

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor : K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XIII. No. 22

AHMEDABAD — SUNDAY, JULY 31, 1949

TWO ANNAS

NOTES

Night-Soil of Police and Military Camps

A correspondent writes:

"It is the practice in military areas to burn all the night-soil on the spot. I believe the Police lines copy the practice. Surely, it should be possible to devise some other means of disposal so that this vast quantity of good potential manure is not lost to the impoverished soil of the country. The only consideration is the health of the troops and the others connected with them. This could be ensured by careful removal to specially designed dumps from where suitable trucks or carts could take the matter to safe and distant places. There it could be decomposed and sold to the farmer.

"If no water is allowed to be mixed with the contents of the pots, the bulk of the matter will be greatly reduced. For this purpose the users should wash away from the basin and should be required to pour some earth into it, before leaving. The semi-solid matter will be easier to handle at all stages and will not spill in transit.

"I am sure the idea is not impractical. If a fraction of the money intended to be spent on chemical manures is diverted towards designing suitable trucks and carts, all the night-soil and swept refuse can be saved for the crops."

I commend the suggestion for adoption by the military authorities. The military personnel, being a trained and disciplined body, can very easily convert the night soil into valuable manure and use it in their camps for raising vegetables, etc. In these days of food shortage, the military personnel, while not engaged in active service, can convert the waste land adjoining their camps into food-producing land and add to the food production. In this way they will be able to get fresh and good vegetables which they themselves require in their camps. Not only their leisure will be profitably utilized but also vegetable-growing will be a hobby for the soldiers. They should also think of ways and means of producing some of their other necessities also in their inactive periods in camps, so that the defence expenditure, which is too heavy for a poor country like India, could be reduced to the minimum possible.

Wardha, 16-7-'49

K. G. M.

The 'Sarvodaya' Monthly

At the time of the Rau Conference, in a meeting of the Sarva Seva Sangh it was decided to publish a monthly named *Sarvodaya*. An announcement about it was also made at the Conference. Accordingly, the first number of the *Sarvodaya* will be published on the 15th August,

1949 from Wardha. Its language will be Hindustani and script Nagari. It will ordinarily contain 64 pages of royal size printed on hand-made paper. If hand-made paper of royal size is unavailable, it will be published in the beginning in the present size of the *Khadi Jagat*. Its annual subscription will be Rs. 8 and a single copy will be sold at Re. 1. The Magazine will contain discussions on all aspects of life from the *Sarvodaya* point of view and technical and generally useful information on the various items of the constructive programme. The aim of the magazine will be, in brief, to prepare the ideology of non-violent social structure.

Shri Vinoba and Shri Dada Dharmadhikari will be its editor and managing editor respectively.

Intending subscribers are requested to remit their subscriptions by money order to the Manager, the *Sarvodaya*, Wardha. No cheques will be accepted and no V.P.P.s sent. Magazines, articles, books, etc. may be sent to the Editor, the *Sarvodaya*.

VALLABH SWAMI,

Secretary, Sarva Seva Sangh, Gopuri (Wardha).

[The credit of inducing Shri Vinoba to accept this new responsibility goes to Shri Aryanayakam. I hope the public will welcome this new journal heartily.

Wardha, 20-7-'49

— K. G. M.]

Adivasis of South India

The *Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh*, Delhi, has published a pamphlet, *Irulas Kadars and Malamalasans of South India*, by Shri V. Raghaviah, M.L.A. (Madras), one of the Secretaries of the Sangh. It gives a very interesting account of the life of these aboriginal tribes and the deplorable conditions in which they are living, and suggests means and measures necessary for the improvement of their condition.

Wardha, 12-7-'49

Bombastic

"A Traveller" writes:

"The travelling public must feel grateful to you for having so pointedly drawn the attention of the Railway authorities to the great discomfort the present 2nd class railway compartments have afforded to the travellers. I am a frequent traveller and confine to 2nd class or inter-class and echo every word of the condemnation you have so forcibly written in your issue of the 10th instant. The present arrangement— whoever it was that conceived it— seems to have been done with scarce courtesy to the travelling public."

The letter does not end here. The writer makes this grievance an excuse for criticizing in

a bombastic style the Congress Government. "The Government of the people for the people" has adopted, he says, "methods which remind one of the inquisitorial ones of old," and its ministers think that "they alone are sole repositories of all wisdom."

I must not omit that in order to induce me to take a notice of his letter, he gives me a flattering compliment as follows :

"Your strong protest, coming as it does from one who now wields the instrument of the 'Father of our Nation' will, it is hoped, bring down the Gods from their Olympian heights to render humanitarian service to those who had chosen them—may be by misguided wisdom—to administer their country."

This really is too much and shows what unbalanced thinking we are developing. Such rhetoric does no good to anyone, and instead of improving the writer's language, spoils it. I thought that Macaulay was no longer a favourite with students. But it appears that he still holds the field. Or is there a modern successor of his ?

Wardha, 21-7-'49

The Russian Management of Languages

An esteemed correspondent writes :

"With reference to the language problem in India (*vide The Swiss Management of Languages in the Harijan 10-7-'49*), I have a few things to say.

"In my humble opinion the analogy of no other country applies to India since the conditions here are so different that a solution must arise out of the situation itself.

"Regarding the Swiss analogy that is quoted, all the four languages are declared national, though Romansch, which is one of the four, is spoken by only 44,158 out of 40,41,000, and German is spoken by about 30 lacs out of 40. If we are to do the same in India, there are not less than twelve languages each of which is spoken by not less than ten millions. Each of them has a literature at least as old as the 12th or the 13th century.

"Of all other countries, possibly we can study with profit the solution of the problem in Russia where the number of languages is as baffling as in India though by and far Great Russian predominates, since it is the language of about eleven crores out of seventeen.

"(In this connection) I may refer you to a book (*Comparative Education* by Dr. Hans), which has been noticed in the leading article by the *Sunday News of India*, Bombay, (29th May 1949)."

For ready reference he sends me a copy of the second and third paragraphs of that article :

"The sixteen national republics constituting the federation known as the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics include many nationalities, languages and traditions, though all have a Russian background. Any other nationality now wishing to become a member accepts the common Russian tradition. There is no need to stress the analogy with India. The educational system, imparting its instruction in 180 languages, requires also a knowledge of Russian in all pupils. The results are indeed impressive. In old Russia, peasants and non-Russians were mostly illiterate; now the majority have received education in their mother tongue, can also speak and read Russian and thus have access to its literature. Yet the imposition of a single national language by Government

has not affected in any way the loyalty of the different national groups to the federation as a whole.

"Does this impose an unnecessarily heavy burden on children? Russia thinks not. She has tackled the problem from the beginning through special Commissions appointed to study the languages of small national groups lacking even alphabets, and to contrive alphabets, grammars and text books for them, through the creation of special chairs in adjacent Universities in the languages of larger groups, and through the establishment of entire educational systems including Universities in the languages of the large nationalities living in compact territories. In the case of Muslim republics, whose populations total about thirty million, the difficulty of the Arabic script has been overcome by the introduction of a modified Latin alphabet. The unifying medium is the universal knowledge of Russian as a national language for all groups."

Of course, each country has its special features, and no country can be followed by another in its entirety. It is the spirit in which the problems are attempted to be solved, which is of primary importance.

India being more like Russia than Switzerland in her vastness, we might learn more from Russia on all-India matters. But Switzerland can teach us in provincial matters, particularly mixed-language areas. It is the spirit of making room for all that is necessary.

Wardha, 21-7-'49

Sugar-Cane Area

I gladly publish the following from Shri Jairamdas Daulatram, Minister for Food and Agriculture, Government of India :

"I read in the *Harijan* of 5th June an article headed as *Sugar-coated Food Shortage*. As you know my Ministry is trying to encourage the Palm *Gur* industry and also the conversion of Palm *Gur* into sugar. I would like to give it scope for maximum development and whatever concrete suggestions are made in that direction will be examined and carried out. As you know, we have an Official Adviser in this matter. I would, however, wish to let you know the exact relationship between the acreage taken up by sugar-cane for the manufacture of sugar and the acreage under foodgrains. The following table gives the necessary data :

	Indian Union	
	1948-49 Area (000 acres)	Percentage of the total foodgrains
All foodgrains (Estimated)	187,600	—
Sugar-cane (Final Forecast)	3,645	2 p.c.
Area required for <i>Gur</i> production (53 p.c. of the total area under sugar-cane)	1,932	1.03 p.c.
Area required for sugar production (24 p.c. of the total area under sugar-cane)	875	0.47 p.c.

"The above Table shows that less than $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the area under foodgrains is being used for sugar from sugar-cane. If the entire area used for sugar from sugar-cane were to be used for foodgrains, it will make a difference of $\frac{1}{2}$ p.c. I do not thereby mean that even that may not be done but I have given the above figures only in view of the impression created by the above article that a tremendous difference in food production would arise if sugar were not produced from sugar-cane."

Wardha, 21-7-'49

K. G. M.

Use of Drain Water

In village cleanliness, the problem of finding an outlet for drain water presents a great difficulty. There is no drainage system in the village and so water coming from houses or wells flows in the lanes causing nuisance, dirt, foul smell and insects of various kinds. The rural uplift department has introduced a temporary arrangement in the form of soak pits, five feet deep and three feet broad. But it affects the water of a nearby well.

In these days when there is shortage of food and fruits in the country, it is our duty to make use of all that would help their production. For growing vegetables and plantain trees, next to land, it is difficult to get adequate water for their extensive growth. The village water, though it contains nitrogen, an essential element for the growth of vegetables and fruit trees, produces only uncleanness. If this water is utilized, it will remove uncleanness and provide water for fruits and vegetables. Some idle piece of land is available in almost every country house. A plantain tree or two and vegetables could be profitably grown on it with the help of the house water. A couple of trees would suffice for a small family. In a bigger family, where much water is used, more trees could be grown. They could also be planted nearby the village well where people take bath or fill water. They require little space and add to the beauty of the surroundings. In a year the tree is ready to give fruit. If we rear it carefully, each one will easily give at least ten seers of sweet bananas. After the bananas are taken from the tree, the juice extracted from its trunk could be used in preparing *papad* etc.

By utilizing filthy water in this way, we can improve our health, clean the village and eat more fruits and vegetables.

TRIVENI SAHAY

(Adapted from *Hindustani*)

New Publications

THE POWER OF NON-VIOLENCE

[Revised Edition]

By Richard B. Gregg

Price Rs. 2-8-0

Postage etc. 0-7-0

By Mahatma Gandhi

FOOD SHORTAGE AND AGRICULTURE

Price Rs. 2-0-0

Postage etc. 0-7-0

RAMANAMA

Price Re. 1-0-0

Postage etc. 0-2-0

DIET AND DIET REFORM

Price Rs. 2-0-0

Postage etc. 0-7-0

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD.

MISUNDERSTANDING

I regret that my article *Disgraceful Behaviour* has evoked angry correspondence and comments. It has been taken as a defamation of the Bengalis.

Some of the correspondents have defended the two incidents referred to by me. One writer says, the National Flag had been already insulted before and mentions two previous incidents in other provinces, where a similar sacrilege was committed. It was, therefore, inconsequential if it was insulted once again! Another writer says that the hoisting of the Union Jack along with the country's flag on Government offices on the King's Birthday was an equal insult perpetrated by the Government itself! This shows how passions blur our power of thinking. If the reference to the two previous incidents is correct, it only shows that we ought not to carry a flag at all until the people are well disciplined. It does not justify the third incident. In any case the National Flag should not be used by any party in elections.

The hoisting of the Union Jack is, I believe, in keeping with our present constitutional position. India is still a Dominion under the Union Jack. It owes allegiance to George VI and the head of the Indian Government is his Governor General. After the country has passed its Constitution and declared itself a Republic, it will have no King and no Governor General, on his behalf, and the position will change.

The assault on Shrimati Suchetadevi Kripalani has been similarly justified. Some of the writers say, election is always a rough business and those who take part in it must be prepared to face rough handling in the heat generated by the occasion. If ladies want to be treated chivalrously, they must not enter the arena of election campaigns, just as they may not expect not to be shot if they entered a battlefield as fighting soldiers. This means that we would make election campaigns civil wars on a small scale if we were left to ourselves! It is this wrong training to our citizens that I have condemned, as I must. There can be no democracy with this sense of citizenship.

Another writer has said that Shrimati Aruna Asafali had been similarly assaulted by partisans of the Congress in a U. P. election, and I had made no comment upon it. I had no knowledge of the incident. If it is true, it was as disgraceful a behaviour as that against Suchetadevi. Whether it is Suchetadevi, Arunadevi or a lady of Saratbabu's party, no woman can be so handled by decent people.

Particular exception has been taken to my remark: "May I know what culture is this? Is it Indian, Bengali, Italian, German, Russian, ancient or modern?" A fling against Bengali culture has been suspected here. The very manner of the sentence ought to have dispelled such doubt. "Is it Indian?" I ask first, and knowing that it can't be so, I ask next whether

it is Bengali? This too, I know, cannot be, and so I proceed to Italy, Germany, Russia, and so on. But I am unwilling to condemn any people downright and so I ask whether it is ancient or modern? I am unwilling to accuse any one definitely and so proceed with the question, "Whatever it is, I wish to ask whether this culture is not immoral and unmanly? Can it lead to good government and happiness of its people?" Both are framed as leading questions which means I know what reply I have to expect, and so proceed further with condemning those who were responsible for the incident. Every discerning reader should have taken this as a friend's warning to his politically minded countrymen of every party.

Wardha, 20-7-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

HARIJAN

July 31

1949

FOOD ECONOMY

Last week I discussed ways for bringing about greater production of food crops, and the procurement and maintenance of food stocks. This week I propose to dwell on some of the points relating to its economical preservation, consumption and distribution.

I believe no statistician has placed the country's food shortage at more than 10 per cent of her needs. In a vast country like India this shortage is too small to cause any serious anxiety or panic. Mathematically it works out at 2 oz. of grain per head for a person requiring 20 oz. as the full ration. Proper preservation, economic consumption, occasional self-denial of cereals and fair distribution of food should be able to feed every inhabitant of the land, with a little help of bananas, sweet-potatoes, potatoes and other subsidiary foods, which no one altogether dislikes, and would need no vigorous propaganda, provided they are available in sufficient quantities and are cheap. But in this poor country of ours, let alone bananas and potatoes, even vegetables are not available throughout the year. It is just like the argument that the deficit in agriculture should be met by keeping a few milch cattle and the deficit in the latter by the income in agriculture!

A consideration of statistical figures alone fails to make any case for controls, rationing, etc. It would appear that there is no scarcity worth the name, and several writers have criticized government restraints on this basis and doubted the *bona fides* of officers and others who have resisted the policy of decontrol.

There is no doubt that in actual experience shortage of food is greater than that warranted by the figures. Statistics are belied by experience in the same way, as the law of gravity,

that a heavy stone and a feather, if dropped simultaneously from the top of a tower, should fall to the ground at the same moment, is belied by actual experiment. It means that besides theoretical calculations there are other factors which have to be taken into consideration and controlled.

The case of food and cloth is similar to that of income. Economists put down the average income of an Indian at about Rs. 180 per annum, if not more. Mathematically it means Rs. 15 per month per head, so that the average income of a family of five persons would be Rs. 75 per month. If this were really available to every one, there need be no serious cause for pecuniary worry. But we know that the average is a fictitious one. It is made by adding together incomes of the following type and striking the average:

No. of persons	Income Rupees	Total income Rupees
1	10 lakhs	10 lakhs
1	5 lakhs	5 lakhs
18	0.02 lakh each	0.36 lakh
80	Rs. 50 only each	0.04 lakh

15.4 lakhs

Average income per head Rs. 15,400!

It is clear that this average is misleading and presents a false picture of prosperity. Similarly fictitious are averages regarding cloth and food. The calculations take no account of the mode of distribution, which is a very important factor. Even if we succeed in producing 10 per cent more food, and thus make up the theoretical shortage, it will, by no means mean that everyone will get sufficient cereals to eat. If the ways of preservation, distribution and consumption continue what they are, there will still be millions of people who will not get sufficient food to eat.

It is not the too much shortage of grains that is the cause of our hungry mouths. Even when a million people died of starvation in Bengal, there was so much rice and flour in Calcutta that thousands of bags were destroyed because they had become rotten. Even now tons of imported grain become damaged before it leaves the dock or railway yards for shortage of labour, wagons, etc. In 1943, when the people of Nagpur were hard hit for food, we saw in the Central Jail maunds of *chapatis*, *dal*, etc. being daily thrown out into drains; so much so, that all the crows of surrounding suburbs found a feasting place inside the jails and there was a marked increase of their population there. Careless storing, delayed transport, deliberate waste in eating, and unequal distribution are evils which make the food problem graver than it should really be. In servant-managed kitchens, as much food is destroyed by careless storing and deliberate waste in cooking, serving and eating as actually goes into the stomach.

Preservation of grain in good condition for two or even for three years is not impossible. Forty years ago all middle class families and cultivators knew how to do it and did it. It is still done where there are elderly women functioning. Cultivators also knew how to save grain from rats and insects, though modern insecticides and cement and stone godowns were not known. Now even wholesale dealers seem to be ignorant of the methods. Government stores and railway godowns in spite of their expensive buildings are houses of waste. The modernized woman is too indolent to regard this as a part of a housewife's duty. Labourers and cultivators have no longer a sense of pious regard towards food. A grain of food was regarded almost as holy as an image of God. It was not consciously trampled under foot. An oath with food in hand was regarded conclusive. We were reprimanded by our elders if we carelessly got ourselves overserved and left something in the dish for being thrown away. A habit of leaving something in the dish was regarded bad training. The present day fashion appears to be the opposite one. Guests seem to regard making a clean dish as niggardly and make it a point of leaving something to waste, even if moderately served. The fashion is not only foolish, but must be regarded as an insult to the host and a sin against Mother Earth. A nation which makes a fashion of wasting its food cannot complain against shortage and famine, and blame Providence for not sending timely rains or raising good crops; and leaders who encourage such fashions must not be surprised if their appeals to cultivators to grow more food and sell away their surpluses are lost like water poured on an inverted cup.

Even after practising thrift on these two heads, the question of fair distribution remains. Whether the market is free or controlled, and food is rationed or open, a handful of people have food exceedingly more than they need, and millions have not enough. At one end of a large mansion, you would see guests being fed at a cost of 3 to 5 rupees per head, at the other end beggars and sweepers quarrelling among themselves to collect eatables from a heap of refuse, discarded after the guests were fed. This is a crime against humanity and it cannot go unpunished under just but relentless laws of the spirit. Such dinners are an offence against society and must be voluntarily abandoned as well as legally banned.

The collection of revenue in kind, the storing of a large part of the grains so collected in the village itself, the opening of co-operative village grain-banks, employment of all modes of transport, and encouragement of the system of paying wages and salaries partly in the form of grain to all employees would go a great way in bringing about fair distribution. Saving and economizing in the expenditure of food is as important as increasing its production.

Wardha, 20-7-49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

THE SANTINIKETAN PILGRIMAGE

II

From their Mandir Gandhiji proceeded to visit Shri Mukul Dey's studio and art gallery where Shri Dey has collected over five thousand pieces of rare Indian art, including nearly 1,500 pieces of Gaganendranath, a lot of them rescued from private houses, second-hand dealers and the ravages of white ants. He showed some of his canvasses on which he had copied immortal paintings of the Ajanta caves that were in danger of being lost, owing to the ravages of time and weather no less than neglect and ignorant interference. He had brought them over from Calcutta where there was danger of air raids and there they lay in heaped profusion converting his tiny hut into a veritable Ali Baba's cave of art treasures. It was his ambition that these should be acquired on behalf of the nation and form the nucleus of an Indian national gallery of art.

Owing to lack of time Gandhiji, could not visit Cheena Bhavana where over 50,000 Chinese texts are housed, the major part of them being a gift from the Chinese National Government. Some of them, we were told, were no longer available in China, being burnt or destroyed during the war. Remarked Prof. Tan Yun-Shan, the head of Cheena Bhavana to Gandhiji, "There was a time when some of the Indian Buddhist texts were available only in the Chinese, the originals in India being lost. Now the process was reversed."

Gandhiji could not give more than half an hour to Nandababu's Kalabhavana, where the witchery of some of Nandababu's masterpieces entranced him. He was in raptures too over the wonderful toys made by Abanibabu almost out of nothing. For instance, a dried piece of twig was converted into the likeness of a mad poet gloriously drunk, riding a wild horse; a piece of rotten wood was turned into a bird nestling in its nest, pieces of straw were turned into a lifelike grasshopper. It seemed as if the alchemy of his art could transmute almost anything, even refuse, into a "thing of beauty and a joy for ever". It grieved Gandhiji to learn that the artist himself was lying bed-ridden in Calcutta.

On his return to Calcutta he especially sent me to him with a personal note to enquire about his health and to tell him that he must live long to give more of his beautiful art to India. Abanibabu holds a place all his own in the renaissance of Indian art, marking as he does a break with the realism of the Western school of painting and a return to the Indian style with its emphasis on the soul which it seeks to interpret instead of mere outward form.

Abanibabu was in a very weak condition of health. Even the exertion of walking from his verandah to the visitor's room had brought on an attack of breathlessness. There was a growth of several days, perhaps, weeks, on the chin. But

in the eyes the fire burnt brighter than ever. He was overwhelmed by Gandhiji's affection and concern for him. "I did his likeness in 1921, when he visited Gurudev at the latter's house. Charlie Andrews was also there," he remarked with a retrospective look in his face. "But I have never met the Mahatma face to face. How can a person like me have that good luck? It needs a lot of *punya*." After a pause he proceeded: "How few fully realize what Mahatmaji's coming has meant to India—the difference between India that was before him and India of today." And to illustrate his observation he sent for a trilogy of paintings which he had done in 1921, depicting three stages in the moral and spiritual evolution of a servant who had actually been in his service. In the first he is shown just as he was when he first came from his village home in search of service—ill clad, starved, fever-wrecked, with a stupid hangdog look in his face. Then comes the non-co-operation movement. He begins to read newspapers. The light of intelligence begins to dawn on his face. In the third he has become a full-fledged *khaddarite*. He has donned the white cap. There is a volunteer's tricolour badge on his shoulder and a look of proud self-respect on his face. He feels several inches taller spiritually. "He is one of the millions like him," he concluded. "His history epitomizes the history of India's metamorphosis under Mahatmaji's gospel of *Charkha* and Non-violence. That is why I worship the Mahatma."

On the 19th Gandhiji performed the foundation laying ceremony of Deenabandhu Memorial Hospital. The auspicious mark on his forehead on the occasion was put by two Santals, one of them being a woman. Equally happy was the choice of the song from the *Gitanjali* that was sung:

Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet
Where live the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.

A note of grim stoicism rang through Gandhiji's reply. Charlie Andrews whom the people of India had affectionately given the title of Dheenabandhu in grateful recognition of his unremitted championship of the cause of the poor and the downtrodden had been like a blood brother to him. There was not a thought which Deenabandhu did not share with him and yet he could not grieve over his death.

"Birth and death are the obverse and reverse of the same coin," he observed. "They are not distinct. They are different aspects of the same thing. But out of our ignorance we welcome the one and shrink from the other. This is wrong. Mourning over the death of dear ones, especially those like Charlie Andrews and Gurudev who have done their part so nobly and well has its roots in our selfishness. Deenabandhu is blessed in death as he was in life. Death of people like him cannot be an occasion for sorrow. Speaking for myself, I may say that I have almost forgotten to mourn the death of friends

and dear ones and I want you to learn to do likewise."

PYARELAL

A TOLERATED EVIL

[I have not seen a cinema or talkie for some years. I have an idea of it only through its advertisements in papers and on walls, occasional press notices, the noise of its songs, etc., and complaints of correspondents. The following is written by one who has not denied himself that luxury completely. His views are sound and deserve serious attention. Personally I regard the cinema as it is a greater evil than drink, with only this difference that while drink has no potentiality for doing good, cinema has. But simply because of its potentiality, it cannot be regarded as an evil which should be tolerated.

Wardha, 19-7-49

—K. G. M.]

I am not unmindful of the criticism that I might have to face if I were to call the cinema an evil. Like liquor, cigarettes, tea, coffee, etc., cinema has come to be considered fashionable these days. But, like the former, the latter has resulted in evil only. While it is conceded that the potentiality of cinemas for doing good is as great as, if not greater than, those for creating evil, this industry, in its selfish craving for money, has miserably ignored the good of the nation and made this invention an instrument of spreading low tastes, crime, vice and frivolity. Supporters of the cinema will argue that it is a good recreation for the weary people and has educative value also. This is true only in theory. Actually it has become the resort of worried persons, who visit these places in the same way as they do liquor shops; that is, in order to forget the outside world and their worries. Such a man forgets himself for a while when in the picture-house; but when he comes out of it, the same world faces him in all its stark realities. Very few people, who see pictures, learn good morals and manners, or gain knowledge. Any evil, however, which they see sticks to them as dirt sticks to white clothes.

The persons who take part in the production of films have, to a very large extent, become victims of vices of every type. The industry not only caters for people with very low tastes, but also exploits young boys and girls for immoral purposes. The cinema houses and the places where cinemas are produced are no better than houses of shame. And yet, simply because there is a theoretical possibility of making cinemas an instrument of useful knowledge and high culture, the industry is regarded as a useful one. It is a tolerated evil.

The practical evils are three-fold: (a) good films are not produced by the industry; (b) the brighter features of the pictures are not taken seriously by the public; and (c) the people do not acquire healthy knowledge and habits.

As cinema-going has come to be regarded as fashionable and the industry is patronized by every one from the Governor General to the factory labourer, a suggestion to

heavily soberize the film, it is feared, will be a cry in the wilderness. We have to accept that it has come to stay. Hence we must think only of improving it and developing its potentiality for doing good to the country. In the days of foreign rule, this industry under compulsion served as a propaganda vehicle and did its job well, and attempts to inspire national self-respect and patriotism were effectively suppressed. But in a free country, this industry has also become free to render real service to the people.

There are many ways in which such service can be rendered. Today the greatest need is the education of the adult population. In less than two years we are going to have elections under adult franchise and this brings a great responsibility on all adults—a responsibility which will be laid on their shoulders for the first time and which they do not understand. We must prepare the adult population to realize the responsibilities of citizenship. The task is tremendous and while none has touched even its fringes, it cannot be expected that the Government will be able to achieve much in the next two years. One of the non-official agencies which can take up this task is the cinema. A show generally lasts from 2½ to 3¼ hours. The period is greater than that devoted in night schools. Most day-schools do not run for more than this period on Saturdays. Just imagine what an amount of useful instruction could be given during this long time. If writers had imagination of the right type, educational films could be made as interesting as lewd ones are supposed to be. They can create a sense of cleanliness and sanitation, and show how to keep cleanliness and to observe rules of health; also teach the proper use of public places like parks, roads, trams, buses, railway trains, etc.; courteous behaviour towards others; proper respect for women and children; the use of public property; etc. They can create a sense of national self-respect, patriotism and citizenship and initiate the people into the art of administration. They can carry people into every country of the world without travelling, giving them a vivid idea of geography, astronomy, science, etc. Such instances can be multiplied to any number, but this is only to give an idea of the tremendous scope for doing service to the people.

This can be done only if the film industry is controlled by sober educationists and films produced by men and women brought up and living under good moral surroundings. Its commercial character must go, even though it has to be self-supporting. The Government has a responsibility in this direction and it should strictly limit the scope of shows to the object of healthy education of the public.

Cinemas must not be looked upon as resorts for forgetting the world but as institutions which teach how to make the world a better living place than what it is.

T. R. R.

LETTERS FROM YERAVDA MANDIR

(By M. K. Gandhi)

XIX

If learned Brahmins are also good men, it would be a desirable thing for them to spread the knowledge of the Upanishads among the people. But nowadays learning and goodness hardly ever go together. Therefore I am indifferent as regards the *parayan** of the Gita or the Ramayan in public. A *parayan* undertaken by one who does not understand the meaning, or understanding the meaning, reads scriptures aloud for show or for fame as if there were anything meritorious in merely reading them aloud, is nothing worth. I would go even farther and say that it does harm. (Translated from Gujarati)

XX

We must believe in the existence of God, inasmuch as we believe in our own. Living beings exist and so does God Who is the sum-total of all life.

By a disbelief in God we injure ourselves in the same way as if we disbelieved in ourselves. That is to say, not to believe in God is something like suicide. But it is one thing to believe in God, and quite another thing to conduct ourselves as if we had such a living faith. As a matter of fact there is no atheist in the world; atheism is a mere pretence.

A man realizes the Supreme by becoming absolutely free from likes and dislikes and never otherwise. I hold that he who says that he has attained realization is far, far away from his destination. Realization is a matter of experience but does not lend itself to description in language.

I can live only in virtue of my faith in God. In my view there is no God different from Truth. Truth is God. (Translated from Hindustani)

XXI

It is my experience as a fasting expert that the breaking of fasts on solid food often results in great harm to the body.

* Recitation from beginning to end.

CULTIVATE LOVE*

Love is a thing to be cultivated. It is said that anger and other failings are a part of the nature of a being, but it is not so. These failings are of the mind, but our being is distinct from the mind. If we realize this, we can correct our mind in the same way as we repair our watch. If our eyes become defective, we cease reading and engage ourselves in some other work, because we know that if we continue to strain them, they will become weaker still. Just as we know that our eyes are different from ourselves and accordingly deal with them objectively, so also if we realize that our mind is distinct from us, we can handle it as such. If we appreciate inwardly that the thoughts which arise in our mind have no connection with our being, we can take a detached view of the mind's actions. Then we will be able to analyse the good and the evil in our mind and rectify it.

One who constantly gives vent to anger cultivates anger. Similarly envy. So too love can be cultivated. If we conduct ourselves with love, it will take a deep root in our hearts and will also spread in society. This is the beauty of virtues. If they take a deep root in our hearts, they easily spread in society.

We should understand another thing also. However good a thing may be, it will have its defects also.

* Adapted from Shri Vinoba's Hindustani post-prayer speech at Vedchhi, on 19-4-49.

— D. D.

Therefore, we have to use our discrimination. Whether it is a holy place or a holy scripture, in making use of it, we must distinguish between that which is primary and that which is secondary. Where there is light, there is darkness also. We must accept the one and discard the other. In fact, we do this in our day-to-day life. We remove stones from grains and dirt from flour by sieving them. When we eat, whatever is suitable for the body is retained and the rest is thrown out. In this way we should discriminate between good and bad in all things.

DIGNITY OF LABOUR *

The modern economic system talks of 'Division of Labour'. So also did the *varnarajvastha* (class division) of the Vedic days. It does not mean however that some should be absolutely exempt from physical labour. It only means that every one should contribute his share to the society in accordance with his capacities. But even while so engaged in one's own way in some useful work, one cannot ignore those responsibilities which are common to all. Professors, students, judges, and others have all their own places in society, but just as air, water and food are quite essential for one and all, so too both mental and physical work are essential for every one. It is wrong to say that some may do only physical work while some others do only mental work. The Vedic dispensation of four classes of people with their own particular works along with the remaining others were together called पंच कृषीः (five workers). कृषीः means a labourer. It is a different matter if one does more of one type of labour than another. But every one has to perform some labour. If we forget this principle, society falls into pieces and also distinctions of high and low come into existence. This distinction is not peculiar to India but exists in the whole world. But in India, in keeping with its practice in other matters of life, it has been given a religious sanction. The *bhangi* has to do scavenging only and nobody else will care to do it. He is considered low and untouchable with the result that he cannot do any other work. This is slavery. It is not equity but oppression. It has done much harm to our society.

Unless this inequity is wiped out, *Sarvodaya*, cannot be achieved. No work is high, none low. The wages should also be equal. In a just social order, there will not be much difference in the wages of a professor and a carpenter. Such differences did not exist in the olden days. In those days a teacher was satisfied with what the society provided him with and the more learned a man, the more self-sacrificing he was. At least this was the ideal, whether it was fully reached or not at any time.

But the present way of life is just the contrary. A professor who works for about three hours in a day and for about six months in a year gets a full year's pay on a scale exceedingly larger than that of an ordinary labourer. In saying this I do not wish to criticize anybody, because I have worked as a professor as well as a labourer and I regard the work of the scavenger to be as essential as that of a professor. But the excessive difference in the status and earnings of the two is unjustifiable. The more learned a man is, the greater are his monetary demands. When he himself does not realize the joy of learning, how can he impart that joy to ordinary people? He forgets that he is a servant of the poor, who cannot spend much.

I am reminded here of a Bengali song which says, 'If you want to take the dust of the Lord's feet on your head, serve the lowliest of the low. There lies the dust of His feet.' But the learned serve those who are rich and who do not do any labour. The masses, who produce everything, remain ignorant, and their ignorance has led to inefficiency and production has gone low. Thus the common people have been falling lower and lower and there is no improvement. The masses are the

* Adapted from Shri Vinoba's post-prayer speech in Hindustani at Hyderabad on 31-3-49. — D. D.

foundation of society and if the foundation is not strong, the society at the top cannot stand long. God stands before us in the form of these masses, so that we can serve Him through the masses.

The distinction of high and low should disappear and each one should produce some article of use. If we perform even a little physical labour, we shall be able to identify ourselves with the labourers and understand their difficulties. Today there is suffering everywhere. A few months ago I visited huts of Bhils. It was on the *Divali* day and within a distance of two or three miles there was a city and *Divali* was being celebrated in that city, while in these huts there was not even half a seer of grain. These inequalities and sufferings should not continue any longer.

The distinction of high and low has gone too deep. We have neglected the scavenger altogether. It is doubtful if we consider him a human being at all. But he cannot cease to be a human being; only by our behaviour we cease to be so. We do not realize the difficulties under which he has to work. A man who manufactures shoes is considered low, while one who wears them is considered high! Similarly, one who sits in a latrine is considered high, while he who cleans it is low! And one who produces is low, while one who eats is high! Even our women, who do some work with their hands, have been considered low, as if anybody who does some work with his hands, should be treated as low! A man considers a woman to be low, a Brahman considers a scavenger low and a city-dweller considers a villager low. If this feeling continues, we are doomed. If we consider the whole society as the embodiment of God, we should not entertain such ideas of high and low. All our energies should be spent in serving the poor.

What I said, above is not of olden days but of our own times. It does not mean that conditions were different in those days. Of course, the economic order was a little different and exploitation was not as easy as it is today with the advent of the machine. There were difficulties also. But in the existing order, some people have started the business of exploitation. The demand of the day is *Samarajya* (Kingdom of Peace and Equality). This is a new word which Shri M. S. Aney, our Governor for Bihar, has used in one of his verses which he composes every year to greet his friends with on the New Year day. I like this word but I do not differentiate between *Samarajya*, *Ramarajya* and *Dharmarajya*. Shri Aney also does not make any difference. The idea is that just as *Ramarajya* was established by conquering *Ravana*, and *Dharmarajya* by conquering the *Kauravas*, so also in this New Year, *Vivodhi* (opponent), we have to oppose all the forces of exploitation and establish *Samarajya*.

We have to oppose the feelings of inequality which have filled our hearts and remove them. We have to treat every one as equal. If we do some physical work, the feeling of high and low will disappear. I particularly appeal to the youth to ponder over this idea of *Sarvodaya*, wherein man and woman, labourer and employer, villager and city-dweller, — all will be equal.

CONTENTS	PAGE
MISUNDERSTANDING ... K. G. MASHRUWALA	171
FOOD ECONOMY ... K. G. MASHRUWALA	172
THE SANTINIKETAN PILGRIMAGE — II	... PYARELAL 173
A TOLERATED EVIL	... T. R. R. 174
LETTERS FROM YERAVDA	
MANDIR — XIX-XXI	... M. K. GANDHI 175
CULTIVATE LOVE	... VINOBA 175
DIGNITY OF LABOUR	... VINOBA 176
NOTES:	
NIGHT-SOIL OF POLICE AND MILITARY CAMPS	... K. G. M. 169
THE 'SARVODAYA' MONTHLY	... V. 169
ADIVASIS OF SOUTH INDIA	... K. G. M. 169
BOMBASTIC	... K. G. M. 169
THE RUSSIAN MANAGEMENT OF LANGUAGES	... K. G. M. 170
SUGAR-CANE AREA	... K. G. M. 170
USE OF DRAIN WATER	... TRIVENI SAHAY 171