

HARIJAN

16 Pages

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

AN UNCONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE

The Madhya Pradesh Government have appointed a Prohibition Enquiry Committee, in order to have, in the words of the Excise Minister as reported by P. T. I. in the *Nagpur Times* of January 10, "a dispassionate view of the problem". "They (the Government) wanted to know public opinion and after the report was submitted they would carefully consider whether, and, if so, to what extent they should revise or modify this policy."

The exact terms of reference have not been published in the Press. The Government Press Note declared that the Committee was "to enquire into the various aspects of the policy of prohibition and to make recommendations regarding them."

I have received a copy of the questionnaire drawn up by the Committee. The Chairman of the Committee is a retired Judge of the Nagpur High Court, and at least two of the members are practising advocates. It may therefore be assumed that the questionnaire is drawn up strictly within its terms of reference. Some of the members of the Committee are known to be opposed to the Prohibition policy either wholly or partly. (By partly, I mean, that they advocate rationed issue of liquor to addicts). The very first item of the questionnaire is:

"Do you think that the policy of prohibition is in accord with current public opinion? If you think that it is, have you any particular section in view?"

It is submitted that the appointment of a Committee, with this approach to the problem, is *ultra vires* any Indian Government under the Constitution. The opinion and mandate of the people of India has been declared in the following definite terms in Article 47 of the Constitution:

".....in particular the State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption, *except for medicinal purposes*, of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health."

As long as this Article stands, no Indian Government—not even a non-Congress Government—can go behind it and question whether

or no prohibition is supported by public opinion. A Government which holds contrary intentions would be guilty of disloyalty to the Constitution, which the people of India gave to themselves with formal ceremonies on 26th January, 1950. It is no longer a question of mere opinion, the opinion has been sublimated into the *Will of the Sovereign Republic of India*. It stands until duly modified by amending the article and every government must endeavour to implement it and prove its capacity to govern by making it successful. No Government can appoint a Committee with members, who are opposed to this Will. If an enquiry was needed it should be for the purpose of better and fuller measures for a thorough success of the policy, and not for sabotaging it, or avoiding its honest and diligent implementation. The Committee must consist of people who have full faith in the wisdom of the policy.

I regret that the Madhya Pradesh Government should have given a lead in taking this retrograde step. It is likely to be imitated by others. If it has been pressed to do so by the Central Government, it should have resisted the Central Government with all its moral and constitutional strength. It should have offered to resign rather than go against the directive of the Constitution. The Bombay Government had done right in resisting the pressure so far. I hope it will not give way. I regard the trend of Governments in this direction as a serious failure on their part in discharging the trust imposed upon them by the Constitution. If they are unable to fulfil their pledge, they should ask the electors to choose others, or to tell them plainly that if they are chosen they will alter the policy and seek to amend the Constitution. Let Government remember that if they give up prohibition now, the step will injure the cause of moral reform of the nation for years to come. I urge the M. P. Government to discharge this Committee forthwith.

Wardha, 30-1-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

GANDHIJI'S INFLUENCE AND MISSION

[Extracts from a speech by Shri Govind Das of Jabalpur in a public gathering in Wellington, New Zealand, in November last.]

The secret of Gandhiji's enormous influence lies in two things: firstly, his singular grasp of the fundamentals of Indian culture and of the Indian mind, and secondly, his constant effort to put into practice all that he believed and said. India has known great social reformers, mighty religious preachers, world-famous philosophers and many great men in other walks of life, such as literature, politics, science, arts, music etc. But Mahatma Gandhi is unique in his influence on practically all spheres of life. It is my belief that in the course of many centuries nobody understood the fundamentals of Indian culture and the Indian mind so well as Gandhi and nobody put into practice what he thought and said as Gandhi did. It is not only knowing and believing which makes a man great but practising what he thinks and believes. How he understood the main features of Indian culture, the unity in diversity, and what place tolerance and service had in his action can be known from many instances of his life. At his prayer meetings, on every evening, stanzas from the *Bhagavadgita*, the Bible and the Quran, were recited, showing the fundamental unity of religions. Once when he was in South Africa, the white men beat him severely. He was advised to take action against them in a law court; but he did not do so, saying that they who behaved with him in such a manner did not know what they were doing. In India, though he fought many a battle with the British Government for India's legitimate right of freedom, none of his battles were based on hatred or ill-will. The ideal of service cherished by Gandhi was translated by him in his own life. His most striking service was the nursing of patients suffering from many diseases, even leprosy, which he did with his own hands. When he said he had devoted his life to the service of the poor and the down-trodden, there too his actions were according to what he said. He resided in a mud hut, he wore a coarse loin-cloth and he travelled third class. The most lowly and the lowest, the Harijans, i.e. the untouchables, were nearest and dearest to him. He had no property of his own.

Gandhi is known all over the world today as the Father of Indian Independence. But that is only how outsiders — foreigners — estimate him. We in India know him not only as the Father of our Independence but much more than that — the Father of our Nation, who injected new life in the 400 million sons and daughters of Mother India, i.e. one-fifth of the human race. In order to appreciate what Gandhi has done for India, you have to look at the social, economic and political situation in India at the time when Gandhi appeared on the scene in the year 1917. The Indian people were disheartened and puz-

zled. Many had begun to think that the Indian masses were for ever destined to be born in misery, live in misery and die in misery. In that most shocking mood of despondency, in that grim moment of almost complete disappearance of our self-confidence, Gandhi came on the scene.

He had two missions for his life — Indian Independence and World Peace. In fact it was only one mission, world peace through Indian independence. Gandhi firmly believed that there cannot be any lasting peace so long as one half of mankind is free and happy and the other half is subjected to slavery, misery and poverty. The world is yet to discover that Gandhi always saw the problem of Indian independence as a part of the larger problem of freedom for all the subject peoples. The greatest passion that Gandhi had was to improve the lot of mankind.

So then what is the Gandhian path for world peace? As I speak to you I can almost see Gandhi — his immortal soul sitting in heaven and speaking as follows:

"Listen to me, O Fellow Brethren! You have done more talking and planning for world peace during the last 30 years or so than was ever done by men before. Yet the more talking and planning you do, the further is peace running away from you. The fact of the matter is that peace is not a commodity which may be procured from the market place. Peace is not found in the external circumstances of life. Peace is a state of mind. It is something internal. It has its source, its fountain head, in the inner life of man. By its nature therefore, peace cannot be born in the unending debates and discussions at Lake Success.

"Also peace is not born on the battlefield. Violence leads to more violence; war leads to more wars. If the recorded experience of all mankind is any guide in this field, it only strengthens and supports my conviction that the way to peace is not through war. Therefore I have come to the inevitable conclusion that violence must be ended and can be ended only by non-violence.

"Now you will ask how to use this new weapon of non-violence for ending violence and for bringing peace on this earth. Well, I do not want to delude you into thinking that I have found the formula which will deliver peace. It is not an easy path to follow. Many times in human history there have been preachers and leaders who have advocated non-violence, but knowing human nature as it is, we know how easy it is to follow the path of evil and how very difficult to follow the path of good. Nevertheless, I am convinced that non-violence is the only path which leads to human salvation. In my humble way I have tried this new weapon in India and you know the outcome very well. I am thoroughly convinced that in the face of the increasing tension in the world, I feel that my

remedy is worth trying. I cannot predict the future outcome but if my own study of the problems of mankind is any safe guide, I feel that the path of truth, non-violence, tolerance and service deserves a fair trial."

I would like to close this brief presentation by a quotation from Nicholas Mansergh of the Royal Institute of International Affairs of the United Kingdom :

"Mahatma Gandhi, who attended the last two sessions of the Conference, was received with the reverential awe that is so rarely accorded to a prophet in his own country. Hailed as the beloved teacher, the Saviour of India, the Father of a Continent, his message was a spiritual message and he recalled with pride that all the great religions of the world had come from Asia. Non-violence and love, he said, were the virtues which the East had to teach the West."

The reference to the Conference above is to the Asian Relations Conference held in India in 1947. A few months after this Conference Gandhi met the death which reminds us of the martyrdom of Lord Krishna and Jesus Christ.

SEVENTH ALL-INDIA BASIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE, SEVAGRAM

Teachers' Conference: February 28 to March 2, 1951.

General Conference: March 2 to March 5, 1951.

Nai Talim Bhavan Old Students' Association: March 6, 1951.

Information for Intending Participants.

I. Travel

The Railway Station for Sevagram is Wardha Jn. on the G. I. P. Rly. Railway concessions at single fare for the double journey will be available for bonafide delegates in all classes. The necessary authority for presentation at the starting station to the Station Master, will be sent on receipt of an application form to be had from the office. The trains will be met at Wardha Jn.

II. Boarding and Mess

The charges for accommodation and meals (morning breakfast and two main meals) are Re 1/8 a day, payable on arrival. A canteen will also be available where light refreshments can be had on payment.

III. Programme

Details of Programme will be sent on requisition.

IV. Problems Selected for Sectional Meetings

- (1) Problems of Pre-basic Education.
- (2) Adult and Social Education.
- (3) Development of Post-basic Education.
- (4) Schemes for Rural Universities.
- (5) The Training of Teachers.
- (6) Correlated teaching methods.
- (7) The place of books in Nai Talim.
- (8) The assessment of work in schools and training schools.
- (9) Administrative problems — Stabilization of standards of attainment.
- (10) Preparation of literature.

Note:—Delegates and attenders will choose the section in which they are most interested and remain in the same section for all its discussions.

V. Exhibits

All exhibits for the Exhibition must be brought or sent so as to reach Sevagram on February 28.

Secretary,

All India Basic Education Conference

Sevagram,
WARDHA (M. P.)

VALLABHBHAI

[A broadcast speech by Shri G. V. Mavlinkar from the All India Radio, Delhi, on 20-12-50.]

Like all mortals, Sardar Patel, endearingly called by me as Vallabhbhai, in view of my close association with him in all fields of life for the last thirty-seven years, has shed his mortal coil and attained *moksha* or *nirvana*. He has cast off the "old clothes", as the *Bhagawadgita* would put it. Death is the natural end of every being that is born, and what has happened is, therefore, inevitable in that sense. This is all true, and also good philosophy in view of human weakness.

But our deep sense of grief and loss are nevertheless of immeasurable magnitude and a reality. In such a colossal calamity, we try to philosophize, not out of our strength and assimilation of the philosophy of life and death, but out of our sense of sheer helplessness.

Though he has left us a rich and marvellous legacy of qualities and inspiration, we feel the void created by his physical absence from amongst us, in every walk of our life; and this is more true of persons like myself, who have been his close followers, and if I may say so, his associates for all these long years. To me, the loss is not only a national one, but a personal one also as the loss of a loving and kindly friend and elder brother.

It was a privilege to be with him in public life. My association with him started from 1913, when he came to practise at Ahmedabad as a barrister. I had also started practice about the same time. His passing away brings before me a picture of our public life right from those days. The fearlessness and the grit, which he showed in plain-speaking to authorities in those old days of bureaucratic domination by the steel frame of the then ruling race, can hardly be appraised now in proper perspective. He always stood erect and showed a sense of self-respect, which was a guide and inspiration to youngsters like me. His spirit of service and devotion to duty were of such an exceptional character that, as Chairman of the Municipal Sanitary Committee, he stuck to his residence in the city of Ahmedabad when plague was raging and refused to move out for personal safety. His was a familiar figure moving in the streets of Ahmedabad, getting the sewers cleaned and the plague-stricken areas disinfected. When friends argued, he simply looked at them, and his silence was more eloquent than his words. It appeared as if he wished to say "I have undertaken the duty as Chairman of the Sanitary Committee, and how can I seek safety for my person? It would be a breach of faith to the public to leave my post of duty, and how can I leave also the conservancy staff of the Municipality to undergo risks of plague and seek safety for myself?" He stayed in the midst of Borsad people, when that town was similarly afflicted by plague. I am citing these instances as such occasions are not given due weight in our

conception of service and national reconstruction, because they do not have the glamour of politics and publicity. Instances in the political field are well known. The Nagpur Flag Satyagraha, the Bardoli no-rent campaign, the Civil Disobedience campaigns of 1930, 1932-34, 1940-41 and the Quit India Struggle of 1942 are all very well known.

- But though all India knew him before independence as a great fighter and organizer, since the establishment of independence he has come to be known as a great statesman. Very few have had a real estimate of his great constructive genius. The municipal work, which he did at Ahmedabad for years together as Chairman of some or other Executive Committee, and later as President, is an outstanding example of his great qualities, broad vision, untiring and continuous devotion to work, selflessness, character, fearlessness and his identification with the cause of the poor and the oppressed. There was not a single branch of municipal administration which he had not inspired. He did not play the role merely of fighting with the Government on the political front, but he initiated a number of schemes which required thought and vision. His organization of relief at the time of the unprecedented floods in Gujarat in 1927, his work for various constructive activities through the network of *ashrams* in Bardoli and other institutions in Gujarat are ample evidence that he could also construct ably and on sound lines. I need only mention the Vidyanagar at Anand, his guidance to the Kasturba Fund and the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi.

We have had evidence of his qualities of head and heart in his unrivalled contribution, not only in the national fight for freedom, but in keeping united, a number of conflicting ideologies and temperaments within the Congress fold and in preparing a new map of India, by the integration of nearly 600 States.

The story of his life is vast, and covers such a long period and such a wide field that it is impossible to do even the barest justice to the subject by writing volumes and volumes. What can one say in a short space of ten minutes? Instances crowd and feelings overwhelm me. Vallabhbhai was a dutiful son, a kind and loving brother, was a generous friend and a kind parent. He was soft and tolerant to a degree which very few know. His appearance, demeanour and paucity of words earned for him the nick-name "The Iron Man of India". This was only partially true. So far as the interests of the country, the self-respect of the nation, loyalty to Bapu and the Congress were concerned, he was an iron man; he would not compromise these

with anybody or allow the opponent any quarters. But essentially in his outlook and relations with humanity, he was soft as butter all through his life.

Our loss is irreparable. He leaves a void which cannot be filled within a measurable distance of time. Every one of us, whether connected with him or not, feels a sense of loneliness. So much had he permeated into the public life of the country and entered into the hearts of every Indian! His mere presence was a source of strength and inspiration. Where shall we find these things now? But we must have faith in our future. Let us all stand firmly united and devoted to the service of the country in as bold a manner and as selfless a spirit of service as he. His body has gone, but the spirit left behind will continue to be immortal.

I cannot conclude without mentioning Shrimati Manibehn. To me, she is, as it were, my own daughter. She was an inmate of my household for nearly eight years on her arrival at Ahmedabad in about 1914. We all have naturally great love and affection for her as a child of our family. She served her father up to the last with an admirable courage and devotion. But for her almost motherly care and devotion, we would not have got the benefit of Sardar's advice, guidance and services for the country for all these years, especially during the last ten years. India will ever remain grateful to her, as she was serving India through her service to her father. Our condolences naturally go to her in this hour of her bereavement, and we all may assure her that this is a period of trial and mourning for every one of us. Sardar's family had outgrown the relationship of blood or provincial ties. The whole of Bharat considered him as the head of the great family.

May the Almighty give us all the strength to bear this calamity and prove true to Sardar by following the noble example that he has set.

By Mahatma Gandhi

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BAPU'S LETTERS TO MIRA

(Written to Mirabehn during 1924-'48)

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SARDAR AS I KNEW HIM

[A broadcast speech by Shri Harekrushna Mahtab from the All India Radio, Delhi, on 19-12-50]

I had the singular good fortune of staying together with Sardar Patel and the other leaders of the Congress in the Ahmadnagar Fort for about three years during that hectic period of Quit India movement. Before that I had no opportunity of studying Sardar from close quarters although I used to meet him now and then in the meetings of the Working Committee. Sardar was admittedly a great organizer and a man of great zeal and determination. But somehow or other, he was looked upon as a reactionary in outlook by various progressive political groups in the country. He was criticized as hard-hearted. The British administration looked upon him as the most wayward and unreasonable leader of the Congress. In the midst of these conflicting opinions about him as a man and a political leader, I started my dispassionate study of him from close quarters and I think I knew him better than many for, at a critical stage in the history of India, my study of him enabled me to render some assistance to him to come to a very important decision. Sardar's heart was as soft as that of a loving father. I knew it only in the jail. That one's exterior is not the indication of one's interior was fully proved in the case of Sardar Patel.

As regards his political leadership, when Gandhiji was there, Sardar did not bother at all to think for himself of the present or the future of the country or to form any independent opinion about any policy or programme. He placed himself entirely at the disposal of Gandhiji and considered that his duty was only to carry out the wishes of Gandhiji by whatever means he could use for the purpose. At one time Sardar was believed to be a great believer in Gandhism but gradually it was clear that he was not so much concerned with Gandhism as with Gandhiji as his leader. Any leader would any day be proud of having a disciplined follower like Sardar Patel. In that way, it was Gandhiji's good fortune that he had Sardar as one of his immediate followers. Sardar's mind was not analytical. It was prone to accept anything which would come from a person in whom Sardar had implicit faith. How this faith used to develop in his mind, it was difficult for me to analyse. But since he himself was a man wholly averse to acquisition of wealth, or fame, which is in many cases a more powerful attraction than wealth, and other physical comforts, he seemed to place absolute confidence in persons who appeared to him to be superior in this respect to him. This was perhaps the reason why Sardar placed himself entirely at the disposal of Gandhiji. Sardar built up his leadership gradually with the help of Gandhiji by proving to him that he could accomplish whatever was simply desired by him. I do not think Sardar

had ever come to any decision himself till 1946 during the time of Gandhiji's leadership. Satyagraha, as contemplated by Gandhiji, was accomplished by Sardar in Bardoli. Parliamentary work, as contemplated by Gandhiji, was carried out by Sardar as Chairman of the Parliamentary Board. By that time Sardar had proved beyond doubt that he ranked amongst the best generals in the world and no doubt he would have proved a great general in any way if he had joined the army anywhere in the world.

The General became the administrator of the country soon after the successful end of a war. By that time the last World War had brought about so many drastic changes in India as in all other countries and Independence had brought in its trail so many problems that Sardar as the Deputy Prime Minister had to take decisions himself. He agreed to accept Jawaharlal's leadership as a disciplined follower of Gandhiji, but the processes through which Jawaharlal's mind works to come to a decision on any subject are not the same as they were in the case of the Sardar. This was the difference between Jawaharlal and Sardar which was made much of in whispers and even in the writings of some foreign authors and authoresses. But the tie of discipline was so strong between the two great leaders that the two never broke away, however much the enemies wished it. Nevertheless, Sardar had to take his own decisions according to his own way of thinking after the National Government came into being in 1946. While Jawaharlal was busy planning to build up the India of his dreams, Sardar was anxious to maintain it as it is. The consolidation after freedom and partition was the only problem for Sardar, and he devoted all his energy to this problem till the last breath of his life. His policy therefore was conservative and it was good for the country that a great leader spent himself up in conserving whatever had been secured after freedom and partition. The absence of Sardar will now be felt more by the progressive groups because they will now realize that a great leader of somewhat conservative outlook is necessary at the period of transition.

Sardar's mind knew no hesitation. His training as a general under Gandhiji had all along been to carry out and not question any decision. A great decision he did take by himself, however, on the 14th of December, 1947, at 9 p.m. at my residence at Cuttack when he was there as my guest — with regard to the abolition of the feudal States. Although I had been agitating for the amalgamation of the Orissa States with the Province since 1938, although even the Cabinet Mission had been fully convinced of the soundness of my proposition, and although Gandhiji had already blessed my

scheme, no decision could be arrived at on the point in spite of long protracted discussions at various levels. The latest proposal was to keep the Rulers as they were and to take away some powers from them, for the consolidation of the country. But the situation was developing in such a way, particularly in Orissa, that a quick decision had to be taken. It was a serious decision no doubt, for its effect on other States was bound to be tremendous. Sardar went to Orissa to study the situation. After a few of us, including Dr Katju, the then Governor of Orissa, had explained the matter to Sardar, at once he came to the decision that my proposal was sound and must be carried out. All the preliminaries were gone through that very night and on the next morning Sardar was calm and determined. I was very closely watching as to how his mind was working at every stage and I think I did not fail him in his expectations on that occasion. Once a decision had been made, Sardar's mind did not allow any hesitation afterwards and the problem of States was solved to his eternal glory.

Since his mind was bent upon consolidation, he did not tolerate any kind of fissiparous tendency anywhere; but this was after all a negative aspect of his character; there was the positive aspect also. He had his own ideas of development of the country, but age and circumstances did not allow him to come to a decision in that matter. Now he is no more and the whole of India feels his loss. India requires consolidation and advance, all at the same time. India was, therefore, fortunate to have Sardar as the leader of consolidation and Jawaharlal as the leader of advance, both tied up to the wheel of administration. Now the Sardar is gone and it will be against his own wishes and his own personal example to weep over his death too long. Those who are left behind are now called upon to put their shoulders to the yoke and carry on to the best of their ability. Sardar's work must be completed and his wishes must be fulfilled. India requires urgent development in the interest of the common man and for development a peaceful atmosphere is necessary. Let not the disruptive forces which Sardar's personality kept under check imagine that now their turn has come. The country will not tolerate them. The tradition which Sardar has left behind will continue to maintain internal peace and India is destined to make progress under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. Although Sardar is not physically present in the country, his spirit is there in the heart of every well-wisher of the country and it is that spirit which will continue to assist Jawaharlal in the realization of his dream—a happy and prosperous India carrying the message of peace and goodwill throughout the world.

A RECORD OF BRILLIANT FEATS

[A broadcast speech by Shri K. M. Munshi from the All India Radio, Delhi, on 21-12-'50.]

It has always been difficult for me to speak about Sardar; much more so now, for my heart is full with grief.

Years ago, I heard of Sardar as a lawyer of Ahmedabad, boisterously dominating the lawyers' club, building up clever defences for criminals, playing bridge and cracking jokes at every one, including the newly arrived Gandhiji. Then he found in Gandhiji his Master, and his life changed. He began his fighting career by offering civil disobedience against the practice of *veth*—a sort of *begar*—in his home district, Kheda. Then, for the first time, an Indian was found with the temerity to invite the white Commissioner to his own office and by one bold stroke the battlement of white bureaucracy fell in Gujarat.

Then Sardar built up the civic life of Ahmedabad. He also became the executive arm of the Gandhian fabric of power—that vast edifice which was one of Gandhiji's greatest achievements, unparalleled in history. Gandhiji planned, inspired and guided, set the standard and the goal. Sardar saw to it that things were done. In the prosecution of Gandhiji's vast plans Sardar abjured all personal life, gave up all ambition except the success of Gandhian policies. He was to Gandhiji what Shri Krishna wanted Arjun to be: *nimitta-maatra*, an instrument.

I saw his power of organization in 1927 in Bardoli when for the first time I came into close contact with him. A *taluk* of 80,000 souls was converted into a compact whole. There I saw what Sardar could do, how he could forge out of the Gandhian weapon of Satyagraha, a non-violent engine of collective coercion. His uncanny insight into the strength and weakness of human character, his resourcefulness, his capacity for evolving the loyalty of his followers and the wholesome dread of his displeasure—all gave Satyagraha a sharp edge and won for India her first battle of freedom at Bardoli. Then I first found that what Gandhiji preached was *Hinayana* Gandhism; Sardar had made of it *Mahayana* Gandhism.

I saw his organizational power on an all-India plane in 1936 when he was arranging elections, fixing up candidates, setting up ministries and controlling them, giving to diverse centrifugal forces a unified direction. He organized and directed men and forces all over the country, broke through hostile combinations, aligned new forces. The Congress then was a seething mass of ambitions throughout the country; Sardar's genius alone brought order and discipline.

For 27 months when I was Home Minister in the Bombay Congress Ministry, I was in the closest contact with him. His was a vast campaign for creating power. We were often weak; many a time we knew not how to act up to the task of reducing the Governors to mere constitutional heads. Then the Sardar stepped in.

From 1937 to 1940 I was in touch with the negotiations which Sardar carried on in respect of Rajkot ; with the last stages of the Ministerial existence in November, 1939, and with the infructuous negotiations with the Viceroy in 1940. I admired him for his penetrating insight, his profound knowledge of human strength and weakness, his unerring grasp of the essentials of the game, and behind it all, I saw the Grand Rebel who, like Pratap, lived and moved and had his being in an atmosphere of self-created independence.

In 1940, we were together in the Yeravda Jail. Then I saw the intensely human side of Sardar's nature. He laughed, cracked jokes, told droll stories. He became our house-keeper, prepared tea for us, looked after our food and other arrangements. In March 1941, when I was laid up with serious illness, he watched over me with a mother's tender solicitude. When, later, I was taken out on a stretcher in a serious condition, I saw in this indomitable man's eyes, what I had never seen before, humid tenderness.

Then in 1946-47, the great days of the final bid for power came. Sardar then emerged as a great player on the chess-board of Indo-British diplomacy. His eye was on every pawn, friendly or hostile. He watched the situation with unweary eyes. He calculated moves, large and small, in Congress groups, legislatures, in public life, in the Central Government. He made people talk by his unfathomable silence. He sub-consciously registered, analysed, docketed jealousies, ambitions, insinuations, complaints and scandals ; for they provided to him the raw material for his uncanny skill to work out the pattern he wanted.

For months in 1946 and 1947, we were staying together at Birla House. I participated in some of the less intimate conferences too. Those were great days, with the Muslim League on one side, the Indian Princes on the other, both trying to make hostile combinations with Sardar fighting every inch of the ground. Few people know the inner history of those days — how he won the Indian Princes one by one ; it is an epic. One chapter of it I will never forget. A few days before the 15th of August, a hostile combination of Indian Princes sprang up with a plan to project the Pakistan frontier from the border of Sindh to the borders of Bhopal on the one side and to the Surat District on the other. It was a bold and formidable move on the part of those who wanted to disrupt our new freedom. I was also interested as I was then the Constitutional Adviser to the Maharana of Udaipur who had also been invited to walk into the spider's web. But the combination was broken to bits by the Sardar, each element being segregated and destroyed. The result was the complete integration of India.

Junagadh was another brilliant feat and

perhaps Hyderabad was the greatest. For nine months I worked under him as the Agent General in Hyderabad. The Laik Ali regime in Hyderabad had money, influence and powerful friends in Delhi and London. Some day I will tell the story how Hyderabad was won ; but it was the most distinguished achievement of Sardar in the whole programme of India's integration.

Samudragupta, the great Gupta Emperor, was styled *Sarvarajochhetta* (सर्वराजोच्चेत) "the uprooter of kings"; Parashurama, the incarnation of Vishnu, was distinguished for having destroyed kings ; but no one knows whether the kings whom they destroyed prayed for the long life of their destroyer. But in the case of this 'uprooter of kings', every Ruler so uprooted prayed for the destroyer's long life.

To his strength we also owe the maintenance of law and order in the land — the disorganization of the Communist forces, the inability of the anti-national forces to acquire a hold over the country, the suppression of the separatist tendencies among the Sikhs and the taming of the R. S. S. It is an undeniable fact that he had the control of the machinery of the Congress ; that he guided the I. N. T. U. C. ; that he was the cementing force between different Chief Ministers ; and that he was the strong man of the Indian Government to the last hour of his life. On Wednesday the 13th night, I met him for the last time before I left for Matheran. On his arrival in Bombay his energies seemed to have revived. For a few minutes he talked to me about an important question with almost his old vigour. In his eye was the old familiar glint of indomitableness. But it was the last flicker of the dying flame. Thirty-six hours more and the flame was extinguished.

Courageous, resourceful, powerful in his preferences and prejudices, realist to his fingertips, he built the edifice of India's strength and stability stone by stone for the last 32 years. But behind this power and strength was a peasant's simplicity which nothing would corrupt ; the loyalty to those to whom he gave his affection ; and an untamable spirit which led him to dedicate himself to the cause of the Motherland.

He lived, he worked, and he suffered for the Motherland and he inscribed his name upon the roll of her history as one of the greatest of her sons, for all time.

I may be forgiven for a personal note. Three men entered my life at different periods. Shri Aravinda when I was his student in the Baroda College ; Sardar when I resigned from the Bombay Council on the Bardoli issue ; Gandhiji when I joined the Salt Satyagraha. Gandhiji died two years ago. Shri Aravinda left the world a few days ago. Now Sardar is gone. My links with an older generation are snapped. All the world, for the moment, is chill, for the warmth of these men is no more.

HARIJAN

Feb. 10

1951

TOTAL PROHIBITION — INDIA'S URGENT NEED

It is rather ironical that free India should use the very arguments against prohibition to which we used to take strong objection when they were used by the British. Some of the officials have frankly said: "We cannot afford the luxury of prohibition." Others ask, "What would you have — education, health measures, better living conditions for the masses or be sentimental and stick to revenue-losing, Utopian ideals?" In the same way when the Grand Old Man of India — Dadabhai Naoroji — among others, raised his voice against the nefarious opium traffic that was being forced on China, the Government pleaded their inability to stop it as they could not do without the opium revenue and refused to admit that opium taken in moderation had any deleterious effect.

They made those millions at the cost of someone else. We would make the tainted money by pouring intoxicating drinks down the throats of our own people! In old days we used to call it satanic, now we defend it as patriotic.

Thousands in India today are faced with the grim prospect of starvation and death. Food imports are draining away our life blood. Our representatives abroad are going about literally with the beggar's bowl to collect milo and other food grains at concession rates. To waste a single grain of food for making liquor under the circumstances is nothing short of criminal.

Instances are glibly adduced of the practice of drinking in other countries. It is forgotten that alcohol has far more deleterious effects upon an under-nourished man with an empty stomach than on a well-fed person. Our wretched millions with scarcity of food and miserable hovels to return to after the day's work deserve something better than to be drugged with alcohol. These people take to drinking in order to forget their misery and in the process create more misery for themselves and others. We do with alcohol the poor, sweated, badly-paid worker to make him sweat further uncomplainingly. With the experience of the stimulus that alcohol gives he tends to substitute drink for food when there is not money for both. The effect of such steady drinking, even though it may not go to the point of definite intoxication, upon an empty stomach in under-nourished people is well-known.

The deleterious effects of alcohol even in moderate doses become more obvious as we proceed from muscular work to work requiring training and co-ordination. What happens is

that alcohol knocks off the most highly developed centres in the nervous system first. This makes people feel fine as their inhibitions are knocked out and they become more sociable. But at the same time there is a reduction in the rapidity of mental grasp, and correct association of ideas. After prolonged research scientists have come to the conclusion that in the highest range of thought alcohol appears to be inimical to good creative work, where the need is "scientific conclusion or considered judgment, rather than mere self-confidence".

And yet I saw time and again India's representatives abroad, gone there for delicate negotiations, taking drink after drink. Some of them with shining red noses and almost on the verge of being tipsy, made one's cheeks burn with shame. They do it because they think it is smart to drink. And then after wasting India's money in criminal extravagance they turn round and tell us that the revenue from liquor is needed for constructive purposes, and nation-building activities!

Another argument that I have often heard is that we have to serve liquor to the foreigners else they would not come to our parties. This applies particularly to Indian embassies abroad. I mentioned this to a friend — a State Department official at Washington. He said: "The truth is that we would welcome it, for then we too won't have to serve drinks. While your embassies get tax-free liquor as a diplomatic concession, for us liquor is very expensive." But we cannot refuse to serve drinks when we go and gulp them down at parties given by others!

Still another argument that is used very often is, "Prohibition did not succeed in America, how can it succeed in India?" For one thing drinking has not become such a part of our life in general as it has in the West. We are still trying to train ourselves to drink. A friend holding a responsible position in the Indian army told me a few weeks ago that he had received instructions to lower the price of rum. "They want the men to drink," he added with a sigh.

And as for prohibition in America it did not fail because of lack of co-operation by the common man. Here is what an American wrote to Gandhiji in 1937: "Prohibition failed politically in America because of the political power of the big cities and because brewers and others, who stood to gain by the sale of liquor, were willing to spend millions of dollars in newspaper propaganda, while the mass of the people were quite indifferent to what had ceased to be for them a pressing problem. It is the case of the exploitation of the country by the wealthy of the cities. The same problem you have to face in making prohibition a success in India."

Loss of liquor revenue has been made into a bogey. Surely, there are enough ways and

means of economy that can be explored to make up for the loss of tainted money. Unless that is done, the liquor revenue by itself, it is certain, is not going to avert the economic collapse of the country. Whether the higher incidence of mental disease in the Western countries is the cause or effect of the drink habit, it is difficult to say. Probably it is a vicious circle which we had better avoid, otherwise the liquor revenue will not provide us with sufficient funds even for hospitals that will be needed for the mentally sick, if the incidence of mental illness in India goes up to the level of the Western countries.

Lastly, mere legal enforcement of prohibition is not enough. It must be accompanied by adequate educational campaign so that the unscrupulous bootleggers cannot mislead and exploit innocent citizens. The object of prohibition is not to take away the freedom of the people, but merely to remove the temptation and save them from the propaganda of liquor brewers. No country in the world can enforce laws which are repugnant to the mass of the people. Fortunately, for India, Indian masses still frown upon drink and except for a handful of Westernized Indians, Indians do not wish to be smart and sociable with the help of liquor.

SUSHILA NAYAR

VANASPATI AND CONGRESS

Papers announce that the A. I. C. C. at Ahmedabad accepted by 111 against 56 Shri Hridayanarayan Chaudhari's resolution asking Government to ban *vanaspati*. It was passed in spite of opposition from the Prime Minister and other important leaders. Some who were personally in favour of it made an appeal to the mover to withdraw it, partly out of respect for the leaders and partly through fear that the leaders' opposition might so influence the members to vote against it that it might be defeated in spite of heavy personal opinion in its favour. No doubt some of the 56 who voted against it did so for this reason.

It is now to be seen how far the Central and State Governments, and the members of the Parliament and the various State Legislatures will respect the mandate of the A. I. C. C. I hope that the Congress in Government and that outside will respect the Unity resolution passed by their A. I. C. C. by acting in unison on major problems.

Wardha, 3-2-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

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MEMORIAL TO BAPA

Thakkar Bapa, the super-octogenarian servant of humanity and champion of lost causes too has gone the way of all flesh to join the growing illustrious company at the other end. For some time past he had been laid up with serious heart trouble but he refused to get completely out of his harness. When Dr Sushila Nayar saw him a couple of days before the end he was having the recent publication of Sardar Patel's speeches read out to him. Six months before the end, another friend paid him a visit at Bhavnagar. His illness was even then far advanced and there seemed little hope of recovery. The friend tried to persuade Bapa to take things easy. "Bapa, you should now take a holiday from all worries and responsibilities. You have fully earned the right," he pleaded.

"I have no worry or anxiety burdening my mind," replied the redoubtable Bapa. "Only the conditions of Mushers (a backward tribe) of Bihar keeps haunting my mind. It is so miserable; it has only to be seen to be believed." He did not rest till four weeks later he had found a couple of workers to take charge of the work among them.

The cry of distress from whatever quarter it came, touched Thakkar Bapa deeply. The recent Assam earthquake and floods havoc shook him to his depths, and even from his sick-bed he made frantic efforts to expedite the sending of his workers to the affected area. As Gandhiji pointed out in his short message on Bapa's 70th birthday: "Bapa was born only to serve the down-trodden." Whether they were Harijans, Bhils, Santhals or Khasis, they could equally claim him as their Bapa — father. Later when Gandhiji wanted to find a secretary for the Kasturba Trust, he could find no more suitable person — man or woman — than Thakkar Bapa.

One of the latest public statements which Thakkar Bapa issued from his sick-bed, was in relation to our pledge to the Harijans. In that statement he reminded us that under the new Constitution special representation and safeguards for the scheduled castes have been provided for a period of ten years ending with 1960. Within this period we have to create conditions which will render unnecessary the need for special representation and safeguards for the Harijans so that they may not have to ask for their continuation at the end of the term. It is a question of now or never.

The best way of paying our homage to Thakkar Bapa would be to take upon ourselves the concern expressed in that statement. We seem today to be more engrossed in the scramble for the fruits of freedom than in preserving the tree that bears that fruit. But as sure as the morning follows the night, the tree will wither away if the roots are neglected and the fruit itself will turn into ashes in our

mouths like the proverbial Dead-sea fruit. Full measure of justice to the out-caste and the down-trodden and unequivocal fulfilment of our national pledges in this behalf is an indispensable condition that must be fulfilled if we do not want to be overtaken by the Nemesis that pursues nations, who, when they gain power, forget the pledges they made when they were in the wilderness.

We dare not postpone to a distant Utopia the complete liquidation of untouchability in practice as it has already been done in law. And the way to do that, as Gandhiji told us, is for us to convert ourselves into Harijans by choice. There is no other way of obliterating the distinction between the caste and the out-caste in practice.

The first step in this direction, if we mean business, is to introduce the science and art of scavenging and sanitation as an essential item in the curricula of our educational institutions. There is no reason why there should not be a faculty of municipal and village sanitation and scavenging in our Universities, and why special diplomas in these and related subjects such as cottage-tanning, leather manufacture, utilization of the by-products of dead cattle and compost-making should not be given by our Universities. A natural result of this will be to bring about an improvement in implements and techniques of scavenging and making it a clean, healthy and respectable avocation. As it is, it is a most disgraceful sight in our towns and cities to see human beings carrying dripping baskets of night soil on their heads so that 'respectable folk' might live in cleanliness and comfort. High heavens won't brook a continuance of this degrading iniquity. It is mere moonshine to tell ourselves and others that all we have to do is to wait till the whole of our sanitation system is mechanized and then alone the evil will disappear.

As a corollary to this it is but fair that so long as these traditional vocations continue to exist in our society those who engage in them should be given special lien on higher cadets in certain services which in essence really are an extension and continuation of these vocations. Take for instance the various health services. What is a Sanitary Inspector or a Public Health Officer if not a master scavenger? Why should not those be specially chosen to fill these jobs who have actual experience of the bucket and the broom? If we want to run a hospital we look for a practising doctor for it. If we want to run a factory, we select an engineer with mechanical experience. It was said of Field Marshal Rommel that in his panzer divisions, which made history, nobody could rise to the rank of a captain or a corps commander who had not constructed or at least assembled one tank with his own hands. And, when a visitor once went to see him in the battle line, he found him with

greasy hands and a soiled apron at work in a tank-repair field workshop, hardly to be distinguished from other mechanics. Why should not then the personnel for public sanitation and public health services likewise be recruited and trained from amongst the class of people who are actually engaged in the vocation of scavenging and sweeping? Why should not a specified number of promising Harijans be specially selected and trained every year at State's expense in an academy that should be specially set up for the purpose preferably in rural surroundings? That would result in an automatic improvement of our standard of municipal and village sanitation which is today a scandal and a disgrace.

Such a re-orientation of our outlook and a concrete programme to give it body would be the worthiest memorial to Thakkar Bapa.

New Delhi, 21-1-'51

PYARELAL

BAPA THE UNIQUE

Great men reveal to us how life includes a satisfaction deeper than joy or sorrow. This satisfaction comes of a deep peace that is born of purposeful activity and well-integrated philosophy. Great men express through the perishing human life some imperishable, innate greatness that belongs to the essence of life which partakes of the divine and immortal. For this reason great men leave an undying inheritance to mankind, enriching the common stock of experience and adding to the quality of civilization. All these remarks apply to Thakkar Bapa who left the earthly scene a few days ago.

The social history of India will speak of him as the greatest humanizing force in India's recent past. An imagination that vividly realized the sufferings of hitherto neglected vast sections of humanity, a sympathy which went out in full tenderness to the 'submerged' and the 'underprivileged', a heroic spirit that dared to bring hope and endeavour in spheres sunk deep in frustration, an organizing ability unmatched in the unglamorous field of social service, an amazing industry which amounted to genius in his case and above all 'the high consecration which marked all his undertakings'—made him a unique personality, and invested him with an awe and majesty rare in contemporary history. Verily he became a power among powers—a power of pure benevolence. Tender to a degree and capable of deepest affection, his awe-inspiring pursuit of duty made him appear like some elemental force, grand and irresistible. On occasions, he seemed to have the aloofness of some natural force pursuing relentlessly the destined path of duty. He was a type of the wise ascetic who rises to a secure and serene level of true peace above ordinary enjoyments and common satisfaction. In him weakness was stifled and virtue made perfect. The contemplation of such a life must be a perennial inspiration.

23-1-'51

T. N. JAGADISAN

A GREAT DEVOTEE

[Shri Vinoba paid the following tribute to Shri Thakkar Bapa in his post-prayer speech on 20th January, 1951, at Paramdham, Paunar.

The speech began with the famous song of Saint Tukaram,

—D. M.]

जे का रंजले गांजले, त्यांसि म्हणे जो आपुले ।

तोचि साधु ओळखावा, देव तेथचि जाणावा ॥

(He who adopts the oppressed and the depressed as his own, know him to be a saint, and the abode of God.)

Tukaram had as it were woven Thakkar Bapa's life in those few lines. And I also know that this was one of Thakkar Bapa's favourite songs. Although Bapa's mother-tongue was Gujarati, he understood Marathi very well. He had lived long in the company of Gokhale and Devdhar, and drawn from them the inspiration for service. The first half of his life was spent in earning bread for the family. The other half he dedicated absolutely to the service of the poor.

Aravinda's was a *yoga* (way of life) in *dhyana*. It was a *yoga* of a very high order. He desired to bring the heaven on earth and wanted to transform the mind into super-mind, so that he could transmit the nectar of the super-mind to the whole of humanity. The significance of such contemplation lay in its endeavour and not in its achievement. Endeavour he did till the end of his bodily life, and if he could not show achievement in a visible form, it was yet a very adorable failure.

The Sardar's way of life (*yoga*) had comparatively a less high goal. He aimed at organizing the society, strengthening it and at achieving public weal in the popular sense of the term. It was not a small ideal, but at the same time was not out of the reach of human effort. It was liable to partial success and partial failure. And so it happened. He achieved success in the case of some of his targets, but could not do so in the case of some others. I have therefore described him as a great *karmayogi*.

But Thakkar Bapa's *yoga* was a simple one—one which was within the reach of ordinary man. He was not a *dhyanyogi*; and, though he led a fully active life throughout his long career I would not call him a *karmayogi*. His was the path of *bhakti* (devotion). His goal was to strive to lessen the hardships of others. That was his activity, his worship and prayer, and his way of life (*yoga*). Tukaram has rightly said that the path of *bhakti* was the easiest; "In this Kali Yuga (the life of struggle) all the other paths of life have become dim and difficult to tread." Who can apply himself to *dhyanyoga*? Is it easy to bury oneself in one place, for forty years? It was possible only for men like Aravinda to do that! And who again can play the deputy of the society and bear the blows on his own chest on its behalf? How many can put themselves in the position of a Railway engine,

pulling single-handed scores of loaded wagons? Only a Sardar Vallabhbhai or his like could do it. How can you and I do it in the hard times we are passing through?

We have put Tukaram on a very high pedestal. But he regarded himself as one of ourselves. "It is not possible for me," he said, "to practise difficult systems of discipline. I find the devotee's way of life best suited to me." He would say to God, "The great devotees of the past contemplated deeply on Thee, with the rigorous discipline of *japa* (repetition of name), *tapa* (austere practices) etc. I cannot even imagine them. Humble that I am, I can only pray for Thy mercy and try to serve the poor to the extent to which I can realize their hardships."

This was also Bapa's background. He had not therefore to experience the adorable failure of Aravinda; nor a mixture of success and failure of the Sardar. He had to see only achievements,—simple, but such as could be seen by the world. If you quenched the thirst of a thirsty man, you have done. The action is complete in it self. It is immediately followed by the fruit, and the satisfaction both to the giver and to the receiver. The Lord has said, "Easy is the Royal Road of Service. It bears immediate fruit." It is like the satisfaction of a full meal by a hungry person. It is produced immediately and with every morsel.

Such was the path of service that Thakkar Bapa trod and laid out for us. He built the road, and departed; and departed after attaining complete success. It is now our turn of service. The agonies of the world have not ended, and may not end so long as God desires to maintain and preserve this path of service. But these agonies need not dishearten us; they should rather encourage us. They are a challenge to us. They, too, it seems, have been made immortal, so that we may not be deprived of the privilege and satisfaction of service. Let us, therefore, take to service at once and with earnestness. Let us forget our own sorrows. Let us have the enthusiasm to diminish the agonies of the world.

[Referring to the students (40 to 50 in number) of the Harijan Boarding House, Wardha, who had walked all the distance to Paunar to contribute their labour in the digging of the well at the Paramdham Ashram, Vinobaji said:]

That was a good thing done today. Thakkar Bapa will feel happy thereby. You have walked a distance of six miles to participate in the sacrificial digging of the well at Paramdham. Yours was a prearranged programme, and you did not cancel it in spite of the sad news of Bapa's passing away, but worked enthusiastically for about three hours.

You have done a good selfless service today. How fond Thakkar Bapa was of Harijan boys! His spirit will say today, "These beloved children of mine have not forgotten me. They have imbibed my message of service. They did not disturb their programme of service at the news of my death. Not only that, they have

carried out their programme more enthusiastically. Verily, my message has reached these boys!"

Let us inculcate this spirit of service. The body may live long or die now; but let it be devoted in constant service, as long as it lasts. This is our prayer to God.

(Translated from Marathi)

BAPU'S KEEN PERCEPTIONS

Mahatma Gandhi was regarded by some people as an enigma on account of his austere ways of living. One such person once told me that Gandhiji had neither eyes, nor ears, nor nose. This was his blunt way of saying that the Mahatma's perception of beauty, sound and smell had become blurred on account of his ascetic mode of life. I countered his caustic remark by narrating the following incidents which occurred during Gandhiji's stay in Hyderabad (Sind) when he visited the place to attend the All-India Khilafat Conference during the stirring days of non-co-operation. Gandhiji's entourage included the late Pandit Rambhujdutt Chaudhari and his talented wife Shrimati Saraladevi Chaudharani, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr S. Kitchlew. Maulana Shaukatali joined the party at Hyderabad. It was a union of diverse elements under one roof.

Many persons came to pay their respects to Mahatmaji. Among them were a batch of local Gujarati women belonging to the shoemakers' community. He returned their salutations with his characteristic smile and remarked, "Look at their Aryan features!" Evidently he was impressed by their looks. This showed that Gandhiji who was a lover of nature had his eyes wide open. But though his eyes could perceive beauty in animate as well as inanimate forms he turned them and his mind to higher things, for instance, the star-studded sky which proclaims the glory of God. And what could be more entrancing than the vast panorama of the starry heavens?

One sultry evening Shrimati Saraladevi came rather tired from the sittings of the Conference. She expressed her desire to go to the Indus which flows at a distance of about three miles from the town, and asked me to request Mahatmaji to accompany us. He readily agreed when approached. Our carriage had not proceeded far when there was a slightly creaking sound. Gandhiji though wrapt in thought detected it and enquired if it was a hackney carriage. I replied in the affirmative. He said, "Why do you waste public money like this?", and firmly asked me to "turn back". I had no option but to obey the command. This incident shows not only Gandhiji's keen awareness of his surroundings but also the scrupulous care with which he would have public funds spent.

Another incident also centres round Shrimati Saraladevi. At night time she was being served dinner in a side-room. Gandhiji casually

walked in, stood for a few seconds and left saying, "So you are having your dinner!" Next morning he inquired from Shrimati Chaudharani what arrangements she had made for his food in the train as they were to leave for Bombay in the afternoon. She replied that she had asked the writer of this to procure a few seers of goat's milk from which she would prepare 'khawa' (milk dried by boiling) for his use. Gandhiji who had smelt mutton at her table the previous evening quietly said, "And you will take mutton chops for yourself!" Gandhiji showed remarkable tolerance for—to use the words which occur in one of his letters translated from Gujarati, "some of those who stay with me and are my companions and who are meat-eaters", for he held that reform must come from within and not be superimposed from above.

These unforgettable incidents throw some light on the rigid principles guiding Mahatmaji in his sublime life of plain living and high thinking which culminated in his glorious martyrdom. Gandhiji had consecrated all his faculties to the attainment of his goal which was the realization of Truth through service of fellow beings. So he did not smother his senses but kept them functioning under proper check, just as an experienced coachman controls his fiery horses and keeps them on the straight path with the aid of blinkers and occasional crack of the whip.

K. G. MIRCHANDANI

INJUSTICE TO SCHEDULED TRIBES

One of the matters, which weighed on Thakkar Bapa's mind before his death, was regarding the injustice done to some of the Scheduled Tribes (*Adimjatis*) of India in the official list published by the Government of India on 6th September, 1950. It is believed that at least 25 per cent, if not more, of *Adivasis* will be affected by the omission of several tribes from the published list. Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are said to have made the largest omissions. Bombay shows an increase of population by 3.25 lakhs in 10 years. It is not clear why other States show a considerable decrease. Some well-known names are conspicuous by their omission.

At Thakkar Bapa's request a Conference of Social Workers and Members of Parliament interested in Tribal Welfare was held in New Delhi on 10th December, 1950, under the presidency of Dr H. N. Kunzru. Thakkar Bapa's illness prevented him from being personally present in it, but he was extremely anxious about the matter. The Conference resolved to send a deputation of M. P.'s to wait on the Prime Minister to get the matter re-examined by a Committee, two members of which should be representatives of Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh. It urges further that before any action is taken by Government on the proposals of the Committee, they should be given wide publicity to elicit public opinion.

I hope the error will be rectified and justice done in good time.

Wardha, 31-1-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

FULFILMENT, NOT FAILURE

One of the last sayings of Jesus, from the cross on which he died, was a triumphant exclamation: "It is finished". It was as if the Master Dramatist, who had staged on the plane of human existence his latest presentation of the eternal theme of redemptive suffering, was writing 'Finis' to this perfect piece. That life is perhaps the most convincing illustration of the dictum of the poet that

"In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measures life may perfect be."

Death at the early age of thirty-three was no defeat for Jesus; rather was it the gateway to fuller life and greater influence. "I, if I be lifted up, shall draw all men unto myself," he had said earlier, knowing what manner of death he would die. And he had gone to face it undaunted, laying down his life of his own will. Many are the sayings which lead to the inescapable conclusion that Jesus had deliberately embraced death, as a supreme act of self-giving, than which there can be no greater sacrifice. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

What happened on the prayer ground of Birla House in Delhi, on January 30, 1948, was another enactment of the drama of redemptive love, of the God of love paying in man and for man, the cost of human redemption. It was entirely in the fitness of things that Gandhiji died at the hands of a fanatic of his own religion, that religion to which he was devoted all his life and which he sought to serve and purify. The misguided young man who fired the fatal shot may honestly have believed that he was thereby safeguarding the interests of his religion and his community in doing away with a dangerous enemy. For there is no greater enemy of false religion than real religion, a distinction which those who would sweep away all religion from the concerns of man fail grievously to realize. There must have been, and still might be, many in the country, who rejoice over that death, feeling like the High-Priest of the Jews who condemning Jesus said: "It is expedient that one man should die for the nation."

Gandhiji has undoubtedly died for the nation and for mankind too. The only question is how his death is going to avail for the healing of our wounds, which are sore and grievous. Jesus' death was followed by certain abnormal apparitions which gave his disciples the conviction that he had survived death and was present with them as a power within, nerving them to almost superhuman efforts. It is a measure of the change in the mental climate of the race that, in spite of multitudes of equally fervent devotees, Gandhiji's death has not been followed by any such super-natural phenomena or belief based on them. It is also a measure of the sanity of the leader who discouraged all personal cling-

ing faith in him. Gandhiji never rose to higher heights than in his last days when he literally threw off his clinging followers and stood in his utter loneliness, drinking the fiery poison of communal hatred to its bitter dregs, as in his lonely wanderings in riot-ravaged Noakhali. In an inspired passage in his *St. Joan*, Bernard Shaw makes the Maid, faced with desertion by even her supporters, exclaim: "My loneliness shall be my strength: it is better to be alone with God. His friendship will not fail me, nor His counsel, nor His love. In His strength I will dare and dare and dare until I die.... If I go through the fire I shall go through it to the hearts of the common people for ever and ever."

Gandhiji in his loneliness dared and dared till he dropped down. Has the spirit in him that was released through the assassin's bullet gone into the hearts of the people of India? It is a personal question. If it lives in you and me it can, and then alone will, live in the heart of the nation. The particular applications he made of his principles are not fundamental, though part of his unique greatness lay in the thoroughness with which he applied his principles to everyday life, in his *practical idealism*. But what is fundamental is his spirit, the spirit underlying the words that were constantly on his lips during his last years: *Do or Die*. We are true to his spirit if only we too dare to do or die for causes that are of vital concern to us and to those around us. Politically we are free today. But there are still many bonds that bind the human spirit in our land and all over the world. The eternal fight between right and wrong still continues. The motto of a great institution where I had the privilege of my education, the Madras Christian College, says:

"They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three."

Gandhiji said that he was never so happy as when he was in a minority of one. If his spirit lives in us, if we are true to him, we too shall taste that happiness, of being in the right with two or three, that supreme happiness beside which the richest prizes earth offers are vanity. Our lives shall then find fulfilment, in our own little measure, whatever life may do to us. *Gandhi ki Jai*.

S. K. GEORGE

Justiciable Prices

Dear Editor,

I heartily approve your suggestion about justiciable prices of controlled and rationed stuffs. It clears the jungle of the black market and creates an honest way out of the present chaos.

If the principle of your suggestion is accepted, I would be glad to offer a few practical suggestions regarding details. And in that case, almost all the staff in the Food Department may be disbanded, immensely benefiting the Government and the people.

Vinayashram, 18-1-'51

SITARAM

SARDAR — A LESSON TO THE YOUTH

When the poet said that lives of great men remind us that we too can make our lives sublime, he perhaps meant this: Every great man is composed of a fibre which has its own distinct characteristics. It is the duty of a young person to discover those characteristics, determine their vigour and try to emulate them to the best of his ability.

Thus looked at, the life of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel has a very simple lesson, easy as well as straightforward, that can well be grasped by a youth, like this humble writer, born in the twenties and after and who could not have had the opportunity of working with him or immediately under him.

He was not, like Gandhiji, an ascetic with a distaste for the ordinary comforts of life, nor a seeker who had resolved to reduce himself to zero. Nor had unique opportunities, good fortunes and special circumstances garnered together to crown his efforts. Nor were there any symptoms of born-greatness with or about him. In fact he achieved greatness. He was an ordinary man who attained great heights by dint of his own efforts and strength derived therefrom.

I think three features stand out very prominently in his life. They are: fearlessness, directness, and one-thing-at-a-time-ness. It is these three qualities which essentially turned the schoolboy at Borsad first into a District Pleader, next into a Barrister and then into a rebel. And finally he flowered into a symbol of unity and peace. Because he was fearless, he was true and sincere. Because he was direct, he was unbending and unattached. Because he did one thing at a time, he was punctual and painstaking and he did it with devotion and thoroughness and surely his performance was *par excellence*. And, therefore, whether he was fighting his case in a Law Court, or presiding over a heated debate in a Municipal Board, or directing a campaign as in Bardoli, or addressing an A. I. C. C. meeting at Tripuri, or discussing a controversial affair like that of Nariman or Khare, or negotiating with a Viceroy in Simla, or arguing with Princes in New Delhi, he always won his point invariably, inevitably, and inexorably. No wonder Victory had always marked him as her own.

We are prone to forget that true fearlessness, real directness and substantial one-thing-at-a-time-ness cannot long stay unless they are associated with, what is at the bottom of them all, a heart, loving and kindly and open. Without it, the Sardar could hardly have acted literally as a "mother" to Bapu in the Yeravda Prison and become all and everything to his daughter in her life.

May God bless the youth of India to learn something from the unparalleled leader and save their country at one of the most crucial hours of her history.

Wardha, 13-1-'51

SURESH RAMABHAI

OUR SARDAR

On the night of December 15, when the funeral pyre blazed in all fury, a wet-eyed elder leader sighed: "It was kind of Fate to have taken away the Sardar. We the unfortunate ones are left behind to grapple with colossal problems."

In these words there was untold affection for the Sardar as also profound concern for the nation's future. But I know what Sardar would have said if he could hear these words and respond. Sardar never could wish for escape in death. He was ever fired with the urge to battle with problems and conquer them. If he accepted defeat it was only from Death which remains unconquered. The Sardar never conjured up imaginary problems; he smote them down as they came.

We knew that Sardar was invincible in the face of problems. India's millions also were well aware of this. The sorrow that afflicted every single Indian on Sardar's death was not due to mere sentiment. The people had boundless confidence in his strength. They regarded him as their sentinel and shield. The shield was suddenly broken; the sentinel himself had become the victim of death; the watchman had gone into eternal sleep.

Piquantly enough the Sardar too had described himself as India's sentinel in a public meeting at Nagpur two years back. He had challenged the enemies of India's integrity and had roared that they dared not lift their heads so long as he watched over Indian unity. How rock-like this self-confidence! What a faith in the co-operation of the people; what utter contempt for the enemies!

Sardar always recalls to my mind the Indian peasant. Sardar was not only born in a peasant home; the whole make-up of his personality was that of an Indian peasant. The peasant is completely engrossed in his land. To tend it and make it productive is almost all his concern. He is practical, and knows not how to prance about on the wings of imagination. The simple wisdom of ages is all his knowledge. He is not averse to new ideas, but only when you convince him of their practical utility. He would call a friend a friend, an enemy an enemy. He has no talent for tinsel talk. If you win his trust, he will even lay down his life for you. He is peace-loving, but he will not hesitate to use force in the defence of his land.

The Sardar was steeped in all these attributes of a peasant. He loved India as intensely as a peasant loves his land. I believe this is the last word in patriotism.

The Sardar was no scholar; in other words he was not afflicted by bookishness. But he was careful to find out all that was worth knowing about any matter in hand, be it from books, files or newspapers. Indeed he never neglected this

knowing, despite all preoccupations. Sometimes, if he had to interrupt his radio listening to attend to a phone call, he would immediately find out from others what he had missed. He would meet a variety of people to keep himself well informed. He was not fond of his own voice, but only of listening to others.

I am myself a keen lover of books, but sometimes I suspect that they provide more of intellectual indulgence than really useful knowledge for the matter in hand. Perhaps they also hamper the urge for action. But even those lovers of books who look upon themselves as *Gyanayogis* would have to admit that there is another path to salvation — the path of *Karmayoga*. And perhaps this latter path is more conducive to the welfare of society.

The Sardar truly was a *Karmayogi*; he had the singlemindedness of a *Karmayogi*.

Some might suggest that I am exaggerating when I describe the Sardar as a *Karmayogi*, but I feel I am not wrong. The Sardar had sacrificed his all at the altar of patriotism. His life was a single pattern of renunciation and devotion. His entire way of life was simple and austere. The Gandhian stamp which it had acquired remained unaltered till the end. It is said that the desire for fame is the last frailty of great minds. What is amazing is that the Sardar was singularly unaffected even by this weakness. He was completely lost in the mission of the moment. He never bothered to tell the world what he achieved. The fact was that he forgot a task the moment it was completed and he would be lost in another which clamoured for his attention. He was utterly unconcerned as to the credit for his achievements. Even when the Sardar's enemies would go to the length of holding the sins of others against him, he was content to leave the slanderers alone, without uttering a word of refutation. So long as the nation's vital interests were not jeopardized, he cared not to correct misrepresentation. If someone brought these things to his notice, his only response was a gesture of contempt.

It would be contended that the Sardar could not be called a *Karmayogi*, because he was not free from attachment and hatred. This may be true, but this writer has yet to come across a man wholly free from these passions. Even so the Sardar's passions were a class apart. Those who were with him in any active cause were for the moment the objects of his favour; and those opposing it, appeared to be the objects of his dislike. As soon as he took up another cause, having served the first and if the former objects of his dislike extended him co-operation, they too became the favoured ones.

In his lifetime countless persons, who regarded themselves as his opponents at one time or another, subsequently turned into the trusted ones. So also did he discard not a few

who turned out to be inefficient or characterless. In the heart of his heart, he had neither love nor hate for any of these. If he had any attachment, it was solely for certain national causes and people became objects of his love or hate even as they were promoters or detractors of these causes. The concept of a *Karmayogi*, untouched by passions, is intellectually a fascinating one, but in actual life, it is only men like the Sardar who lead us to believe in the feasibility of that perfection.

Another misconception spread against the Sardar was that he had a weakness for capitalism. This came from those who were steeped in the book-lore of Socialism, Communism and other 'isms'. You could not induce the Sardar to accept a proposition merely by labelling it with an 'ism'. He would agree to it only if it was presented as a practical solution for some specific national problem. If Marxism has any substance, the Sardar could have been induced to gulp the whole of it, if administered one by one as curative pills for some national maladies. But when 'isms' and slogans are the order of the day, it is not surprising that the Sardar should have been accused of capitalism. Those who did not hesitate to brand even Gandhiji as a friend of the capitalists could not be expected to be considerate to the Sardar.

The Sardar is accepted on all sides as the sole liquidator of nearly six hundred feudal States. But even this has not deterred the Marxists from labelling him as a partisan of the Princes. Marxists are champions of class-war. They refuse to accept revolution as revolution unless they are enabled to shout *Inquilab Zindabad* with their feet trampling the corpse of the enemy. They have no use for common or universal well-being. They will not trouble to see that in a generation or two, the progeny of the princes will have been blended with and lost into the social fabric. Their souls would have known peace only if rivers of blood had flown in every State and if some blood-thirsty people had danced on the corpses of the princes. It would have been grand fun, no matter if it took half a century in coming and protracted the unification of the country. Their satisfaction is not in achievement but in the process of achievement, and the bloodier the process, the more happy our revolutionists. Indeed the Sardar did them grave wrong. He deprived them of their beloved pastime. No wonder that they did not pardon the Sardar.

Some princes too continue to bear a grudge against the Sardar. They are prone to think that they made a mistake in taking the Sardar's counsel. The Sardar inaugurated the process of the merger of States with the Eastern States Agency. Cuttack and Nagpur were the first to be visited by him in this behalf. I will never forget the historic evening when he discussed merger with the fourteen rulers of the above Agency. There was first anger and stubbornness; then panic

and tears, and lastly dawn of wisdom and reconciliation. All the princes passed through these three stages. One of the princes remarked to the Sardar in all princely courtesy: 'Just as we acknowledged the paramountcy of British Government, so shall we, of the Congress Government. Why not take us also under your protecting wings?' Sardar merely replied: "The British have conferred independence on you also. You may remain independent if you so elect. But if your own people revolt against you, pray do not expect free India's armies to rush to your aid." This was enough for the princes. They thought for a while and quietly signed on the dotted lines.

This fundamental change in the situation of the Indian princes so succinctly expressed by the Sardar was not applicable only to the princely marionettes existing within the borders of India but it had significance, as we already see, for such independent neighbouring States as Nepal. It is surprising that just when the wisdom of the Sardar's advice to the princes is being demonstrated in Nepal some of our princes should choose that very moment to regret their only act of wisdom since the appearance of the British on the Indian political stage.

The Sardar was an indomitable fighter in the battle of freedom. He translated into action Satyagraha — that priceless gift from Gandhiji to humanity. He gave tranquility and security to the country in the most turbulent period of transition from slavery to freedom. He was the author of the finest achievement of the first independence Government, viz., unification of India.

The Sardar could achieve all this only because he was utterly selfless, because he was endowed with peerless wisdom and indomitable courage, because he had nerves of steel and an intellect as sharp as the razor's edge.

No one will deny these qualities of the Sardar. But many are under the impression that the Sardar had no heart, that he was completely devoid of emotion. But those who had the privilege to observe him at close quarters — and such are not few — will stoutly deny this assertion. The truth is that though the Sardar was rightly known as a man of steel, he was a true specimen of Bhavabhuti's concept — "Harder than a diamond and softer than a flower." The fact of the matter is that the Sardar was hard just because he was selfless. And how can we expect softness for others from one who had none for himself?

The truth is that the human side of the so-called crafty Sardar was wholly artless and ingenuous. This was simply demonstrated in his love of children. He was well-known for his sense of humour and biting satire but very few know that whenever affairs of State permitted he would spend hours talking to children. The

children too were spontaneously attracted to him. Just as I cannot erase from memory the image of sorrow that was Manibehn as she sat by the remains of the Sardar, so will remain carved in my memory Shri Shankar's baby-daughter who stood sobbing nearby. She was the playmate of the Deputy Prime Minister during the hours of his relaxation and her grief was as inconsolable as that of Manibehn. And no wonder that it was so, for had he not made a place for himself in every Indian heart — old and young alike?

Nagpur

DWARKAPRASAD MISHRA

THAKKAR BAPA

Tributes to Thakkar Bapa from better, more closely associated and more effective writers make it unnecessary for me to add one more contribution. It is also not convenient to me. The more deeply I get moved, the more difficult it is for me to express my emotions in words. Suffice it to say that though I did not actually live and work with Thakkar Bapa for any considerable period, since 1916 onwards his was one of the major influences upon my life. I am heavily indebted to him for his great affection for me, his continuous encouragement to me in all my activities that met with his approval, and his prompt reproof whenever he felt that I was on a wrong track. His name will always be associated in my memory with tender feelings of love and veneration.

Wardha, 1-2-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

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