

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

APPEAL FOR SARDAR MEMORIAL FUND

The reader must have seen the appeal for "Sardar Vallabhbhai Memorial Fund" issued by several leaders and prominent citizens and workers of Gujarat. (The appeal is reproduced in these columns.) No discerning resident or friend of Gujarat will doubt the appropriateness of the appeal. After Gandhiji, the Sardar undoubtedly deserves the honour of a Memorial Fund by Indians throughout the country and abroad, and among them it is appropriate that the people and friends of Gujarat wherever residing should give the lead.

The signatories have declared three objects for the use of the Fund; namely, (1) the foundation of an association of 'Servants of Gujarat'; (2) construction of buildings for schools in the villages of Gujarat; and (3) excavation and construction of wells for drinking water in Gujarat villages. These were three of the favourite activities of Sardar Vallabhbhai. Barring granting of occasional aid for relieving deserving individuals from immediate wants of an urgent nature, personally I hold the construction of wells as a most lasting and self-acting form of charitable investment. If I possessed money which I could donate, I would rather spend it straightway for sinking wells than found a charitable trust, which would carry on an industry promising a dividend of as high as even 50 per cent, and utilize only its proceeds for charity. If I possessed still more money I would spend it for maintenance of *sevaks* and for rendering assistance to deserving men in distress. Next after this, I would like to spend for providing *Nai Talim* (industry-based) schools with buildings and equipment. Fire, flood, famine etc., causing large-scale distress, are uncommon calamities, and money given for them is certainly necessary and commendable charity, but it hardly deserves to be considered a donation. It is just an expression of fellow-feeling, which even paupers and animals too, are not wanting in. Want of response on such occasions means deficient development of normal creature instincts.

Thus the objects set forth are such as all, I believe, would approve.

Collections of Memorial Funds should be made without delay. Time works against them.

The strong emotions, which arise when a loss is fresh, subside with the passage of time, and both collectors and donors tend to forget even their greatest benefactor. I hope, the Committee will complete the work of collection within a few weeks, and people will contribute to its purse liberally.

Wardha, 3-1-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

THE PRESIDENT AT WARDHA

President Rajendraprasad was at Bajajwadi, Wardha, for two clear days to witness the end of 1950 and the opening of 1951. It was just a year after his last visit, for he had also seen the end of 1949 and the dawn of 1950 at Wardha, from the same room and in the same surroundings, though in a different capacity. Last year, he was President of the Constituent Assembly. Now he came as the President of the Indian Republic. In his personal appearance and manner of living, there was no change. He was the same simple Rajendra Babu as ever. But he was a greater and more guarded State prisoner now than the British Government had ever made him, with the result that Bajajwadi had been turned into a military camp for four days. I do think that a very large amount of these 'security measures' can be safely dispensed with. Apart from the hiatus they create between the people and their great and esteemed leader, they must necessarily cost a good deal. There is a great scope for economy on this head. But this is by the by.

The President arrived rather late in the evening on 30th December. The day had been wet and cold, and the road had become slippery with mud. But happily, he had kept well in spite of a heavy programme and a long journey by motor.

Rajendra Babu prefers to sleep early and rise in the early hours of the morning to dispose of his files. But he could not retire that night till about 11 p.m. Nevertheless, he got up early as usual the next day, and when I entered his room at about 6 a.m., I found him spinning and at the same time dictating notes to his stenographer. A spindle full of yarn was lying by, while another fixed on the *charkha* was also more than half full. I enquired if he had spun all that since the morning. "No," he said, "the

other one was spun yesterday, but I could not get time to wind it into a hank." "Is this your usual spinning time?" I asked. "Yes, this is the only time in the Government House when I am generally free from public engagements. So, I generally finish my spinning in the morning," was his reply. As I noticed that he was not only spinning but was also busy with his assistant, I withdrew from the room so as not to disturb him in his work.

At 9 o'clock he had to lay the foundation stone of the Gandhi Jnana Mandir. The site chosen for this institution is just in front of Bajajwadi, on the opposite side of the road. The main building when constructed will stand opposite to the small bungalow in which Shri Jammalal Bajaj used to live during his lifetime.

There was a good gathering at the time of the function, which was presided over by Shri Shrikrishnadas Jaju. A fuller account of that function is published elsewhere in these columns, and need not be told here.

After finishing that programme, he was to go to Sevagram and examine the institutions there and address their students and workers. He could get a few minutes between the end of the Jnana Mandir function and the time for departure to Sevagram. This short interval allowed me to have a brief talk with Shri Mangaldas Pakwasa, the Governor of Madhya Pradesh, who was also to accompany the President to Sevagram. In the course of our conversation I learnt that Shri Pakwasa had spun and got woven 37 yards of fine *khadi* during the year. He hoped, he said, that he would not be consuming more *khadi* than that for his personal apparel during the year, and was eligible for being regarded a *vastra-swavalambi* (self-dependent in cloth). But apart from that, he added, spinning gave him great mental peace and time for introspection. He spun in front of a portrait of Gandhiji, and it inspired him. As age advances, he said, while other organs of action lose their power to act, the tongue seemed to get loose and prone to talk more freely. Bapu's ever silent picture reminded him of his emphasis on the virtue of silence.

After returning from Sevagram at 4-30 p.m., Shri Rajendra Babu had to address a public meeting from the balcony of the Commerce College. Exactly a year ago along with Jawaharlal Nehru and several delegates of the World Pacifists Meeting, he had addressed a similar meeting from the same place and at about the same time.

The meeting over, Shri Rajendra Babu returned to Bajajwadi to attend the evening prayers. He had had busy hours throughout the day, and was rather fatigued towards the evening.

He had desired to have no public engagements on the New Year's Day, and so he passed

that day in the company of a few friends of the Wardha institutions. Towards the evening he paid a visit to Maganwadi. After return, he attended the evening prayers, took his food and retired.

His departure was scheduled at 8 a.m. on the 2nd. As usual he got up in the early hours of the morning, read his files, took his bath and breakfast, and motored to Nagpur. On the way he halted to see the Leprosy Institution at Dattapur, and the Gandhi Ghat at Pauniar for a few minutes each.

It was a quiet and busy time, coupled with heart-searching and hard thinking.

Wardha, 4-1-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

APPROACH TO THE ABORIGINAL

II

Shri V. Raghaviah's Reply

1. Background of Work

Of late thanks to the efforts of untiring pioneers like the revered Thakkar Bapa and the fatherly interest evinced by the President of the Indian Republic, the problems concerning the aboriginals have been receiving some amount of public attention despite certain inherent handicaps that failed to secure for them that extent of publicity which any, politically useful factor would in the present set of things have usually secured. It is unfortunately the habit of busy administrators to look at first things first and there is no other element that can compel such an attention as a bit of aggressiveness. The leaders that shouldered the burden of the aboriginals have rightly not chosen the path of creating unrest and agitation as it would ultimately endanger the cause of the aboriginals themselves. It cannot however be denied that the success of this policy, though not its wisdom, would be in a large measure conditioned by the success achieved by tribal leaders in alleviating the distress of their followers and the speed with which they could do it. In making these observations it is not my intention to belittle the political, nay, strategic importance of the aboriginal problem. If one looks at the map of India he finds the Nagas, the Mishmis, and the Abhors inhabiting the frontiers of three independent countries like Burma, Nepal and Bhutan and the Koltas, Boksars and Kinnars residing in the Simla Hill States and Jaunsar Bawar areas of Uttar Pradesh and the newly formed Himachal Pradesh and lakhs of Bhils spread over entire Rajasthan along with several other minor tribes like the Sansis, Kanjars and the Meenas who are still virile and warlike. Nor can it be said that the aboriginals have not been awakened by the conflicting political slogans that have been gaining added momentum since the advent of freedom and the formation of our young Republic. Attempts are also not wanting on the part of a few educated tribal leaders to propagate sectarianism, resulting in the demand even for separate States for tribal people.

With this background in view, I propose to answer a few points raised by a friend on tribal matters.

2. Good Features of Aboriginal Civilization

The civilizing mission, which some workers impose upon themselves, and which by their exuberance raise justifiable apprehensions about their policies and programmes and in certain cases even about their intentions, smacks of a superiority complex which has got to be carefully avoided in dealing with tribal people. Apart from the harm done to the cause by presuming that all that belongs to the aboriginals is necessarily primitive and unwholesome, this approach very often leads to hasty conclusions, offends the tribals and rapidly alienates them. Undoubtedly there is much in tribal civilization and culture that deserves emulation even by moderners,

particularly the highly romantic, extremely subtle and undisputedly sublime friendship-contacts, commonly known as *Sangatho*, which are accompanied by elaborate and colourful ceremonies solemnized in the presence of the relations of the respective parties. The young friends thus united in the presence of the sacred fire, keep a lifelong friendship and rush to each others' succour sometimes risking their all.

Then again the conception of production, distribution and consumption practised by the aboriginals is essentially Gandhian, in that it is based on the cottage pattern and worked by barter and exchange. Even today no tribal produces to sell. His *podu* or *bewar* cultivation dispenses with the bulls and the plough and the little patch of hillside clearing, which is quickly turned with the spade, yields just enough for the producers' family to keep the pot boiling. Tribal economy knows neither the inconveniences of rationing nor the troubles of 'procurement' which are proving to be a veritable nuisance to the dweller in the plains.

3. Scope of Work

If by civilization one means the indiscriminate copying of the western or modern methods of living and working them it is better that a little caution is exercised in the superimposition of costly and elaborate ways of life on the tribal. At the same time, I do not agree with some who wish to cut off the aboriginals from the outside world, preserve them as curios in utter segregation, and even to deny them the comforts of easy communication, benefits of enlightenment and improved methods of food production. We would be achieving much in the matter of tribal welfare by just not thrusting anything on the tribal much against his will and at the same time not standing in his way of reaching his highest aspirations. In short we must provide him complete freedom to think and act for himself untrammelled by political or social environments that do not satisfy his taste. Calling the aboriginals either as depressed or backward is an unmerited insult that can be easily spared. In fact even the name *aboriginals* is by no means a complementary term. It may be more correct to call them a suppressed people but then it might unnecessarily provoke others. After all what is in a name?

4. Dire Poverty

The day-to-day life of the tribals is even today very simple though it cannot be at the same time said to be comfortable and healthy. The ever-tightening forest laws have rendered their means of livelihood very precarious and uncertain. The game laws have robbed their freedom, deprived them of their joy and practically impoverished them. Total dependence on wild roots, tubers and honey have not kept them above want and starvation. The sickly Chenchu, the undernourished Koya, the stunted Irula and the steadily decaying Kadir of South India are samples of Governmental colossal neglect and victims of society's unconscious callousness. While touring among the Chenchus of Amrabad plateau last month, I noticed a large body of these miserable-looking and emaciated people forcibly brought down for political reasons from their hill abodes in the Nallamalais of Hyderabad State (Deccan) plaintively pleading for a return to the hills and asked them why they were not content with a three-meals-a-day of the rice of the plains. With one voice the whole assembly shouted a powerful dissent and said that this food had made them sick, weak and emaciated. They preferred still the chase of the jungle, the edible roots, the myriad varieties of leafy vegetables, and, more than all the hymn of the forest, the freshness of the mountain breeze and the soothing aroma of the hill vegetation which they woefully lacked in the plains. They felt cribbed and cabined and utterly humiliated in the presence of uppish officialdom and annoying businessmen. There can be no doubt that the aboriginals feel happier in their own surroundings. Any attempt at colonization or settlement must be made in and around their usual abodes and no effort should be made to uproot them.

ASSAM EARTHQUAKE RELIEF FUND

From 31-12-'50 to 6-1-'51

Name & Place	Rs as ps
The staff of R. P. Vidyalaya, Panchavati	16 0 0
Collection by students of the Anavil Vidyarthi Ashram, Surat	220 0 0
Savings by fast by the students of the Anavil Vidyarthi Ashram, Surat	55 0 0
Shree Siddheshwar Shukla, Fatehpur	5 0 0
Collections by the Sarvodaya Ashram, Shamlaji	200 0 0
—Residents of Shamlaji: Rs 5 each: Shankarlal S., J. P. Bhatt, R. B. Talati; Rs 3: Found in the street; Rs 2 each: Nanji M., Valji G., Dalshukhlal S.; Rs 1-4: Vasudev M.; Re 1 each: Mohanbhai M., Prithvisingh L.; 12 As: Found in the street; 8 As each: Jivabhai K., Somabhai P.	
Rs 29-0-0	
—Residents of Titol: Rs 5: Labhshankar Vyas; Rs 2 each: Dahyabhai D., P. S. Gandhi; Re 1 each: S. J. Pathak, Bhogilal N., Kodarlal M., Narsibhai Soni, G. A. Soni, Kodarlal Z., Narbheram M., Motilal M.	
Rs 17-0-0	
—Residents of the Shamlaji Ashram: Rs 5 each: N. M. Bhawasar, Natubhai Soni, N. J. Sheth, R. N. Shah, Shantabehn Natubhai; Rs 3 each: D. L. Patel, V. M. Joshi, J. K. Vyas; Rs 2-8: D. B. Makwana; Rs 2 each: Savitabehn Patel, Anasuyabehn Joshi, Suryakantabehn Vyas, T. L. Patel Rs 44-8-0	
—Residents of Himmatnagar: Rs 5: I. M. Khan; Rs 2: Navnitilal J.; Re 1: Amritlal C.	
Rs 8-0-0	
—Residents of Devnimori: Rs 5: Thakor Saheb; Rs 2 each: Harijans, Shri Lalsinghji	
Rs 9-0-0	
—Residents of Modasa: Rs 15: Modasa Gumasta Mandal; Rs 11: Gulam Mohmed G.; Rs 5: Laxmichand K., Rs 3: Afzal D.; Rs 2 each: Manilal G., Abdul Karimbhai, Gulamrasul A., J. M. Gandhi, G. P. Bhawasar; Re 1 each: Gulamrasul K., P. C. Kadia, K. L. Bhawasar, N. S. Soni, S. P. Bhawasar; 8 As: C. M. Bhawasar	
Rs 49-8-0	
—Miscellaneous: Rs 5 each: Maganlal S., Kalubhai V., K. L. Soni; Rs 4: J. M. Suthar; Rs 3: Mulji N.; Rs 2: Dhuljibhai P.; Re 1-4: S. M. Soni; Re 1 each: Amarsingha D., M. T. Ninama, Amritlal C., Hukamchand D., Chunilal A., Gordhandas G., Chunilal S., Abdulbhai M., Motilal K., Nanji S., V. K. Shah, R. A. Malek; 8 As each: Ismail N., Singabhai K., Surjibhai, Paulbhai S., Vishrambhai K., Muljibhai, Ambalal B., Narsibhai K., Navjibhai D., Johnbhai P.; 4 As each: Amraji K., Amos R., Isaacbhai	
Rs 43-0-0	
Shree K. S. Ray, Janla	5 0 0
Shree N. K. Vaishnav, Motakhokhra	2 0 0
Shree N. B. Bola, Ghatkopar	5 0 0
Shree M. Narsing Rao, Manjeshwar	15 0 0
Shree M. K. Nayak, Manjeshwar	5 0 0
Residents of Umarva—Rs 10 each: P. R. Desai, J. M. Patel; Rs 5: S. J. Patel	25 0 0
Shri Popatlal V., Bombay	25 0 0
Collection from the villages of Vegam, Gadat, Ichchhapur and Kolva by the students of Ambika English School, Gadat	48 0 0
A pensioner, Halwad	2 0 0
Sum already acknowledged	26,299 7 0
Total Rs	26,927 7 0

HARIJAN

Jan. 13

1951

CURRENCY AND REDUCTION OF PRICES

The problem of prices is closely related with that of our currency. Hence the currency policy must also be carefully investigated. If the issue of new notes is more rapid and lavish than what is necessary for exchange purposes in a frugal manner, and there is no machinery to secure a return of surplus notes, the system cannot but result in a continuous rise of the prices. If the only way by which the heir of a millionaire pays his servants or purchases his goods is an extravagant issue of promissory notes, in course of time he would have to issue a note of Rs 1,000 for services worth Rs 100, or promise to pay an interest of as much as 3,650 per cent per annum. The same rule applies to a government perhaps more disadvantageously than to the heir, since the Government currency notes are not redeemable and cannot be refused by the payee. The payee would, therefore, cheat the Government in more ways than those who deal with the spendthrift heir. He might not only try to get more notes than the value of his services, but might also remove some of the valuable possessions and property of the Government. There is reason to believe that this is actually happening, and the Government is being cheated and misled by its own officers, foreign agents, and contractors, advisers, party-men and others.

Secondly, the desire to bring down the prices is governed by the counter-desire that they should not come down too heavily lest it might ruin industrial and commercial concerns. The apprehension might be based on good reasons and the advice emanating from it honest and well-intentioned. But the result cannot be avoided: that is, prices cannot go down, until these basic causes are tackled. The promulgation of controlled prices cannot work miracles by itself.

In order to reduce the prices, my feelings are as follows:

(i) The amount of currency must be severely reduced; as the root of the word suggests, a currency must be always current (i.e. running) in order to merit that name; if too much of it remains as unused balance, it is not currency; a good deal must be recalled;

(ii) the heavy impost of taxes, freights etc., under whatever name, must be drastically cut down, and the deficit should be met temporarily or as a permanent feature by means other than payment in cash; even performance of free labour and payment of taxes in kind may not be ruled out;

(iii) the present policy and system of controls should be fundamentally changed;

(iv) people must be saved against temptations to spend their cash in luxuries and vices and get rich through easy channels, like gambling, *sattas*, cross-word puzzles and similar lotteries etc. by banning them, and not merely taxing them, however, heavily;

(v) people must be set to work immediately even if the out-turn per head is trivial and out of proportion to their apparent maintenance charges. On the principle, "First things first", setting people to work is more important than calculating the amount of work done. Our calculating instinct will not allow us to feel complacent for long with small out-turn or inefficient work and so improvements in technique are bound to follow in course of time;

(vi) prosperity does not come to a nation by allowing a large margin of profit to the producers, or by liberally providing too many ready-made articles to the consumers at seemingly cheap rates; but by liberally providing the people the means of production and asking them to manufacture as many articles as they can with their own hands;

(vii) administrative economies must be effected primarily by lowering the lavish standard of comforts and pomp of buildings, demonstrations, public functions, expenses of tours, scale of security measures for high officers, etc.

These measures should, I feel, result in a move towards reduction of prices in a natural manner. If prices are reduced, salaries can be reduced and it would be possible to employ more men on work. Economical measures need not always take the form of retrenchment of staff; for ultimately cheapness and rapid circulation of money should result in the increase of useful, healthy and essential employment and not in its reduction. Our economic wisdom must be regarded as having failed us, if every pair of hands does not find sufficient work to do to deserve its plate of food. He who wants work must be able to get it; and he who works must be able to get his food, provided he has worked to the best of his capacity. Since the amount of work done depends upon the instruments of production at his disposal, it cannot be the sole determining factor of the value of his work.

Wardha, 13-12-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

By Mahatma Gandhi

SATYAGRAHA IN SOUTH AFRICA

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SARDAR VALLABHBHAI MEMORIAL FUND

An Appeal

In the latter half of the first quarter of the present century Gandhiji returned to India from Africa and began his Herculean task for the emancipation of the country. Among those who joined him soon after his arrival, with full faith and devotion in his undertaking, from Gujarat, Sardar Vallabhbhai was the ablest. It was Sardar Patel who made a practical, effective and fruitful application of the matchless technique of Satyagraha prescribed by Gandhiji for the liberation of India.

Gandhiji trained the people of India for its fight for independence; Sardar Patel trained the people of Gujarat while making a practical application of the Gandhian technique for the attainment of Swaraj. He spent his whole life under Gandhiji's leadership and guidance in training the people of Gujarat to that technique. Consequently he could not only enable Gujarat to contribute her proper and effective share in the fight for Indian freedom, but was instrumental in the making and moulding of modern Gujarat in the process.

While carrying on this work of training Sardar Patel did not neglect a single facet of Gujarat life, nor any part of its region. The wealthy mill-owners of Ahmedabad, the labourers—both men and women—from the different parts of the province, working in the same mills, the landlords and peasants, the *adivasis* (aboriginals), especially the backward classes inhabiting the Kheda, Panchmahals and Surat districts, the whole commercial community, the people and the princes of Baroda and other States in Cutch and Kathiawad and all the other component parts of the population of Gujarat—all these he served, and ran to their succour whenever they were in trouble. Very recently he had performed the foundation-laying ceremony of the Gujarat University buildings and blessed that activity also; and while doing so he had expressed his hope that the regions of Gujarat, Saurashtra and Cutch, all speaking the same language, will co-operate and unite at least in the field of education.

In the political field he conducted the affairs of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee for a full quarter of a century and gave lessons in politics to the province. He served the cause of labour by frequently helping and guiding the Textile Labour Association which was founded with the object of helping the labourers working in the mills and factories of Ahmedabad. He served the cause of the Harijans in Gujarat as the patron of the Gujarat Harijan Sevak Sangh. He served the city of Ahmedabad through the Ahmedabad Municipality, and showed by personal example the proper way of serving the people through municipalities. He took a keen interest in the working of the institutions of national education in Gujarat, taking an active

part in the making and conducting the affairs of the Navajivan Publishing House and the Gujarat Vidyapith and thus founded a new tradition in the field of education in Gujarat. During the last years of his life he took an active interest in the foundation of the Vallabh Vidyanagar, the Vitthal Kanya Vidyalaya and other educational institutions. And above all, he paid throughout his life attention to the work of nursing, developing and consolidating all the various constructive activities and institutions founded by Gandhiji with a view to infuse new life into the villages and make them self-reliant and self-respected. By his uncommon will and determination, strong character, dignified speech, his ceaseless industry in the multifarious activities of service to the people, the Sardar made of Gujarat a heroic people, enabled it to make a noteworthy contribution to the fight for Indian freedom, won for Gujarat (including Cutch and Saurashtra) its proper place on the political map of India. And by integrating the small Saurashtra States into a unit and solving the complicated problem of the States he secured and established the unity of the Indian Union.

Thus by constantly cherishing and thinking of the welfare of all the people of Gujarat in diverse ways, in diverse fields, through diverse institutions and associations and diverse critical situations the Sardar rendered signal service to the people of Gujarat for a full quarter of a century, and began to be considered by them their *Sardar* or Captain. By his death all the Gujarati-speaking people in the country experienced a grief as at the death of their father. The obligation of the Sardar on Gujarat are boundless; and hence the desire on the part of the people of Gujarat to create some kind of memorial to this maker and father of modern Gujarat even as a token of its desire to repay the debt is but natural.

The fitting memorial to such a man would be to keep the activities undertaken by him going; that is, to continue and nourish the numerous activities started by Gandhiji years ago and conducted and nursed by the Sardar throughout his life on the basis of *Sarvodaya*, and give all possible help to institutions of public service that are at present working or may be formed hereafter would be his true memorial. An outline of these activities and the methods and policies of doing them have been fully set forth by Gandhiji in his writing on the constructive programme.

It was always the desire of Gandhiji and the Sardar that the tradition of public service created by them should be kept up and an association like a Gujarat Sevak Samaj (Servants of the Gujarat Society) be founded to do the work. To help such an association for doing the above mentioned activities if it comes into existence, would also be a legitimate function for this memorial.

The Sardar had a keen interest in education. In many villages in Gujarat there are no

buildings to house the schools. If this Fund can make up this deficiency even partially the Sardar's soul will be satisfied. The scarcity of and consequent difficulties experienced in the matter of drinking water in many villages was a constant source of pain to him; and after the recent famine he was always anxious as to how the difficulty could be removed. The removal of the difficulty by sinking wells in such villages would also be a proper work for this memorial fund.

Hence in order to help and support activities dear to the Sardar's heart, going on in Gujarat or outside, it is decided to collect a Sardar Memorial Fund and a Committee of the following office-bearers and members with the power of co-option of additional members is hereby appointed to collect the fund. The Committee will have the authority and power to make all the necessary arrangements for such collection, to appoint sub-committees necessary for the purpose, to incur the necessary expenditure for the collection, to form a trust and appoint trustees to administer it, to keep and make necessary arrangements for keeping the moneys and assets of the Fund till it is handed over to the trustees; to do all these and other necessary arrangements for all ancillary purposes.

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Shri Kanaiyalal Nanabhai Desai	- President
Shri Kasturhai Lalbhai and Shri Nanji Kalidas	- Vice Presidents
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Fifteen members will form the quorum for a committee meeting. The committee will have the authority to appoint an executive committee with power to co-opt additional members.

Office :

Gujarat Prantik Samiti,
Congress House, Bhadra,
Ahmedabad

30-12-'50

HIMALAYAN LESSONS

I

(Dramatis Personae)

1. Swami Yogananda
2. Krishnamurti
3. Bhavanisingh
4. Brahmachari Rameshwar Dutt
5. Bishen
6. Self.

The Whys and Wherefores

Ever since the establishment of Pashulok I had been contemplating the idea of connecting it with service of the neighbouring mountain area and even of starting a branch Ashram somewhere in the lower Himalayas.

So long as the work remained in the form of a Government scheme this would not have been easy to achieve, so I waited for the formation of the Pashulok Seva Mandal, after which I planned to spend 2 or 3 months in the mountains to study the area, and get a little change for my indifferent health. I was most anxious to get away by the middle of May, so as to have at least one dry month for looking around, but such were the difficulties and delays in the formation of the Mandal that May, and even June went by, and I was still held up. The rains had now begun, and I felt I must be satisfied with the nearest possible place, which was Nilkanth, lying just over the other side of the mountain ridge opposite to Pashulok.

On account of the bad weather we decided not to attempt the journey in one day, but to sleep at Swargashram (Rishikesh) on the first night, so as to be able, the next morning, to catch the first bright interval for making the ascent of 5 miles, which is sufficiently steep and stony, followed by 1 mile of sharp descent on the other side.

Off to Nilkanth

By about 5 p.m., on the evening of July the 4th, I set out on Mana and reached Swargashram via Lakshmanjhula, just before dark. The rest of the party with the luggage had gone ahead in the Pick-up-Truck.

There is something gracious and friendly about leaving a place on horse-back, which is wholly lacking in the rude rush of departure in a motor car. As I rode along I could say good-bye to the trees and birds and beasts, and could exchange a friendly word or two with those who met me on the road. All was harmonious and natural.

As good fortune had it, the weather was fine. When I reached Swargashram the party was already busy with cooking preparations, and we soon got our evening meal. Mana had his feed of gram, and was then tied to the edge of the verandah.

Troublesome Horses

It so happened that two or three mischievous pack-horses were grazing loose in the Ashram compound that night, and before long they began neighing and nosing round to try and get at Mana. Swamiji and the two boys,

therefore, put their beds outside making a kind of fence. But big clouds were gathering and before long it began to pour with rain. There was nothing for it but for every one, including Mana, to come up on to the verandah. Nevertheless those mischievous horses kept poking around, and every now and then Mana, who was tied alongside my bed, would suddenly express his opinion with a resounding neigh. This was hardly conducive to sleep, and what with the horses, the mosquitoes and the pouring rain, I remained wide awake nearly all night.

Nature's Wilder Moods

When daylight came it was still raining. We had breakfast, packed up our things, and sat down to wait for a fair interval. At last the rain stopped, though the clouds still threatened. We set off. Hardly had we gone half a mile when the rain began again. As we proceeded up we got into thicker and thicker clouds growling and rumbling all around, and nothing was visible but the great forest trees hanging over the path.

On a wet day a person always waits, if possible, for a fine interval, because of the inconvenience of wet clothes and the like, but actually it is a grand and exhilarating experience to be out in storm and rain, and, as I rode up through the thundering clouds, I remembered the days in my youth, when, putting on raincoat and sou-wester, I would go right out into the raging gales on the rugged South-West coast of England, and rejoice in the sting of the rain on my face, and the smell of the salt spray from the Atlantic rollers as they hurled themselves with unceasing roar on the rocks below. A "sit-at-home" never knows the grand inspiration of Nature's wilder moods.

Pashulok

MIRA

(to be continued)

GANDHI JNAN MANDIR, WARDHA

On 31st December, 1950, President Rajendraprasad laid the foundation stone of the Gandhi Jnan Mandir in the open land granted for that purpose in front of Bajajwadi, on the opposite side of the road. The function was presided over by Shri Shrikrishnadas Jaju.

Shri Shrimannarayan Agarwal, Secretary of the Gandhi Jnan Mandir Trust, traced briefly the history of the institution. The idea was originally mooted by the late Shri Jamnalal Bajaj and Mahadevbhai Desai and it was their ardent desire to establish a first-rate library on Gandhian literature in Wardha. But the 1942 movement and the subsequent political developments prevented the materialization of the scheme. The idea got revived recently, with the donation of Rs one lakh given by Shri Janakiprasad Potdar of Calcutta in memory of his father the late Shri Radhakrishna Potdar and a piece of seven acres sanctioned by the Madhya Pradesh Government. In course of time, it was intended to develop the Mandir into a University where students and lovers of Gandhian thought might assemble, carry on research and supply the fruits of their studies to different languages of the world. Presence of veteran constructive workers in Wardha afforded enough opportunity for such development. It was also intended to establish an International House under the Mandir where scholars from different countries could live together and study Gandhian thought.

In the course of his request to Dr Rajendraprasad to perform the function, Shri Jajuji observed: "As long as Mahatma Gandhi was alive it was difficult to make an appraisal of his statements in the midst of political agitations and conflicting views. But now that he no longer plays a personal part the time has come for pondering over his thoughts with detachment and calmness. Since Gandhiji has not written any treatise as such, it is all the more necessary to preserve and convey his message to every one. Gandhiji has thrown light on almost all the aspects of human life. But his contemporaries who came into close touch with him have now grown sufficiently old. The new generation has to succeed the old one. Hence the need of passing on the unwritten ideas to the next generation."

On returning to the dais after performing the ceremony, Shri Rajendrababu addressing the audience in Hindi said, "I regard it as a great privilege to be asked to perform this ceremony. As the Chairman had said, the Jnan Mandir will not only be an institution for the study of Gandhiji's ideas, but also for putting them into practice.

"If we look to all that is happening within the country today we begin to feel depressed. Christ told his disciples that they would deny him thrice before the cock crew. A similar feeling creeps into our hearts about Gandhiji. It appears that we who claim to be the followers of Gandhiji are abandoning his path one by one. We begin to doubt whether we will adopt his ideas in our lifetime! Whatever the followers of Christ did in his lifetime, later on Christianity was reborn. Similarly I have every hope that whatever we may do at present, Gandhiji's ideas will spread throughout the world. They have such inherent force of truth in them that they will not depend on what we do or do not do; they will survive all changes and give life to the afflicted world for all time to come."

In a reminiscent mood, Dr Rajendraprasad narrated an incident of 1930. A meeting of the Congress Working Committee was held in the Sabarmati Ashram and after prolonged discussions it was decided to start the Salt Satyagraha. Some friends felt that Gandhiji might be put behind the bars by the Government at any moment and then it would be difficult to get his advice and convey it to the masses. They thought that if Gandhiji could give a brief message in his own voice it could be conveyed to the people through gramophone records after his imprisonment. A deputation headed by Rajendrababu placed this request before Gandhiji. Immediately came a reply from him: "If there is truth in what I say, it will automatically reach every home without any propaganda. Anything devoid of truth will not have any effect even if it is publicized through a thousand records of my voice. I do not want to give anything for propaganda. Truth will propagate itself." Dr Rajendraprasad remarked that what Gandhiji stated then, proved to be absolutely true. Today we see darkness after Gandhiji's death. It appeared as if we were not capable of keeping alive his ideals even for some time. (At this stage the President was deeply moved and tears rolled down from his eyes.) Resuming his speech after a few seconds, Dr Rajendraprasad said that Gandhiji's ideas in fact, do not depend on our actions for their survival. They have a force of self-propagation in them. The world will ultimately have to accept and follow them. If the world has to survive it must follow the path shown by Mahatma Gandhi. If it fails to do so, I do not know what is going to happen to humanity. As a matter of fact we should work out all these ideas not so much for preserving them, but more for preserving our very existence."

Speaking about the nature of activities to be undertaken by the Gandhi Jnan Mandir, Dr Rajendraprasad said: "I am glad the Mandir will contain literature on Gandhiji's thoughts and constructive activities and will also provide facilities for serious study and research. But we should not forget that Gandhiji's thoughts are not

merely to be studied for mental gymnastics; they should permeate our daily life. The country needs not one institution of this type but many deriving inspiration and guidance from the central institution located in Wardha where a number of institutions are carrying on the constructive programme propounded by Gandhiji. The Wardha institutions, I am confident, will keep the candle burning and radiate light throughout the country. Today we may see some darkness around us, but I have no doubt that as long as even one lamp of light burns it will light up many and fill the world with light. Wardha has been chosen for the location of this institution not because Gandhiji and Jannalalji resided here, but because a number of institutions are working here which can demonstrate to the world the shape which Gandhiji wanted to give to the existing social and economic order. I am confident this institution will make rapid progress year after year. As Gandhiji used to say, such work never suffers for want of funds. Money will flow in voluntarily with the progress and expansion of this institution. Besides books we must also collect workers who are prepared to mould their lives according to Gandhian ideals. I hope next time when I visit, I will see this institution actually functioning."

A. & M.

"COMMON AILMENTS OF THE VILLAGE"

This booklet of less than 40 pages (price eight annas) published by the Manager, Kasturba Hospital, Sevagram, Wardha is written by Shri Vasantibehn (Miss Barbara Hartland, now Mrs Bruce), who was for several years on the staff of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh and the Matron of the Kasturba Hospital, Sevagram.

One will rarely come across as hard-working and affectionate a 'Sister of the Poor and the Sick' as this young English graduate. Her spirit of service and charity knew no distinctions of colour, caste, or culture. After selflessly serving India for several years, she returned to England last year to build her own home there.

In this booklet she has given hints for the treatment of the most common ailments of the people in our villages, along with details of treatment and nursing and a list of equipment for a school dispensary. As Shri S. Pandit, Adviser, Maternity and Child Welfare, Government of India, who has written the preface to the book, says,

"with common sense and the use of the instructions contained in this little book, any intelligent person, especially a school teacher, with whatever education and without specialized training can do much to improve the health of the villagers, particularly that of the school children."

I wish the book had been published in Hindi also. It should be translated into Indian languages.

Wardha, 2-1-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

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THE SARDAR'S ASSETS!

[The following is the report of interview given by Shri Jivanji Desai, Managing Trustee of the Navajivan Trust to the representative of the United Press of India who specially sought the interview to know whether there was any truth that the Sardar had liquid assets to his credit.]

Ahmedabad, 29-12-'50

Caskets, presents, addresses, photos and letters received and sent by Sardar Patel, have reached the Navajivan Headquarters for preservation, thus forming a small museum by themselves.

All this is the treasure of the "Iron Man of India" who prior to his death and during his illness at Delhi gave his consent to the suggestion made by Shri Jivanji Desai, Managing Trustee of the Navajivan Trust, that all these should be preserved in Gujarat for the nation.

Two large rooms in the spacious Navajivan building have been set apart for preserving articles and manuscripts of letters and documents in the Sardar's handwriting.

The Sardar's speeches, letters, etc., whose verbatim records have been maintained by his daughter, Miss Manibehn, will be published by the Navajivan Publishing House after they have been competently edited. Two more volumes of his biography, for which more materials have been received, will also be published shortly.

"There is no truth that the Sardar had any liquid assets to his credit," Shri Jivanji Desai said referring to certain reports that the Sardar had a large sum in his name and that he had bequeathed the same to the Navajivan Trust.

Purses that he had received were given there and then, Shri Jivanji added, for some public purposes.

For example, the sum of Rs 15 lakhs presented to the Sardar at Ahmedabad on his 76th birthday was handed over to the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee for Congress work in Gujarat.

A meeting of the trustees of the Navajivan Trust will be held shortly to elect its chairman in place of the Sardar. Other members of the Trust are Shri Morarji Desai, Shri Maganbhai Desai, and Shri Jivanji Desai.

"Whatever the Sardar had, he has bequeathed to us, the Navajivan Trust," Shri Jivanji said, "and liquid assets he had none." "I hope to scrutinize all these and arrange them before the next meeting of the A.I.C.C. here," he added.

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