

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF BHOODAN\*

(By Vinoba)

I have been constantly moving about for the last three years, and my zeal to stick to the campaign, instead of diminishing, has been ever increasing. How has it been possible? Because there is behind Bhoodan a great philosophy—a truth which I know to be inviolable and which therefore sustains me, come what may. You see those trees standing there. They draw their sustenance from within the earth and so they do not wither away even in summer. Rather the more scorching the rays of the sun, the greater is their verdancy. It points out that where one gets *rasa* from within, the outer difficulties cannot damp the spirit; on the contrary, they serve to rouse one's ardour to a higher pitch.

I have just seen the report of a speech by Acharya Narendra Dev who is also a member of the Uttar Pradesh Bhoodan Committee. He is reported to have said, "Bhoodan work is good, but there does not seem to be any philosophy behind it." What am I to say in reply to this sweeping statement? I would only say that if there was no philosophy behind it, then I should have become utterly exhausted after these three years of ceaseless work and quite loath to pursue it any further. But I have no feeling of exhaustion. If anything, I feel more determined. When there is no powerful truth behind one's work, one's interest in it begins to flag and the work suffers. But when there is at its root a great and powerful truth one's interest grows and the work prospers. You know Bhoodan has led to a number of auxiliary campaigns: the Sampattidan, Shram-dan and now Jeewan-dan. It shows that the work is progressing. When all these campaigns get into full stride, they will comprehend within their orbit not only all the constructive activities but also all the other aspects of our social life, material as well as moral. This could not have happened, if there had not been any great truth at the root of our work.

Acharya Narendra Dev did not say that the

effort at change of heart was useless. But he said that as a believer in class conflict, he could not subscribe to the hope that the change of heart technique would suffice for all that we have to do. What does it mean except that one has formed a certain view and is not ready to budge from it? But the views are formed on the basis of experience; and since one is always getting new experiences in life, one should keep an open mind and be ready to change one's view if experience warrants it. A revolution cannot be limited for all time to one fixed technique. By its very nature a revolution is bound to throw up newer and newer techniques for its success. A revolution with a fixed technique would be a contradiction in terms—in that case it would be no revolution at all.

I would say that if he who has concluded, as a result of his thinking, that only class conflict brings about revolution, but is open to new kind of experience, then he would certainly feel that the change of heart and the change of thought can successfully bring about a revolution. The change of heart is necessary for those who are caught in 'Moha'—ego and infatuation born of it; while the change of thought is necessary in regard to those whose heart is sound but whose thinking is either obscure or wrongly directed. The combination of these two—the change of heart and the change of thought makes up a perfect technique of revolution. And to do this is my programme. I proceed towards this goal simultaneously from two directions. On one hand I carry on an educative campaign to introduce the people to the thought content of the message of Bhoodan and on the other I am doing *tapas* to wean them from their selfish ways and rouse them to a sense of duty. Along with these and as a result of them there comes about the change of outer conditions also. I think this makes for as full and complete a formula of a revolution as one would wish.

Some people think that law will change the outer or material conditions. Granting that this may be so, what has to be done for getting the necessary law passed and enforced? The usual answer would be—to seize power. And how to seize power? Would it not require educating the

\* From a prayer-speech at Vrindavan (Champanan District) on 26-6-54.

people in the desirability of the proposed legislation so that they may return to power the party advocating such legislation? Under democracy this is the only possible answer to the question; which means that the change of thought is the only way to achieve our end, and since we are already doing it the advocates of legislation have no reason whatsoever to find fault with us.

Bhoodan has another weapon in addition—that of changing the heart through *tapas*. *Tapas* can take many forms. To go round the villages on foot, as I am doing, is one such form. It helps me to explain to the people the injustice involved in the existing inequalities, social and economic, and to awaken them to the duty of weaning themselves away from this sort of sin. For example, at the present moment evictions are taking place at various places. We go to the Zamindars and convince them how unjust it is. If they do not understand it, then they run the danger of non-co-operation. The people would withdraw their co-operation and make it impossible for them to continue their present exploitation. Thus our technique which includes non-co-operation and Satyagraha, in a way helps legislation also. I confess that if people are driven to disappointment, there may ensue a bloody revolution. But there is a fair possibility that all this may not be necessary and Bhoodan by itself may succeed in resolving the whole problem, if only the workers would apply themselves to it from all sides and bring this message home to the people. And from what experience I have had of our people, this does not seem to be at all impossible. Anyway, I am working and will continue to do so in this hope.

But supposing that this hope does not materialize, there will be three ways open to bring about the change. Of these the bloody revolution has to be ruled out of court. Indeed it is no way at all nor is it revolution in the real sense of the term. That leaves only two—legislation and non-co-operation. As explained above, I am not obstructing legislation, rather I am helping it in my own way. And I want that it should be an effective piece of legislation.

What is happening at present is that as soon as a proposal for land legislation begins to be seriously discussed, questions of ceiling etc. are raised which take time to resolve themselves. In the meantime, landowners get their lands so distributed that any legislation when it eventually may come into force is almost circumvented. It happened like that in Hyderabad State. A land-legislation has been passed there which allows landowners to keep 100 to 150 acres of dry land. The talk of the legislation had been in the air from the time I was in Telangana three years ago. The landowners, therefore, had ample time during which to redistribute their lands in a

manner so as to escape the undesired operation of the law. The rich have not only riches but also ever-ready intelligence. Therefore I say, do pass a legislation if you will, but it should be so devised as not to result in making a fool of its makers.

Now remain non-co-operation and Satyagraha. The way of non-co-operation and Satyagraha is just and right, and one may resort to them if conditions demand it. But these weapons depend for their success on love. Love is the power behind Satyagraha. The more love one has, the more is one's right to undertake Satyagraha. Now love expresses itself normally in the form of co-operation. I am therefore first going to the people and explaining to them lovingly what they should do. I am sure, many will heed to it and donate land. However, if they do not, there are with us other weapons—those of Satyagraha and non-co-operation. These are such that they do not trouble the opponent but bring out his change of heart.

Lastly I have a word for our workers. They must be *atmavadi* i.e. they should have firm faith that every one has a soul, and if we appeal to it his heart can be changed. The belief in such soul-force lies at the root of Bhoodan. For those who do not believe in it, the change of heart theory and Bhoodan must appear as void of sense. But if we believe that every one has an *atma*—a soul, then it follows that our threefold technique consisting of the change of heart and the change of thought and the consequent change of outer conditions must work. This is in short the philosophy behind the Bhoodan Yajna.

(Adapted from Hindi)

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# COMPULSORY HEALTH SERVICE SCHEME

To

The Editor, *Harijan*

The *Harijan* has been forcefully championing the cause of Freedom—political, economic and medical. Time and again the cause of Nature-Cure, as the one feasible solution of the health problems facing our country, has been advocated in the paper.

May I, through the columns of your valuable paper, give vent to a problem of serious importance? It would appear to affect, at present, only residents of Delhi and New Delhi, but as it is often repeated, it is just a beginning of a 'reform' to be extended all over the country, it would affect the entire country in due course.

The Central Government Contributory Health Service Scheme for Central Government Servants in New Delhi and Delhi may have been thought of as a measure to bring relief and succour. The scheme, however, suffers from serious deficiencies.

First, only allopathic doctors are proposed to be appointed under the Scheme. Does it stand to reason why votaries of other systems should subsidize allopathy?

Secondly, the system suffers from another great deficiency. Some doctors are to be recruited and a few families will be placed under the charge of one doctor, so that there will be no choice left for a particular individual, even if he happens to be a votary of allopathy.

The greatest sting of the scheme is that it is compulsory, that every Government servant should make a contribution to it, irrespective of whether he utilizes the scheme or not, irrespective of whether he is a conscientious objector or not. Followers of the Drugless School of Healing—"Nature-Cure" maintain (with full data to support their contention) that drugging produces chronic disease. Can followers of such school be forced to pay for a drugging system, when they hold that drugging is a (hygienic) sin?

The index of a nation's health is to be measured by the fact as to how low the incidence of chronic disease is, and as to how little people resort to doctors and hospitals. Increasing hospital facilities and provision for free drugging would not mean less but more incidence of disease. A country like ours cannot pay the cost of a medication scheme. Nature-Cure is best suited to India, as it is a science that can be learnt and practised by every family, in every home.

New Delhi

Ved Prakash

[In regard to the issue of liberty raised in the above correspondence, it will interest the reader to know of an important observation made by Lord Douglas of Barlock in the House of Lords, Britain, January 27, 1954. I reproduce it from an interesting cyclostyled, bulletin,

*Should You Pay for Your Health?*, issued by the Indian Institute of Natural Therapeutics, Pudukkottai, S.I.: 15-7-'54

M. P.]

The battle for the liberty of the subject has to be renewed and fought in every age. No sooner has one encroachment been swept away than another arises to take its place. The passion to regulate the lives of others is deep-seated and hard to root out. It is most dangerous and most insidious when it arises not from motives of personal gain but from the desire to inflict benefit upon others. In this era, the greatest danger to human freedom is the specialist or the expert, the man who has soaked himself in some branch of research and who wishes to impose upon others the pattern of conduct which he thinks is best. I do not refer to scientists, for a true scientist is one who has learned to take a broad and balanced view, one who is imbued with a healthy spirit of scepticism and not with fanaticism.

## In Praise of Action

This eloquent passage, selected from *Four Minute Essays* by Dr. Frank Crave, appears on the front cover of *Magazine Digest* of August 1948:

'Doing clears the mind. Physical activity has a peculiar luminous effect upon the judgment. The soundest views of life come not from the pulpit or the professional chair, but from the workshops.

'To saw a plank or nail down a shingle, to lay a stone square or paint a house evenly, to run a locomotive or raise a good crop of corn, somehow reacts upon the intelligence. Such labour reaches the very inward essential cell of wisdom—provided always the worker is brave, not afraid of his own conclusions, and does not hand his thinking over to some guesser with a large bluff.

'Doing makes religion. All the religion that is of any account is what we thrash out with our own hands, suffer out with our own hearts and find out with our own visions.

'Doing creates faith. Doubt comes from Sundays and other idle hours. The only people who believe the Ten Commandments are those who do them. Those who believe the world is growing better are they who are trying to make it grow better.

'Doing brings joy. The sweetest of joys is the joy of accomplishment. Make love and you will feel love. Quit making love and you will doubt love. Be kind, steadily and persistently and you will believe in kindness. Be unclean and you will soon, sneer at anybody's claim to virtue. Be mean and you will cease to believe there is any goodness in the world.

'So a man has his own destiny, his own creed, his own internal peace, his own nobility in his hands—literally in his hands. For all the worth-while wisdom of goodness you have in your head and heart was soaked up from your hands.'

V. G. D.

By Vinoba Bhave  
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# HARIJAN

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1954

## QUIT ASIA

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

I think it was in 1945-'46. In a speech that late Sardar Patel gave after coming out of jail, he said, not 'Quit India' but 'Quit Asia' should be our slogan now. I fear some must have thought then that the statement was surprising and too fantastic to be true. Today we see that it was not so.

The invasion of Asia by the Christian world of the West began in the 16th or the 17th century. The English occupied India, the French held Indo-China, the Dutch occupied Indonesia. European Christianity invaded China and Japan too, though not with similar success. The whole age constituted a new chapter in world's history. A new one in that history is being enacted now; its watchword is 'Quit Asia'.

It is in the nature of a vested interest to be parasitic and exploiting the poor. This applies to foreign rule as well. It is quite apparent that the colonial occupation by Europe of Asian territories is today a danger to world peace and humanity. Even the little foreign spots like Div, Daman, Goa, Pondicherry etc. are menacing enough and threaten to resist the writings on the wall by violent means. The tragedy of Korea is being repeated at present in Indo-China, instead of the Christian world realizing the signs of the times and quitting Asia.

'The Asian Revolution' is the title of a pamphlet containing a lecture by Sir Malcom Macdonald, the British High Commissioner, S.-E. Asia. He describes the present Asian situation in the following terms:

"At this lively moment in history the peoples of (S.-E. Asia, i.e. Burma, Thailand, Indo-China, the Philippines, Malaya with Singapore, Indonesia and Br. Borneo).....are playing their part in the Asian Revolution which is one of the great events of the 20th century. They are in process of throwing off the protective, but in some way restrictive rule of overseas Colonial Powers and they are building their own free National Governments. Politically conscious people in all these S.-E. Asian countries are devoting themselves to the two great aims of Asian Nationalists in these days: First, the attainment of that political self-government, and second, the achievement of economic progress which shall bring higher standards of living for the Asian masses....So throughout S.-E. Asia the old type of colonialism is passing away."

It is a question whether the French or the Portuguese or other colonial powers realize this or no. It is equally a point how England or America think and act in this matter, because,

it seems, they are reluctant to take out their hands from the Asian pie.

Such interference on the part of Western powers in Asian affairs is defended on grounds of growing fears of Communist expansion in Asian lands. To quote Malcom Macdonald again from his above-mentioned speech,

"Like many human institutions (colonialism) has lived a full and vigorous life.....but it is growing out-of-date and is making way for a successor. But as that colonialism is growing weaker so its successor, national self-rule is still not very strong. In some countries in S.-E. Asia it is still comparatively young; it is growing up; it is gathering its strength. And at this moment before it has attained its mature strength, it is having to meet the attack of an enemy, a powerful and fanatical enemy—Communism.....In international affairs Communism means Imperialism."

So it is that the 'free world' of Europe, America have undertaken the 'white man's burden' of bringing in the new age of freedom in Asia; and to that end, the dollar is out to help not only economically but militarily with arms and armies even.

These countries came to Asia during the colonial period of world history; they were not as disinterested nor altruistic as they say at present. They may not be taken to be free from colonial covetousness and acquisitiveness. For example, even this day we see how France and Portugal cling to their little enclaves in India. The British Commonwealth countries have captured territories in Africa and Australia and they allow only White immigration, and it appears as if England and America stand in defence of such policy of exclusion. Therefore the first thing that is expected of these powers is to leave off the colonial policy of the bygone days. Instead of that we find, in the name of stemming the onrush of Communism, there is going on warfare and internal commotion among divided Asian countries. This is jeopardizing peace and freedom. But this is not realized by the colonial powers, nor do they stop taking to military means of intervention. Therefore, people fear whether there is now growing in the world a new type of world imperialism.

Such a world imperialism aims to capture the whole world in its grip. Two protagonists of this 'ism' seem to have arisen at present—America and Russia. They come forth with the aim of a certain ideology prevailing in the whole world. If so, it is wrong on the part of both of them, because spreading of ideas cannot—should not be done through the wrong means of diplomacy and warfare etc. The means must be as the ends aimed at—non-violent and peaceful persuasion. Otherwise, surely they will not succeed.

A few days ago, an Indian Press correspondent at Geneva had put a question to Prime Minister Chou En-lai, which is worth quoting here:



"Q: Can it be said that there are certain major problems which are common to the peoples of Asian countries? In what way does Premier Chou En-lai think the peoples of Asian countries can help each other solve these problems?"

A: The aggressive policy of splitting the Asian countries into opposing military blocs is increasingly threatening peace and security of all Asian countries. This is a major problem facing the peoples of all Asian countries at present. It is our view that in order to ensure the peace of Asia and safeguard the rights of the peoples of all Asian countries to national independence and self-determination, the Asian countries should consult among themselves with a view to seeking common measures to safeguard peace and security in Asia by assuming obligations mutually and respectively." (*The Hindu*, June 25, '54)

The Prime Minister of China immediately thereafter came to Delhi and saw Shri Nehru during his three days' stay in the capital. At that very time President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Churchill were meeting at Washington, and it seems they discussed what should be done for Asia's security against Communist infiltration.

It is obvious that in such a discussion there should be Asia's statesmen also. Supposing that peace is a collective responsibility of the entire world, even then it must be conceded that the nations of the part of the world, where peace might be in danger are surely the most concerned. It would not be a proper policy to evade them or not to consult them. We are in a new age now, wherein old ways of secret diplomacy are fast growing out of date. Asia wishes to manage her own affairs with self-respect and without any humiliation. This is not to refuse whatever aid and advice friendly and peace-loving nations of the world may give to her. In a way, freedom means the right to err. The first thing needed by Asia is to have her freedom to manage her own house. It is also necessary that Asian peoples unite for mutual benefit and friendly co-existence, and on the basis of no-war join together to work for their happy and peaceful security. The only condition for such friendly unity should be that it must be consistent with and in furtherance of world peace and security, and not a group formation allied in rivalry or war against another group.

30-6-'54

(From the original in Gujarati)

By Mahatma Gandhi

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#### WHY PROHIBITION

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#### A CASE FOR PROHIBITION\*

Prohibition is a fundamental necessity to improve the social order in India today and its enforcement is a duty enjoined by the Constitution, says Shri Morarji Desai, Chief Minister of Bombay State, where prohibition has been in force for over seven years.

Shri Desai says the drink evil has wide ramifications and the standard of living of the masses cannot be raised unless this evil is wiped out.

Q: The enforcement of total prohibition in Bombay State since April, 1950, has aroused a measure of opposition. Do you feel that the ideals or goals behind the policy are understood in their proper perspective?

A: The policy of prohibition and the ideals behind it are understood by an overwhelming number of our people. There are a few, however, who refuse to understand and they deliberately carry on misleading propaganda against prohibition. There are others who do not understand the proper economics of prohibition because they are guided by some preconceived notions of economic theories.

Q: Why was the introduction of prohibition found necessary?

A: Prohibition is a fundamental necessity to improve the social order. Its proper enforcement gives happiness to the masses. Practically, since its very inception, the Congress has been demanding prohibition. Now for many years a large section of the people has been in its favour. Remember also the large-scale movement against liquor and the subsequent picketing of bars and liquor shops. Even at the cost of jail sentences, lathi-charges and other forms of persecution from the Government of those times the people persisted in this constructive programme. Because of this history and the ideals of our country, prohibition has been unanimously adopted in our Constitution as a directive principle. It thus becomes a duty to be discharged and by enforcing prohibition, therefore, we have done nothing but our duty.

Q: It has been argued that moral reform of this extent required widespread propaganda. Please explain some Statewide steps taken in this direction.

A: Who could have done better propaganda than Mahatma Gandhi himself? He saw the havoc wrought in the lives of our poor people and ceaselessly propagated the advantage of weaning them from the destructive effects of narcotics and alcohol. Before prohibition was introduced in Bombay State, it was preceded by years of persuasive propaganda made by Congress workers as laid down by Gandhiji. Today, we are conveniently forgetting this background. But mere propaganda cannot suffice in making social reform effective. For, if propaganda alone

\* An interview with Shri Morarji Desai by Smt. Bhadra Desai.

could do the necessary work, there would be no need for penal code to reform criminal tendencies.

Q: Does prohibition infringe the right of the individual in a constitutional democracy? Besides it has been suggested in some quarters, that if prohibition is meant to be a social reform for the neglected classes, the cost of alcohol itself should be made prohibitive. Is this viewpoint compatible with the need for total prohibition?

A: Certainly not. Prohibition cannot be said to infringe the liberty of an individual, as the liberty of no individual can be greater than the provisions of our Constitution. Every individual in turn is governed by the fundamental rights of the people as included in the Constitution. Then again, in all democracies even in the West and in America all narcotic drugs have been prohibited. If this is justified as democratic action in a democratic State, how can the same be classified as an infringement of the constitutional democracy in our State? In the final analysis it becomes a perversion to say so. By making the price of alcohol prohibitive, effective prohibition cannot be enforced. Thereby problems of illicit liquor would increase manifold.

Q: Is it true that statistics reveal that the "drink habit" is prevalent among nearly 10 out of every 100 people in this country? If so, was prohibition introduced solely to reform this cross-section of society or for its simultaneous effect on the people as a whole?

A: I cannot say exactly what percentage of the people is given to drinking. Nevertheless even if only 10 per cent of the people drink, almost 30 per cent of the population is concerned. Drinking by any individual affects his or her family and surroundings. This total section cannot, therefore, be said to be a small one. Habits with evil potentialities spread fast and are not easily given up. Besides, the drink habit is more prevalent among our poorer people. Their low standards have to be improved if we desire to raise the entire level of our country. Such aims cannot be achieved unless the destructive habits like drinking are removed from them. It was Mahatma Gandhi who said that "the drink curse has desolated many a labourer's home. There is no halfway house between drunkenness and prohibition. Well-to-do men may pretend to be moderate. But there is no such thing as moderation possible among labourers."

Q: What, in your opinion, have been the consequences of prohibition under the following general heads: (a) In rural areas which today form the larger regions of our State; (b) on our over-all economy; (c) on crime throughout the State?

A: (a) The consequence of the policy in rural areas has been the raising of living standards among the village communities. These facts are obvious and are freely admitted by those honest enough to do so.

(b) Bombay State has continued to spend more money on welfare schemes than other States even after the introduction of prohibition. The dry policy has become a contributory factor in raising the living standards of the people and in providing a diversion for money from drink to valuable necessities of life. It has thus actually improved the economic conditions.

(c) Prohibition has helped in lessening the crimes of certain categories throughout the State.

Q: Do you agree the long coastline of the State, absence of prohibition laws in some States, along its border-lines and lack of a uniform prohibition policy throughout India are the factors which mar the effectiveness of prohibition?

A: All these are impediments to a certain extent but they do not deter us. It must, however, be said that most of the States, excepting the Goa authorities, have given good co-operation to us in enforcing this policy.

Q: Do you concur with the experience of social workers that prohibition by its very nature is full of difficult problems?

A: All social reforms are full of difficulties but these should not prevent us from making attempts to introduce reforms. Human ability is of little value if it cannot face difficulties bravely and squarely. Nothing of lasting value can be achieved without solving difficult problems.

Q: How do you measure the success of prohibition?

A: Actually out of every 100 people who used to drink, 70 or 80 have given up the habit. The rest, even though they drink through the issue of permits or illegal ways, have also partly benefited. I do realize that despite the prohibition laws some people continue to drink but their number is much less than before. Take for example, public holidays, festivals and the like. You will see fewer results of drunkenness on the streets than ever before. Moreover, we receive numerous reports of people giving up drink and of the benefits that have accrued to them. Petitions requesting the Government not to relax prohibition are also not few.

Q: Is prohibition mainly concerned with the "morals" of the people? Are not moral principles interconnected with the practical exigencies of daily life?

A: Prohibition is meant for the economic and social uplift of the people. Moral principles play this undeniable role in life and hence their relevance to exigencies of everyday life.

Q: Will you say something about the difficulties the State encounters in enforcing prohibition?

A: The difficulties are the ones created mainly by those opposing prohibition.

Q: As a member of the A.I.C.C. what do you think will be the result of its latest directive recommending prohibition to all the States?

A: The directive will strengthen our hands and help the country to go dry.



## VINOBA IN CHAMPARAN

(By "Dadu")

Though Vinoba entered Bihar on his Bhoodan mission in September, 1952, and began covering one district after another, he had Champaran out of mind as he felt sure that land would be obtained in that sacred and sacrificial district for the mere asking. As we know it was in that district that Gandhiji had his first Satyagraha. And he was perfectly correct. For, I myself have had some experience of Bhoodan work in Champaran sometime ago when I contacted about a dozen small villages whose grateful populace easily donated about 90 acres on gentle persuasion. But the general people could not quite follow, not wrongly, why Vinoba should not come to their innocent district. As the time of his departure from Bihar drew near, their call became insistent and Vinoba decided to devote one month in Champaran, and entered the district on 14th June, 1954.

Champaran is a district of big farms and sugar mills. A common saying of its peasantry is: 'Neel-ha gaya, Mill-ha aya' (the indigo planters have been replaced by mill proprietors). On thousands of acres of land there is grown cane which feeds the Bihar sugar mills. I need not go into the woes of cane cultivators here. Suffice it to state that they are as miserable and underfed as their brethren in Gorakhpur and other sugar districts. But they are lovable, hospitable and full of feeling and warmth. Despite the rains they come to attend Vinoba's prayer meetings in their thousands to listen to him with rapt attention.

On 26th June, Vinoba was at Brindaban Ashram, near the Kumbarbagh halt of the Muzaffarpur-Narkatiaganj branch of the N. E. Railway. Brindaban Ashram is a prominent educational centre of Bihar. Also in 1939 was held there the fifth annual session of the Gandhi Seva Sangh, attended by the Mahatma himself. Close to it lies Ranipur, the village home of the late Pandit Prajapati Mishra, former president of the Bihar State Congress Committee. Vinoba's post-prayer speech at Brindaban, was a reply to Acharya Narendra Dev's criticism of the Bhoodan movement. The speech is given elsewhere, therefore I may not dilate upon it here.

Three days later, Vinoba reached Sugauli, noted for the British-Gurkha Treaty of 1818. From here goes a railway line to Raxaul whence one gets a bus for Khatmandu, the capital of Nepal. In the afternoon, the workers of the district Gram Panchayat gave a demonstration of physical exercises. Seeing them, Vinoba observed that they did not form an essential part of panchayat activities. He, however, placed a few points before them for their consideration:

1. There should be study circles or *mandals* at different places where people should be brought in touch with new thoughts

and currents. Sarvodaya and Gandhian literature should be studied and read out to the people.

2. They should raise production of the country. Unless production is increased and village unemployment removed, village people cannot be enthused to any activity. What is the use of building roads that help city-people to exploit village-folk?

3. The panchayats should see that there is neither anybody unemployed in their village, nor hungry. As boycott of foreign goods brought Swaraj, boycott of mill goods was necessary for village Swaraj or Gram-raj.

4. As land was the primary basis of production, village land must be redistributed. Land must belong to the village and there should be no one landless anywhere.

5. The real strength of the panchayat lies in public opinion. The panchayats should run according to the will of and under the control of village people. It matters little whether Government recognizes them or not. People should work with their own strength.

Thirteenth of June was the solar eclipse day. In his post-prayer address Vinoba said that people went to Kuruksheetra on that day because there was taught the great lesson of detachment through the Gita in which Krishna asked Arjuna to cast off his attachment (सोह) and thus remove the eclipse (ग्रहण) which had overshadowed his (Arjuna's) brain. As people bathed and made gifts on the occasion of an eclipse, they should resolve anew and donate their wealth and lands. Our attachment had eclipsed our intellect and heart. He made an earnest plea to take a lesson from the sacred day and offer to the society what they had with all their heart.

We were at Areraj on July 1, 1954. Next to Baidyanathdam, it is one of Bihar's most important religious places. In his evening prayer-meeting, Vinoba expressed his joy at the fact that Bihar houses consisted of large families, which was an indication of mutual love. But he regretted that lately, on account of Zamindari abolition measures or otherwise, they were rendering land into pieces and transferring it in the name of their relatives and near ones. This would result in loss of love and goodwill and was bound to prove ruinous. He said that God's object in giving much to some was only to test whether they spent it on themselves in vain or for those poorer than themselves. Wealth was a sort of strength to be properly utilized. Tulsidas wrote Hanuman-Chalisa (हनुमान चालीसा) and not Ravana-Chalisa (रावण चालीसा) though Ravana was not less powerful than Hanuman. Tulsidas did so for the simple reason that Hanuman used his energy and talents to help and serve others while Ravana for contrary ends.

The audience at Manchargawan next day was rather small. As it was a clear sky that day after several cloudy and rainy days, most of the villagers had gone for paddy transplantation. There were more children in the meeting. Vinoba told them that their parents expected them to study devotedly and do right work at the right time. He deplored the practice of modern students of wasting eight months and mugging up for examinations night and day in the last month. Knowledge was to be acquired bit by bit and regularly, without any break. He referred to the instructive story of the hare and the tortoise. He said that we must be steady like the tortoise. These days, our workers, social or political, took to many things at a time and hence miserably failed to achieve any substantial results. What was seriously required all over the country was single-mindedness.

Our last halt of the week was at Turkolia, some six miles away from Motihari, the headquarters of the district. We were staying at the local middle school. An important visitor in the afternoon was an official who asked a common question: If everything depends on God where is the liberty for man to do or undo anything?

Vinoba dwelt on this question at length in his evening discourse. At the outset, he observed, we must know that in our humble language we tried to describe God. There was no reason to suppose that our descriptions were correct and sufficient. Out of His infinite compassion, He tolerated them. But it was better to sing His praises with our faulty or incomplete expressions than to waste our time in trifles and quarrels. Coming to the question, he said that God did leave some liberty in our own hands too. When we tie a bullock to a pillar by a rope, the bullock's movements are confined to the circle (with rope long radius) round the pole. But he is free in the circle to sit or stand, lie or sleep. So also God has imposed certain limitations on man. But in the sphere of those limitations, he is absolutely free. As for example, He has provided us with a body which cannot stay without air. But He has left it to our choice whether we use good and fresh air, or the bad and foul one and whether we keep our homes and villages neat or dirty. Another restriction that He has imposed on us is that we would reap as we sow. That is His law. Once having made it, he does not at all interfere. He has ordained that a good action bears good fruit and vice versa. Fire can be used both for cooking a meal and burning a house. If our house goes afire, it is due to our carelessness and we cannot absolve ourselves of our responsibility by shifting the thing on God. God's name was being used for maintaining the *status quo*, which is awful. If it is the will of God that a

rich man should have wealth, why does he go to the court in case there is a decoity in his house? If a patient dies, we hold God responsible for it. Why do we not do so when the doctor's medicine cures him of disease? It is strange distribution of responsibilities. It is rank atheism. Because the world is unhappy, God like a true father, wants a change in the *status quo* in the existing situation. If we act according to His law there would not be that misery which stalks the world today. Concluding, Vinoba enjoined upon the people to do things that would be liked by God. That would make our life happy, change the woe-ridden world and usher in new society. Bhoodan was the symbol which called upon them to do their duty to their neighbour.

9-7-54

Camp Chaita

**BHOODAN FIGURES**

(Up to 10-7-54)

S. N.	State	Total Collection (Acres)	Total Distribution (Acres)
1.	Assam	1,692	—
2.	Andhra	18,976	—
3.	Uttar Pradesh	5,05,945	46,666
4.	Orissa	94,645	708
5.	Karnatak	1,809	239
6.	Kerala	17,000	—
7.	Gujarat	35,228	942
8.	Tamilnad	21,697	256
9.	Delhi	9,245	41
10.	Punjab	6,847	—
11.	Bengal	2,210	—
12.	Bihar	20,78,072	557
13.	Madhya Pradesh	66,200	1,416
14.	Madhya Bharat	62,412	—
15.	Maharashtra	15,480	—
16.	Mysore	3,414	—
17.	Rajasthan	3,21,544	4,088
18.	Vindhya Pradesh	5,141	152
19.	Saurashtra	41,000	—
20.	Himachal Pradesh	1,900	—
21.	Hyderabad	92,114	10,505
Total		34,02,571	65,570

(Total collection on 31-5-54 was 33,71,075 acres).

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A. I. Sarva Seva Sangh.

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