

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

“ A PILGRIMAGE FOR PEACE ”

[Note: The public is aware that after Gandhiji's tragic death Shri Pyarelal was asked by friends and associates to take up the writing of Gandhiji's full-dress, authentic biography. An outline of the plan of the book was published in *Harijan* of 6-3-1949. But for various reasons he could not set himself to begin that work in a regular manner till now.

Shri Pyarelal utilized the interval to prepare for publication a series of forestudies to the full-dress biography, particularly bearing on the last phases of Gandhiji's mission. *A Pilgrimage for Peace** is the first volume of the series. The next one will deal with his “Do or Die” mission of peace and reconciliation in Noakhali. The third is his sister, Dr. Sushila Nayyar's diary of the twenty-one months' detention in Agakhan Palace with Gandhiji. The following are extracts from the *Introduction* to the first volume. — Ed.]

In giving precedence to these publications I have been led by the consideration that they embody Gandhiji's reply to the atomic challenge which confronts the world today. They unfold in minute detail the theory and practice of non-violence of the strong, to perfect which especially his last days were devoted. The substance of these volumes will later be incorporated in a condensed form in the full-dress biography of Gandhiji.

In the autumn of 1938, Gandhiji made an extensive tour of the North-West Frontier Province in the company of Khan Saheb Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Never shall I forget the ecstatic exaltation of the soul which filled him throughout that memorable tour. To witness it was a rare privilege.

I covered the story of that tour in a series of articles in *Harijan* at that time. . . . These talks, as Gandhiji used to remark, constitute the most systematic and comprehensive exposition of the theory and technique of non-violence that he ever gave in one place.

Nor is this surprising. In the Frontier Province Gandhiji had to expound non-violence to a set of people who not only had no living tradition or background of non-violence for a long time past, but whose entire history for the last two thousand years had run counter to it. Non-violence was not only not an extension of what they had held and practised for a long time past, but it was in many ways its reverse. Gandhiji had therefore to begin from scratch and reduce his philosophy to its simplest terms

* This will be published by the Navajivan Publishing House on the 30th of this month.

so that even a child could understand. In the discourses to the *Khudai Khidmatgar* officers Gandhiji has described in minute detail the nature and working of non-violence with an anatomist's thorough-going patience and care, and delved deeper and deeper till you come to the pulsating spring of the Godhead enshrined in the human heart, from which it gushes forth.

Gandhiji's tour of the North-West Frontier Province was undertaken under the shadow of the Munich crisis. That gave to his utterances a distinct international slant, and he did not hesitate to claim for his message a world-wide application to meet the challenge of brute force which the Munich crisis dramatized.

It has been argued that the weapon of non-violence can be of avail only when the power opposing it is susceptible to moral appeal, but is of no use against a power that has, by the totalitarian technique of suppression and unscrupulous propaganda, rendered itself impervious to world opinion or any other moral influence. For instance, it is pointed out that if the German Jews had resorted to Satyagraha, the Nazi rulers would have thought nothing of mowing them down by machine-gun fire as if they were a herd of diseased cattle and thus putting an end to all trouble and trouble-mongers once and for all.

These friends seem to forget that non-violence does not depend for its working upon the sufferance of the tyrant. It is independent of his will. It is self-sustained. For instance, it was not lack of will or confidence in his capacity to annihilate that “dark contemptible superstitious heresy” — as Christianity was then known — that stayed Nero's hand when he started burning alive Christian heretics to illuminate the nocturnal garden sports of Rome or throwing them to gladiators and hungry lions in the Colosseum to make a Roman holiday. Enlightened public opinion of his day was wholly on his side. To exterminate Christians like a pest was regarded as a laudable and meritorious act of public service. They were regarded as by nature corrupt and steeped in sedition, enemies of the State and of true religion. . . . Nor were the Christians sufficiently numerous or important to employ “embarrassment tactics” successfully. And their persecutors knew it. Had they actually decided upon their extermination, nothing could

have prevented them from it. And yet, they did not, because they could not.

So baffling, so subtle, so novel in character and contrary to all that they had all along recognized or were familiar with was this new force that confronted them that they did not know what to do. And before they were aware of it, it had like a hidden leaven permeated and transformed the entire mass. The triumphant smile on the face of the Christian martyr, as he proceeded calmly to the stake to be burnt alive, at first surprised, then exasperated and finally undermined and overwhelmed the complaisance and smug self-confidence of the proud patrician. The javelin-proof coat-of-mail of the Roman cohorts was not proof against this subtle force. It insinuated itself secretly into the families of the high and the mighty and gained a footing even in the Imperial household.

Coming to our times, scientific testimony as to the superiority of the power of non-violence to physical strength or the cunning of the brains in nature and primitive society is furnished by that great savant Prince Kropotkin in his *Mutual Aid as a Factor in Evolution*. Even in wild nature, where there is not any curb or check upon the destructive propensities of the strong, Kropotkin has shown that "the fittest to survive are not the physically strongest nor the cunningest but those who learn to combine so as mutually to support each other."

But, argues the sceptic, whilst in an academic way many people would today endorse the declaration embodied in the Atlantic Charter that "on spiritual as well as realistic grounds the renunciation of the use of brute force is inevitable in the long run", the present trend of human evolution as typified in the rise of totalitarian dictatorships is against it. This argument ignores the phenomenon of dialectical transformations and mutations in nature and history. A close study of natural and historical phenomena shows that when a particular tendency in nature or society has reached its peak, it is very often ripe for a mutation, i.e., transformation into the opposite by a sudden leap. as the number of people groaning under the iron heel of militarism grows, the stage is set for the discovery that if the oppressed masses simply shed the fear of death, it might not be necessary for them to die to regain their freedom. The deadlier the weapons of destruction become, the greater is the chance of humanity's learning to confront them with a power of an altogether different kind against which they cannot prevail. Armaments can but destroy. Yet, total destruction is not what the tyrant seeks, but co-operation, willing or forced, of the victim and this no power of armaments can extract from a people if they have the strength to say 'No'. The moment, therefore, the people become aware of soul force or the power of the spirit, which armaments can neither destroy nor

subdue, the arms will be rendered useless and the citadel of tyranny will fall.

The earliest and perhaps the most brilliant recorded historical instance of the triumph of this power of the spirit is to be found in the encounter on the plain of Taxila between Alexander and the Indian sage Damdamis, who, according to the Greek chronicler, "though old and naked, was the only antagonist in whom he (Alexander), the conqueror of many nations, had met his match". The reader would do well to ponder over the inner meaning of that episode, symbolizing as it does the reply of the East to the challenge of the armed might that was hurled at its head 300 years before the Christian Era :

"The East bowed low before the blast
In patient deep disdain ;
She let the legions thunder past
And plunged in thought again."

Today the same challenge is being repeated in an even more accentuated form and once more people's thoughts are beginning to revert to that weapon and source of inexhaustible power which is India's peculiar heritage from the past and promises to be her special contribution to the world's future progress. Humanity is in the grip of the atomic nightmare. What is the nature of this power which Gandhiji had set out to discover and present to the world? How can it be developed in the individual and in the mass? What is the type of organization needed for it? How does it differ from the other type of organization based on violence? How is a non-violent attitude to be related to the world around us which not only does not swear by unadulterated *ahimsa* but actually believes and practises largely its opposite? These and other equally vital questions confronting a votary of *ahimsa* will be found posed and answered in these pages in Gandhiji's own words.

But whilst *ahimsa* on an individual scale is independent of one's environment and can be practised anywhere and everywhere, a non-violent order calls for a particular type of socio-economic milieu. What will the mind and face of a society based on non-violence be like? A few glimpses of this world order in miniature based on *ahimsa* will be found in the two articles on Taxila. It is an enchanting world—that once existed in actuality—a world of Arcadian simplicity, individual freedom and natural living, honest, healthy industry and bread labour, a world in which there were the fewest laws but a highly developed social system, a world in which war was abolished and toleration in its broadest sense reigned supreme in the political no less than in the religious sphere. And all this efflorescence sprang forth from the seed of non-violence. How Gandhiji and Badshah Khan endeavoured again to plant it in the hearts of the *Khudai Khidmatgars* of the North-West Frontier Province will be found described in the following pages. Let the reader

ponder over the inner meaning and significance of this experiment and decide for himself whether it is not worth living for and dying for.

THE DEFENCE POLICY OF FINLAND

[The following is from Andre Trocme, one of the secretaries of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. Both he and Mr. Kallien, about whom he speaks, are delegates at the World Pacifist Meeting.]

The train stopped some two hours before we were due to reach the capital, and some Finnish policemen, under the charge of a single Russian soldier, fastened full-boarded shutters to every carriage window and sealed all openings. A Russian engine, bearing the Sovietic star, took the place of the Finnish one we had had. For an hour we travelled on in complete darkness; no one in Finland has any idea of what is going on in the Occupied Zone. The entire population has been evacuated.

Twenty kilometers before Helsinki, the Finns delivered us. Of the Russians who had conveyed us through the forbidden Zone, not a trace remained. And so it is that Russia's 180 millions weigh on the four million Finns, although nothing is seen of it. At Helsinki freedom reigns. The papers publish what they like. How is it that this little country can live so calmly, and not be scared stiff in this atmosphere of invisible threat and mystery?

The day following my arrival, Mr. Kallien, the Minister of National Defence, sent his car to fetch me from the Quaker Centre where I was staying. The mention of the possibility of a Pact with Russia roused Mr. Kallien. He got up, his white hair standing on end in protest. "I accepted," he said, "the office of Minister of National Defence because I am an anti-militarist of such long standing that my holding the post was proof of the nation's will to peace. It has suffered too deeply to go to war again. It will not go to war, indeed it cannot go to war. But my own will to peace is so strong that I will never — you hear me, never — sign a pact that might involve us in fighting against any other nation whatever. Eighty per cent of our members of Parliament are of the same opinion. We are united, and the Russians know it. We would sooner refuse to sign anything at all, and accept the terrible consequences of a Russian occupation than help by a military alliance to contribute to the danger of a conflict between East and West."

My feelings were more and more stirred as it dawned on me that this man standing before me was a great man, indeed a very great man. Here was a Minister of National Defence who refused out and out to have anything to do with armaments — a conscientious objector on whom lay the responsibility of defending his country by other means than the use of force.

(*The War Resister*, No. 56)

SUGGESTIONS FOR SARVODAYA MELA

It was decided to hold *melas* at all places where Gandhiji's ashes were immersed. Such *melas* were held throughout India on the 12th February this year (1949) and will continue to be held every year. A *mela* was held on the banks of the Dham river also, but it did not appear to have been previously organized. It was, of course, attended by a large number of people from the nearby villages and also adjoining districts. I do not know who made arrangements for this particular function, but as it is a *Sarvodaya mela*, it should be organized on behalf of all. It is not desirable to entrust it to any single section or group. The best thing would be to entrust it to those who believe in the constructive programme. People also expect it to be so. This applies to every one of its kind throughout India.

One special feature of the *mela* here, which I liked most, was that the people brought hanks of handspun yarn as their offering. I heard later that many more would have done likewise if only they had known it. From this and other defective arrangements, it would appear that there was not sufficient publicity of the programme of celebration. Even the loud-speakers installed there did not work and the people could not hear well. This is only by way of illustration. What I wish to say is that this idea of offering hanks is commendable and it should be organized properly. Those who offered hanks did give an appreciable number, but in my opinion each one should offer only one hank. It is not wrong to give or accept more. But one hank each is enough for the occasion. If one spins more, he can use the yarn for himself or contribute it separately to the Charkha Sangh, which will utilize it for the poor. But if each one gives one hank, it will also be possible to find out how many brought the offering. I would like as many people as can go to attend the *mela*. Though personally pilgrimages do not interest me much, I make this suggestion in the hope that by innovations like this, it will be possible to place before the country a different and better conception of what pilgrimages ought to be like. This is also likely to give an impetus to the reform and revitalization of other pilgrimages which have become more or less like *tamashas*. The workers should go from village to village and explain to the people the idea of offering hanks. If this succeeds, a good convention will take root and every child of India will be inspired to offer something or other for the sake of his country. In course of time it may happen that none will go there without a hank of yarn. I am not suggesting that none can go without a hank, but when it becomes a convention, people would like to observe it.

Through this offering of hanks, the idea of worship through work would be spread and people would develop a truly spiritual outlook. Just as I do not favour the offer of more than one hank, I should also discourage money-contributions. The idea in restricting the offerings to one hank is to give expression to the idea of equal regard and at the same time to encourage cloth self-sufficiency. It would encourage the idea that what we produce by our own labour is the best offering and this kind of sacrificial offerings would give dignity to physical labour instead of to money. Otherwise, such places would become centres of greedy people and this would breed evil. We would be saved from all these evils if we do not accept money.

Mahilashram, Wardha, 9-10-'49 VINOBA
(Translated from the *Sarvodaya*, November, 1949)

GLEANINGS

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HARIJAN

January 8

1950

THE ESSENTIALS OF PEACE *

My friends in the same faith,

On behalf of my brothers and sisters here, I welcome you all with love and respect. Let me first greet you humbly and with devout feelings, because to me you are the manifestations of God. I do not know you personally, but I know that you are all doing God's work. You have come here from distant corners of the world, and while by treading this soil you have sanctified us, you have also increased our responsibilities. But it is by your help alone that the burden can be lightened.

The power that drew you here has ceased to exist today in physical form, but it is my daily experience that in its subtle form, it is present here even more than before. Had Bapu been alive, he would have offered you the nectar of his spiritual thoughts. It is not given to us to offer you that. But you can see the little work we are doing here. The defects that you may discover — and they are many — are all ours; and if you see any good therein, take it that it springs from the immortal nectar of his thoughts.

Weapons of Ahimsa

Ahimsa is not merely non-participation in destructive activities; it principally manifests itself in constructive activities — services which lead to the upward growth of man. People say that the Goddess of *ahimsa* has no weapons; I say that that is wrong. The Goddess of *ahimsa* has very powerful weapons at her command. They are the weapons of Love and are, therefore, creative and not destructive. Yet they do destroy; they destroy hatred, inequity, hunger and disease. It is true, however, that the weapons of *ahimsa* look small in size and slow in action.

People say that these small tools of ours will not work in this machine age. But we gave them a trial and found by experience that they do work even in the machine age. We plied the spinning wheel and the hand-mill and we found that in spite of the machine age, the wheel gave us the yarn and the hand-mill the flour. Then we went on with the experiment further and you can see some of the results. With *charkha* in the centre, we have made an effort to discipline ourselves in *ahimsa*. This has helped us to purify our lives. Along with this it has been our desire to serve the unhappy to the extent of our capacity. I request you to see this work with sympathy along with the keenness of an examiner.

* Opening address read at the World Pacifist Meeting at Sevagram on 25-12-'49.

Our main shortcoming is that we have not yet been able to fully identify ourselves with the poor around us. As far as I can see, this is not possible so long as we do not give up our dependence on money and do not rely completely on body labour. We do perform a certain amount of body labour, but it is not enough. We should pledge ourselves to earn our bread through body labour alone, and free ourselves from dependence on money. Without this *ahimsa* can never manifest itself as a great Power. I believe to the very letter what Jesus Christ said (and would paraphrase it thus): "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for the rich (one attached to money) to enter Heaven (i. e. realize *ahimsa*)", however much he may profess it by mouth. My mind is working on these lines these days. I am trying to think out how we may put this principle into immediate practice. I am trying to persuade my friends to leave money alone and get going with production. It is yet to be seen how far I shall succeed in this.

War and Peace

Now let me briefly place before you what I think about World Peace. The whole world today is thinking of a third World War and if we continue to think about it constantly, it may as well come about. But I am not afraid of World Wars. I am rather afraid of small wars and quarrels. To me a World War appears to come very close to non-violence. I always say to friends, who believe in violence, 'If by reason of your faith (in violence), you cannot take the vow of non-violence, do not bother about it. But at least take this vow that if you fight at all, you will fight World Wars, and that you will on no account fight small wars or busy yourselves with petty quarrels.' I have even said that World Wars are divine. When we do not understand what is right straightaway, the all-merciful God sends World Wars to stimulate our thinking, and to make us drawn speedily towards *ahimsa*. World War frees man's mind from limitations which make him think in narrow grooves and impels him to think in terms of humanity as a whole. This is a big step forward towards *ahimsa*. But this is not true of small wars. They are the sworn enemies of *ahimsa* and all the time push *ahimsa* further and further away. We therefore ought to be on our guard against these. Those who believe in violence are not unaware of this. Their effort, therefore, is to prevent World Wars as far as possible and to go on with small wars.

Once we realize that *ahimsa* has mainly to fear from local and small wars, our task becomes easy and we get the right direction. That sets us to the service of the people around us and we endeavour to see that there is no discord within our field of service. Then we turn our eyes inward, and realize the need for the purification of our minds. This leads us to the right solution of our problems. But if our minds always dwell

on the bogey of World Wars we do not get down to the root of the matter, but become involved in superficial thinking and external organizations only.

Organization of Peace Army

This leads me to my views about organization. I referred to it in my letter to the Shantiniketan session. Very often we think of *ahimsa*, but do so in terms of *himsa*. To a certain extent, this is unavoidable. None the less, use of wrong words leads us astray. For instance, we speak of an *army* of peace. We think that we should maintain a standing army of peace so that it could be detailed immediately to offer resistance and self-immolation, whenever there was a breach of peace in any part of the world. But here is a point that needs thought. The farther you send an army of violence the better for it; for, its duty is to hate. Therefore, the less it knows its opponents or the more false its notions about them are, the more intense will be its hatred. But in non-violence we have to conquer through Love. Therefore, an army of peace can serve better only in a familiar field. What sort of an army would that be? It will be a band of social workers engaged in producing food by daily manual labour and in serving the afflicted, completely identifying itself with all fellow-beings in a spirit of humility. What should be the weapons of this army? As described by Saint Tulsidas in the *Ramayana*, and as Gandhiji has laid down in the rules of his *ashram*, they are the vows of truth, non-violence, self-control and the like. Call these observances weapons if you will, but it is entirely a different concept.

The light of *ahimsa* cannot be spread by the external and formal mechanism of organizations. History shows that Jesus came alone and the light that he brought pervaded the world—not through church-institutions or “Christian” governments, but in spite of them. The light inspires us even today. The same is true of Buddha. He was a prince but his message could not be spread by the authority of the State. It spread because he threw his kingdom away like a blade of straw.

After all, what is it that will spread non-violence? It is not the body that can do it, for the body is an embodiment of violence. *Ahimsa* is assimilated to the extent one rises above one's body. Non-violence is the natural state of the soul. What *ahimsa*, therefore, needs is the quest of the spirit, the purification of the mind, service of living creatures, love universal and fearlessness. This has become with me such an unshakable conviction that I keep on telling myself in the words of St. Francis: “Do not get entangled in organizations.”

We are working here on the idea of *Sarvodaya Samaj* (a society for the well-being of all). People ask me about the form of its organization. I explain to them that it is not an organization in the usual sense of the term, but an idea. But people do not understand this and they try to

turn it into an organization. And the fascination for organization these days is so strong that unless we carefully guard ourselves against it, the *Sarvodaya Samaj* may not only turn itself into an organization but may even take the shape of a political party, before we are aware of it, and then the inspiration which the name and idea of *Sarvodaya* brings will wither away.

I do not wish to dilate upon these ideas at length. You are all men of experience and have made your own experiments. In all humility I have briefly placed my ideas before you and you will please take whatever you find worthy of consideration.

Vegetarianism

Finally, I would like to mention one special point about India. I believe that India's special contribution to the history of *ahimsa* is the giving up of animal food. Not that all Indians are vegetarians, but the idea commands the respect of all. I have seen many a cruel person among habitual vegetarians and many a kind one among meat-eaters. In spite of this, I still believe that vegetarianism will go a long way to help the evolution of *ahimsa* and humanity will be imperfect without it.

Nature Cure

The practice of Nature Cure follows in the wake of a natural vegetarian diet. Bapu, in his last days, was never tired of singing its praises. It is possible that some will ridicule me for my reference to Nature Cure in a discussion on World Peace. But I cannot leave this subject alone, because it appears to me to be part and parcel of a clean life. And since I am ill these days, it is good that I strengthen my faith in Nature Cure by referring to it here in conclusion. My friends advise me to take some other treatment with a view to speed up the work. I tell them that I am not in a hurry. I do not mind if I just live a few days longer in this world.

The Culture of India

You have come here with great faith in the hope of gaining something from this country. I believe that your hopes will not be belied. “I look upon the world with the eye of friendship, so that the world may also look on me with the same eye.” This is the message of the *Vedas* given to India in very ancient times. In historical times, Lord Buddha by his life revealed the same truth in this country. Although we have not yet been able to put it into practice satisfactorily, still history bears witness that even in its days of power and glory, India hardly ever invaded another country. It comes easily to an ordinary Indian villager to think of all men as brothers, while the idea of nationalism does not come easily to him. And it is in the villages that real India lives. Even in the worst days of the British Government's oppression in this country, our great national poet was busily engaged in founding a world university at Shantiniketan, ‘the Abode of Peace’, and singing

songs of Universal Love, and our political leader taught us lessons in *ahimsa*, and strictly forbade the use of violence even for the winning of Freedom. We made many mistakes, but we lived and worked for thirty years within the limitations set by him. It is but natural, therefore, if you should expect something from this country.

The question is: Which direction are we going after the passing away of Gandhiji? also, which direction is our Government going? I cannot speak of the future. But as I see things today, I feel consolation that Gandhiji's best colleague, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, leads our country at present. Whatever may be the shortcomings of his Government in internal affairs, its whole weight, so far as international affairs are concerned, is thrown on the side of World Peace and the freedom of all nations.

None the less, our people do feel some darkness after Gandhiji's death. Some feel that we have perhaps begun to forget Bapu. The fact is, that they, to whom this remark might apply, never cared for Bapu's principles even during his lifetime; but those who had enshrined him in their hearts have not forgotten him. Even so, there is darkness and I think that the reason is that we remember Bapu too much. Whenever there is an occasion for some deliberation, our first thought is always: what did Bapu say or do in such a situation? This manner of thinking sometimes throws us into darkness instead of leading us towards light. But this will not go on for long. Gradually we shall begin to think for ourselves about *ahimsa* and have courage to make new experiments on our own account. Even if that does not come about, there is no great cause for anxiety, because by God's grace we too shall not live for ever. He will take us away and will send others in our place, who will think with fresh minds. They will become God's instruments and will carry on the work so dear to His heart, until *ahimsa* pervades the world.

Therefore, please do cherish hopes about India. It is this hope of yours which makes us, weaklings, strong; and how can Hope, which gives strength even to the weak, fail to make the hopeful all the more strong?

My humble salutations to you all again.

Parandham, Pavnar
(Translated from Hindi)

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NOTES

A Paradox

Shri Vinoba has said in his address published in this issue: "I am not afraid of World Wars. I am rather afraid of small wars and quarrels." This and the subsequent sentences caused surprise to some members of the audience. A little reflection would show that Shri Vinoba has uttered in his characteristic way a profound truth and drawn attention to a shortcoming in our attempts for preventing another World War. Is it possible to prevent a World War if all along small wars and breaches of peace were continually going on between some countries or peoples in one part of the world or another? We say that there have been two world wars within a generation and there is the danger of a third ahead, and we are told that the atom bomb can prevent it. But let us reflect whether there was peace all over the world—and if so, how long—between the end of the first and the commencement of the second World War. How long did the Sino-Japanese war and the Civil War of China last? How long did Italy, Germany, etc. maintain peace? Whether repression had ever stopped in Imperialistic countries? Is it possible that such strifes should continue and still there should be no danger of a world war breaking out some day? The existence or non-existence of the atom bomb cannot prevent a world war; at best it can only make a difference in its deadliness. Whatever be the weapons of war, in order to stop a world war, it is necessary first that there should be no strife and no violence during the interval. If these are prevented, a World War can never come. This is the implication of Shri Vinoba's seemingly paradoxical utterance.

Wardha, 30-12-'49

K. G. M.

Reward

His Excellency Shri Asafali, Governor of Orissa, is pleased to announce a reward of Rs. 1,000 to any one who can plan the best and cheapest labour-saving device which can be useful to farmers in Orissa in any kind of agricultural operation, e.g. irrigation, ploughing, sowing, weeding, harvesting, threshing, etc. It should be simple and capable of being manufactured from materials easily available in any part of Orissa preferably by local artisans and its repairs should likewise be simple.

Economy, simplicity, easy availability of materials *plus* efficiency shall be the important criteria in judging the merit of the design.

A Committee of experts will be set up to assess the merit of the design received. The Committee's decision shall be final. The competitors are requested to send their designs with sketches and explanatory notes in sealed covers to the undersigned by the 15th February, 1950. All designs received will be treated as confidential.

Public servants under the Government of Orissa are not debarred from participating in the competition.

Cuttack

B. MISHRA
Secretary to the Governor

W. C. Bonnerjee

In the article *Congress Clarification* (18-12-'49), I referred to the late Shri Wyomeshchandra Bonnerjee as a Christian. I am informed by his granddaughter that this is incorrect. He never changed his religion and remained a Hindu to the end of his life. His wife, Shrimati Hemanginidevi, however, did become a Christian in 1875. I regret the incorrect statement.

Wardha, 26-12-'49

K. G. M.

ASHRAM ACTIVITIES

(By M. K. Gandhi)

I

Worship

(ii)

A hymn was sung after the *shlokas*. Indeed singing hymns was the only item of the prayers in South Africa. The *shlokas* were added in India. Maganlal Gandhi was our leader in song. But we felt that that arrangement was unsatisfactory. We should have an expert singer for the purpose, and that singer should be one who would observe the Ashram rules. One such was found in Narayan Moreshwar Khare a pupil of Pandit Vishnu Digambar whom the master kindly sent to the Ashram. Pandit Khare gave us full satisfaction and is now a full member of the Ashram. He made hymn singing interesting, and the *Ashram Bhajanavali* (hymn-book) which is now read by thousands was in the main compiled by him. He introduced *Ramadhun*, the third item of our prayers.

The fourth item is recitation of verses from the Gita. The Gita has for years been an authoritative guide to belief and conduct for the Satyagraha Ashram. It has provided us with a test with which to determine the correctness or otherwise of ideas and courses of conduct in question. Therefore we wished that all Ashramites should understand the meaning of the Gita and if possible commit it to memory. If this last was not possible, we wished that they should at least read the original Sanskrit with correct pronunciation. With this end in view we began to recite part of the Gita every day. We would recite a few verses every day and continue the recitation until we had learnt them by heart. From this we proceeded to the *parayan*. And the recitation is now so arranged that the whole of the Gita is finished in fourteen days, and everybody knows what verses will be recited on any particular day. The first chapter is recited on every alternate Friday, and we shall come to it on Friday next (10th June 1932). The seventh and eighth, the twelfth and thirteenth, the fourteenth and fifteenth, and the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters are recited on the

same day in order to finish 18 chapters in 14 days.*

At the evening prayer we recite the last 19 verses of the second chapter of the Gita as well as sing hymn and repeat *Ramanama*. These verses describe the characteristics of the *sthitaprajna* (the man of secure understanding), which a Satyagrahi too must acquire, and are recited in order that he may constantly bear them in mind.

Repeating the same thing at prayer from day to day is objected to on the ground that it thus becomes mechanical and tends to be ineffective. It is true that the prayer becomes mechanical. We ourselves are machines, and if we believe God to be our mover, we must behave like machines in His hands. If the sun and other heavenly bodies did not work like machines, the universe would come to a standstill. But in behaving like machines, we must not behave like inert matter. We are intelligent beings and must observe rules as such. The point is not whether the contents of the prayer are always the same or differ from day to day. Even if they are full of variety, it is possible that they will become ineffective. The Gayatri verse among Hindus, the confession of faith (*kalma*) among Mussulmans, the typical Christian prayer in the Sermon on the Mount have been recited by millions for centuries every day; and yet their power has not diminished but is ever on the increase. It all depends upon the spirit behind the recitation. If an unbeliever or a parrot repeats these potent words, they will fall quite flat. On the other hand when a believer utters them always, their influence grows from day to day. Our staple food is the same. The wheat-eater will take other things besides wheat, and these additional things may differ from time to time, but the wheat bread will always be there on the dining table. It is the eater's staff of life, and he will never weary of it. If he conceives a dislike for it, that is a sign of the approaching dissolution of his body. The same is the case with prayer. Its principal contents must be always the same. If the soul hungers after them, she will not quarrel with the monotony of the prayer but will derive nourishment from it. She will have a sense of deprivation on the day that it has not been possible to offer prayer. She will be more downcast than one who observes a physical fast. Giving up food may now and then be beneficial for the body; indigestion of prayer for the soul is something never heard of.

The fact is that many of us offer prayer without our soul being hungry for it. It is a fashion to believe that there is a soul; so we believe that she exists. Such is the sorry plight

* Later on the Gita recitation was finished every seven instead of every fourteen days, and the chapters were distributed among the days as follows: Friday, 1 and 2; Saturday, 3, 4 and 5; Sunday, 6, 7 and 8; Monday, 9, 10, 11 and 12; Tuesday, 13, 14 and 15; Wednesday, 16 and 17; Thursday 18.

of many among us. Some are intellectually convinced that there is a soul, but they have not grasped that truth with the heart; therefore they do not feel the need for prayer. Many offer prayer because they live in society and think they must participate in its activities. No wonder they hanker after variety. As a matter of fact however they do not attend prayer. They want to enjoy the music or are merely curious or wish to listen to the sermon. They are not there to be one with God.

[Translated from Gujarati by V. G. D.]

(To be continued)

HINDU MAHASABHA AND R. S. S.

Dr. N. B. Khare, the new President of the Hindu Mahasabha, has obliged the public by clarifying the relationship between the Mahasabha and the R.S.S. P.T.I. reports his words as follows:

"There is no organizational connection between the R. S. S. and the Mahasabha but it cannot be denied that there is a vital organic connection between the two consisting of identity of ideology. Both were based on 'Bharatiya' culture."

What is this identical ideology? According to Dr. Khare,

"the Mahasabha stands for a secular or, more correctly, a non-communal Government where all people, to whatever religion or community they may belong, will be equal before the law and will have equal opportunities."

This does not on the face appear as necessarily conflicting with the make-up of the present Government. But Dr. Khare himself does not think so. He says:

"We harbour no ill-feelings against the Government though we have acute differences of ideology."

He is also reported to have observed that "the idea of a secular State showed 'a confused and a diseased mind'."

Shri V. D. Savarkar is more explicit. He is reported to have said,

"the talk of a secular State was absurd in a country which was inhabited largely by Hindus and it was their proud task to establish a Hindu *rashtra*."

It may be questioned whether the statements of Hindu Mahasabha leaders could be taken as binding on the R.S.S. One must turn, therefore, to the writings of Shri M. S. Golwalkar himself. In his booklet, *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, he says:

".....applying the modern understanding of 'Nation' to our present conditions, the conclusion is unquestionably forced upon us that in this country, Hindusthan, the Hindu race with its Hindu Religion, Hindu Culture, and Hindu Language (the natural family or (of?) Sanskrit and her offsprings) complete the Nation concept; that, in fine, in Hindusthan exists and must needs exist the ancient Hindu nation and nought else but the Hindu Nation. All those not belonging to the national, i.e. Hindu Race, Religion, Culture and Language, naturally fall out of the pale of real 'National' life.

"We repeat: in Hindusthan, the land of the Hindus, lives and should live the Hindu Nation—satisfying all the five essential requirements of the

scientific nation concept of the modern world. Consequently only those movements are truly 'National' as aim at rebuilding, revitalizing and emancipating from its present stupor, the Hindu Nation. Those only are nationalist patriots, who, with the aspiration to glorify the Hindu race and Nation next to their heart, are prompted into activity and strive to achieve that goal. All others, posing to be patriots and wilfully indulging in a course of action detrimental to the Hindu Nation are traitors and enemies to the National Cause, or to take a more charitable view if unintentionally and unwillingly led into such a course, mere simpletons, misguided ignorant fools." (pp. 48-49, third edition).

In the next chapter, Shri Golwalkar poses the question:

"What is to be the fate of all those, who, today, happen to live upon the land, though not belonging to the Hindu Race, Religion and Culture?" (p. 50),

and answers it as follows:

".....all those, who fall outside the five-fold limits of that idea can have no place in the national life, unless they abandon their differences, and completely merge themselves in the National Race. So long, however, as they maintain their racial, religious and cultural differences, they cannot but be only foreigners, who may be either friendly or inimical to the Nation." (p. 50).

"There are only two courses open to the foreign elements, either to merge themselves in the national race and adopt its culture, or to live at the sweet will of the national race. That is the only logical and correct solution.....the non-Hindu peoples in Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and languages, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e. they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ungratefulness towards this land and its agelong traditions, but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead—in one word, they must cease to be foreigners, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment—not even citizen's rights. There is, at least should be, no other course for them to adopt." (pp. 52-53).

Let Congress Hindus decide how far this ideology accords with that of the Congress, and whether the R. S. S. is only a cultural organization unconnected with politics.

Wardha, 27-12-'49

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