

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

NOTES

Yusuf Meherally

Closely following the death of Sane Guruji, the death of Shri Yusuf Meherally at the early age of 44 is another great loss not only to his personal friends (among whom I include myself) and to the Socialist Party of India, of which he was one of the founders and guide, but to the whole country. If the Socialist Party were in power, it was hardly conceivable that, health permitting, he could have remained outside its Cabinets, and there was no doubt he would have distinguished himself by his ability. Very warm-hearted and loyal, with not a trace of narrow-mindedness or communalism, he was dear to all his comrades. We came to know one another as co-prisoners in 1930 Satyagraha, and our mutual regard grew with the passage of time.

He had the honour of being the youngest Mayor of Bombay about ten years ago. His seventh and last incarceration in 1942 brought him out altogether broken in health with serious heart complications. He was in a precarious condition for a long time after his release, and his total recovery was hardly expected. But, slowly, he recovered enough to be able to go to U.S.A. for treatment and change, and returned about two years ago much restored to health. This enabled him to become a member of the Bombay Legislative Assembly. But the disease returned, and he took ill about a couple of days ago before his death and succumbed to it (2nd July, 1950). By blood relationship he leaves behind him a brother and two sisters, but by the relationship of comradeship it is difficult to reckon the number of brothers and sisters who will mourn his loss. May the warm-heartedness and deep love for the people, which characterized his being, become a part of us all.

Wardha, 4-7-'50

Temple-Entry Satyagraha in Kaladi

Shri S. Krishnan Nair of the Gandhi Sevashram, Kaladi, writes to the following effect :

"Shri Sankara Temple in Kaladi, which had been opened to all on February 10th in accordance with the Indian Constitution, was again closed down on 7th April 1950 against all except Brahmans. The latter are also required to get proper permission from the local authorities. This step is understood to have been taken in consultation with the Head Quarters, the reason urged being that it is a private institution, and none may enter it without proper permission.

"The authorities know quite well that the temple is not a private institution. The step taken is only a device to prevent Harijans from entering the temple.

"The Hindus in the locality were very much perturbed due to the injustice done by the temple authorities. They took it as an insult and a challenge to them and felt that it was their legitimate right to fight out the conservative mentality of the Sringeri Math through a proper channel. They elected a council of action, which represented the matter to the Government. But nothing came out of it. It has, therefore, decided to launch satyagraha in front of the temple from July 17th onwards till the temple is opened for all."

I do not know what is the form of satyagraha contemplated. But I hope the matter will not be allowed to reach a crisis. We are apt to believe that the cause of the survival of the Hindu civilization through centuries is due to such perfectness of its institutions as made any changes in it unnecessary. I do not think so. It lived as a force binding its adherents because it modified itself and adjusted its institutions according to the needs of the times. At some stage this process stopped, resulting in its slow disintegration. It has not disintegrated rapidly simply because of India's vast extent and numbers. Adaptation to the needs of the times is a necessary condition of strength, life and ultimate survival. If the caste mentality persists in Hinduism, in course of time it is bound to die, even though in a desperate attempt the orthodox section were to become a Fascist organization for a time. The wisest course is to obey the spirit of the Constitution, because it is in accordance with the highest principles of justice and truth.

Wardha, 5-7-'50

Freedom and Slavery

A prominent daily owned by a *vanaspati* manufacturer returned to the Goseva Sangh a statement in support of Pt. Bhargava's Bill 'with compliments'. This was courteous. Several have neither returned it nor published it.

Hon can one enjoy freedom, even if fully protected by the Constitution, if he looks to another for his worldly comforts, and is afraid of those being endangered? And who can take away the freedom of him, who is not afraid of facing hardships and death? Much has been said about the Freedom of the Press. But how can there be a Free Press if the editor himself is an obedient servant under an obligation to allow his power of writing to be exploited by his employer?

A great many of the prominent papers are either business-undertakings of industrialists or depend for their maintenance on government and industrial advertisements. They can publish only inadvertently anything which is opposed to their patrons' interests. Thus none may publish or write against *vanaspati*; or against legalized gambling, like races, cross-word puzzles etc., false and exaggerated advertisements, obscene pictures, and the like. They will speak of freedom, if there is restriction against drinking, or if the film is severely censored, or cross-word puzzles and similar type of gambling are prohibited, or bogus medical advertisements are forbidden. But the editor may not protest against restrictions on his own freedom by his own employer. Does Freedom of the Press mean freedom to propagate evil? Or does Freedom of the Press mean freedom of a talented man to become an employer's mouth-piece?

Wardha, 4-7-'50

Opinions on Vanaspati — A Correction

It was announced in the Press that public opinion on *vanaspati* should be forwarded to the Parliament Secretariat and the Food Minister, New Delhi, on or before 31st August, 1950. *This is a mistake.*

The opinions or resolutions about vanaspati should be sent to the Secretary to the Government of the State to which the sender belongs and within the date fixed by that State Government. Thus the Bombay Government has notified 31st July as the last date for receiving such opinions. It is not known which dates have been fixed by other governments. It would be safe to forward the opinions without delay, and in any case *before 31st July.* If any one has sent his opinion directly to the Parliament Secretariat or any Ministry of the Central Government, he will please send another copy of the same to the Secretary of his own State Government.

Wardha, 8-7-'50

K. G. M.

Korea

Korea is a land of some 23,000,000 souls, divided into two parts — North Korea and South Korea — along the 38th Parallel (i.e. 38th North Latitude), after the Japanese surrender. The capitals of the two parts are Pyongyang and Seoul respectively. After the Japanese surrender the Northern part was under Soviet occupation and the Southern was occupied by American troops. The north is an industrially developed area possessing coal mines, iron and steel mills and hydro-electric installations, while the south is mainly agrarian in its economy. The north has 57 per cent. of the territory and a population of seven to eight millions, while the south contains as many as seventeen to eighteen millions. It is, therefore, most obvious that the country has been partitioned in a most irrational manner, for the slightest friction between the two parts produces untold suffering for the Korean people as a whole.

Of all the political parties, the Communist party of Korea was best organized and clear as to its aims. The end of the war saw the emergence of the Communists as a major political group under the patronage of the Red Army.

The division of Korea along the 38th Parallel was an arrangement dictated by military necessity after the Japanese surrender. The Korean nationalists naturally thought that this partitioning of their country would, in course of time, be replaced by a unification programme. In this the Reds and the Democrats were one; the motives inspiring each, however, being entirely different. To the Reds the unification of Korea meant an extension of Communist domination throughout the country. The Democrats, on the other hand, saw in it the fulfilment of their nationalistic and democratic aspirations.

(From an article by Dr Balkrishna Gokhale in *The Sunday News of India*, July 2, 1950)

Mahadev Desai (Bombay) Memorial Trust Terms for the Mahadev Desai Memorial Prize Competition

1. The Mahadev Desai Memorial prize will be awarded to the students whose essays have been declared to be deserving of the prize by the judges appointed in this behalf.

2. The essays are to be written on the following two subjects:

1. "Gandhiji — Statesman and Saint".

2. "Gandhiji — as Mahadev Desai saw him".

3. The essays may be written either in Hindi, in Marathi or Gujarati.

4. The essays must be written on one side of the foolscap paper with proper margin and should not be less than forty pages and not more than fifty pages in length.

5. The Competition is open to all School students who have not completed the age of 16 on 15th August, 1950.

6. The Competitors must attach a certificate of age signed by the Head of the School, where they are studying, along with their essays.

7. The essays must be submitted on or before 31st January, 1951.

8. A sum of Rs. 500/- each for each of the three languages, viz. Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati will be distributed in three prizes as under:

1st Prize .. Rs. 250

2nd Prize .. Rs. 150

3rd Prize .. Rs. 100

9. The prizes will be awarded either in cash or in the form of books.

10. The award of the judges will be final.

11. The copyright on the essays for which prizes will be awarded shall vest in the Trustees of the Mahadev Desai (Bombay) Memorial Trust.

12. The Essays should be sent to the following address:

MAHADEV DESAI MEMORIAL COMMITTEE,
C/o Shri Shantikumar N. Morarjee,
'Scindia House', Ballard Estate,
Bombay.

EDUCATION AND VILLAGE SELF-SUFFICIENCY

(This is the second article of Wilfred Wellock, in continuation of his previous one.)

In a short article in his paper, *Harijan* July 31, 1937, Gandhi, in considering the problem of education in penurious India, wrote:

"I have made bold, even at the risk of losing all reputation for constructive ability, to suggest that education should be self-supporting.

"By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education, nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy, in itself, is no education.

"I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft, and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. Thus every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the State takes over the manufactures of these schools.

"I hold that the highest development of mind and soul is possible under such a system of education. But every handicraft should be taught not merely mechanically as is done today but scientifically, i.e., the child should know the why and wherefore of every process."

This was the beginning of one of the greatest revolutions in education, and at the same time it was a social revolution of the first magnitude.

Gandhi was fully aware of this, as the following quotation shows:

"My plan to impart Primary Education through the medium of village handicrafts like spinning and carding etc. is conceived as the spearhead of a silent social revolution fraught with the most far-reaching consequences. It will go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes. It will check the progressive decay of our villages and lay the foundation of a juster social order in which there will be no unnatural divisions of 'haves' and 'have-nots' and every one will be assured of a living wage and the right to freedom." (*Harijan*, 9-10-1937).

The Spinning Enthusiast

I have seen this system of education at work in India's villages, including entire classes of children from 6 to 8 years, spinning with spindles, and doing this to a spinning song, which gave them obvious pleasure.

The yarn these children spin is of astonishingly even consistency. One *ashram* I visited had a stock of cloth which had been woven from the yarn their children had spun. One of the tailor-workers came forward to take my measurements, and inside two hours I was presented with a hand-woven Gandhi shirt made from yarn spun by children between 6 and 8 years.

Weaving is undertaken by boys any time after about 11 years of age. One evening, in a South Indian *ashram*, when I was being shown round, we discovered a boy of eleven weaving alone in an otherwise empty building. "Is this in order?" I asked. "Why not?" the leader said. "The boy is proud of his newly acquired skill, and desires to perfect it. Why should we crush his enthusiasm?"

There is no attempt to hasten the transit to literacy. This is left until the child requires the knowledge that is contained in books, when it will want to read. Even then the child does not start with the alphabet, but with naming, spelling and writing down the names of the tools connected with spinning, mat-making, or what not.

The aptitude and intelligence of these children is astonishing. The number of things that they can do, and

put their hands to, just amazes one, while they are able to explain the why and wherefore of every process.

I was assured by teachers everywhere that the speed with which children learn to write and read by this method is remarkable.

I once attended a school which is wholly devoted to the education of city slum children. The Head told me that they had not been very successful with Basic Education, and he attributed this to the much lower degree of aptitude which their children possessed compared with village children.

The first aim of Basic Education was to adopt it up to the eighth standard, which means up to fifteen or sixteen years of age. But it is now being applied to older students, and courses are being worked out for Basic Education at the College level. It is intended to cover University education in due course.

This order of education applied in the villages has an immediate economic value. The yarn which the children spin is woven into cloth outside the village at first, but when the cloth returns, and there is only a small weaving charge to pay for it, the desire for a few looms in each village grows, and leads to discussion on the ways and means of procuring them.

This carries us on to the problem of village economy and the part the Gandhi *ashrams* are playing in its development.

These *ashrams*, as previously explained, are staffed by devoted followers of Gandhi, and very fine souls they are. Almost invariably they set up a Basic Education School for the education of the children in one or two nearby villages. But their main work is to train teachers in Basic Education and workers to carry numerous social services into the villages.

Take the case of *ashram* G. G. (Gandhigram). It is surrounded by a block of about 30 villages. It is now administering at least one service in 13 of these villages, as a clinic and maternity centre, a woman's welfare class (spinning, needlework, knitting and embroidery), a nursery school (often run alongside the woman's welfare class), one or more Basic Education classes, a co-operative composting experiment, or a multi-purpose co-operative society.

Gandhi's Dream Will Be Realized

I have seen all these services set up in the midst of unbelievable poverty and misery, and witnessed a response which had kindled in me a belief that Gandhi's dream not only can, but will, be realized. I have been in a village of untouchables which permitted a Basic class to be started in the sacred interior of their temple, and a maternity centre and general clinic to be accommodated in the porch thereof. These poor families gathered before their temple and offered to contribute one rupee per family to build a house for the use of four *ashram*-trained young women who had come to minister to their needs. The villagers are building the house themselves and buying the necessary materials they do not possess with the Rs. 200 which they have collected.

Soon the yarn spun in their school and in their homes will be woven into cloth; then a little colour will appear in the women's *saries* and men's *dhoties*; soon also their crops will improve under compost treatment while their prices will improve by co-operative trading. Before long they will co-operate in building better houses. Then will follow music, drama, dancing, reading and books.

Here in South India in a three weeks' pilgrimage, I have witnessed a beginning of India's social revolution, whose foundation Gandhi laid. The people are responding magnificently. A new light shines, a life dawns, the revolution is under way.

Moreover, it is the true answer to Communism, for here it is not merely a higher material standard of living, but a higher spiritual standard also. This in its most simple basic form, is the revolution which the world

awaits, and which may be modified to meet the circumstances of every country.

WILFRED WELLOCK

(From *Peace News* of May 12, 1950)

[Note: Mr Wellock has given us too flattering a compliment. I hope none will think that we deserve it. But it should inspire us to work so that it may become our true description.
— K. G. M.]

HARIJAN

July 15

1950

UNHAPPY KOREA

Imperialistic ambitions of powerful countries have made Korea an unhappy land for about the last half a century. First Manchuria allowed it no peace. Then Japan conquered it and treated its people brutally and exploited its resources for its own benefit. Japan's defeat brought the Koreans under the subjection of the victorious nations without any fault of their own. These nations, for their own selfish ends, divided the country into two and established two mutually incompatible systems of government in the two parts. All this was done without the consent of the Koreans. If this conquest had taken place in the last century, most probably the United States would have annexed Japan and South Korea to itself in the same way as it had done the Philippines. Similarly North Korea would have been annexed with Soviet Russia. But in the course of the present century new moral ideas have grown up which do not approve of territorial extension. They have become more popular than what would suit imperialists.

Unlike Mussolini and Hitler, the democratic imperialists are unable to reject these ideas with brutal frankness. They have, therefore, taken recourse to hypocritical ways. Instead of straightaway annexing parts of Germany, Japan and Korea to their several realms, they were placed under their several "mandates" until such time as they would find it convenient to leave them to their own people.

When Germany and Korea were partitioned, it must have been evident that it was impossible for these countries to relish the division of their respective countries into small bits. They were each a single people, with common language, religion and ideas. They were one before the conquest and wanted to remain together after it. So far as the Koreans were concerned, they were never a willing party to the War. They were involved in it because of their masters, Japan. It was also perfectly well known that Russia and the so-called Democracies held totally different conceptions of the way in which human good could be achieved in this world. It was also perfectly well known that though Russia and the democratic countries had somehow made it convenient to unite in defeating Germany, Italy and Japan, they were mutually as hostile towards each other as they were towards the vanquished enemies. Indeed, it was like the alliance of the serpent and the

mongoose for defeating the monkey. The defeat of the monkey has left the serpent and the mongoose to resume their old bitter enmity.

The hostility between the Democracies headed by U.S.A. and the Communist countries headed by Russia has long since become an open matter. Soviet Russia feels that it has a mission in the world. Like the early Christian missionaries and the early Muslims, the Communists believe that humanity can be saved only by making the world accept the Communist way of life. And like all religious fanatics, they do not believe in the purity of the means, but sanction all kinds of tactics to achieve their purpose. On the other hand, the Democracies feel that the spread of Communism is bound to affect their own happiness. Of the Democracies, those which are very rich and advanced, have raised their standard of living to so high a level, that it is impossible to maintain it if they have to share their riches equitably, not to say equally, even with the poor of their own country. Sharing them with the poor nations of the world is inconceivable. And the spread of Communist ideas ultimately means both. They are, thus, like priests and supporters of an orthodox religion, who would find their vocation gone, if people accepted a new Master's teachings. They know that their present position is morally unjustifiable. But they want to maintain it and feel that they should join all their strength and resources while there is still an opportunity of crushing the new trend of thought. They too have no scruples about means. They are wealthier and better organized and feel that they have destructive weapons superior to those of Russia. So, before the latter get too strong they are anxious to pick up a quarrel with the Communist powers. Thus, there appears to be a will on both the sides to bring matters to a head. An excuse was awaited. Both Korea and Germany possess the potentiality for it. Korea has already provided one. It may not be long before Germany does the same. Or the defence of South Korea and Japan might involve the necessity for an aggression against Soviet-controlled Germany.

Before the Second World War the Democracies had made an unholy alliance with the Fascists and the Nazis against Russia. At the commencement of the War, the Axis powers entered into an unholy alliance with Russia to crush the Democracies. During the progress of the War, that unholy alliance was broken to be replaced by another unholy one between the Democracies and Russia against the Axis powers. The War saw a crash of the Axis powers leaving the Democracies and Russia free to resume their old hostilities. One sin after another has been perpetrated against mankind by each of the three groups, and none is still repentant. Each is willing to repeat the same crime.

Where do the Asiatic nations, including India, stand in this picture? We are too much populated, too very poor, too very illiterate, too

much divided internally. We have slept too long and have been unscrupulously and immeasurably exploited during our sleep. We are just getting out of our slumber, and are not yet fully awake. We feel confused about what will save us. Some look to the Democracies, others to Russia to help them. A few are unable to believe in either, but at the same time they do not know their own mind and their independent course. In India, Gandhiji tried to show them a definite course. But they still waver.

But the Gandhian way apart, this much is certain that if the Democracies mean the present capitalistic order and the liberty and facility to raise one's standard of living as high as one pleases without a thought for the condition of the masses, the people of Asia will not tolerate it for long. If the capitalist order does not take rapid and progressive steps to liquidate itself, it will be impossible for any power, however strong and Fascist-minded, to stop the tide of Communism from spreading over the whole of Asia. With the whole of Siberia and the whole of China, as also North Korea, gone red, and with India and the South-East Asia not free from its influence and possibly getting increasingly under it, how does U.S.A. expect South Koreans to be satisfied with the imposition of an exploiting order under a seeming democracy? The Democracies, I feel, would labour under a serious mistake if they think that Communism spreads in Asia simply by reason of the machinations of the Russians; or that it can be stopped by merely giving them large loans and weapons. It spreads, because Asia is poor, starving, has been ruthlessly exploited, is densely populated and has become conscious of that condition, and at the same time witnesses that in the midst of its appalling poverty there are in their own countries a handful of people who are rolling in riches and are heartlessly selfish, and control their governments.

It may not be impossible for the Democracies of Europe and America to crush Russia. But that will not be an end of the trouble. The amount of truth which Communism represents will make its appearance in their own countries. The only true answer to Communism is voluntary liquidation of capitalistic economy, and reducing their high standard of living and inviting people of densely populated countries to spread in the vacant regions of the earth.

But apart from this, why should U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. put at the disposal of one or another group their funds, weapons and technicians? If they really mean Peace in the world, the first thing each ought to do is not to trade in destructive weapons and not give their technicians to any outside country. Let both Russia and U.S.A. withdraw from Korea and Japan, along with their weapons and technicians and trainers. Let Koreans decide their quarrel without the

interference of a foreign power. It is hardly sufficient that the two Korean powers should stay inside their artificial border line. What is necessary is the abolition of the border line altogether by the unification of the country. If the Big Powers bear real goodwill towards the people of Asia (which, of course, includes India), let this policy of bisecting and trisecting every natural regional unit be once for all abandoned. Palestinians, Punjabis, Bengalis, Kashmiris, Indjans, Indonesians, Koreans have all had enough of partitions. If the Big Powers cannot use their talents to foster unity among the people of these lands, let them leave the people of each region to their own fate and resources. Let these people commit fratricidal warfare, if it is the only thing they are capable of. The U.N.O. must interfere not to maintain a seeming peace but to create real unity among the people of natural regions. If that is not possible, the second best thing is to allow violence to be confined within their natural regions. This is possible only by the Big Powers clearing out of Asia, and refusing to sell their arms and talents to the fighting countries.

Wardha, 3-7-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

DREADFUL TRAFFIC IN MONKEYS

Mr Wilfred Tyldesley, Secretary, of the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, 47, Whitehall, London, S. W. I. England, writes :

"It has been reported in Indian newspapers that an American is visiting your country in order to arrange for 1,000 monkeys to be sent every month to the U.S.A. for experiments respecting infantile paralysis. It has also been reported in British newspapers that American research laboratories intend to import about 300,000 monkeys during the next three years. The larger number no doubt includes some from India and the remainder from other countries. Many of the monkeys now travel by air via Britain. A few days ago it was reported that thirty monkeys in one cargo died of dysentery. These thirty were fortunate, for the others will suffer much more in the research laboratories of the U.S.A. The poor creatures also suffer greatly during road transport in India, especially in the hot season, and many of them die.

"This dreadful traffic has been going on for years, despite the many protests of humanitarians in India, Britain and America. I sent a letter of protest about a year ago to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, but received no reply. It seems that the mantle of Mahatma Gandhi has not fallen on his successor.

"Despite the years of experimenting on countless monkeys (not to mention other animals), no preventive or cure for infantile paralysis has been discovered, nor is there promise of any. Even if a cure could be found for artificially infected monkeys, it is most unlikely to be of use in curing the disease in humans. The only successful treatment known is that developed by Sister Kenny, and this had nothing to do with experiments on animals.

"I do hope that India will raise its voice in protest against the cruel traffic in monkeys. If any of your readers would like to have information on the dangers and uselessness of inoculation treatments based on animal experiments, I shall be pleased to send it."

While I associate myself with the above protest, I do not approve of such criticisms as "the mantle of Mahatma Gandhi has not fallen on his successor." In the first place, such remarks are hardly helpful. Mahatma Gandhi's mantle was so big that no single person could attempt to monopolize the whole of it to himself. Pandit Jawaharlal or for the matter of that, to the best of my knowledge, any one else, never pledged himself to carry out Gandhiji's ideas in every detail, and even while the Mahatma was alive, they often differed with him on many matters. Every one found in Gandhiji's teachings some very clear, new and important ideas, and accepted some of them whole-heartedly. They try to act upon them honestly, though necessarily to the extent of their own capacity. At the same time, it must be realized, that every one of them also dared to reject some of his teachings. One cannot be blamed for not implementing an idea, which one never accepted.

A great part of the rejection of Gandhiji's ideas is due to the influence which modern industrialism and science has cast upon us, as it has done upon the people of every country. In this respect the Western nations have given us the lead, and they have a strong hold on the Indian mind, in spite of the fact that Gandhiji and the Indian seers of the past had very clear ideas about the sins perpetrated in the name of science, health and industry. Consequently, some of us are at present so mentally constituted that it is possible that we may have to re-discover Gandhiji's ideas through a lead given by the West. Perhaps this might be a good process for the development of humility on both sides, and for the unification of the World. The Western countries will acknowledge their gratitude to Gandhiji and Gandhiji's countrymen will stand indebted to the West for helping them to re-discover Gandhiji and other great masters. This requires that very strenuous efforts should be made to create a sense of repulsion in the minds of scientists and industrialists for indulging in such traffic and scientific experiments. The cult of non-violence must spread so strongly in the West as to affect the policy of the nations; its replantation thereafter in India might yield greater results than ever before. Sent neatly dressed from the West, we might relish them better just as we used to relish British textiles made out of cotton exported from India.

The tragedy of this lies in the middle stage, which entails destruction of innumerable innocent lives. It is distressing, but not surprising. Man has always been the cruelest and dullest animal in the world. He has learnt tiny bits of goodness after perpetrating most heinous and reckless deeds. The satirical saying about King James I of England applies perhaps to most of us, so-called intelligent and learned men.

Wardha, 24-6-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE AND GOODWILL The Vedic Period IV

The 'eternal village' of India managed its internal affairs through the caste system, and through the caste system it dealt with any oppression from the ruling power or powers (M. K. Gandhi, *Economics of Khadi*, Navajivan Press, p. 6). 'India is really a republican country and it is because it is that, that it has survived every shock hitherto delivered. Princes and potentates, whether they were Indian-born or foreigners, have hardly touched the vast masses except for collecting revenue.'

The Indian village not only enjoyed political autonomy, it was also economically self-sufficient. It was 'a self-supporting and self-contained unit, exchanging only such necessary commodities with other villages as are not locally producible' (*Ibid*, p. 8).

This twofold independence is the secret of the eternal life that the Indian village has lived for thousands of years.

Describing the Indian villages as they were about 125 years ago, Sir Charles Metcalfe, an English official in India who gave mortal offence to his masters in England by 'his abolition of the restrictions on the press' (Vincent Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 671) wrote: "The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they can want within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds to revolution; Hindoo, Pathan, Mogul, Maratha, Sikh, English, are all masters in turn; but the village community remains the same. In times of trouble they arm and fortify themselves; an hostile army passes through the country; the village communities collect their cattle within their walls and let the enemy pass unprovoked. If plunder and devastation be directed against themselves and the force employed be irresistible, they flee to friendly villages at a distance; but when the storm has passed over they return and resume their occupations. If a country remain for a series of years the scene of pillage and massacre, so that the village cannot be inhabited, the scattered villagers nevertheless return whenever the power of peaceful possession revives. A generation may pass away, but the succeeding generation will return. The sons will take the places of their fathers; the same site for the village, the same position for the houses, the same lands will be re-occupied by the descendants of those who were driven out when the village was depopulated; and it is not a trifling matter that will drive them out, for they will often maintain their post through times of disturbance and convulsion, and acquire strength sufficient to resist pillage and oppression with success. This union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little state in itself, has, I conceive,

contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence" (Elphinstone, *History of India*, Murray, 1841, p. 120).

The condition of Indian villages deteriorated in every respect during British rule, but even so it charmed the foreign observer, as witness the following description from the pen of a British journalist H. F. Prevost Battersby, contributed by him to the *Morning Post* in 1906 (*India*, February 9, 1906, p. 68) :

"The life of India is essentially the life of the village, the people of India are in overwhelming proportions a village people, and their communities are, or at least were, the most attractive, the most complete, the most contented in the world. Within their self-sufficing confines trade is no vulgar source of profit for which men scheme and strive, but a calling, often a holy calling, handed down from father to son through the generations, each with its own unchanging ideals, its zealously-guarded craft. At the entrance to a village street, beside his wheel, which is only a wooden disc weighted with mud and spun on an axle, the potter sits, with dreamy fingers squeezing the clay to the shapes of his fancy ; on one side of him a brown heap of earth, on the other the frail children of his fancy waiting for the fire which shall fit them for use ; type, since man made pots, of the unchallengeable authority and detachment of the Eternal Potter. Further down the street, past the green and orange and salmon-pink piles of the grain sellers, raised but a foot from the ground, open to all that care to lounge and look, are the workshops of the brass and copper smiths, ringing all day to the sound of the hammer, and with the red breathing of a furnace in their depths. Hard by is the tinsmith, slowly grinding his amalgam in a mortar, while further on a woman with a *sari* drawn across her face watches the silversmith, with no tools but a hammer and nail, graving some shape of god or beast upon the bracelet cast from the silver she had brought him ; for his wife is the poor man's bank and on her, against the evil day, he hangs his earnings, a burden to which she does not object. [Here or there] the village may be distinguished by a special craft ; by carvers in ebony or ivory, blackwood or stone, by some famous maker of swords or worker in lacquer ; or a stall may glimmer with the brightness of glass beads and bangles. Behind the houses the looms will be at work, gay spaces of blue and purple and scarlet in the shadow of the green trees, on which the frames are hung and from which, as the shuttle is thrown to and fro, the scented blossoms fall upon the workers' fingers ; while further on the dyers swing from side to side across the width of the sunlit street some length of intense and dripping colour.

"As the afternoon wears on, the women make their way to the well, their robes rich as illuminated letters, brown waterjars upon their heads, there to loiter and gossip till the calm-eyed kine are driven lowing from the fields, with a silver trail of dust behind them. Then the sounds of the hammers begin to cease, a film settles on the red-eyed furnaces, the dyer hangs his last damp *sari* up, the looms are covered and put away and the village elders gather in the *chora* there to hear the latest news read out to them from the cheap daily sheets which circulate everywhere, to discuss recent judgments which have come to their hearing, and to shake their heads at the crops ; till the lights begin to shine in the growing darkness and the sound of songs—songs straight from the Ramayana or Mahabharata—rises from round the cooking pots upon the cooling air. That is a picture of village life all over India, a picture whose restful and contented charm cannot anywhere be bettered, but a picture of a life which is gradually ceasing to be, as the work of the hand craftsman is undersold and displaced by the cheaper, uglier products of the machine-driven West."

V. G. D.

ASHRAM ACTIVITIES

(By M. K. Gandhi)

(Translated from Gujarati by V. G. D.)

IV

Education

This word is here used in a special as well as the current sense. The Ashram experiment in education was a trial for us as nothing else was.

We saw at once that the women and children in the Ashram should be taught to read and write, and a little later on that there should be similar facilities for even the illiterate men that came to the Ashram. Those who had already joined the Ashram could not undertake to teach. If capable teachers were to be attracted to the Ashram, the rule of *brahmacharya* had to be relaxed in their case. The Ashram was therefore divided into two sections, the teachers' quarters and the Ashram proper.

Human beings cannot overcome their weakness all at once. As soon as the two sections came into being, a feeling of superiority and inferiority poisoned the Ashram atmosphere in spite of all our efforts to scotch it. The Ashramites developed spiritual pride, which the teachers could not tolerate. This pride was an obstacle in the attainment of the Ashram ideal and therefore an aspect of untruth as well. If *brahmacharya* was to be observed in its perfection, the division was inevitable. But the *brahmacharis* had no reason to think too highly of themselves. It may be that the *brahmacharis* who sinned mentally in spite of themselves were retrogressing while those who did not claim to be *brahmacharis* but liked *brahmacharya* were making progress. This was clear to the intellect but it was not easy for all of us to put it into practice.

Then again there were differences of opinion as regards the method of education which gave rise to difficulties in administration. There were bitter discussions, but at last all calmed down and learned the lesson of forbearance. This was in my view a triumph of truth, the goal of all Ashram endeavour. Those who held divergent views harboured no evil intentions in their minds, and were indeed grieved at the divergence. They wished to practise truth as they saw it. Their partiality for their own standpoint came in the way of their giving due weight to the arguments of their opponents. Hence the quarrels which put our charity to a severe test.

I have my own perhaps peculiar views on education which have not been accepted by my colleagues in full, and here they are :

1. Young boys and girls should have co-education till they are eight years of age.

2. Their education should mainly consist in manual training under the supervision of an educationist.

3. The special aptitudes of each child should be recognized in determining the kind of work he (or she) should do.

4. The reasons for every process should be explained when the process is being carried on.

5. General knowledge should be imparted to each child as he begins to understand things. Learning to read or write should come later.

6. The child should first be taught to draw simple geometrical figures, and when he has learnt to draw these with ease, he should be taught to write the alphabet. If this is done, he will write a good hand from the very first.

7. Reading should come before writing. The letters should be treated as pictures to be recognized and later on to be copied.

8. A child taught on these lines will have acquired considerable knowledge according to his capacity by the time he is eight.

9. Nothing should be taught to a child by force.

10. He should be interested in everything taught to him.

11. Education should appear to the child like play. Play is an essential part of education.

12. All education should be imparted through the mother-tongue.

13. The child should be taught Hindi-Urdu as the national language, before he learns letters.

14. Religious education is indispensable and the child should get it by watching the teacher's conduct and by hearing him talk about it.

15. Nine to sixteen constitutes the second stage in the child's education.

16. It is desirable that boys and girls should have co-education during the second stage also as far as possible.

17. Hindu children should now be taught Sanskrit and Muslim children Arabic.

18. Manual training should be continued during the second stage. Literary education should be allotted more time as is necessary.

19. The boys during this stage should be taught their parents' avocation in such a way that they will by their own choice obtain their livelihood by practising the hereditary craft. This does not apply to the girls.

20. During this stage the child should acquire a general knowledge of world history and geography, botany, astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, and algebra.

21. Each child should now be taught to sew and to cook.

22. Sixteen to twenty-five is the third stage, during which every young person should have an education according to his or her wishes and circumstances.

23. During the second stage (9-16) education should be self-supporting; that is, the child, all the time that he is learning, is working upon some industry, the proceeds of which will meet the expenditure of the school.

24. Production starts from the very beginning, but during the first stage it does not still catch up with the expenditure.

25. Teachers should be paid not very high salaries but only a living wage. They should be inspired by a spirit of service. It is a despicable thing to take any Tom, Dick or Harry as a teacher in the primary stage. All teachers should be men of character.

26. Big and expensive buildings are not necessary for educational institutions.

27. English should be taught only as one of several languages. As Hindi is the national language, English is to be used in dealing with other nations and international commerce.

(To be continued)

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