

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

Vol. XVIII. No. 41

AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1954

TWO ANNAS

GANDHIJ'S LETTER TO GOKHALE

(Third Class Railway Travel Fifty Years Ago)

[This is an interesting piece from Gandhiji's archives. I propose to publish such others as and when they are researched by friends who are working at them: I hope this will interest the readers. I may here tell them that this may be read along with the relevant chapter (XX, In Benaras, Part III, pp. 294 to 298, August 1948 edition) in Gandhiji's *Autobiography*. Ed.]

Rajkot,

4th March, 1902

Dear Professor Gokhale,

I trust you will pardon my writing to you in pencil hand and on such paper. I am yet without the type-writer or my carbon paper notebook. As I am anxious to send a copy of my letter to you, to Dr. Mehta, I am obliged to make use of the only carbon sheet I have been able to procure in Rajkot in order to get a duplicate copy. I am anxious that he too should know my experiences of 3rd class travelling.

Having passed five nights in the train I reached here on Wednesday last eve. Only a day later than I would have had I not stopped at the intermediate stations.

It was with very great difficulty that I found a seat in one of the intermediate carriages and that after I offered to stand the whole night if necessary. As it was it was merely a trick on the part of the friends of some of the passengers. The former had occupied all the spare room with a view to prevent any more passengers from getting in. They got out as soon (as) the guard blew the whistle for the train to go. There was absolutely no room in the 3rd class carriages. You cannot adopt gentleman's time and travel 3rd. From Benaras however I travelled 3rd only. In your words it was only the first plunge that was difficult. The after effect was all pleasure. The other passengers and I talked with the greatest freedom and at times became even charming. Benaras is probably the worst station for the poor passengers. Corruption is rampant. Unless you are prepared to bribe the police it is very difficult to get your ticket. They approached me as they approached the others several times and offered to buy us our tickets if we would pay them a gratuity (or bribe). Many availed themselves of the offer. Those of us who would not, had to wait nearly one hour after the window was opened before we could get our tickets and we would be fortunate at that if we did so without being presented with a kick or two from the

guardians of law. At Moghalsarai on the other hand the ticket master was a very nice man. He said he knew no distinctions between a prince and a peasant.

In the carriages we were packed anyhow. There was no restrictions as to numbers though there were notices in the compartments. Night travelling under such circumstances does become rather inconvenient even for the poor class passengers.

There was plague inspection at 3 different places but I cannot say it was carried on with any harshness. My inference (should it be "experience"? — Ed.) is yet very little but the picture that the imagination had drawn of the terrible lot of these passengers has become somewhat toned down. Five days can hardly afford sufficient data for drawing a fair conclusion. I feel all the richer and stronger in spirit for the experiences which I would resume at the very first opportunity.

I alighted at Benaras, Agra, Jeypore and Palanpur. The Central Hindu College is not a bad institution though it is difficult to speak, with confidence, on a hurried visit. The Dream in Marble is certainly worth a visit. Jeypore is a wonderful place. The Albert Museum is a far better building than the Calcutta one and the Art Section is by itself a study. The Jeypore School of Arts appeared to be flourishing under a Bengali Superintendent.

I now come to the most important part of my letter. To Palanpur I went to see merely the State Karbhari who is a personal friend of mine. I casually mentioned to him that I might join in collecting subscription for the Ranade Memorial Fund in April next. The State Karbhari, Mr Patwari, who is a sincere man says that it will be a great mistake to start it in April, especially if we meant to do Gujarat. He thinks that we would lose at least Rs 10,000 thereby. All the States are more or less groaning under the effects of famine and he is strongly of opinion that the collection should be undertaken in December or January next. I place his views before you for what they may be worth.

Plague is raging in several parts of Kathiawar.

Please remember me to Prof. Roy.

I remain,
Yours truly,
M. K. Gandhi

VINOBA IN PURNEA—II

(By "Dadu")

"Every morning I go out on my Bhoodan yatra from village to village. But I get no time to study." In these words an earnest Bhoodan worker placed his difficulty before Vinoba. The latter asked him, "Why so?"

"I am never free."

"You must be having some companions in your work?"

"No, I go alone."

"Then there should be no difficulty at all. How many miles do you cover daily?"

"About eight miles in two hours."

"It is so simple. Instead of eight miles, suppose you have to walk twelve. And the time required to cover the extra four miles should be spent in reading. You can choose any beautiful and lonely spot on your trek and do concentrated study during that one hour."

The formula went straight to the worker's heart. Thus Vinoba has been ceaselessly stressing the need of study and meditation. In fact this is his old habit. Here I am reminded of another anecdote of his in this connection. They were the stormy days of 1930-31. Gandhi's writings appeared regularly in his *Young India*. One day a worker asked Vinoba his opinion on a certain question. Vinoba replied, "Bapu has clearly spoken on this point last week."

"But I did not read that."

Vinoba grew suspicious and said, "Do you ever read *Young India* or *Navajivan*?"

"No, I don't get any time. But why should I read? For, I do nothing but Bapu's work all the day long."

Vinoba bluntly remarked, "Strange indeed: When Bapu can find time to write something why can't you find time to read the same? Don't you realize that he writes for us and not for himself?"

The need of study and meditation cannot be too much emphasized in free India. It cannot, however, be said that public workers do not as yet give it the attention it deserved. Of course, mere study does not make a full man. But public workers are the fittest persons to study. As Acharya P. C. Roy used to say, even half an hour's regular study is very much elevating. It may be noted that we want of time to read and think was one reason that led Pandit Nehru to think loudly in terms of the famous letter he addressed to State Congress Chiefs. Vinoba is particularly insistent on this point and avails of every opportunity to draw workers' attention to it.

He entered the Kishanganj sub-division of Purnea district on October 24, 1954, when he encamped at Hatgaon. He told his audience in the evening, "Both richness and poverty are sins. I want both of them to disappear. All of us should live together like brothers and sisters and behave as of a single family." He added that those who gave land-gifts did not oblige anybody, rather they obliged themselves.

On his way to Tulsia next day, he halted for few minutes at Bibiganj, with an area of 1,000 bighas. They wanted to present him about 29 bighas of land obtained from 130 donors. Vinoba refused to accept the same saying, "I value only such offers as include one-sixth of the donor's land. There is no sense in accepting two kathas (a katha is one-twentieth of a bigha) from those having twenty bighas or so. The workers who have taken these gifts have violated the Bhoodan spirit. In these days when people fly in planes, my going on foot is regarded as idleness. Should I accept such unbecoming gifts, that would be another stupidity? I cannot accept such *dan-patras*. I would request each landholder of this village to donate one-sixth and more so that there may be no landless left here."

In the post-prayer meeting he dwelt on the importance of accomplishing Bhoodan work by Janshakti or the self-reliant power of the people. He pointed out, "It is

Janshakti that can transform life. The question of legal enactment comes long after. The Muslims go to the mosque and the Hindus to the temple. Why so? Are they afraid of any law? They fear more the teachings of prophets and saints than the laws of the State. This year about forty lakhs of persons are reported to have attended the Kumbh at Prayag. Why? Were they afraid of anything? Several of them lost their life this time. Won't the people go there again? Those who founded it carried no legal authority with them. So also you have to do this work by your own will and initiative. You are the architect of your fortune. If you want to ascend to the Heavens you would have to die yourself. It is fantastic to imagine that somebody else's death would carry you to the Heavens."

At Bahadurganj on 26th the audience included a large number of Muslims. Vinoba recited the Sur-fatihah before beginning his speech. Vinoba observed that Bhoodan did not merely seek to help the poor but to root out poverty itself. While they were listening to him in pindrop silence, it began to rain and rained heavily. Vinoba stood on the dais. The people followed suit. But some of them tried to hold out their umbrellas. Vinoba asked them to close them down and be one like others. Thus they all stood in torrential rains. Vinoba remarked, "Those who do not love their neighbour like a brother and yet take God's name, commit a crime and are atheists. Land is God's gift, His blessing. He has bestowed upon us all sorts of blessings. All those whom He has blessed with wealth are on trial. If they loot and exploit the poor, they will be declared as failed. On the other hand, if they speak truth and love and treat people on a comradely basis, they will get a pass."

Kumbhla was the next halt. Workers' meeting was very interesting. Vinoba wanted names of persons willing to accept his *Jail* until the close of the year. Half humorously one of them said, "Won't it be extended?" Vinoba smiled and said, "It depends upon you." And he related a story: The Nagpur Satyagraha in 1923 was joined by hundreds of volunteers. In the beginning they were sentenced for two months' imprisonment. That the jail was only for two months brought in more volunteers. Later the Government grew wiser and sentenced them for longer periods. They would not, however, offer apology and go back to their homes. They bore the jail suffering cheerfully. But some of them came to him (Vinoba) and grumbled, "Pandit Sundarlal promised us that that was hardly two months' business. But now we have to stay here for six months, some for a year. We were not prepared for it." Vinoba used to teach them the Ramayana and the Gita. One day jailor called Vinoba and taking him into his confidence informed him that orders had been received of releasing all politicals on the next day. The next day was Krishna Janmashtami. When Vinoba returned to his corner from the jail office, they all surrounded him as usual and wanted to know what had transpired between him and the jailor and whether there was any hope for them. Vinoba kept calm. They smelled something and would not leave him. Then he said, "Who can dare keep you in jail on Janmashtami day? Even the mighty Kamsa of Mathura could not!" They all came out next day without serving even full two months. After Vinoba had finished the story he told them, "If you fulfil your *thana* quota you may be released earlier!" They all had a hearty laugh and fourteen of them joined the *Jail*.

On the 28th. Vinoba was at Sukhani, a small village on Nepal-Bihar border. In his post-prayer meeting he dwelt on the necessity of proper distribution. He said, "Food production in the country has gone up. But that won't solve the problem of the poor. The land distribution is very faulty. Where land which is at the basis of all life is wrongly distributed, how much would the people suffer?"

In the evening, Vinoba walked to a village across the border. The people there greeted him affectionately. The village chowkidar of Nepal Government was conspicuous by his dress. "Inform your Sarkar," said Vinoba to him, "that I have come to Nepal." He bowed down to reply, "That is my duty which I would certainly perform." Thus Vinoba had his first visit to a 'foreign' land.

Next day, we were at Thakurganj, an important station on the Assam link railway, between Kathihar and Silliguri. In the noon some prominent zamindars of the locality saw him and made generous donations. One of them half in joke, asked him the question as to what he had thought about their maintenance. Referring to it in his post-prayer address, Acharya Vinoba observed,

"God has given us all hunger. This is His blessing. Besides giving hunger to men as to all other creatures, He has provided man with two hands and a heart that rejoices in others' happiness while suffers in others' suffering. Through these three things God is telling us something very valuable. The hands teach us to work hard to earn our own livelihood. The heart teaches us to dedicate our earnings to the society and accept the offerings made by the latter as its *prasad*. But if we try to hoard heaps and heaps, it would be against the scheme of God. While I accept one-sixth or more of your land, much more remains with you. I would request you to labour at it yourselves and thus improve your health and refresh your mind. The land-donor must, therefore, be prepared to work on their land themselves. Granted that there may be some very old among them rather unfit for it. They must however, prepare their sons for it. Then alone they would be able to keep the remaining land with them."

He continued, "What is true about land is also true about the factories and other property. Nobody can own them because of the investment of certain capital. As these investors are a product of the society, they as also their wealth belong to the society. No doubt they apply their intellect in the task. But there are others also who labour therein. So all of them, whether they contribute intellectual or bodily labour should draw like amounts. And in times to come, the factory-owner would get only as much as others in the factory. It would be owned by the society. There would be a partnership of both the owners and labourers. But that is also a transitory stage. What is required to be done is that the labourer must be equipped intellectually so that he may partake in management. And the owners or their children should work with the labourers and toil and sweat. Nobody would be able to escape bodily labour."

Paying his tribute to the late Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, India's Food Minister and the late Thakur Pyarelal Singh, Leader of opposition in Madhya Pradesh Assembly, Acharya Vinoba remarked, "Our Food Minister executed his duties very efficiently. He helped in the growth of food production, tackled the problem very ably and bravely lifted up controls. He was working up to his last moment and God removed him from our midst without any notice. Our friend in Madhya Pradesh gave all his time, except the Assembly hours, for Bhoodan. On the day of his death he covered more than 22 miles on foot and addressed a Bhoodan Conference. I treasure such instances. They lead me to be ready for God's command any moment. I must, therefore, be ever busy in righteous task so that I may never be caught napping. Likewise, I appeal to all workers to be alert on their post of work."

As we were coming to Sonapur Hat on Saturday, the 30th, we had the majestic view of Kanchanganga (named Kanchenjunga by the British) in the northern sky. In our trek in Darbhanga we had seen the sublime Dhaulagiri and Gaurishankar. Kanchanganga looked as lovely and enthralling. This was Vinoba's last day in the northern direction. Next day he turns South. Staying for two more months in Bihar, he enters Bengal on 1st January next,

remains there for 25 days and then goes on to Orissa. And further on!

Bihar Provincial Bhoodan Committee was to meet on 30th and 31st. So we had in our midst that day Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, Shri Gauri Shankar Saran Singh, Shri Lakshmi Babu. And, of course, Shri Baldyanath Babu and Shri Ramdeo Babu were our regular companions. In his post-prayer address that day, Vinoba observed, "I have spent more than 25 months in Bihar. Today I pay my respectful greetings, my last homage to the great north. For several days past, my journey has been in a region where I could catch the glimpse of the lofty Himalayas. I have had the *darshan* of Gaurishankar and Dhaulagiri or Mount Everest. And today that of Kanchanganga too! I do not know when I will be blessed to have this *darshan* again. Neither I go forward with any such longing. One who walks on foot can never be sure when he would re-visit a place. I, therefore, offer my final greetings and *pranams* to the northern direction."

Later he remarked, "We have to take a lot from science. Hence we have to learn much from Europe. But so far as social sciences are concerned, Europe has little to give us. But the reverse is the case today. We framed our constitution etc., on the European model. Whence we have gone completely backward. The social structure in our country differs much from that in Europe. We have now started here those institutions which have been running there for the last several centuries, e.g., Parliament, party-groupings, etc. Had we built on our own experience we would have gone far ahead. Nay, it is alleged that we have no adequate language to conduct public affairs. How painful it is that the want of language should be felt by those very people who have produced such giants of rulers as Yudhishtira, Ashoka and Akbar. Had we framed our constitution in our own language, the Europeans would have been obliged to translate it. But we have imitated all their thinking and planning. We have, therefore, fallen far behind. Suppose two objects are moving in a circle. One is behind the other. But if the backward one turns its face in the reverse direction, it goes ahead, while the forward one gets backward. This has actually happened in our country. We turned our face towards Europe and were left in the rear. Had we not done so we would have been ever kept forward."

Vinoba concluded, "The Bhoodan Yajna denotes universal unity. And because it underlines deep unity, I want the whole village to turn into a family. I call it a natural thing, for, our Vedas sing: *विरदं पुष्टं ग्रामे अस्मिन् समाचरन्*. (May we, living in this village, grow strong with the world!). Bhoodan includes our own Socialism too which is far deeper than Western Socialism. Hence it is more difficult to practise it. It encompasses not only bipeds but also quadrupeds. So vast is this Socialism of ours! I, therefore, maintain that this programme is natural for our country. It is now for the workers to take it up."

At the request of Shri Ananthkant Basu, our reception incharge, Shri Jayaprakash Babu also spoke a few words: "Today everybody wants to earn for his own self or family. The battle of self-interest is raging all over. Its result is obvious. Few win and all the rest lose. But if we follow Vinobaji's method, then not a few but all would win. None would then suffer from hunger or want. The new society would be formed not on struggle and self-interest but on love and comradeship. That would be the Sarvodaya Samaj whose outline was placed before us by Mahatma Gandhi. And Vinoba is going from village to village to fulfil that picture. Hence everybody must contribute to his or her maximum in this work."

Next week is going to be a very busy one. For, leading members of the Sarva Seva Sangh and of the All-India Khadi and Village Industries Board are coming to see Vinoba.

HARIJAN

Dec. 11

1954

THE SECOND FIVE YEAR PLAN

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The first F. Y. Plan is nearing its close and preparations for framing a second one are afoot. State Governments and the Planning Commission are at present engaged in this task.

It is a very important thing to see what will be the central aim with which it will be framed. Looking from this point of view, the first F. Y. Plan was a medley of heterogeneous items that lay in the secretariats of the country during the ex-British rule. Irrigation formed a notable part of it. However, it may be said that the Plan was silent about one of the foremost problems of national reconstruction; e.g. unemployment. Part 4 of the Constitution lays down the Directive Principles of State policy; the Plan could have woven its programme round them, saying what would be done to achieve each of them. It seemed as if bigness of a project by itself had a merit of its own to recommend itself as worthy of our great people. For such projects crores of rupees were spent and the manner of doing it was on mechanized lines of Western industrialism, thus requiring us to spend the money in foreign markets and without exploiting to its very best our massive labour potential and thus availing of the rare opportunity of mobilizing it to a conscious national effort and thus educating it in a new way. This would have made the Plan not only for the people,—which it surely was,—but of them also, thus appealing to the inner being of our whole people and invoking us all to a total effort on our part for nation-building. Judged from this point of view, the first F. Y. Plan did not succeed so well. But it was not its direct aim as well and hence to judge it from that angle is futile. What I wish to suggest here is that the new Plan should not miss to incorporate this point in itself now.

There are certain items that would directly touch the people and influence them for their obvious good, e.g. prohibition, basic or fundamental education of the people, etc. The first, under the British rule, suffered under the idea that education would be difficult if excise revenue was forgone. Under freedom now, our ministers and planners think that the loss of that revenue would tell upon massive projects for irrigation, electrification etc. undertaken, under the first F. Y. Plan. Thus what was 'Education vs. Prohibition' has now come to be 'Development vs. Prohibition'! And even the first F. Y. Plan became an indirect party to this new slogan of

confusing the implementation of the Nation's great Directive to the Swaraj Government.

Regarding fundamental education of our people,—we recognize its topmost need. We also accept that this should be on the principle of Basic Education enunciated by Gandhiji. And we declare that the whole system should be reformed accordingly. However, what is actually being done is to mind the "traditional" system and in old ways and through the machinery that clings to them. The result has been that nothing solid could be achieved in this sphere; and what was done was to have Commissions and Committees for higher and secondary education, and some tasks were undertaken to change it accordingly, without radically changing the traditional set-up to meet the needs and demands of the new age of Swaraj.

Another thing that has come about during these years is undesirable from the point of view of our self-respect even. And that is the over-increasing practice of foreign travel and its prestige. Foreign degrees, foreign machines, foreign experts etc. are having their day as perhaps they never had before. In the beginning the Government of Bombay had resolved that foreign degrees will bear no more weight or value than their Indian university equivalents. Unfortunately, however, this got reversed and it became as it was before. If this had not been so and the good thing that was initiated had continued, it would have tended to raising the dignity of our institutions and they would have tried to justify themselves accordingly. Instead of this, we find in India at present that one runs out abroad on this pretext or that as it adds automatic value and importance to the goer, and this tendency is being helped or encouraged by Government. This has adversely affected the mind of the youth, and looking from the financial point even, it is an unwarranted drain of Nation's wealth.

Let it not be taken from what I say above, that to go abroad and learn new things by way of knowledge or industry is not necessary. The point is to say that our main aim in all that we undertake to pursue should be to achieve the virtues of self-reliance, self-respect and increasing self-confidence and strength. Whatever jeopardizes this gives us the cause of complaint,—is what is meant to convey by the above.

And, as a result of all that is noted above, the position seems to have come about that the importance of the rich and their riches increased and that of the large mass of the labouring people and their life and labour remained as it was. Thus, in the new order of Swaraj the latter which was expected to increase did not become so, and to that extent it was rather relegated to the background. In short, what should have been primary became secondary, and as a result the sentiment did not catch the imagination of

our whole people as a raging surge of new enthusiasm and endeavour to march on further.

The only strength the Congress has had in the land was that the great institution stood for the service of the poor. To that end it formulated a nation-wide programme of constructive activities. After 1936, when it began to dawn on us that we were nearing the beginnings of Swaraj, Gandhiji said that parliamentary programme had come to stay and we might well take it as an added item of our constructive programme and the nation might afford to allot a few thousand of its great army of workers to the new item. This meant a big change in regard to the re-orientation and the organizational strategy of the Congress.

And when independence actually came to us, Gandhiji said that the Congress should now turn itself into a Loka Seva Sangh and organization of its political wing might be thought out in some other way. This could not be accepted by the Congress, and at present we are in the position that, by and large, the Congress is reducing itself to a mere political party, and where only a few thousand of workers were required, there is to be found unbecoming rivalry in the organization; and the army of constructive workers has come to be a distinct class by itself, which, to a certain extent, may be said to be neither here nor there in the scheme of things that matter.

Surely all that is said above is not in any mood to find fault with anything or anybody. This is only an humble effort to assess our position as it really appears, with a view that we might frame our future course and plans keeping before us the clear picture of the present situation.

The country, at present, is deeply in the throes of mental commotion. The Prime Minister, on the eve of his China visit, took the people into confidence about how he was feeling for himself. The constructive programme organizations, the Bhoodan workers, the Congress and its ministries, as also other political parties — all, in their own way, are astray at the present situation. Such a thing on the eve of the second Five Year Plan augurs well for our future. May God guide us aright in deciding with wisdom and due seriousness the great issues before us.

2-12-'54

(From the original in Gujarati)

By Mahatma Gandhi
BASIC EDUCATION

Pages viii+114 Price Re. 1-8-0 Postage etc. As. 6

By M. S. Patel
THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF
MAHATMA GANDHI

Pages xv + 288 Price Rs. 5-8-0 Postage etc. As. 15
NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
P.O. NAVAJIVAN, AHMEDABAD-14

NOTES

A Plea for Public Integrity

Shri S. Ganeshan writes as follows under the heading 'Memorials for the Dead':

"Memorials built for the great in the land are only intended as a symbol to perpetuate the principles for which they lived and fought in their lives. Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba Gandhi though they are dead, are personages within the living memory. Their influence on the mass mind for the past three generations and their life principles have not been forgotten. They stood for love, non-violence, *brahmacharya*, self-respect and self-control. We call Gandhi the Father of the Nation and Kasturba a Ba — mother. Is it fair to teach birth-control or family planning methods in a hospital intended as a memorial for Kasturba Gandhi? Some call it blasphemy.

"The Congress politicians hastily changed the name Victoria Gosha Hospital into Kasturba Memorial Hospital without caring for the public, thinking it will get them cheap popularity. Nobody liked the change. Having changed it, should they teach now the birth-control methods there? It looks incongruous and insulting. This is no sentimental objection. It is something deeper. It is more moral. If it may be too much for the Government not to teach birth-control there at this stage, it can at least easily decide on reverting to the old name Victoria Gosha Hospital."

I think the correspondent's objection is right. Those who associate themselves with memorials etc. of Gandhiji and Ba, should be at least careful to see that they do not confuse the popular mind by undertaking even for themselves those activities which Gandhiji and Ba did not or could not accept as worthy causes.

10-11-'54

M. P.

Greetings to War-Resisters in Prison

War-Resisters' International, England, writes to say, with justified pangs of pain and sorrow, that "the end of the year is approaching and it is our privilege to send you the list of war-resisters who will be in prison at Christmas and the New Year... We hope that all W.R.I. friends will join in sending them greetings."

We do so with our heartfelt prayers that their noble sacrifice may promote the cause of peace and no-war in the world.

2-12-'54

M. P.

Next Sarvodaya Conference

The Seventh Sarvodaya Conference will be held on three consecutive days commencing from Friday, March 25, 1955 near Puri in Orissa.

Names of Sarvodaya workers will be entered in the register until the end of December 1954.

P. O. Buniyadganj,
Gaya (Bihar)

VALLABH SWAMI,
Joint Secretary,
Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh

Correction

Harijan, Dec. 4, 1954, p. 320, second col., 3rd para, in last but fourth line read 'the central or focal point' and not '...local....'.

AN AMERICAN FRIEND'S QUESTIONS

(By Suresh Ramabhai)

Acharya Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan Yajna movement has attracted the attention of thoughtful people in different parts of the world. Foreign press has also shown good interest in it. Visitors from distant countries often join him in the far-off countryside and try to probe into the secrets of this unheard-of and amazing phenomenon called Bhoodan and go back with a new knowledge of true and resurgent India. One such visitor, an American friend, joined us last month for three days. Vinoba gave him an hour to discuss his questions which needs must be shared with the larger public.

Fifty Years Hence

"Given fifty years of peace what do you think would be the pattern of the Indian society in the year 2,000? Will it be industrialized as nations of the West or will it have a different aspect?" This was the first question.

Vinoba observed with a smile, "The question should rather be: Given fifty years of peace, what pattern of Indian society would you like? But you want me to speculate. Well the pattern would be as we make it. If India chooses the bad path, it may be industrialized at the cost of other nations; if it chooses the path of Sarvodaya, good of all, it would become a force for peace. By industrialization we disturb peace. And why worry for fifty years? We would try to build a society for the good of all, a society that may not give rise to fear in other nations or become an exploiting force."

"I am asking for speculation on the basis of your experience," interrupted the friend.

"Well, I don't know what will happen," said Vinoba. "It is all a manifestation of the Divine Will. I am but His instrument. I must be prepared for any consequence."

Vinoba paused for a while and queried, "But who will give me fifty years of peace?"

The friend had no answer. Vinoba continued, "If there is peace for fifty years, it connotes that the world is going in the right direction. If you mean peace in the real sense of the term and not in merely that of 'Cold War', it implies that people in India and elsewhere are progressing on the right lines. So far as I can feel the atmosphere, no industrialization can be done in India without exploiting the poor people."

"Whether the masses," asked the friend, "would be consulted, or the decision be taken in Bombay, Calcutta or Delhi?"

"India lives," said Vinoba, "in villages. Delhi and Bombay do not represent it. I don't think that the tendency would be towards industrialization. A nation of thirty-six crores, if industrialized on modern lines, would be a danger to world peace. It is decentralized economy alone that will help India. Every village should be self-sufficient in primary necessities like food, clothing and housing. Every village should have its own industries supplementing agriculture."

What of Bhoodan?

The second question was, "What will be the consequence of Bhoodan's success or failure?"

"Its failure would give some relief," answered Vinoba, "to poor people; no question of complete failure. Its success will lead to village autonomy or *Grama Raj* and change the whole society basically."

The friend seemed to be unconvinced. He raised a doubt, "Many praises are heard for Gandhiji, but how have his teachings basically affected the lives of those with whom he came in contact?"

Vinoba felt his difficulty. He argued, "When a great man comes his influence permeates the whole atmosphere. You cannot put just a finger and show the influence. It simply pervades. Still, such great man's influence cannot be measured in such a short period. Nevertheless, nobody in this century has changed, at least in India, so many lives as Gandhiji did."

Perhaps much disillusioned by the life of New Delhi, the eager correspondent thought aloud, "I know a number of people who came in contact with him. But neither their behaviour nor thinking shows that their lives were in any way affected."

Vinoba nodded and said, "You can but measure it comparatively; what they were before they came in contact with Gandhiji and after. For example, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan—he changed the whole outlook of the race. Take the Nehrus who lived in luxury. But now Pandit Jawaharlal works at least fifteen hours a day, leads comparatively simple life, his outlook is also non-violent and he works for peace. Had there been no Gandhiji, there would have been no Jawaharlal of today. Or, take our President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. You won't be able to distinguish between an ordinary Bihar villager and our President. But as I said, influence of men like Gandhiji would be measured in centuries."

Whither Man?

The answer pacified our friend. And this appeared to induce him to think about Gandhiji's work vis-a-vis the world at large. Hence the next question: "From one century to the next, has man come any closer to God or does one century produce as many or as few enlightened beings as the next?"

Vinoba wanted him to clarify. "Do you mean to ask whether people are going towards God, receding from Him or remaining static?"

"Yes."

"Well, as science advances, choice before humanity would be either to take to violence and finish itself or to take up non-violence. Science will bring wisdom and wise men are expected to go in the direction of God."

The correspondent was rather puzzled. He put in, "If they are going towards God, why these crises?"

"I think it is all a miraculous working of God. Every nation is afraid of another in the world. With the aid of science in developing war-instruments the choice before them is either to give up war altogether or be totally destroyed. This is the last stage of violence, which will just give place to non-violence."

Our friend was surprised at it: "Does non-violence come out of violence?"

"No, it comes," said Vinoba with a hearty laugh, "out of experience. God is teaching us wisdom. No experience is in vain. I am quite hopeful that the world is going swiftly towards non-violence."

Vinoba's deep conviction touched him. Whence he asked, "Does suffering necessarily produce generosity, kindness, love, etc.?"

Confidently Vinoba asserted, "Of course, so far as the home is concerned, the behaviour of the parents always testifies to it. In the outside world you see that when the sun comes to zenith, it begins to descend. So also when you have come so far as to be ready to kill the whole society, there is no alternative. But humanity will live and things will change. Not long ago, an American friend came to me for a message. I told him that I was neither habituated to nor fitted for the task. But I gave him my suggestion that America would do well to destroy her warships herself on Christmas day. Go on manufacturing them and destroying them. That will keep up employment and ensure peace as well. But I tell you that the same is actually going to happen one day. People will get up and say, 'Sword will be turned into ploughshares.' There is no doubt about it."

This stirred him to his depths, "Though people are never in favour of war, yet war takes place. If a plebiscite were taken people will vote against it. So I feel that people as such do not have capacity to prevent war."

Vinoba disarmed him saying, "There is no question of capacity or otherwise. It is Divine Will working and leading humanity to non-violence. Science will precipitate the crisis. For, after all man has to live."

"Is it not faith?" he wondered.

"Of course," said Vinoba with a smile, "it is not logic. But you can see that it is not possible to tolerate the situation either. Wise men are thinking of one world. In ancient times people were merely violent, man to man. Today it is not violence but fear that dominates nations. This fear would go if a single nation comes forward and manages its affairs of its own accord peacefully. It will give light to others."

Man's Greatest Difficulty

Vinoba's indomitable faith moved him. Then he inquired, "What do you consider the greatest difficulty man must overcome during his lifetime?"

Vinoba was pleased at the question. Gently he told him: "No individual should consider himself apart from other individuals. The greatest obstacle is that we identify ourselves with our body, but the truth is that we are quite apart from it. In this embodied life, body is given for service. Instead we consider we are this body. This basic thing has to be realized. Just as I live in this house though I am not this house itself, so also I am dwelling in this house called body though I am not the body nor of it. And, just as I leave one house and live in another, so also we must be prepared to leave this body."

But the correspondent had his own difficulty. "This realization is not instinctive."

Vinoba concurred, "If it were possible for that realization to be instinctive, there would be no merit in that realization. You will have then found it even in animals and brutes. Since we have to do so many things for it, there is some merit in it. Just see, what was our realization on the day of the birth? And now you have more realization. Again, why are people ready to sacrifice their body in war and other causes?"

"They can do so for bad reasons too," he put in.

"Still, it even proves then that I am distinct from the body which is sacrificed."

"Then, why is not suicide recognized?"

"In case of suicide, I, as a third man, will get the realization though that fool may not; suicide is not realization but folly."

This provoked him to add, "Did not Christ go to the Cross in agony?"

Vinoba dispelled his suspicion by the words, "But what did that Prince of Men say, 'Let Thy will be done and not mine!'"

"There is a difference between Christ and others," said the correspondent.

Vinoba admitted the same and observed, "There is. But the example shows that man can sacrifice. Thus you see that the greatest difficulty is that man identifies himself with the body."

God and Religion

Then followed the question, "Is organized religion a help, hindrance or something non-essential in leading a man to God?"

Vinoba has very definite views in this connection. He remarked, "They organized religion fancying that it would be of help. But personally I am against all such organizations. I have always held that organizing is a form of violence. My advice always is, 'Don't organize'. Let every man have full freedom in his work. In place of a penal code, they instituted heaven and hell. All that becomes a very great torture to me. I don't at all like the idea of organizing religion. As a matter of fact, organization and religion are contradiction in terms. By organization, religion has not become that force which it would have otherwise become. Surely, the progress would have been slow. Yet the condition would have been far better than what it is today."

City and Simple Life

After this serious talk, there was light query: "How is it possible to follow your personal example of living, without abandoning cities, machines, and technology?"

With his characteristic confidence, Vinoba pointed out, "It is possible. If there is discrimination, even city people can lead a simple life. Say, why should they wrap them-

selves in cloth bindings? They can use open air. Again, why can't they walk instead of using motor-cars always? Why should they give up walking altogether?"

"You live a consistent life," argued the correspondent, "and you have no attachments. As one in the city, I must do something contrary."

"So it amounts to: Whether one can lead simple life without giving up attachments?"

"Yes," he murmured.

"Then I would submit: Leave bad attachments and have good ones: Discriminate."

"How to do it? Can one put on *dhoti* in a city?"

"Why not? You can clean your own clothes. Who prevents it?" asked Vinoba.

"Why clean clothes and not do something else?"

"Then I must put the question: Can you pray in the city?"

"Yes, I think."

"Then, why should you not be able to follow a simple thing, like cleaning clothes? It is not more difficult than praying. Or, why go to cinemas?"

"There is the compulsion of the situation."

"That may be. Then you have to take the middle way."

"Do you believe in the middle way?"

"If you come from this way to that, there is the middle way," stated Vinoba with a contagious smile. He added, "Ultimately you have to leave cities." And after a moment's silence, he asked, "Can't you love at least, your neighbour?"

Our friend confessed, "Yes, in the city, it is more of a challenge."

Vinoba nodded in assent and bade the earnest visitor a happy farewell.

1-11-54

OUR MILK PROBLEM

(By Jawaharlal Nehru)

I

[Being the text of the Congress President's letter to P. C. C. Presidents.]

It is an urgent and important problem for the country to protect and improve the standards of our cattle, more especially our milch cows. The question is how this can be done. The demand for some law banning cow-slaughter appears to me to be based more on sentiment than on a practical consideration of this problem. Indeed there is a grave danger that such a law will not only not be enforced, but will result probably in a rapid deterioration of our cattle population. We have in a large part of India, municipal and some times provincial laws preventing cow-slaughter. They have not had any great effect.

Cow killing has gone down very considerably in India during the last few years, and will no doubt further lessen. The chief problem today is of the big cities of Bombay and Calcutta. No simple law can deal with that problem. Some recent steps taken in Bombay have helped and further steps are going to be taken. As I have said above, we consider this an urgent problem from the economic and other points of view. But, if we take a step, which, instead of solving the problem, makes it worse, that will not help.

Cow slaughter used to take place in India previously largely because of the needs of the British Army. That is over. What takes place

now is chiefly due to milkmen and others in the big cities not being prepared to keep cows when they go dry. This problem has to be met positively. No negative solution is possible. It is this problem that is being tackled now in a variety of ways.

I cannot understand how Satyagraha or any kind of agitation can solve a positive problem. If we want a bridge on a river, we have to build it and not perform Satyagraha for it.

Most people who have given thought to this problem agree with this analysis. I regret to find that the present agitation is largely political, although no doubt religion is brought into the picture.

II

[From a message sent to Anand on the occasion of laying the foundation stone of a Dairy Factory there, by the President on 15-11-54.]

I am happy to learn that the President is going to lay the foundation stone of the new Dairy Factory at Anand in Gujarat.

It is an extraordinary thing that in a country like India where milk is greatly appreciated and where the cow is held in great respect, we should have both insufficient and bad milk and our cattle should be so badly looked after. All over Europe and America one sees beautiful cows yielding large quantities of milk. They are tended with the greatest care. Good and cheap milk is available. East of India, that is Burma, Malaya etc. to China, milk and milk products are not used at all and are almost disliked. Only foreigners there use milk.

One would imagine that in India our cattle would be in good condition and would be specially looked after. Also that there would be an abundant supply of pure and cheap milk. Instead of this, we find that nowhere in the world probably are cattle less cared for than in India in spite of our Goshalas and Pinjarapols, and the consumption of milk is very low indeed except to some extent in the Punjab. This indicates that there is something radically wrong about the way we look at this problem.

Agitations about stopping cow slaughter may have a sentimental value but have no other significance. Indeed, they are harmful, because they prevent people from thinking constructively of this problem. The result is a continuous deterioration of our cattle wealth and that is very bad for the nation.

Probably the greatest sinners in this respect are the great cities of Calcutta and Bombay as well as some other cities.

We have, therefore, to consider this problem soberly, objectively and with a view to achieve results.

10-11-54

B. C. G. VACCINATION

V

A great decline in tuberculosis has occurred in countries that have not practised B.C.G. vaccination.

In the Bulletin of the W.H.O. (VII, 3, 1952) there is a paper by two eminent doctors who show that tuberculosis has decreased enormously in Iceland without B.C.G. vaccination—from 250 deaths in 1925 to 20 per 1,00,000 population in 1950.

They say:

"Improvement in socio-economic conditions, and general control measures—particularly case-finding and isolation of few cases—have probably contributed most to the rapid decline of both morbidity and mortality during the past two decades.... Our experience shows that a rapid decline in tuberculosis may occur without the extensive use of B.C.G."

Dr. Rainey pointed out that Iceland, using no B.C.G., had done as well in reducing human mortality from tuberculosis as Denmark which relied on B.C.G.

Even as regards Denmark the editor of the *South African Medical Journal* (1952) suggested that the beneficial results might equally well have been due to the progressive development of the social services. To quote: "In Denmark there has been a continuous decrease in mortality from 1906 onwards; but the mortality-rate graph shows no decrease consequent upon the use of B.C.G."

On the other hand, according to Dr. Wangenstein of Oslo, 'in Norway where B.C.G. inoculation has received statutory sanction 4 years ago, there has during the first 2 years been an increase in tuberculosis instead of the expected decline.... 50 p.c. of school children get boils and sores after B.C.G. inoculation.' The learned doctor concludes, that so far as combating tuberculosis is concerned, there is little to be said for it.

Dr. Bayley also wants us to bear in mind that in New York City between 1924 and 1944 there was a fall in the death rate from tuberculosis of nearly 95 per cent, without the use of B.C.G.

V. G. D.

(To be continued)

CONTENTS	PAGE
GANDHIJI'S LETTER TO GOKHALE ..	325
VINOBA IN PURNEA—II .. "Dadu"	326
THE SECOND FIVE YEAR PLAN ..	Maganbhai P. Desai 328
AN AMERICAN FRIEND'S QUESTIONS ..	Suresh Ramabhai 330
OUR MILK PROBLEM ..	Jawaharlal Nehru 331
B.C.G. VACCINATION—V ..	V. G. D. 332
NOTES:	
A PLEA FOR PUBLIC INTEGRITY ..	M. P. 329
GREETINGS TO WAR-RESISTERS IN PRISON ..	M. P. 329
NEXT SARVODAYA CONFERENCE ..	Vallabhwami 329