

# HARIJAN

16 Pages

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

## "LORD OF HUMILITY"

[*Bapu* is the title of a small book by Miss F. Mary Barr just published by International Book House, Ltd., Bombay (price Rs. 2/12). It contains conversations and correspondence of the writer with Gandhiji along with relevant narrative. Just fifteen years ago she received from Gandhiji a letter in which was enclosed the following prayer composed by Bapu himself for being delivered to Miss Linforth, "an English woman who was then working at a Hyderabad Welfare Centre", and who had asked Miss Barr "to get Gandhi to give her a message". Miss Linforth framed and put it up in her centre. To avoid misunderstanding, let it be added that the poem-like form in which it is printed below is the art of the sub-editor and not of Bapu, who wrote it running like simple prose. — Ed.]

Lord of humility, dwelling in the little  
pariah hut,  
help us to search for Thee throughout  
that fair land  
watered by Ganges, Brahmaputra and  
Jamuna.

Give us receptiveness, give us open-  
heartedness,  
give us Thy humility, give us the  
ability and willingness  
to identify ourselves with the masses  
of India.

O God, who does help only when man feels  
utterly humble,  
grant that we may not be isolated from  
the people  
we would serve as servants and friends.  
Let us be embodiments of self-sacrifice,  
embodiments of godliness,  
humility personified, that we may know  
the land better  
and love it more.

Wardha, 12-9-'34

## "Bapu's Letters to Mira"

Under the above title are collected 386 letters selected out of 650 that Gandhiji wrote to Mirabehn (Miss Madeleine Slade) during 1924 to 1948. About these Mirabehn aptly says:

"The last twentytwo years of Bapu's life are reflected in these letters. Not the grand and dramatic outer life seen by all, but the inner personal life which ran its balanced, even course of spiritual search, undeterred by all the turmoils of the outer world..... At the same time his relentless search for Truth made any waste of time or sentimental weakness impossible."

I am glad to announce that this valuable collection will be out on the next Charkha Jayanti Day, 19-9-1949.

The book contains 387 pages and is priced Rupees four (postage extra).

J. D.

## C. R.'S BOMBAY UTTERANCES

I

[In the second week of August, His Excellency Shri C. Rajagopalachari made not a few important utterances on various intricate problems at Bombay at the opening ceremony of the new building of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, and at a meeting of Press representatives. As I was not satisfied with the reports which I saw in some of the Bombay dailies, I sought for an authenticated account, which his Secretary kindly sent. The speech and the Press Conference refer to four important topics, namely Primary Education, University Education, Medium of Instruction in Universities, and the Difficulties of the Middle Class. I propose to publish all the four authorized accounts in the *Harijan* one by one and give in the present issue his opinions on the last two topics. The initials at the end are his Secretary's. — K. G. M.]

### Difficulties of the Middle Class

Q. The middle class is feeling the economic pinch more and more.

A. There is no doubt they are hit hard. If you will not think I am evading the question, I would like to approach it from a different angle. In any society, the scope of occupation for the middle class is limited. It does not cope with the increase in the population in that caste or class. The result is that idleness, unemployment and parasitism, dependency and so on are created if the children of the middle class are not ready to take up work not generally associated with that class. If the middle class multiplied according to the laws of biology and without birth control, the position cannot be met unless middle class occupational chances also multiplied correspondingly. What then should be done? We must make the middle class a true middle class and not confound it with caste feeling. It is only when children born in middle class families adapt themselves to working class occupations that the problem of middle class unemployment would be solved. This is pure mathematics, not politics.

"Is working class occupation unlimited?" asked someone.

A. Yes, because it is automatically adjusted to the population. Essential requirements increase as population increases. But middle class occupations cannot be so increased. If our industries advance, there will be larger scope for what may be called middle class occupations.

The financial misery of the middle class now, to which you refer, is the measure — again



mathematics, not politics — of the improvement of the working class position. I am not thinking only of the Bombay working classes. In the countryside, the farmers are better off than before. Is it not a good thing? Our aims have been declared to be and have in fact been to improve the position of the worker and the farmer. I feel no prick of conscience on this account. The trouble with the middle class is that there is an element of obstinate attachment to caste feeling which makes the matter more difficult of solution. The disinclination of that class to work with the hand and to seek employment outside its limited field is the worst form of caste feeling. Now I will tell you a story about your own Premier. Mr. Kher's grandfather lost his property but he felt no hesitation in becoming a postal runner, moving thirty miles a day from village to village and handing over bags to the Post Offices. His son, Mr. Kher's father, went about receiving alms of food and studied. He became a small lawyer. His son is your Premier now. That is the proper middle class — from landholder to postal runner, from postal runner to alms-taking school student, who becomes a lawyer, from lawyer to big solicitor and from solicitor to Premier. With such a Premier in your own Province, why do you ask me any questions? Now if I praise your Provincial Government too much, other provinces will get jealous!

#### Medium of Instruction in Universities

*H.E. The Governor of Bombay:* What is your opinion about what should be the medium of instruction in universities — regional or State language or both?

A majority of the assembled Press representatives said that it should be the State language.

*H.E. The Governor-General:* I would put the question in a different way. Do we want to learn subjects through a language or language through subjects? Hitherto we have been used for the last 100 years to learning language through subjects. Now that is not the right way to learn. The State language is so important that it should be learnt. But it should be learnt as a subject by itself, as much as science or mathematics. The best way to learn it is to learn it through the medium of a regional language.

Supposing the State language is Hindi. Must people in non-Hindi areas learn the differential calculus through Hindi? If they are compelled to do it, I suppose they will do it. But it would be rather unfair.

In our country we have to learn many languages while we are young.

*Q.* You are going to make education more complicated?

*A.* The education suited for a country is bound to be as complicated as the population of that country. If you want simplicity in edu-

cation, you must have a homogeneous population to be brought about by free intermarrying, more than it is prevailing now.

*Q.* Is it true Your Excellency made Hindi compulsory in schools when you were Premier of Madras?

*A.* It is true I made it compulsory. But do not confound it with the proposition that it should be made the medium of instruction, either in colleges or in the high schools, in non-Hindi areas. We may apply a foreign or strange language that we have learnt in imparting and receiving instruction. But it should not be a compulsory medium. Let us leave some things to posterity. We cannot settle everything ourselves.

S. K.

#### SEVAGRAM KASTURBA HOSPITAL

The following is summarized from the Report for 1948 published by Dr. R. V. Wardekar, B.Sc., M.D., Medical Officer, Kasturba Hospital, Sevagram:

At Gandhiji's instance a small dispensary was started by Dr. Sushila Nayyar in the year 1937 in a building near Gandhiji's hut, assisted by Shri Prabhakarji, one of the inmates of the Ashram. Some Ashram girls also received training in elementary nursing for this purpose. Gandhiji named it informally in his correspondence as "Kasturba Hospital" and in due course it was called by that name. It is not, as might be imagined, an institution of the Kasturba Gandhi Trust. It serves the population of about 75 surrounding villages which lie in an area of about 5-10 miles radius from the hospital. The following will give a general idea of the way in which the medical work developed:

Year	
1937	A small dispensary started in the Ashram by Dr. Sushila Nayyar.
1937-42	Work carried on by her with the help of non-medical assistants and some Ashram girls.
1942-45	Work carried on by non-medical assistants in absence of Dr. Sushila Nayyar. Anti-malaria work started in 1944.
1945	An English nurse joined the work at the beginning of this year and helped to organize a child welfare centre started in Sevagram village in February. Maternity work was also started at this time. A lady doctor joined at the end of the year and the hospital was shifted from Ashram to the present building. Help was rendered in a cholera epidemic in surrounding villages.
1946	An Ayurvedya-Visharad joined and Ayurvedic branch was started. The hospital was recognized as a training centre for Kasturba Trust Midwifery candidates.
1947	Another doctor joined the hospital and a Clinical Laboratory was started. Official training to two compounders was given. Two sub-centres (since closed) were started in nearby villages.
1948	The first lady doctor left and another one joined. Minor Gynaecological Surgery work was started. Eye operation work was started.

#### Staff

The present staff consists of Dr. Sushila Nayyar (Superintendent on leave), Sjt. Prabhakar (Vyavasthapak), Dr. R. V. Wardekar, M.D. and Dr. Ranade (Male Doctors), Dr. (Mrs.) Mathutai Athale and Dr. (Mrs.)



Pramila Wardekar (Lady Doctors), Sister Miss Barbara Hartland (Vasantibehn) (Matron), two qualified Midwives trained here, 12 Trainee midwives and 10 assistants, such as Compounders, Ward Boys, Clerks and the like.

### Training

1. *Midwifery*: The third batch of Kasturba midwifery trainees which was admitted in October 1947 will appear for examination in March 1949. The fourth batch of trainees was admitted in April 1948 and the 5th batch in October 1948. All the five candidates who appeared for the Kasturba Midwifery examination in March 1948 passed the examination, one of them securing honours. Four of these candidates were trained at this hospital. Three candidates appeared for the examination held in September 1948 and all passed. The candidates who had passed in March 1948 were sent to Maharashtra Centres for Domiciliary training. The successful candidates of the October batch were trained in our own sub-centres at Satoda and Sevagram.

2. *Talimi Sangh Students*: Besides the above regular students, weekly classes in Anatomy and Physiology were held for students of the Talimi Sangh and some students attending the Basic Teachers' Course of the Talimi Sangh were given elementary training in nursing, dressing and in treatment of minor ailments.

### Outdoor Department

Attendance during the year.....16,799

As many of the patients come from far away villages medicines are dispensed to them for at least three days at a time. From this year a new system named "Hospital membership system" has been introduced for outdoor patients. A person can become a member of this system by paying annas eight per year. A member has to pay only anna one for each hospital attendance. Non-members have to pay annas two for similar attendances. Annas eight are charged for injections. The idea of introducing this method is two-fold: (i) to encourage the idea among people of paying for whatever help they take and not to be always helplessly depending on charity, and (ii) ultimately to make the hospital self-supporting, if possible. Those who cannot afford to pay anything are exempted from all charges.

### Indoor Department

There are 18 beds for indoor patients. Preference for indoor admission is given in the following order: Maternity cases, female medical or other cases, children and lastly males. The number of cases treated in the indoor during the year was 493, of whom 336 were females and 157 males. The number of maternity cases (81) has shown a distinct rise over the previous year. The Hospital has created confidence amongst the villagers but the number of cases is not rising as it might do because of difficulties of conveyance and communication. The number of beds allotted to males is not sufficient and many people really needing admission have to be refused on that account.

### Clinical Pathological Laboratory

587 investigations were carried out during the year. These include 29 cases of blood-grouping and 3 of blood-transfusion.

### Eye-treatment

Special work in diseases of the eye was started from the middle of the year and ten important operations were performed, besides 12 cases of treatment of refraction.

### Sevagram Village

A child welfare centre was being run at this village by the Hospital but it was taken over by the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust from 1948. The Trust maintains a midwife and a village *dai* there under the supervision of this hospital, the lady doctor paying rou-

tine weekly visits in addition to emergency calls. The total number of patients treated at the child welfare centre during the year 1948 was 793.

### Surrounding Villages

Health units were sent to Wadgaon, Dhanoli and Jawadi villages for doing preventive and therapeutic work during a cholera epidemic. Health units were also sent to other villages for disinfection of wells and for other preventive work. A trained worker visited the surrounding villages three times a week to do sanitation work. During the Kasturba week a party of hospital workers visited one village every day for purposes of cleaning and sanitation, etc. Hospital doctors attend emergency calls in the surrounding villages whenever sent for.

### Donations of Medicines

Various drug manufacturing companies have donated drugs to the Hospital during the year, the chief of them being the Vaidynath Ayurved Pharmacy of Nagpur, which has very generously promised to supply to the Hospital, free of charge, all annual requirements of Ayurvedic drugs. The Hospital is grateful to all its donors for their help.

### Needs

The Hospital was mainly financed each year by Gandhiji hitherto, but now it must seek help elsewhere. Every year the indoor department work is increasing and there is naturally a crying need for increasing the number of beds. To accommodate more beds in the existing hospital building the outdoor department is being removed to another place and for that purpose a building is under construction, which, it is hoped, will be completed by the end of the year 1949. The Hospital has to meet the expense of the enlarged hospital which will consist of an outdoor department, indoor beds for Obstetrical, Gynaecological, Surgical, Medical and Ophthalmological cases.

### "THE SCHOOL FARM"

The question of achieving self-sufficiency in food on a national scale has been engaging the attention of the Provincial and Central Governments. The Prime Minister made a fervent appeal to the Nation to make every possible effort for increased production of food during the coming year. One reads of mechanization of agriculture and the purchase of hundreds of tractors to achieve the goal. Very little attention is being paid to educating the children of cultivating farmers with small holdings in improved and efficient methods of agricultural and dairy production. In Basic Education gardening and agriculture have been included in the syllabus as subsidiary and basic crafts. The understanding of the method of correlated teaching of various subjects which is one of the essential features of Nai Talim, created considerable difficulties among teachers.

The confirmation of the soundness of this method has come from unexpected quarters. *The School Farm* is the title of a book by A. C. Hilton and J. E. Audric, published by G. G. Harrap & Co., London. Here is presented an account of an experiment made by a County Modern Secondary School in a rural area in educating children to take a real interest in the land and at the same time learn the essentials of farming.



The foreword is written by R. S. Hudson, M. P. As the foreword gives a clear idea of the contents of the book, it is quoted in full:

"The future of Agriculture, one of our greatest basic industries, depends largely on the extent to which it is able in the future to provide the people of this country with the food they require at prices which the community regards as reasonable.

"From a technical point of view the country is in a better position today than ever before. The war years have seen a considerable increase in the application of scientific knowledge to day-to-day practice. The rising generation of farmers and farm-workers are more receptive of new ideas and new developments than in pre-war years. Livestock is being improved, fertilizers are being applied to the land more intelligently, waste is being eliminated, and mechanization more rapidly developed.

"Progress along these lines, inspired by the harsh needs of the country in war, must be consolidated and extended in the difficult years of peace that lie before us.

"Education has a vital role to play. Here is the account—and a very readable account—of a new experiment in marrying works in the classroom or laboratory with practical experience in the fields.

"It seems to me that it has a double advantage. It is bound to send out the youth who is going to make his career on the land better equipped than heretofore. It should also—which is of equal value—give those, whose future lies in towns, an understanding that agricultural work is not only varied and interesting, but needs a high degree of skill.

"I heartily recommend the book, and hope it may lead to widespread adoption of the admirable venture which it describes."

When I presented this book to Bapuji during my last interview with him in Birla House, New Delhi, on December 13, 1947, he glanced through it with appreciation and commented on the expression, "a new experiment in marrying work in the class room or laboratory with practical experience in the fields."

Bapuji remarked that while he talked of correlating subjects to the basic craft, the teachers conducting this experiment had gone a step further and performed the productive union of marriage.

The last sentence of the book sums up the objective:

"In fact we have, as far as possible, tried to help the children to know what real living means, and to this end our system of teaching has, we believe, proved itself to be worth all the efforts we have made in the past and will continue to make in the future."

This is reassuring for those who have been carrying on the work of Nai Talim with faith and conviction. The book deserves to be studied by heads of educational institutions, particularly of agricultural schools. The introduction of this system of Nai Talim in schools and colleges will harness the willing co-operation of pupils in this 'admirable venture' to solve the food problem through their harmonious development.

Sevagram, 25-8-'49

E. W. ARYANAYAKAM  
Secretary,  
Hindustani Talimi Sangh

## REASSURANCES

Speaking on the Report of the Atomic Energy Commission, President Truman expressed his satisfaction that in the past six months considerable progress has been made in every sector of the 350 million dollar project and stated that all who rely on the strength of the United States have reason for reassurance and faith.

The Report of the Commission itself announces that "new and more effective" atom bombs tested on Eniwetok Atoll in the Pacific last year were being produced "on an industrial basis". With the performance of the United States' contribution to civilization at Hiroshima fresh in one's mind one would be forgiven if one questions the meaning of "reassurances". When a ruthless giant with a garland of skulls around his neck grins with satisfaction at the sharpness of his weapons, is it "reassuring"? Of recent times the two world wars have proved beyond doubt man's inability to bring peace through armament. The moral stature of man lags far behind his intellectual attainments. The former has to control the latter if the conflict between the good and evil is to show a balance in favour of good. In this world of ours, as at present constituted, it will be too much to expect that the good can have its own all along the line. Hence it is rather disturbing to peace-loving nations to find an aggressive wrestler patting his biceps in the traditional way showing his readiness to take up any challenge. Let the world beware!

The background to this performance was provided at the United Nations Conventional Armaments Commission which sought to inaugurate a world census of non-atomic weapons and armed forces. Why atomic weapons should have been left out is rather ominous. Under the present conditions of armaments it would appear that the Commission is to function for the atomic-weapon-holders. This position was clearly brought out by M. Seymon Tsarapkin, the Russian Delegate to the Commission, who stated his opinion that the United States seem to be engaged in an armed race as the groundwork for World War III. He felt that there was an armament fever in the United States with the propaganda for war against Russia. These are indications which when backed with the major appropriation of the budgets of many nations for military purposes auger ill for the peace of the world.

Naturally, it is not possible to lay bare such activities before the common man. To throw dust in the eyes of the unsuspecting public, the Atomic Energy Commission includes a few experiments carried out for medical purposes and state that relatively inexpensive radio-active cobalt may eventually prove to be a better treatment for cancer than radium. Having stated this as an opiate they proceed to discuss the possible extension of the sources of uranium and



plutonium which at present they are getting from Belgian Congo and Canada.

When we scrutinize these statements in a detached manner it makes us wonder if civilization has entered into a suicide pact. It appears to us that this aggressive policy is being pursued by a handful of people in the few financially strong nations of the world today. Millions of our citizens are peace-loving and absolutely ignorant of the nefarious devices of the handful. Is this democracy? If democracy is to assert itself, it is time that those of us who desire peace and have no intentions on other people's property, should band ourselves together to put out of court all military preparations, which though ostensibly be for peace, are in reality for aggression. We must confess with sadness that India with its newborn freedom is also "arming for peace". Is it not time that we took our lessons from the past and re-ordered our house in the interests of civilization and culture?

J. C. KUMARAPPA

### TOURISM — A NEW INDUSTRY

Every aspect of human nature is capable of being commercialized. Friendship is commercialized in diplomacy. Even the noble function of motherhood is commercialized by the wet nurse. One of the most beautiful aspects of human relationship is hospitality. Amongst the oriental peoples till now the true human elements are still retained in the simple hospitality extended to strangers. Hospitality is a twice blessed thing. It blesses him who gives and him who receives, and binds the two together with bonds of pleasant memories.

In true modern style the Central Transport Ministry is scheming to commercialize hospitality into a new national industry — tourist traffic. When this is properly developed our highest officials will stand at the Gate Way of India bowing and scraping to every globe-trotter. When our children have not enough to eat, enough to put on and adequate means of education and we lack in transport with people riding on the top of railway carriages and on the couplings and foot-boards, one would have thought that the Transport Ministry would have its hands full to put its household in order, but the thirst for the Dollar Exchange seems to be more luring than the service to our own people.

As a means of education and culture our land had developed the technique of pilgrimages. Men and women travelled leisurely, studied customs and traditions, visited places of unique interest, topographically and historically, and acquired a wider understanding which ultimately burnt itself into the national culture.

On the other hand the modern tourist takes his travel as lightly as a cinema-goer. It is a means of spending his money and wasting his time. It matters little what the ultimate gain is. It is usually undertaken by the play-boys and girls of the nations to make the world their playground. They forget that life is real and life is earnest and spending their time and

money is not the goal. Are we to utilize our Government organization to cater to such needs?

The argument that the visitors to the United Kingdom spent in the country about 30 million pounds per year and the Americans squander about 100 millions in foreign countries will hold no water. Money has its own value but it is not everything. An industry is not merely a means of accumulating material wealth. It should lead to the development of the people engaged in it. The hotels in Switzerland which cater to American traffic try to approximate their conditions of life to those prevailing in America so that their guests may feel perfectly at home! The attitude of the host to the guest carries no personal interest other than that which is centred round the purse. Such mercenary hospitality is a degrading feature of tourism. When that develops, the true spiritual significance of travel and pilgrimage disappears yielding place to mere commercialism.

We do not wish to discourage foreigners coming to our land to learn and understand our attitude to life, but the development of tourist traffic is not the way to do it. It is purely a commercial device to garner in as much of the Dollar Exchange as we possibly can. We make no contribution to civilization, but we shall be merely providing momentary amusement, recreation and diversion. Even these functions may have a value of their own, but when these exclude the other, as they would if the methods proposed are followed, the Government will not be justified in its existence by what would ultimately prove to be a disservice to the nation. As things are today, we need every ounce of energy to rebuild our culture and character and we do not require to manufacture fly-paper to entrap the stray flies.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

### A Tourist's View

To the Editor, *Harijan*

Dear Sir,

Quite a great deal has appeared about the necessity of attracting tourists, particularly Americans and their dollars, to India. To do this it is said liquor must be made available even though such availability may be contrary to the Country's customs and laws. As an American myself, and one who has travelled extensively as a tourist, may I say that foreign travelling is undertaken not to meet the same conditions as prevail in our own homelands, but to contact different and other customs and kinds of people. If India loses its basic simplicity and its local colourings, and thereby becomes another machined peg fitting exactly into a machined hole both being exactly similar to other pegs and holes of East or West, what attractions then for tourists will India offer? One does not need to undertake foreign travel to get intoxicants. This is either a miasma or big business trickery or both.

Sincerely yours,  
Wm. D. TEN BROECK

Bombay, 9-8-'49



### UNTOUCHABILITY IN CUTCH

The following is the gist of a letter from Shri Chhaganlal Joshi, Secretary, Saurashtra Harijan Sevak Sangh :

"One full year has elapsed since the change-over in the administration in Cutch but there is no noticeable change in the attitude of the public servants towards the Harijans.

"On 25-6-'49, the *vahivatdar* of Mandvi visited this place in connection with the Taqavi loans. The cultivators and *dhrus* (village revenue officers) of the surrounding villages were asked to attend.

"The *dhrus* of this place had arranged for the residence of the *vahivatdar* in a *dharmashala* managed by an orthodox *sanatani* and believer in untouchability. Before allowing the use of the *dharmashala*, he had stipulated that Harijans should not enter its premises. The *dhrus* had accepted the condition.

"The cultivators and the *dhrus* came here on the appointed day according to the scheduled programme. All cultivators who were not Harijans entered the *dharmashala*, while the Harijan cultivators had to wait outside.

"At a distance of about three miles from here, there is a village by name Devpur. Recently a Harijan has been appointed there as the *dhrus*. He has studied up to Matric and is a man of good culture. He had to attend the call of the *vahivatdar*. He was forbidden to enter the *dharmashala*. A separate arrangement was made for him in an old State house. Naturally this was a gross insult not only of the Harijan *dhrus* but of the government also. It was also a gross disregard of the orders of the government. An officer, for no fault of his except that he was Harijan, had to bear that humiliation and that too at the hands of his own colleagues. It may be imagined how these officers have wounded his feelings! When a Harijan officer has to meet with such treatment, one can easily imagine the lot of other Harijans. When an officer does not respect his own colleague, how can one expect the public to respect the Harijan officer?

"On the attention of the *vahivatdar* being drawn to this injustice, he invited the Harijan cultivators at the place where the Harijan *dhrus* had lodged and disposed of their applications there. He also assured us that such incidents would not happen again. The Secretary of the Mandvi Taluka Congress Committee was also present with the *vahivatdar*. He had also put up at the *dharmashala*. There was no arrangement for meals for the Harijans but the officers and the Secretary of the Congress Committee enjoyed a full dinner with sweets.

"Following the orders of the government, four or five Harijan students were admitted in the school here. But on account of the harassment of the orthodox *sanatani* guardians, the Harijan parents were compelled to withdraw their children from the school. Now there is only one Harijan boy in the school. He too is seated at a distance in a humiliating way. It is strange that such things happen even after the passing of the legislation removing the Harijan untouchability."

The government as well as the reformist are upon their test. The government may content itself by simply passing the laws, and now and then punishing an offender. But the reformists cannot afford to remain contented like this. It is the duty of Harijansevak not only to reform Harijans but caste-Hindus also; rather work among the latter demands more serious attention.

Wardha, 26-7-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

(Translated from Gujarati)

### WOMEN'S RESPONSIBILITIES \*

Good work is being done here for the uplift of women. I notice that women are even ahead of men in some matters. For instance, I witnessed that women showed greater enthusiasm than men in learning Hindi. That is as it should be, because they are the custodians of our culture. A seed is being sown here by way of a memorial to Kasturba; it will grow into a big tree, which will flower and give fruits and shelter. Some sisters have just received their certificates. But they will get their real certificates when they go to the villages and serve the people there. And then only will there be real progress of India.

We have heard that at one time there flourished in our country women like Gargi, Maitreyi and Sulabha, whom men sought for acquiring knowledge. Similarly, the name of Avvayyar is famous in Tamilnad. But ever since India became a slave country, the sphere of activity of women became narrowed. It was when Gandhiji, in his peculiar way, started the freedom movement that he gave, along with men, an equal place of honour to women and got equal work done by them. Today three cheers are given to Equality. People say that women should be trained to do equal work with men. Your poet Bharatiar has also sung : *सरिन्द्र समानमाह* (men and women are equal). But it is not sufficient if women attain only equality with men. Men have become intellectually bankrupt. They plunged the world into two great wars within the last twenty-five years. Even now they are preparing for a war. If women too become militarized like men, that kind of equality will be of no use. Therefore it is not sufficient that women should become equal with men; they should surpass them and repair the damage done by them and put them under restraint. That means propagation of *ahimsa* and that was Gandhiji's expectation of women.

The world is tired of violence and will get more exhausted by resorting to it further. Ultimately it has to turn to non-violence. Then will begin the great work for women. So long as society is based on violence woman cannot become equal with man, because man is physically stronger than woman. When society is based on non-violence, woman will become stronger than man; she will become the Mother of Humanity in the real sense of the term. She will also be its *guru* (teacher).

Besides the qualities of love and restraint which they possess, women should cultivate fearlessness also. Without it, *ahimsa* is not possible. This requires to be developed. Therefore, I shall consider you successful only when you go to the villages and work there fearlessly. Whatever other qualities one might possess, one possessed of fear is of little worth. Other qualities develop only if there is the quality of fearlessness. When you go and work in the villages, the villagers will of course respect you, but at the same time they might slander you and watch you also. Only when they find you fearless would you gain real entry into the villages. Women are rightly expected to possess modesty but without fearlessness modesty does not shine. Sanskrit poets have considered timidity as one of women's qualities and described women as timid. But it is not a quality but a failing. Therefore if you all work fearlessly in villages, Gandhiji's expectations would be fulfilled.

\* Extracts from Shri Vinoba's Convocation Address in Hindustani to the Graduates of the Kasturba Gram Sevika Vidyalaya, Gandhigram, on 30-4-'49.



## ASHRAM ACTIVITIES

(By M. K. Gandhi)

## I

## (Worship)

## (ii)

At the morning prayer we first recite the *shlokas* (verses) printed in *Ashram Bhajanavali* (hymnal), and then sing one *bhajan* (hymn) followed by *Ramadhun* (repetition of Ramana-ma) and *gitapath* (recitation of the *Gita*). In the evening we have recitation of the last 19 verses of the second chapter of the *Gita*, one *bhajan* and *Ramadhun* and then read some portion of a sacred book.

The *shlokas* were selected by Shri Kaka Kalelkar who has been in the Ashram since its foundation. Shri Maganlal Gandhi met him in Shantiniketan, when he and the children of the Phoenix Settlement went there from South Africa while I was still in England. Dinabandhu Andrews and the late Mr. Pearson were then in Shantiniketan. I had advised Maganlal to stay at some place selected by Andrews. And Andrews selected Shantiniketan for the party. Kaka was a teacher there and came into close contact with Maganlal. Maganlal had been feeling the want of a Sanskrit teacher which was supplied by Kaka. Chintamani Shastri assisted him in the work. Kaka taught the children how to recite the verses repeated in prayer. Some of these verses were omitted in the Ashram prayer in order to save time. Such is the history of the verses recited at the morning prayer all these days.

The recitation of these verses has often been objected to on the ground of saving time or because it appeared to some people that they could not well be recited by a worshipper of truth or by a non-Hindu. There is no doubt that these verses are recited only in Hindu society, but I cannot see why a non-Hindu may not join in or be present at the recitation. Muslim and Christian friends who have heard the verses have not raised any objection. Indeed they need not cause annoyance to any one who respects other faiths as much as he respects his own. They do not contain any reflection on other people. Hindus being in an overwhelming majority in the Ashram, the verses must be selected from the sacred books of the Hindus. Not that nothing is sung or recited from non-Hindu scriptures. Indeed there were occasions on which Imamsaheb recited verses from the Koran.\* Muslim and Christian hymns are often sung.

But the verses were strongly attacked from the standpoint of truth. An Ashramite modestly but firmly argued that the worship of Sarasvati, Ganesh and the like was violence done to

truth; for, no such divinities really existed as Sarasvati seated on a lotus with a *vina* (kind of musical instrument) in her hands, or as Ganesh with a big belly and an elephant's trunk. To this argument I replied as follows:

'I claim to be a votary of truth, and yet I do not mind reciting these verses or teaching them to the children. If we condemn some *shlokas* on the strength of this argument, it would be tantamount to an attack on the very basis of Hinduism. Not that we may not condemn anything in Hinduism which is fit for condemnation, no matter how ancient it is. But I do not believe that this is a weak or vulnerable point of Hinduism. On the other hand I hold that it is perhaps characteristic of our faith. Sarasvati and Ganesh are not independent entities. They are all descriptive names of one God. Devoted poets have given a local habitation and a name to His countless attributes. They have done nothing wrong. Such verses deceive neither the worshippers nor others. When a human being praises God he imagines Him to be such as he thinks fit. The God of his imagination is there for him. Even when we pray to a God devoid of form and attributes, we do in fact endow Him with attributes. And attributes too are form. Fundamentally God is indescribable in words. We mortals must of necessity depend upon the imagination which makes and sometimes mars us too. The qualities we attribute to God with the purest of motives are for us but fundamentally false, because all attempts at describing Him must be unsuccessful. I am intellectually conscious of this and still I cannot help dwelling upon the attributes of God. My intellect can exercise no influence over my heart. I am prepared to admit that my heart in its weakness hankers after a God with attributes. The *shlokas* which I have been reciting every day for the last 15 years give me peace and hold good for me. In them I find beauty as well as poetry. Learned men tell many a story about Sarasvati, Ganesh and the like, which have their own use. I do not know their deeper meaning, as I have not gone into it, finding it unnecessary for me. It may be that my ignorance is my salvation. I did not see that I needed to go deep into this as a part of my quest for truth. It is enough that I know my God and although I have still to realize His living presence, I am on the right path to my destination.'

I could hardly expect that the objectors should be satisfied with this reply. An *ad hoc* committee examined the whole question fully and finally recommended that the *shlokas* should remain as they were, for every possible selection would be viewed with disfavour by some one or other.

(Translated from Gujarati by V. G. D.)  
(To be continued)

\* Recitation of short passages from the Koran has since been made an integral part of the Ashram prayer.



# HARIJAN

September 11

1949

## IN GANDHIJI'S WORDS

### In the Forefront, Removal of Untouchability

I have put untouchability in the forefront because I observe a certain remissness about it. Hindu Non-co-operators may not be indifferent about it. We may be able to right the Khilafat wrong but we can never reach Swaraj with the poison of untouchability corroding the Hindu part of the national body. Swaraj is a meaningless term if we desire to keep a fifth of India under perpetual subjection, and deliberately deny to it the fruits of national culture. We are seeking the aid of God in this great purification movement, but we deny to the most deserving among His creatures the rights of humanity. Inhuman ourselves, we may not plead before the Throne for deliverance from the inhumanity of others. (*Young India*, 25-5-'21, 165)

### The Sinful Contagion

Hinduism has sinned in giving sanction to untouchability. It has degraded us, made us *pariahs*. Even the Mussalmans have caught the sinful contagion from us. (*Young India*, 27-4-'21, 136).

The 'touch-me-not' -ism that disfigures the present-day Hinduism is a morbid growth. It only betrays a woodenness of mind, a blind self-conceit. It is abhorrent alike to the spirit of religion and morality. (*Harijan*, 20-4-'34, 73)

### A Plague

Untouchability is not only not a part and parcel of Hinduism, but a plague which it is the bounden duty of every Hindu to combat. It has received religious sanction in India, and reduced lakhs and crores of human beings to a state bordering on slavery. (*From Yeravda Mandir*, 47)

### What is Removal of Untouchability?

The observance (of the vow of the removal of untouchability) is not fulfilled merely by making friends with 'untouchables', but by loving all life as one's own self. Removal of untouchability means love for, and service of, the whole world, and it thus merges into *ahimsa*. (*From Yeravda Mandir*, 49)

### My Prayer

I do not want to be reborn. But if I have to be reborn, I should be born an untouchable, so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings, and affronts levelled at them, in order that I may endeavour to free myself and them from that miserable condition. I, therefore, pray that if I should be born again, I should do so not as a *brahmana*, *kshatriya*, *vaishya*, or *shudra*, but as an *atishudra*. (*Young India*, 4-5-'21, 144)

(*From Selections from Gandhi* by Shri N. K. Bose)

## HARIJAN DAY

I understand that the Bombay Government have decided to observe the 25th September as Harijan Day throughout the province. I hope that the Saurashtra and Cutch Governments will join it, so that there might be a uniform programme throughout Gujarat. The Madras Government has already given a lead by declaring the 30th of every month as a day for Harijans. Other provinces must also contribute their full quotas.

I do not know what detailed programme, if any, has been drawn up for the day. I have no doubt that it must have been drawn up carefully, allowing local workers sufficient scope to enrich it with suitable items.

Thinking of Harijans, the section of them which needs most urgent attention at this juncture is, in my opinion the *bhangis*. *Bhangis* and workers attached to them are at present particularly restless in Gujarat, Saurashtra, Cutch and — to mention outside Bombay — Rajasthan. A worker has gone so far as to suggest that the word *Harijan* should hereafter be confined to *bhangis* only, as other sections of the Harijans have already given to themselves better-sounding names such as *Mahyavanshis*, *Rohits*, *Guru-Brahmans*, *Matangs* and the like and got them officially recognized, but the poor *bhangi* has not been able to find a nice name for himself. Perhaps he is not aware that in some parts of India, *bhangis* call themselves *Valmiki*s, but that has not raised their social or economic position in any way. Let us not, therefore, be too much concerned about names, but concentrate ourselves upon the substance, that is the conditions in which the *bhangis* subsist at present. And there is no doubt that they are woefully sub-human. I shall not say that there are not human groups in India, whose condition is even more pitiable than that of the *bhangis*. The kind-hearted Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru in the North, Shri Thakkarbapa from his tours in the Centre and Shri V. Raghaviah in the South have drawn attention to the miseries of groups condemned legally for their birth as Criminal Tribes. Happily, so far as Bombay is concerned, it has already taken the laudable step of restoring to these condemned peoples their rights of free citizenship. So let us think of the *bhangis* for the present, because with their condition we are all familiar, and they render a service, which we all know to be even more indispensable for our health than hospitals, dispensaries, schools, street-lamps, and water-works put together.

From reports which I receive, it appears that there is a tussle going on at present between the *bhangis* and their friends on the one side and Municipal and Government authorities on the other in several towns of Gujarat and Kathiawad. In some places the governments concerned have sanctioned schemes for increased pays and allowances, but the municipalities



do not implement them on the ground of shortage of funds. The result is that the schemes, by no means too ambitious, remain no more than pious intentions. This, naturally, is too depressing a situation to the *bhangis* and their friends, for their condition demands immediate relief and not mere good promises.

To add to grossly inadequate salaries, the conditions under which they have to carry out their daily scavenging duties and the localities and shelters in which they have to live are so repellent and abject, that no Harijan worker can be blamed if he has no more patience to put up with them. Upto a stage a debtor might ask a creditor to wait for repayment of his debt. But when the creditor is so thoroughly reduced to dire circumstances, may he not ask the debtor to give him his due anyhow?

A worker in Saurashtra has got exasperated at this state of affairs in a particular town and threatens to go on a fast. I do not know whether this particular fast is appropriate or not, and whether the worker is qualified for wielding this weapon, which in any event has to be resorted to only when no other remedy is left. But I mention it in order only to show how the conditions of the *bhangis* are exasperating and depressing.

A further cause for depression is the attitude of the non-Harijans towards the Harijans as a whole and of the *non-bhangis* towards the *bhangis*. I do not use the words 'Savarna Hindus' intentionally. The prejudice against the Harijans and the *bhangis* in particular is not confined to Savarna Hindus only. The movement at Udwarda among the Parsis, though a small thing by itself, shows that the spirit of untouchability has not failed to infect even them. Muslims also, I have seen, have a sense of untouchability towards the *bhangis*. Dr. Syed Mahmud, Minister, Bihar, wondered that at Sevagram every one did scavenging work without any sense of reluctance. He wished to send for his son to attend upon him, but felt a little hesitant about it, as he was afraid that the son may not like to fall in with the *ashram* discipline. But the son did come and the Doctor was agreeably surprised when he found that the former showed no reluctance to do that work. And I might add this was not his communist son, but the orthodox one. The prejudice against scavenging and so also against those who are condemned to do that work by force of circumstances is thus common to all the people of India.

Therefore, in my opinion, the observance of Harijan day should no longer be confined to Hindus. Parsis, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, should all take part in whatever programme is announced and befriend the Harijans in every manner.

Governments and municipalities should also take steps to render justice to the *bhangis'* demands. If municipalities are short of funds

for implementing their obligations to the *bhangis*, they might do well to ask for special contributions from their townspeople for this purpose, in addition to other programmes.

The day falls during the Jayanti period. Gandhiji's views on the subject are well known. Nevertheless a few have been gathered together at the top as refreshers.

Wardha, 1-9-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

### COMMON LANGUAGE CONTROVERSY

Readers must have seen from the papers the result of the unduly prolonged Hindi-Hindustani controversy. Just as the British became supreme as a result of the internal quarrels of the *rajas* and *nawabs* in the 18th and 19th centuries, so the English language has remained supreme even after their departure because the protagonists of Hindi and Hindustani would not come to a settlement.

Since the Munshi-Iyyengar draft has not yet been finally passed, may I venture once again to suggest that

(1) Shri Rajendrababu's solution about the name and contents of the language should be accepted unreservedly;

(2) with regard to English, for a period of years that Shri Rajendrababu might suggest, both English and Hindi should be accepted as equally authoritative in the Central Government and High Courts, so that all laws, proceedings, reports, etc. should be passed and published in both the languages as in Switzerland and South Africa;

(3) with regard to numerals, the international numerals should be accepted throughout India, wherever they have to be publicly exhibited, e.g. mileage-stones, telegraph posts, numbers on vehicles of all kinds, post-marks, etc. They should also be used in account books of government departments, banks and similar institutions;

(4) Hindi numerals should be used in other printed publications in the Nagari script. But their form should be standardized. At present there are more styles than one even in Hindi provinces in regard to some of the numerals; e.g. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9. Some of them are confusing. I suggest that the *Balbodh-Modi* (Maharashtra) style should be adopted as the standard one both for its grace and ease;

(5) with regard to the script, Shri Rajendrababu's solution settles the matter as between Nagari and Urdu. Though I am afraid my voice is going to remain one in wilderness, I do not hesitate to urge that a standardized Roman script should also be permitted to be used for Hindi, though the knowledge of Nagari be compulsory. This will enable Bengali, Oriya and Dravidian provinces as well as those accustomed to write Urdu or their own dialects in Roman (e.g. Konkani) to take to Hindi quickly. It will enable all those who have their English typewriters to change their linguistic medium without difficulty, expense and delay. At present a good deal is written in English (and that often in bad English) simply because people possess English typewriters and they cannot afford to discard them just now and go in for expensive Nagari machines, with un-uniform keyboards.

Since Nagari is phonetically more perfect, it is not likely to lose its precedence (unless it refuses to make any reform) and with the importance of English diminishing in ordinary Indian affairs, the Roman script is likely to be always secondary.

Will this humble pleading be heard?

Wardha, 2-9-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA



## RAJENDRABABU'S SOLUTION

The papers have published a statement by Dr. Rajendraprasad, President of the Constituent Assembly, on the question of the National Language. As it has appeared already in almost all the papers, I publish only such parts of it as are of the nature of conclusions. The readers will remember that I had myself suggested that this controversy should be settled by agreeing to abide by the decision of a great leader. The name suggested from the Hindi platform was that of Dr. Rajendraprasad and I had accepted it. I, therefore, accept for my part this 'award' if I may so call it, without reserve and appeal to the protagonists of Hindi to do the same. As a matter of fact, I regard his broader definition of the form of the language as better than any hitherto suggested.

### Parts of Statement

"(1) *Script*: Devanagari should be accepted as the script for all-India purposes, although in places where Urdu has been long prevalent option may be given for a time to parties to file petitions, etc., in the Urdu script, if they so desire, it being clearly understood that there would be no obligation on the part of any Government to adopt that script for any of its purposes. In particular cases if the provincial or State Government considers it necessary in view of convenience of an appreciable number of its citizens, it may use it for any particular purpose. This is a solution which should be acceptable to all.

"(2) *Contents of the language*: As regards the language, I have always felt that the language which is generally understood in Northern India alone has the claim to be accepted as an all-India language, if for nothing else, on account of the vast numbers that can understand it even where they cannot write it in a strictly grammatically correct form. That language cannot afford to exclude any words which are in use at present and no one can deny that there is a large number of words of foreign origin which are current in that language. It will also have to absorb a great many words from the provincial languages, both of the north and the south, and quite a great many new words from the English language. It has been doing this for centuries and it cannot afford either to exclude words which it has already adopted and not to accept any new words simply because they happen to be of foreign origin. If this definition of a common language is accepted, I do not see there is any really serious difficulty in arriving at a solution so far as the contents of the language are concerned.

"(3) *Name*: There remains only the question of name. That ought not to stand in the way of a solution if it is clearly understood and accepted what the contents of the language are to be, (i.e.) if we include within the definition of Hindi other styles of it also, by whatever name they may have been known—Brajhasha, Khadiboli, Hindustani or even Urdu."

"(4) *Conclusion*: Finally Shri Rajendrababu appeals for "a policy of non-boycott of words of foreign origin, which would include various styles in the Hindi language within its scope, which would allow the admission of a large number of words current in provincial languages and, perhaps, it may even be readjustment of its strictly grammatical rules to suit non-Hindi-speaking provinces, and which while recognizing the Devanagari script as the only script for all-India purposes would for a limited

period as a matter of convenience, allow the use of even the Urdu script by the people who desire to use it."

Concluding, he says, "I consider it to be a solution which is best calculated to help the growth of Hindi and which should, therefore, be acceptable to all lovers of Hindi purely from the point of view of Hindi also."

Wardha, 20-8-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

## DESABHAKTA KONDA VENKATAPPAYYA

I

(1866-1918)

Shri Venkatappayyaji was born in his native place, old Guntur, on *Magha Bahula (Badi)* 7th, 1788 *Salivahana Saka* (7-2-1866) and breathed his last in his own house at Guntur on *Shravana Badi* 7th 1871 (15-8-1949), being the first day of the first month of the third year in *Gandhi saka*. He was thus 83 years, 6 months and 9 days at the time of departure from this world.

He came of a poor but respectable family belonging to the Yajnavalkya sect. His father was a trader's clerk. His mother died during his boyhood. He studied in the A. E. L. M. School at Guntur. The teachings of Jesus fortified by the exemplary conduct of Dr. Uhl, Principal of the School, appealed to his religious mind and he desired to become a Christian. Dr. Uhl, pleased with the prospect of having a brilliant Brahmin boy within his fold, fixed the following day for the conversion. This gave the youth some time for reconsideration. The matter leaked out; the arguments of the learned people, the importunities of his relatives and friends, the dire distress of his father, Kondiah, who in the absence of the mother acted as mother and father, and the unbearable grief of the two younger brothers prevailed upon his affections and he did not go at the appointed time for the ceremony. But on further thoughts he became ashamed of himself and felt sorry that he cheated the revered Doctor. So he mustered enough courage, went to the Doctor and told him of the change in his resolution. The Doctor patted him on the back and blessed him to live up to the ideal of Jesus, though he may not technically be a Christian.

This incident is creditable both to the Christian Father and the young student. It reveals the sincerity of purpose and the courage of conviction and confession which have throughout characterized the life of our beloved Desabhakta.

While he was studying in the Christian College at Madras, a similar incident occurred in which he had to prevent some friends of his from getting converted. It led to the rustication of the leader and his followers.

After joining the Bar at Masulipatam, the headquarters of the Krishna District, he had a tussle with a corrupt magistrate before whom he appeared in a criminal case. The angry



magistrate drew up proceedings against him, but the righteous lawyer took up the matter before the High Court where he was vindicated.

He took to politics even before the Bengal partition. He became in 1902 the first editor of the Telugu fortnightly paper, *The Krishna Patrika*, which he carried on with other friends till 1907. Thereafter it was converted into a weekly and he could not attend to it from Guntur where he had gone in 1905 to practise before the newly constituted District Court.

But till 1913 the two Districts of Guntur and Krishna had joint political and social conferences. In December 1911 the Bengal Partition was annulled and the principle of linguistic distribution of provinces was enunciated in the famous despatch of Lord Hardinge. This was taken up by some young men of Guntur who carried on propaganda for the same. In 1912, the last joint conferences were held and the separation of the District Conferences was decided upon. The ideas of a separate Andhra University and separate Andhra Province, which were at first ridiculed by the elders early enough commended themselves to the essentially democratic mind of Venkatappayaji. The first Andhra Conference was held in May 1913 at Bapatla (Guntur District) and Venkatappayaji became the Chairman of the Reception Committee. Slowly but surely he stepped into the work which was destined to be his life-mission. In 1915 he gave up his lucrative practice at the Bar in furtherance of the Andhra cause. For years together he was the President of the Standing Committee of the Andhra Mahasabha formed for the attainment of the Province. He presided over the deliberations of the 5th Andhra Conference in 1917 at Nellore.

In 1915 he also thought of joining the Servants of India Society and to devote himself to the uplift of Andhra women. He purchased buildings at Vetapalem for Rs. 4,000 but God willed it otherwise. It (Saradaniketan) was started at Guntur by Shrimati Unnava Laxmibayamma in 1921, and her husband, Barrister Laxminarayana, took it up after release from jail in 1922. It is now a flourishing institution. Desabhaktaji in accordance with his original intention gifted away immovable property worth Rs. 10,000 to the same.

As part and parcel of the Andhra movement, he wanted to start a Servants of Andhra Society, but the Congress Movement gave him no time for organizing the same.

Through the efforts of Venkatappayaji and Dr. Pattabhi, backed up by the late Lokamanya, a separate Andhra Provincial Congress Committee was formed in 1918. Venkatappayaji became its first Secretary, while the Andhra Bhishma N. Subbarao Pantulu became its first President. Subsequently Desabhaktaji was its President for several years.

G. SITARAMSASTRY

(To be continued)

## SAUCE FOR THE GANDER

A little while ago a mission was sent by the Government of India to Japan to study the organization of cottage and small-scale industries and place orders for machinery. The intention is to popularize mechanization and increase production. The mission has now returned and the possibility of setting up a Central Institute at Delhi with branches in the Provinces is under consideration. Some Japanese technicians have also been invited to set up that machinery and to train Indian workers.

While this is on the proper line of studies of the efforts of other nations in their attempt to put their nationals to work, we wonder if the schemes that work under one set of circumstances will be found useful in a totally different environment. Japan is a small country with comparatively little resources struggling against nature to maintain their mode of living. While we must gain from other people's experiences, it cannot be said to be incumbent on us to accept in toto their *modus operandi*.

We fear that the personnel of the mission itself was not one calculated to fulfil the purpose of the mission. One was a bureaucrat trained in the ways of red-tapism and the other with hardly any knowledge of the artisan population of the country. If it were an industrial mission sent out to get the up-to-date type of mechanism and organization to be reproduced in our country, such a mission will have meaning, but cottage industry is not merely a method of producing articles. It also combines in itself a philosophy and way of life. Therefore the type of cottage industry suited to the Japanese genius may not necessarily be profitable to us.

Our knowledge of our own people and their way of life is an essential factor in deciding how to put them to work. The mechanical part is only a detail, however important it may be.

The machines ordered from Japan should have arrived in our country by now. If so, the way we should deal with them is not to accept them as they are but put them through searching tests in our own country in the environment under which they will be used. Until these have been studied properly under our own field conditions, they should not be put out into the market. The persons who study these should themselves be qualified to pronounce judgment on such matters. Mere technical superiority of a machine means nothing unless we wish to turn man into a machine-feeder. Man and the machine are very closely inter-related. Ignoring such relationship will not make for the growth of our nation. Hence we trust that every attempt that is made to improve our country mechanically will be made after careful investigation on the human and social factors that enter into the equation. Broadly speaking it is very unwise to imitate the industrial organization of other



countries. As it has proved in Japan it would prove to be disastrous to our country also. We have to evolve our own system, devise our own machines to suit our people and the local environment.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

### ENGLISH IN SCHOOLS

Recently the Bombay Government decided that English should not have a place in the syllabus of the first seven years of a child's education. This was a sound decision from the educational and psychological points of view, and having regard to the social environments of the Indian child. If a great load is to be taken off the tender mind of the child, if an atmosphere of love and respect for the mother-tongue and nationalism is sought to be created, the abolition of English from the first seven years of a child's education is not only desirable, but imperatively necessary.

But the Government's decision appears now to be wavering. The Central Advisory Board made a concession that if a provincial Government so desires, it may introduce English in any standard it thinks fit. This was a most welcome opportunity for the protagonists of English. They seized the opportunity and began to put forward the old arguments for the retention of English—that for the present we cannot do without English, that English is an international language, that there are no books of higher science, etc. in the Indian languages and so on. Many of the schools of Bombay, which are very vocal, and Anglicized in their outlook, believe that the abolition of English or lowering of its standard will take us back to medieval times. Then there are vested interests too. All such individuals, in their committee meetings and informal contacts with officials, set in motion propaganda for bringing back English, with the result that there is now every possibility of English being reintroduced almost certainly in standard sixth and possibly in standard fifth too.

Mahatma Gandhi showed us the way of Basic Education. The whole idea was watered down and under the stress of circumstances Government decided to introduce craft as only one of the many subjects in the school curriculum. Most of the schools have not, as yet, introduced any craft. Instead, they made strong representations to Government and asked for three years' grace for the retention of English. The Government allowed it. In the case of the English-teaching schools, too, instead of adhering to their original decision of allowing such schools to admit only those children whose mother tongue was English or a regional language other than those recognized for the Bombay Province, Government allowed them also three years' freedom to continue as before. Numerous English classes, where children whose mother tongue is not English are taught

through the English medium or are taught English right from the beginning, are allowed to run merrily. On various committees are sitting—through chance perhaps—persons who have no faith in Basic Education and who regard no education perfect without a sound knowledge of English.

All this has resulted in the creation of such an atmosphere in official circles that the reintroduction of English seems inevitable.

If no resistance is offered to the growth of such a situation, the present scheme of even semi-Basic or pro-Basic Education is likely to receive a serious setback. In almost every activity propaganda is essential. Mere faith in the ultimate soundness of a scheme does not always pay. It behoves, therefore, all who believe in the soundness of the measure of abolishing English and introducing craft as a main subject in the curriculum of the first seven years of a child's study, to get together and combat with equal vigour the subtle propaganda that is being carried on in favour of the reinstatement of English. Delay in such activity may ultimately prove disastrous.

A. L. MAZMUDAR

[Note: The principal issues and dangers to which Shri Mazmudar has drawn attention are of great importance. They were also emphasized in the resolutions passed at the last All India Basic Education Conference at Perianayakempalayam. That the Bombay Government have to submit to the reactionary forces is due to lack of faith of the Central Government and the effective influence of the advocates of English.

Shri Mazmudar suggests a vigorous propaganda against this tendency. I do believe in propagating right views, but have no aptitude or taste for creating loud noise. The resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee to allow the use of English for administrative purposes for fifteen more years indicates which way the wind blows. The meaning which I draw from the resolution is that those over 45 years of age in the public services and over 55 or 60 in elected offices seek protection against the trouble of adopting a new language. 'Vested interests' are to be understood in this sense in the sphere of education. The present generation of grown-up teachers would retire from work by that time and to suit their convenience, the progress of the people and the children should be stayed. This is the import of the resolution in its practical aspect.

Those who are engaged in constructive work have realized and, if not, they must realize now that *Nai Talim*, *Khadi* and such other constructive activities will advance through the children who are now either in cradles or roaming in the streets.

Wardha, 10-8-'49

— K. G. M.]

(Translated from Gujarati)



**POSITION OF INDIAN BANKING**

[The following is another thoughtful contribution on the question of Indian Banking. — Ed.]

Banks and Industries have a vital part to play in building up and promoting National Wealth and Welfare.

The Indian Banks have made a steady progress, though there is a lot wanting as yet. The Banks usually produce some eminent financiers and the country at one time or the other looks up to them for its economic uplift. What is essentially needed is sterling character of such Financial Heads. This will not only play an important part in building up sound banking in the country but such heads being in constant touch with the industrialists are in a position sooner or later to create the same character in the latter wherever lacking. It is an accepted fact that in the post-war world there has been an all-round perceptible fall of morality and lowering down of ethical values. The tendency to blame the Government for all our misfortunes is gaining momentum, but how many of us pause to think of the responsibilities of an individual, organized corporations and the so-called social groups? I feel unless all of us, individually and collectively, pull ourselves up, the present economic conditions and political situation, if allowed to go unchecked, will land us into such difficulties as to make an escape therefrom impossible.

Treasures are kept locked to ward off the temptation of a normal man (for I take a normal man to be honest and right-thinking) but not for thieves and robbers—they will somehow or other break in. Enactments and ordinances are promulgated by the Government to remind the public of their responsibilities to their country. People who frankly take upon themselves the profession of evading the same and defeating the very purpose of such enactments are a little difficult to apprehend immediately, though they all pay for their deeds in one form or the other at some stage. I group them in the class of thieves and robbers, whose number, to our misfortune, at present is large. Their character and the social conscience in them need to be built up.

Banks, which are reservoirs of wealth, need a careful handling. Their investments and advances deserve the greatest and expert consideration. The vicious circle created by some of our so-called industrialists and Banking Heads has been responsible for what the industry has been through from 1946 onwards. The banking crisis of 1946 in Bengal shook the foundations of many sound Banks. The practices adopted by some of these Banks in Bengal and elsewhere are open secrets now and if there had been legislation then to control the activities of such Banks, probably banking in India would not have received such a rude shock. The Banking Companies Act, 1949, late as it comes, is still most welcome. Some suggestions in this

direction were made by the Reserve Bank of India as far back as 1939. The Act which had been pending since 1944, if it had come somewhere in 1944-45, the peak period of profits for almost all the Banks, would have been a step rightly taken at the most opportune time. Yet better late than never.

The Act has been received with a mixed feeling of appreciation and criticism from different Bankers, particularly as it affects them or the institution they represent. It is contended, the Banks, particularly the small Banks, are bound to experience a good deal of difficulty in practical working. It is also said to have been passed to safeguard the interests of depositors and that the shareholders' have been ignored. It, however, cannot be overlooked that some sort of legislation was necessary to check the obnoxious activities of some of the Banks, which were misusing and speculating with the public funds with impunity, without realizing that they were but trustees of such funds placed with them. The interests of depositors form usually more than ten times the interests of the shareholders. So naturally their interests have a priority. Once this is guaranteed, the shareholders will reap the benefit of being the sponsors of a sound Bank.

The Act is also criticized for having many loopholes. This is true; but usually no fool-proof legislation is possible. If there is a certain class of "robbers", they will continue their activities. How long and how can we fight them? It rests with every individual of the country and unless we all contribute our assistance to the Government, the Government cannot come to the rescue of the public by mere Acts and Ordinances. Yet the Act as it stands is sufficiently rigid as it is in keeping with the conditions prevailing in the economic sphere of the country today. A stricter Act would hit hard not only the small Banks but many a big one too. With the powers now vested in the Reserve Bank of India, they are in a position to put an end to many of the malpractices practised so far. From a perusal of their recent directives to the Banks, it is observed that they mean business. The Act has, however, afforded reasonable time to Banks to discontinue activities considered unsound and it is to be seen how far this can be fulfilled. It is likely that the very existence of a few of the small Banks may be threatened, but all the same it is hoped that the depositors' funds will not be jeopardised.

It is agreed that we cannot ignore the necessity of smaller Banks as they render as much service in smaller towns as the big ones in bigger cities. But banking based on sound principles is the need of the country today.

It has been pointed out by Shri B. S. Ramaswami that "in spite of the recent Banking Act, which came into existence a few months ago, we have had a bank failure in the suspension of



the operation of the Exchange Bank of India and Africa." I wonder if the Banking Act 1949 has anything to do with this unfortunate affair. If the Bank has failed, it has paid for its past activities. The Act in its infancy could not have been of any assistance to the Bank. From closer quarters it is, however, observed that every possible assistance was afforded to the Bank by the Reserve Bank of India.

There are a good many suggestions from "A Banker" for improving the situation but probably it has not been realized that their execution is not as simple as it appears from an employee's point of view. Suggestions such as recruitment of staff, supervision and inspection, the Reserve Bank's control over them and the periodical declaration of their assets are not practicable. It is not possible for a controlling body to look through things microscopically unless a large number is mobilized for the purpose. Nationalization of Banks would instead be more effective, if it can prove successful. But have such difficulties been overcome in nationalized or semi-nationalized bodies?

The functions of a bank employee are very much similar to that of a trustee and a missionary. Such an employee with his many contacts is the Bank's most sincere advertisement and greatest asset. Most of the Banks, in fact all the good Banks, welcome suggestions and opinions of employees to improve the internal working and business in general. An employee in fact is most suited to suggest improvements in the Banking routine, because of his practical experience. But unfortunately the present employee, particularly the junior staff, is found lacking in creative initiative. He is more or less in the grip of the "strike mania".

The bank employee is invariably drawn from educated classes and is accustomed to a good standard of living. It is unfortunate that he should conduct himself as irresponsibly as comparatively illiterate and politician-led factory-labourers, giving constant threats of strikes. The country's progress has suffered at their hands. If the bank employee also imitates them, he is bound to give a setback to the Banks and ultimately to the economy of the country. He would prove himself to be his own enemy.

The creation of a tribunal by the Government for Banking Disputes shows their anxiety to ensure a fair deal to the legitimate demands of Bank employees. It is of course not to be forgotten that this action on the part of the Government is prompted by the importance attached to Banks and Banking, on which rests the country's economic position.

It is hoped that the employees will take a realistic view of the things and join hands with their employers, who should also adopt principles of sound banking and thus promote Indian Banking to contribute to the prosperity of the country.

P. N. V.

## CONTROLS RE - EXAMINED

### II

#### Cloth

Let me take up cloth next.

In pre-war days we used to import about 400 to 500 million yards only and that too of very superior varieties or cheaper type of Japanese cloth and nobody had ever complained of shortage or anything. During the war, particularly after the Japanese war, Japanese supplies were cut off and the Government were in need of large quantities of cloth, for defence requirements. I am told that as much as 60 or 70 per cent of the mill production was taken up for military requirements and the Government thought of introducing control and rationing it among the public. This rationing came in force during the latter part or at the fag-end of the war and the system was very defective. But it went on till the year 1948. At the instance of Gandhiji cloth was partially decontrolled but the Provincial quotas and the Provincial movements were still directed by Government. Some unscrupulous mill-owners and traders immediately tried to take advantage of decontrol by withholding sales at controlled prices till the public were compelled to pay 60 or 75 per cent higher or even more. This rise in prices brought into the market all the hoarded stocks from villages and elsewhere and the prices were gradually taking a downward trend, and would have got stabilized nearer the old controlled rates, but all of a sudden, the Government, either of their own accord or at the instance of interested parties, who thought that their profits would dwindle in a free market, reintroduced control during the latter part of 1948, i.e. November or December. It is very interesting to watch the working of this control during the period of the last six months. Some of the provinces like C. P., U. P., Madras and Bihar, had no rationing system at all. But other provinces like Bombay, West Bengal, Assam, etc., introduced cloth rationing in a few centres. The quota in Bombay was fixed at 20 yards out of which 10 yards were fine or superfine and 10 yards medium or coarse. The public were allowed to take 10 yards at a time. It was found that sales under the controlled system were so low that during the very first fortnight the Government was compelled to remove white drill out of the rationed quota and its sale was allowed in unlimited quantities. Even when this was not found sufficient, people were allowed to take their whole quota of 20 yards in the year provided they availed of this opportunity during the first three months. It was subsequently raised by another 10 yards, special quota, the availability of which was limited firstly upto the end of April and then upto the end of May. Over and above this a unit card holder was allowed to buy two superfine sarees and a family cardholder four superfine sarees. In West Bengal



the quota was fixed at about 16 yards or so. It was later raised to 18 or 20 yards. Even then the sales were not sufficient. So the Rationing Authority under the pretext that large quantities of *dhoties* and *sarees* were of odd sizes and lengths, although actually fine and standard, released them in the market in unlimited quantities. These were freely available, so licensed dealers under the rationing system found that they had practically no sales at all. In the month of June government suspended cloth rationing for a period of two months from 1st July.

What do all these indicate? There is no shortage of cloth in the country and even if there is any shortage, people can adjust themselves to it without any interference on the part of the Government. Even at present, cloth mills are so heavily stocked that there is a cry to lift the controls completely, as banks refuse to allow any more credit on cloth. The serious stock position of the cloth mills caused nervousness among pro-controllers and immediately a joint conference of the officials of the Government of India and representatives of the Cotton Textile Mill-owners and recognized exporters was called and free export of cloth was unanimously decided. People are crying about cloth shortage but vested interests have contrived to see that shortages can be maintained by these unlimited exports. The Delhi Gods have given out to the Special Representative of *The Statesman* that "improvement in the supply position is due to control measures and the success of the Centre's efforts to ensure equitable distribution." And the stock "is not more than 500 million yards." If that be the case, why should they be in such a hurry to allow unlimited exports? If India is really short of cloth, where is the necessity to export cloth at all? It is better that we go without even our capital equipment or consumer goods rather than deprive ourselves of cloth at cheaper rates. When unlimited export is allowed, mills can sell even at ex-mill prices and maintain their high margins of profit by perpetuation of controls. This is an unholy alliance of vested interests to deprive the poorer classes of India of their legitimate dues. A few days ago, Shri Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, member of the Constituent Assembly, is reported in a speech to have complained, on the one hand, of food and cloth shortage and, on the other, advocated the export of cloth in unlimited quantities. To me it appears only a wicked device to perpetuate cloth shortage on the plea of export drive to balance the trade. Before allowing unlimited exports of cloth, the Government's first duty was to see that the entire controls were completely removed and people were clothed adequately, and thus save the public exchequer the charges of the Textile Commissioner's establishment, central, and its various counterparts in the provinces.

One fails to understand why those who were crying hoarse to remove shortages of cloth,

are now in such a big hurry to export cloth, and perpetuate cloth shortage and saddle the exchequer with the establishment charges for the maintenance of this control.

A news item of P. T. I. dated 23rd June discloses the complacent attitude maintained by Government. It says, "while the Government are satisfied that the position caused by the closing of a few textile mills and other industries during the past weeks is not serious, they have decided to take steps to ensure that no major industrial undertaking will in future close down without giving a month's notice to the Government." I cannot understand what the present Government considers serious, if unemployment among the textile workers whether it be of a few or many, is not serious. There are about 15,000 workers idle, but I am afraid there are many more in other parts of India, like Rajasthan, Saurashtra, etc.

(To be continued)

### A FIELD OF WORK IN AHIMSA

The Maharogi Seva Mandal, Wardha, which has been doing leprosy work for the last thirteen years, was perhaps the first non-Christian institution of the kind at its beginning. All over the world leper service has been a speciality of Christian missionaries, who have carried on this work with love and sacrifice. Though of late others also are inspired to take up this noble work, it is still too little to be counted. But something is better than nothing.

In the introduction of the Thirteenth Annual Report of the Maharogi Seva Mandal just published, Shri Manohar Divan, Secretary of the Institution, writes:

"A review of the last thirteen years' work reveals that the Maharogi Seva Mandal, which received the blessings of great men and valuable co-operation from many, and has been able to plant its roots firm and spread itself, still remains in extent limited to the capacity of a solitary worker. This was inevitable then and perhaps even proper, but it might also become and perhaps has become an impediment in further progress. It is possible that this period was necessary also to understand the different aspects of this work. The Mandal's work might have also inspired others to act.

"Till now our attention was mainly devoted to propaganda (in affected areas), examination, treatment, organization of colony, laboratory, operation room, experimentation, occupation, sports, school, prayer, cultural development, etc. of the patients. But it has become clear now that the solution of the leper problem lies in the solution of the further problem of increasing for the country the number of workers, equipped with expert knowledge and devoted to this work in the spirit of service and a life-mission."

If the idea behind an institution is to wind it up after the demise of the founder, it might be good to have the scope of work limited to a single individual. It is said that the city of



Dwaraka was built in the middle of the ocean on a single pillar, and with the departure of Lord Krishna, that pillar gave way and the whole city was submerged into the sea. But since that is not our object, the institution should not rest on a single pillar but should be supported by more pillars than one. Here, however, there is no question of choice; it is a stark reality that Shri Manoharji has no co-worker, and still less a successor. Not only that, the report also says that the internal manager, who perhaps had been trained from one of the patients themselves, has been sent to help the Bombay Government in running a leper home near Poona. 'Give and spend and God will send' is the faith underlying this. The Mandal has also to shoulder the responsibility of the Amraoti Branch. So it is an experiment in erecting two structures on one pillar.

Having seen this state of affairs, Shri Shrikrishnadas Jaju has taken a new step. He was till now residing in Sevagram but has now shifted to the leper home of the Mandal. This is adoption of a sort of *Sannyasa* by him and, I feel, is full of great possibilities.

Shri Jajuji's step is a silent but definite call to the youth. India is full of mercy but that feeling has not been properly canalized. The defect is due to lack of an urge in us to act up to a noble sentiment, as there are defects in respect of many of our qualities. Want of knowledge is also responsible for our inaction. If the urge to render humanitarian service, the adventurous spirit to take risks and the perseverance necessary for obtaining knowledge take possession of our youth, a wide sphere in the field of *ahimsa* is open to them. Let us see how and to whom God gives inspiration.

VINOBA

(Translated from the *Sarvodaya*, August 1949)

### A Tragedy of Life !

How is it that of all the diseases leprosy work finds special place in the Constructive Programme? To my mind it appears that from a very long time society has severely neglected the lepers. In India the incidence of the disease is so great that more or less one out of every 200 suffers from it. Still we have not taken adequate precautions against this disease and it appears our relief measures are merely nominal. One struck with this disease suffers for life and it becomes a burden. What a tragedy it is in such conditions if a leper does not get the sympathy of his companions!

(From the *Hindustani* in the *Sarvodaya*)

SHRIKRISHNADAS JAJU

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I have received letters like the one reproduced below from correspondents of the late Baroda State, Saurashtra and Madhya Bharat:

"The people of the Baroda State have been considerably inconvenienced by the introduction of English in public administration since its recent merger with Bombay.

"The late Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwar of Baroda had prohibited the use of English in the State administration. He had caused a Gujarati vocabulary to be prepared and with its help the entire administration was carried on in the Gujarati language.

"The merger has reintroduced a handicap from which the people had been relieved. Now when shall we be freed again from the new fetters?

"Will you please explain?"

Who am I to explain? It is for the governments concerned to do so. All I can say is that the grievance is right.

Wardha, 30-8-'49

K. G. M.

(Translated from Gujarati)

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