

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

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TWO ANNAS

## SOCIALISM

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Socialism is a beautiful word and so far as I am aware, in Socialism all the members of society are equal — none low, none high. In the individual body the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is Socialism.

In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion, there is no duality in Socialism. It is all unity. Looking at society all the world over, there is nothing but duality or plurality. Unity is conspicuous by its absence. This man is high, that one is low, that is a Hindu, that a Muslim, third a Christian, fourth a Parsi, fifth a Sikh, sixth a Jew. Even among these there are subdivisions. In the unity of my conception there is perfect unity in the plurality of designs.

In order to reach this state we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to Socialism. Without changing our life we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and hawk-like seize the game when it comes our way. This is no Socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the farther it must recede from us.

Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is zero, in other words, no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will also produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste.

This Socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Are not non-violence and truth twins? The answer

is an emphatic 'no'. Non-violence is embedded in truth and vice versa. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same. This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity, harbouring impurity of mind or body and you have untruth and violence in you.

Therefore, only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted Socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and world. To my knowledge, there is no country in the world which is purely socialistic. Without the means described above the existence of such a society is impossible.

New Delhi, 6-7-47

(Translated from the original in Gujarati)

*Harijan*, 13-7-47

## WHY HAND-POUNDING OF RICE

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

[From his note submitted to the Rice-Milling Committee of the Union Government.]

### Terms of Reference

Terms of reference for the Rice-Milling Committee are that it should examine the problem of rice-milling from such aspects as "technical, nutritional, consumer preference, economic, and employment. The main problem before it, as I understand it, is to examine which out of the two, viz. rice-milling by hand or by machine, is to be accepted and encouraged on a nation-wide scale, and for what reasons; and to recommend what steps, 'administrative, financial and legislative', Central and State Governments should adopt in furtherance thereof.

### Technical Aspect

From the technical and nutritional points of view, we learn from experts that —

(i) The recovery of rice from paddy is higher through hand-pounding than through the milling machine.\* "Economies" in the *Khadai Gramadyog* (of November 1954) calculates that on an average it is 3.8 per cent higher. At any rate, we as laymen may well conclude that the machine does not score any point over man in this aspect of the case; i.e. hand-pounding cannot be rejected as unhelpful from the efficiency point of view; it may as well be more efficient than the machine process.

### Nutritional Aspect

(ii) From the nutritional aspect, we are told that the hand-pounded rice, in its dietetic contents, is richer than and far more superior to its rival variety from the

\* See the article reproduced in the *Harijan*, 25-12-54 and 1-1-1955.

rice-mill. And it is shown that saving of these rich contents by the hand-pounding process would mean a substantial saving in our national rice demand by about 10 per cent or so. Which will obviously have consequential good and very welcome effects on our general economy and agricultural planning.

#### Hand-Pounding Is Superior

These two things combinedly show us that hand-pounding is directly helpful to our national economy from the health and nutrition point of view and from the point of efficiency as a method of recovery of rice from paddy. And thus it will conduce to a better welfare economy of our people.

#### The Economic Aspect

Then remains the third and the main aspect of the case to be gone into, viz. the economic. The terms of reference have put it down under three heads:

- a. 'Consumer preference';
- b. 'economic', (by which I understand is meant, financial, industrial and otherwise)
- c. 'employment'.

#### "Consumer Preference"

The first is, really speaking, not a proposition in the economic science; it is rather a point in the habits and psychology of certain groups of our people. Undoubtedly these have their bearing and effect in the economic field; but what I suggest here is that it is a question in the taste and fashions or habits which are born of causes different from economic. Fashions and habits change and may be changed in various ways. If it is agreed that hand-pounded rice is a better thing, then it is a matter for the Government and the people to begin to educate public opinion accordingly and mobilize it. The last war has shown us how Government propaganda agencies can function in such matters, if it is so needed in nation's interests and welfare.

#### Economics of Hand-Pounding

The crux of the problem before the Committee, to my mind, is the economic and the employment aspect of the case. I am glad to say that from this aspect also the case for hand-pounding is unassailable; and that not on merely economic grounds, but also on the broader and the larger grounds of our national reconstruction and progress on sound and peace-loving lines.

#### Role of Power-Machine in Modern History

We envisage for our people the status of a classless co-operative commonwealth. Generally speaking, the advent of the power-machine in world's economic and political history has meant for over-concentration and centralization of economic and monetary power and inequality exasperating class-divisions in a community, viz. the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots, the employer and the wage-earner. At the inter-national level, in its influence on the comity of nations, it has meant intensive search and rivalry for foreign markets, imperialism, and class-rule based on capitalism etc. and resultant global wars. Thus democracy, though true in the political sphere, has been denied in the economic and social fields. The reasons for this behaviour are to be found in the want of rationalization and forethought on a world scale, in the use of the power-machine and the competitive and combative economic world order that it has provoked on an alarming scale.

#### Peace and Welfare Aspect

I may not go further into this broad aspect and may well content myself with drawing the attention of the Committee to it, as it has very great meaning and significance in the broad context of the progress and wellbeing of our country, chiefly the villages where most of India's humanity lives and works. Unless this is realized betimes, I am afraid, it will go hard for us as a nation to be on the side of true democracy, freedom and peace. No doubt, this is an aspect which touches all our village- and home-industries as envisaged by Gandhiji for our national eco-

nomy. I submit that, hand-pounding being one very important of them, should be considered from this larger and long-range view of things also.

#### Employment Aspect

Paddy is a village product. It is one of our daily needs. Before we use it it has to be processed in a certain way. It is economically and industrially a sound proposition that the processing must be done by the people who produce it and at their places. It would be both cheap and convenient in our economic and industrial organization and from the point of view of welfare economy as contrasted with the class-cum-profit urban economy that power-machine has brought in. This is more so when we remember that un- and under-employment is the general law of our villagers' life. Therefore the ways and methods of industrial organization that help to immediately utilize our colossal employment potential are true economics.

#### Rice-Mill Competition

We must also note here that the villager knows hand-pounding and has his traditional hand-machines or implements to ply this great industry. Thank God, this industry of his is still living to a very high and appreciable extent. As statistics tell us, about 70 per cent of our rice is processed in the traditional hand-pounding way. I learn that a few years ago, it was more. About 10 or 20 per cent of it were snatched away by the machine under the stress of the war-conditions. This has a lesson for us. Obviously, the competition is from the power-machine.

The power-machine competes in two ways: (i) through cultivating and pandering to the acquired taste for highly polished rice, and (ii) if at all, through cheap prices.

#### Polishing Is Misused

The first is injurious from the point of nation's health and nutrition; it must be checked even on that very valid ground. This, if necessary, must be done on an all-India level, so that there may not be unholy competition in injuring the nation, as polishing can be done by hand-processing also.

#### The Price Factor

The price factor is another. I have no material to judge how it operates in the two sectors of rice-milling. For this I have again to rely on experts. However, price factor is a matter in the hands of our economic and monetary policy makers, and their mechanism can well be directed to see that the jugglery of prices works in favour of the desirable type of the hand-pounding industry. Happily enough, I learn that there is no material difference in prices, and if some little margin has to be allowed to the village workman by the general consumer, it will be for the better, as it will raise the general level of the villagers' purchasing power in the most natural way.

#### Removal of Unemployment

Therefore, what is really material is the utilization of our man-power, crying hoarse to be immediately employed in a gainful way. The removal of unemployment is our basic urgent need; and hand-pounding is a potent way for it. I am told that it can provide employment to lacs of people and distribute crores of rupees, if we patronize hand-pounding and all that it means to us.

#### Enunciation of Policy Necessary

I therefore submit that Government should clearly lay down and declare as a policy that hand-pounding is accepted as the general method for rice-milling and the power-machine will be discouraged in this field.

At the end I may note that this is not a plea to cling to the traditional implements for hand-pounding. These vary from region to region. Their efficiency and technique require to be scientifically studied and can be profitably improved upon by suitable changes. Government will have to undertake this, presumably through the Khadi and Village Industries Board. The main thing is to state the policy clearly and to implement it in a suitable manner.



## GRASS LANDS AND CATTLE-KEEPING

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

A much discussed question in regard to the land in the Pardi sub-division of the Surat District is whether the land there is so poor of quality that it cannot grow food nor fruit crops and if no, whether it will be an economic proposition to go in for it. This land is good enough for grass which grows there abundantly. In fact the Zamindars owning this land have been reaping for a long time past pretty good profits. The question naturally arises: Why cannot it then be made to grow other crops? Of course, it would require planned and sustained effort and considerable expenses for some time to come. But then one does feel that it should be and ought to be made possible to do so. The point, however, need no more be pressed for the time being, because the Government has appointed a committee of experts to go into the question and we must await their report.

We were reminded of this question by the views recently expressed by an expert from Israel come here to report on the Rajasthan desert. He is reported to have stated that the Rajasthan desert is not like the Sahara desert and that if suitable measures are taken then it is quite possible to bring it under cultivation. In Pardi, not only does grass grow there, but the region also enjoys good rains. It cannot, therefore, be admitted that it will not grow anything other than grass. Of course, the final opinion on the question can come from the experts.

But there is one thing which can be done even today. Today grass grows there. This grass is transported to Bombay and within four to six months the Zamindars get their money back along with the profits. In this kind of the use of land, the Zamindars have great security and the cattle-keepers in Bombay too are freed from any worry in regard to grass. The only people to suffer are the poor landless people who find themselves confronted with the question—what to do and how to live around the year? The Zamindars and the milkwallas of Bombay cannot ignore this question for long.

The Second Five Year Plan is now in the offing. It may well take up this question and find a workable solution for it. The question should be treated as one of sufficient public importance—like the Aaray Colony or a Steel Plant—for the Government to step in and act. How is it right that while grass grows in Pardi, the cattle are kept at far off Bombay which grows no grass at all? Would it not be far more natural to encourage and organize cattle-keeping and the milk-trade at the very place where grass grows and to transport milk from there to the cities? The cattle-keeping will provide work to the people all the year round, the quality of the land will improve with the help of the manure which should be had in this way, and as a result the standard of people's living will automatically go up. If Bombay's milk problem is tackled from this long-term view, it would do good to us in

many ways, and would also make it possible to better the economic conditions of such grassy regions as Pardi.

24-12-54

(Translated from Gujarati)

## REVOLT AGAINST THE INDUSTRIAL AGE

(By Wilfred Wellock)

Breakaways from the established order are in fact occurring on a scale which indicates an insurgence of the creative spirit over the greater part of the world. All I can do here is to give some indication of their nature and extent.

In Britain there is a marked revival of interest in home and village arts and crafts, which many Country Councils are supporting.... giving substantial assistance to village craftsmen by way of loans, helping to procure raw materials, and providing training in new processes....

In the wider field of economics, many political and peace organizations now take the view that peace and social wellbeing are the fruit of creative living and co-operative functioning as persons and as nations, and thus that economic policy may be aggressive and war-promoting or co-operative and peace-promoting.

In industry the owners of many small businesses are trying to introduce the spirit and habits of community and democracy into business practice and organization.

Internationally there is far more to report than can be ever mentioned here. This is also true of America, where giantism in machines, industrial corporations, and cities reaches its peak. Decentralist movements are numerous.... there are advocates of highly integrated, socially conscious small-town communities, with small-scale industries. There is a live interest in this small community idea in the U.S.A. today.

I have.... the nation-wide movement of the Gandhian workers to found the Indian future on fully integrated agro-industrial villages.

What of Russia? An outstanding fact has been the successful revolt of the peasants in all the Communist countries against big-scale farming. Another important fact is that thanks to a Lenin edict which permits groups of persons to start industrial co-operatives, providing no interest is paid to non-working members, no fewer than "80,000 industrial co-operatives with over 15,00,000 members, and an output valued at billions of roubles" existed in 1941. The number is probably much larger now.

A remarkable revival of home and village crafts has been taking place in the Scandinavian countries, also in Finland, in recent years....

In France, Germany, Holland and Belgium many village or small-towns industries are being organized on the principle that a primary objective of every business should be to make men.

Switzerland clings tenaciously to village industrial organization, even in textiles, and valiantly holds her own.\*

\*From the Addendum to *New Horizons*.

# HARIJAN

Jan. 8

1955

## WHAT IS A "SOCIALIST PATTERN" ?

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Gandhiji had his own inimitable way of doing things. A man of his unique eminence alone could evolve and practise it. We may, however, try to understand some of its features and learn from them. That is indeed how the great ones live ever after they have passed away from the scene of their activities.

One of the most important features of his method was that he never worked under the banner of any particular 'ism'. To do good to the poor of India by following the path of truth and non-violence: this was the broad outlook which guided him in viewing and choosing his course of action.

Not that he did not place his ideal before the Indian people in more concrete terms. He did so, but in that too he made use of the equally comprehensive language which our people understood. Only he did not like it to be cast in the form of any rigid 'ism' or individualistic ideology. He, therefore, disliked what he preached to be termed as 'Gandhi-ism'. In describing the ideal he wanted India to strive for and achieve, he used such terms as complete or true Swaraj, *Ramaraj* or *Sarvodaya*. And these terms served his purpose and that of our people quite well.

After the attainment of our political independence, the Congress has changed the wording of its objective of 'Poorna Swaraj' to 'Co-operative Commonwealth', an English term; and it should be evident that it has failed to make any deep impression on the mind of the people. They still think and talk in the terms expressive of the spirit of Gandhiji's time.

As if this new English term was not found adequate enough to convey their meaning, the Congress has recently brought out a sort of commentary on the same in the form of a resolution passed by the Parliament. The resolution says *inter alia*:

"1. The policy of the Government is in harmony with the 1948 industrial policy statement;

2. The objective of our economic policy should be a socialistic pattern of society.

3. The tempo of economic activity in general and industrial development in particular should be stepped up to the maximum possible extent."

It is a question whether this annotation will really make it easy for the people to understand it. For, as we remarked in the last issue, the word 'Socialism' has meant different things to

different people and in different times. True, such words as seek to express big social ideals are, by their nature, suggestive of a variety of meanings. But it is equally true that every nation chooses for this purpose its own term and tries to plant its meaning in the popular mind by getting the people to apply their thought to it and by concretely working for it. For example, we in India, worked in that way when choosing our ideal in such words as 'Swaraj' and 'Sarvodaya'. In the meantime, we are given these new words in a tongue foreign to our people.

Gandhiji has at times used these words too in expounding his views. But it was solely in order to interpret through them the meaning of his chosen ideals. For example, look at the article which is being reproduced separately in this issue.

The use of the word 'Socialism' for connoting our ideal by Shri Jawaharlal, has impelled Shri Vinoba too recently to express his views about it: For example, he said in one of his recent speeches:

"Pandit Nehru has recently observed that the picture of the future India before him is of the socialist variety. But our Socialism would have to be different from that of the world, which is essentially constitutional. The Socialists of Britain differ little from the Conservatives and both equally aspire for capturing the administrative machinery of the State. They do not work on the basis of independent *Jana Shakti*. This is possible only when the present values are replaced by the new ones." (*Harijan*, 25-12-54).

Shri Vinoba shows very delightful ingenuity in using his words for expressing his views. He says, "What we want is not *Samajavad* (i.e. Socialism) or *Samyavad* (i.e. Communism), but *Samajayoga* or *Samyayoga*, that is, the *yoga* of unifying the society on the basis of equality." The point is that a '*vad*' or an '*ism*' is exclusive; partisanship, combativeness, or a counter '*ism*' is inherent in it; while '*yoga*' is inclusive, all-comprehensive, an integrated harmonious whole.

The ultimate aim of Socialism is equality; not only political equality which democracy is out to bring about, but also social and economic equality. The economic equality is specially important so long as the economic status continues to determine the social status. Besides, it is also related to the question of a man's livelihood.

This aim is, however, accepted by almost every '*ism*' and ideology worth the name. The difference arises in regard to the means to be pursued for achieving this end. And here there is enough scope for disagreement with Socialism itself or for controversy about its true meaning.

Gandhiji's view on this point, as is to be seen in his article noted above, was that the means to be employed for achieving this equality should be as pure as the goal and that these are truth, non-violence and self-purification. The difficulty is that Socialism as popularly understood does not accept this view. It is more inclined to



follow other ways which are being used today in Europe.

For example, the Democratic Socialism of England. This 'ism' has evolved its own particular ways and means. England, on the strength of its imperialism, developed, during the last hundred and fifty years, an industrial civilization based on highly mechanized technology. The State proposes to nationalize these industries and to institute national welfare services.

It seems that this is the way sought to be followed by the Government here. And I think that it was this particular brand of Socialism which the sponsors of the said resolution had in view when they got the Parliament to pass it. The question is: Would it really suit India?

I would however stop here and leave this question to be discussed later. Suffice it to say that, if the view presented here, namely, that the word 'Socialism' is being used here today mostly in the sense which it has come to acquire in England with its Democratic Socialism and Welfare State ideas, is correct, then the question how it would affect our society and whether it would be for our good or ill should be thoroughly discussed and made abundantly clear to the people to enable them to judge it and make up their mind about it.

(From the original in Gujarati)

31-12-'54

## A FEW QUESTIONS REGARDING UNTOUCHABILITY

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Central Government's intention to undertake a comprehensive legislation in regard to the abolition of untouchability has produced very interesting reactions amongst certain sections of the people. A few of these selected from the letters I have lately received in this connection from South India are worth noting here:

1. A friend asks: Is interdining an essential part of the programme for the abolition of untouchability? Is such interdining to be considered necessary for a worker who professes faith in Sarvodaya?

2. Another friend writes: The Harijans are being given a number of extra facilities. Would it not lead to a result the very opposite of what we want? Is it not likely that it would tempt them to perpetuate—or in any case to prolong their existence as a separate group?

3. This friend writes further: Excepting the entry into temples, hardly anything remains now of what used to constitute untouchability. The times in which we are living are such that the little that remains will soon disappear. After the older generation has passed away, the new generation is bound to be basically different.

4. A third one says: Let us extend and intensify the scouting movement and that will

gradually wipe out the barriers and bring all together in one common fold. Teasing people by insisting on such things as interdining and intermarrying should be stopped.

He adds flaunting that now fashionable word 'co-existence', "It would be well to leave the Brahmanas, Shudras, Harijans and all others to live as they like according to their mode of life."

These are only a few specimens gathered by me from the letters that have come to me. The lack of any urge in them to put down the demon of untouchability is quite evident. It shows how conservative our people are. It is true that both the age and the Government have changed and this is bound to produce its own effect. In fact, that is why such thoughts as are noted above are now agitating the people's minds. But this change must also make its impact on the long-established inertia of our people's conservatism. The effort to avoid or shelve that eventuality through indulgence in such subterfuges as quoted above unfortunately points just to such an inertia.

It is really surprising to find any objections being raised to interdining. One is free to follow one's personal likes in regard to eating. One is free to choose what one shall eat. But the belief that the presence on one's side of someone belonging to some particular caste at the time when one is eating constitutes for the latter, although the former would be eating from his own plate,—a breach in his practice of religion cannot be accepted.

Bringing up the idea of co-existence to support untouchability is equally surprising. Co-existence is all right. But it must mean equal regard for each other. Co-existence and the belief that some are higher while others are lower by birth cannot go together. Co-existence pre-supposes equal regard.

As to the fear that because of the extra facilities that they are receiving, the Harijans might like to keep up their separate identity, it cannot mean even if there were some truth in it that they should not be given the facilities which they deserve. But the fear is quite baseless. It is not reasonable to suppose that lured by these facilities they would like to keep their social status as it has been. It is the normal constitutional responsibility of the State to help the more backward classes educationally and economically. Those who are accordingly eligible for such aid will receive it. There is no reason, therefore, why the Harijans should like to preserve their untouchability. The more important question is whether the non-Harijans will wipe out the sin of untouchability by that time or not. That is what we should be concerned about and attend to with all our energy. If that is done all other things that we want will follow automatically.

23-12-'54

(From Gujarati)

## VINOBA IN SANTHAL PARGANAS

(By "Dadu")

Adivasis Even Can Lead

"Historians tell us that society continuously progresses in a cyclic order. In that course, some people are ahead, some in the middle and some behind. So also in other paths. But a peculiarity of the cyclic path is that if somebody turns about his face, he gets the lead and the rest fall in the rear. To turn the direction is the simplest way to outstrip others. There is no need of emulating them. By changing direction many a backward nation has come in the front and gained supremacy. None even dreamt of their superiority. Yet they came to enjoy it. The district of Santal Parganas is inhabited by the Adivasis who are regarded as backward. But there are several such elements in their life as can enable them to lead the entire society provided those elements are impregnated with some thought. In such districts, viz., the Koraput district in Orissa and Palamau in Bihar, several villages have been donated in toto. These people rather readily agree to transfer landownership to the village. Others who know Communism, Socialism, and other isms are attracted more by money than by those isms. They like the words Communism and Socialism provided their pockets are full. But not so the Adivasis who work together even these days. They also sing and dance and celebrate ceremonies together. If the Sarvodaya thought is explained to them—they are told that ownership of land and capital must be abolished and the village be turned into one family, they can easily grasp it. Then there would be no need to collect an acre or two from them. Whole villages would be obtained. This is the special task to be done in this district as in all other so-called backward ones. And these very people can bring about a revolution in the country. They need not traverse all those stages through which the civilized people have to pass." In these words Vinoba greeted the people of Santal Parganas when he entered their district at Sahabganj on the morning of Sunday, the 21st November last.

### To the Workers

It was a very busy day. The conveners of District Bhoo-dan Committees of Bihar saw him at ten o'clock. Vinoba impressed upon them the necessity of study and meditation without which they would lose all warmth. Their meetings should be like *satsang* (truth-company) in which should be revealed *Saraswati of the Beahma Vihar* (divine thought). For meeting their requirements of finance they must pay attention to the Sampattidan Yajna programme too. He concluded, "Your main concern should be how to reach each and everyone of the 75,000 villages in Bihar. You must plan for it. You must have the conviction and satisfaction of giving your whole time to the work and coming even nearer to the people. This will also soothe your soul. If all the 17 of you were constantly on your feet it would produce something remarkable in Bihar."

### Essentials of Swaraj

In his post-prayer discourse, Vinoba made a passionate plea for a true synthesis of *atmajnana* (spiritual knowledge) and *bhautik vijñana* (physical science). "After a long number of years," said he, "we have secured Swaraj and the same inspiration rules people's heart from one corner of India to another. Naturally, society feels a longing for those things whose denial has blocked the evolution of our spirit."

### Equal Distribution of Food

"There is food-shortage in the country. Everybody talks aloud for more food production. But food production is but a minor item in imparting tranquility to the soul of man. For a complete harmony it is very necessary that all should enjoy that food equally. Man is not pacified with meeting his own pleasures. He derives complete satisfaction when others also enjoy the same pleasure as he does. Hence equal distribution of food is a vital thing for man."

### Freedom of Speech

"Next man is eager for self-expression for which God

has given him the power of speech. That power must get full opportunity of growth. Whence freedom of speech has been regarded as a fundamental freedom of man which must be available to one and all. Where there is freedom of speech man expresses it in words. But only such expression is pacificatory as is acceptable to the hearts of others."

### Refined Chaste Literature

"Every word spoken or written does not necessarily bring joy. Hence the need for ceaseless purification or refinement in the field of literature. Fortunately the literature of our country is very rich in this respect. From times immemorial to Gandhiji has flown a continuous current of the finest literature in the languages of our country. But these days that expression has lost its restraint and decorum. Hosts of dailies, weeklies and monthlies testify to this sad fact. There are plenty of libraries and very many books are published. But no book in any Indian language has appeared during the last 100 years which would be as much appealing to the people as the Ramayana of Tulasidas or the songs of Kabir. There is want of depth and feeling. Sobriety in expression and conduct is the prime need of our country today. For this, right word must be used at the right place. Thank God, we have got a few words on whose basis we can unify the country. One of them is 'Swaraj' which held the country together for 60 years and changed its face. The second is 'Sarvodaya' which has attracted many. We would have to go into its inner meaning and present its full picture before the public eye. This will be possible step by step. But here is a word which has shown its capacity to draw the attention of the people. Amidst the dust and turmoil of today I feel that on the basis of the word 'Sarvodaya' we can unite the country and its contemplation would result in the production of sober literature and in the satisfaction of the soul."

### Decadence in Art and Music

Vinoba went on. "The third requisite is art. Music, dancing, art, paintings, sculpture etc., developed in ancient India in their own inimitable way. But today we have very much fallen in this respect. Whenever I happened to hear a harmonium I am reminded of a dog's bark. I find no art in that instrument. At night the Radio cries from place to place. Its voice is devoid of any music or harmony. I encamp in a town hardly once a fortnight. But when I do so and the Radio voice reaches my ear, I simply pity my city brethren how they bear that wailing. I am afraid that if Radio music continues, it would turn people into dunces and *sanskars-vihem*. The sweetness that one finds in a villager's throat is not met in the cities despite the many music classes. This fantastic artlessness has found home in our country."

"The fashions in vogue are no less frivolous. In our bazars are sold imported clothes, used and wretched. Some are very fond of felt caps which are a repository of dust above and perspiration within. Again, people keep hair. The worst, impure and mixed hair-oils are used. Whence the hair of our youths turn white at an early age. Beauty turns into ugliness. Further, the maiden programme in the day in many a house is fire-shooting by the mouth. How fantastic would be a photograph of that scene! Dirty pictures—safe depots for mosquitoes—occupy our walls. All this artlessness has flooded our country because we have, on the one hand, abandoned our good *sanskars* and on the other, not adopted the good ones of Europe or America where towns are not so dirty as here in India. We have learnt little good from the West. We can't even sit erect or walk straight. How dirty sweets parade our shops! There is want of order and method in what we eat and work. We would have to be vigilant in all this."

### Jnana and Vijnana

"The fourth thing is a reconciliation of *atmavidya* and *bhaktividya*. This is impossible so long as we dissipate our energy and resources in looting or exploiting others. Today the scientists use their wisdom in making death-showering weapons, not in things for the good of man. If



this attitude of exploitation persists, the conflict between *vinjana* and *atmajana* would continue. The society will then collapse. I do want the growth of science, but only in the company of *atmajana*. We can bring heaven on this earth if *atmajana* and *vinjana* develop simultaneously."

#### Why Bhoodan Yajna

Later, Vinoba observed, "Bhoodan Yajna touches all aspects of life. Ever since it began, I have been thinking what salutary changes can be effected in the manifold phases of our life. Therein I have urged for the abolition of private ownership. Otherwise equal distribution would not be possible. Nor would production grow. In the field of literature, I have placed the objective of *Samyayoga*, not *Samyavad*. The literature in every society is produced according to the ideal before it. No more the funny stories of kings and queens. We have to set up *Samyayoga*. The question before us is: What would be the pattern of the society when man fashions his life on the basis of *Samyayoga*? In the light of his vision, great and immortal literature would be created in our country. I must add that even the best literature today would not meet our urges. Here is an example. When Sita asks Kausalya's permission to accompany Rama to the forest, Kausalya is hesitant. With overflowing love, she says, as Tulasidas puts it, "How can I let her go when I have never asked her even to blow out a lamp?" Thus love is symbolized by no work of any kind. Ramayana is an immortal creation of an immortal author, yet it does not entirely satisfy the soul. True love flows in a house only when every member, old or young, male or female, keeps busy in work. These days we do seek such homes for our daughters as may not require them to lift even their finger. But no more is so in *Samyayoga*. The new concepts of productive physical work, non-possession, ownership-abolition etc. would have to be introduced in literature, which would render it sweet and sublime."

Vinoba concluded, "Bhoodan Yajna encompasses all this. You are the citizens of a free India. I want you to bestow your thought on these points and act accordingly."

#### The Sarvodaya Order

We were at the small Santhali village of Mirza Chowki next day. Addressing the evening meeting, Vinoba remarked that the Santhals had as much right on this country as any other people and they must be given every opportunity to grow and develop. In the Sarvodaya order, none would be backward or unhappy. "It implies," said Vinoba, "that the first priority should be given to the out-caste and the backward people. What does the mother do? She treats all children alike, which means she gives greater attention to the weak child than to others. Look at the illustrious behaviour of water. It first fills in all the pits before flowing on the surface. Thereafter it goes up and reaches the higher spots. But it begins from the pits. Water is a true devotee of Sarvodaya. It loves all equally, but its first concern are the fallen levels. Likewise, the Adivasis, the Harijans, the landless labour and other afflicted people should receive our first and immediate attention."

He went on to stress the necessity of overthrowing the standing values and build up a new society. He advised them: 'जेक बनो और तेक बनो' (Be one, be honest and virtuous).

#### To the Village Panchayat

On our way to Chapri on 23rd, we passed through Madanpur, a village with 45 houses and 300 *bighas* of land. Vinoba stayed there for 45 minutes and listened to the tale of woe of the people. Some of them had started a grain godown on co-operative lines for the benefit of the village. But it was largely exploited by the few *panchs*. Vinoba gave them five points: (i) the *panchs* to get no commission of any kind; (ii) village grain not to be given to people of other villages; (iii) no interest to be charged at all; (iv) the committee should have one representative from every home and its decisions should be unanimous; (v) the collected grains should be consumed within the

year and fresh collections be made every year. All the residents of the village, specially the women, listened to his refreshing suggestions with rapt attention.

In his post-prayer meeting Vinoba pointed out, "There is nothing wrong in forming States on a linguistic basis. The idea is correct. But there goes on a conflict about the regions on either side of the border where people know both the languages. There is a dispute whether that region should go to one State or the other. It begets bitterness. This indicates narrowness of heart. This will not help in raising the strength of the nation. The latter would go up only when people would feel that we are all brothers and the whole country is ours. Formerly we were proud of our entire country. **बुल्लन भाते जन**. But these days we take pride in calling ourselves Bengali or Bihari, Oriya or Andhrate, Kannada or Marathi etc. Some time ago there was a clash between students on the Orissa-Andhra border on this language issue. Is it any issue to knock heads down? The real issue is to wipe out poverty and illiteracy, to remove untouchability and casteism, to cast off disparities. But if we think bigotedly we weaken the nation. A narrow heart and big mind can't go together. This combination can only endanger world security and peace."

#### New Education with Old Ideologies

On 24th Vinoba's party entered the beautiful and mountainous area of Balbadda. The way was circuitous and narrow. Hardly anybody comes in this part from outside. Asking people to stand on their own feet in the evening meeting, Vinoba regretted that inspite of new flag after freedom, old education continued. "New education," said he, "should follow new flag. They object that Nai Talim does not lead to the development of children. If in place of running Nai Talim you simply stage a *natak* of it, that is meaningless. Keeping old values intact you cannot run Nai Talim with old ideologies. Why not call it Purani Talim (old education)? Mere introduction of craft does not make it Nai Talim. It can at best be called industrial education. But Nai Talim is not possible without changing the old structure. Wonder of Nai Talim would come to the fore under the new values. However, they now say that Nai Talim can meet the needs of the country. But Gandhiji said it no less than 18 years ago. And though 7 years have lapsed since the attainment of Swaraj, yet the old education continues. If there was something wanting in Gandhiji's model of education it could be improved upon by experiments and the schools of old education could be closed for six months. There was no harm if these schools did not run for six months. But no use regretting the past. What has not been done so far can be done now."

#### Bhoodan Is Not Relief Work

In the workers' meeting in the evening, Vinoba stressed the need of devoted work, *ekagrata* or single-minded devotion being the requisite in every *upasana* (worship). "Bhoodan is not a relief work. If you concentrate on it even for two months as you do on election occasions, you will realize its potentialities. Doing many things at a time yields no fruits. Again, if you work in Bhoodan at irregular intervals it is futile, for all shoulders must be applied simultaneously to lift a load. If you do it at irregular intervals, it would give you exercise all right. But the load would not move." On the visitor's book of R. S. R. High School, Balbadda, he gave the following message: "High education would only be that in which there is no gulf between knowledge and action."

We were at Mahagam next day, populated mostly by Muslims. Beginning his evening discourse with *Suri-fatima*, he pointed out, "The Quran teaches us that *sood-khori* (drawing interest) is *haram* (damnable). Why so? Because none is authorized to eat without performing hard physical labour. Eating without working is like interest-drawing. It is therefore, sinful. Likewise, keeping big plots of land, owning big factories and exploiting labour, earning huge profits are all of the same category as interest-

drawing. You all know very well that Prophet Mohammed himself laboured hard, led a simple life, lived among the poor and never felt himself to be a great man. He was a true servant of mankind. Such great souls like Kabir, Namdeo and Ravidas have also been born in our country. They all inspire us to lead an active life of hard work."

He then referred to the land evictions and called upon the evictees not to get panicky but take courage, grasp the Bhoodan spirit, donate their share and provide every landless with land. He concluded, "Some people are afraid of Bhoodan also. It means they are afraid of their own selves. I do say that that work must be done speedily. But I do not frighten you thereby. Mine is simply a warning as your friend. I want you to wake up betimes, even as I must tell you the presence of a snake if it be on your bed, though soft like a feather."

A happy event followed after Vinoba left the dais. An old Santhali came to the dais and told a worker that he wanted to offer *dana*. "I have ten *bighas* of land in one *damini* area and I want to donate 13 *bighas* out of it." The worker began to fill in the *dana-patra*. When the time came for signing, he added, "I have 12 *bighas* of land elsewhere too. Would you accept two out of that too?"

"Very gladly."

"Then fill in the second *dana-patra* as well. I will sign both of them together."

The worker did as desired. And the noble Santhali signed both the *patras*.

Pathargama was the next halt. The merchants of that place met Vinoba in the noon. He dwelt on the significance of Sampatidan Yajna and why he accepted no cash donations. "I want you," said he, "to take me in your house. If you are five members I am the sixth and want to be treated accordingly. In case a year or two after, you become six members, I then would willingly be the seventh. But I must be regarded as a permanent being in the family. You have to offer Sampatidan as long as you live."

#### Craze for Money-Making

In his post-prayer speech Vinoba impressed upon his audience the need of displacing money from its unnatural *gaddi*. "All Rajas," said he, "have gone away for good in democracy, but money continues to be on its throne. It rules our life. It is at the basis of our dealings. But it is thoroughly a rogue or villain by character. It resembles a knave through and through. A knave's word cannot be relied upon. So also money. Sometimes it fetches 8 seers of wheat, at other times 5 and hardly 2 seers at still other times. Thus we have a knave for our business medium and we have charged it with all powers. One may tolerate a knave among others. But entrusting it with all business responsibilities is bound to result in such catastrophe as has seized us today. Consequently, integrity is at a discount. Humanity is at a discount. Man has exalted money to the highest status. Hence the more he gets it the more secure he feels. And since the value of money, like knave's, is undependable, his passion for money knows no bounds. The higher the passion the greater the avidity. But as immortalized in the Mahabharat, Yayati declared for all time that passion is not satisfied by enjoyment as *ghee* cannot quench fire. Man is mad after that."

"Thus in all walks of life money enjoys ascendancy. Everybody, from the peasant to the trader and on to the Brahmana, is mad after it. The Government is equally mad after it. Whence it realizes revenue in cash and not in kind. It also encourages money crops like tobacco, jute etc. We have to break this vicious circle and bring down money from the pedestal it enjoys today. Blowing down money, we have to raise up dignity of Lakshmi which is born of productive bodily labour. Money is made at the press in Nasik. You can print any amount of it. But

Lakshmi is produced by hard work, toil and sweat. Hence we all would have to do hard work and more hard work. The gulf between the values of physical labour and intellectual labour would have to be eliminated. A moral thing cannot be measured in material terms. Thus land which yields food, fruits and wealth cannot be owned or commercialized. It belongs to all. It must be redistributed with justice and love."

Concluding he remarked, "Our young people think that theirs is to earn money first and do anything else later. That is, they want to earn enmity and hatred of their fellow beings first. Do you think that cheating in youth will yield dividends in old age? Yours is to earn love and goodwill, not money. I trust that the righteousness in your heart will wake up. It has already begun to flow as is evident by the 36 lakhs of acres of land donated throughout the country. Once the tide gathers momentum, nothing will be able to withstand its force. Hold up your courage. Be brave. Great and virtuous souls have always graced the soil of India. Their blessings would surely lead to a successful accomplishment of the revolution now before us."

The week closed with our visit to Lohandiha, a typically Adivasi village. Expressing his joy at getting their *darsan*, Vinoba observed, "A visit to small villages is very pleasant because the people there have a large heart. Cities become big because of money. On the other hand, love is the basis of small villages. While villages are born, cities are made. While love is the God of village, money is the God of cities. Hence the village people easily follow what I say. I echo what is there in their own heart." Vinoba asked them to live unitedly like the five Pandavas and establish Ramaraj i.e. their own Raj. "This can only be done on the basis of land redistribution or Bhoodan. Once you lay a solid foundation, you can raise the whole structure."

We are for about a month in this innocent and charming district.

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