so.

(Translated from Gujarati by V. G. D.)

(To be continued)

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