

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XIV. No. 22

AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, JULY 29, 1950

TWO ANNAS

QUESTION BOX

Government Help in Constructive Activities

Q. We appreciate your advice that constructive workers should keep themselves away from all political parties and group politics, squabbles and electioneering campaigns. But our governments have instituted several activities for the benefit of the people and set apart funds for such purposes; e.g., the welfare of Kisans, promotion of culture, health, *Ayurveda*, adult education etc. These activities form part of our own institutions also. The situation facing us (in Rajasthan) is one of serious factions between two political groups. Our regard for the Shastri (Government) group and Vyas group is even. But the atmosphere round about us is such that if we accept Government help, we are looked upon as pro-Shastri and if we decline it there is no doubt that our capacity to serve the people decreases for paucity of funds. May we accept Government aid?

A. In my opinion, constructive workers and their institutions should forget which party runs the Government for the time being. If under Government rules, it is possible to accept aid without being bound by unreasonable conditions or understanding, there is no objection to do so. The obligation to maintain proper accounts and to serve all people entitled to service under the grant impartially is a reasonable condition. But if it is expected that the workers or the institutions would vote for the Government group or assist it in election campaigns, or allow its officers to interfere in its day to day work, or carry on their activities strictly in accordance with official policy, or explain their conduct whenever called upon, or refrain from expressing their opinion upon or criticizing any Government act, would be unreasonable stipulation.

In an atmosphere surcharged with power politics, misunderstanding is perhaps unavoidable. It has to be put up with. Our own conscience must be clear and we must not be prepared to sacrifice our freedom of action and expression of opinion. We must not be partisans either of the Government group or any of the opposite ones. Hatred, there can be for none. But offering truthful and non-violent resistance to evil is our bounden duty.

Wardha, 14-7-'50

(Translated from Hindi)

Vedic Rituals In Government House

Q. The newspapers give an account of the ceremonial of tree-planting to the accompaniment of *Vedic* rituals in the Government House at New Delhi. Is it proper for a secular State like ours to allow all that? Our State is pledged to do away with caste distinctions and to represent all communities equally. Was it right for the President in the context of this pledge to perform a religious ritual in a State function and in accordance with his individual *Sanatana* Hindu *Vedic* faith?

A. We do not seem to have correctly grasped the meaning of a secular State. A secular State does not mean that no religious rites of any particular denomination can be held in the Government House or in a State function. The only condition should be that they should not be such as must necessarily hurt the susceptibilities of the members of some other community. If the President is a *Sanatani* Hindu, should he suspend as long as he is the President, the performance of religious rites in his family in his own ancestral way? However, if at present there is a recitation of the *Vedic mantras* in the Government House, in the event of a Parsi or a Sikh or a Muslim becoming the President, there will have to be a suitable change in the form of the ritual. A Jain President will do it in the Jain way; that is, there will be equal regard for all religions, and no particular religion will be given the status of a State religion, or be patronized by the State. Shri Rajendrababu can celebrate *Dashhara* and *Diwali* in the Government House at New Delhi; Shri Homi Modi the *Pateti* and *Jamshedi Navroz* at Lucknow; Shri Asaf Ali *Id* in Cuttack, and Shri Maharaj Singh the Christmas Day in Bombay. Not only that, if Shri Rajendrababu believes in the performance of the *Satyanarayana Puja* and performs it on any occasion of public rejoicing, or Shri Homi Modi observes a *Jashan*, it cannot be objected to. A secular State does not mean that holders of office in the State should be restrained from observing their religious ceremonials. If it is to mean otherwise, the Government House will become a suffocating place for the follower of a particular religion. In public functions where the person asked to perform a function and the institution or host

organizing it belong to different faiths, a form acceptable to both would have to be followed.

Wardha, 12-7-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

I read Principal S. N. Agarwal's interesting note on the "Re-orientation of Cottage Industries" in the *Harijan* of May 27.

I find that in most discussions about cottage industries, whether for or against, a very important aspect which is usually lost sight of is with regard to the objective. What is our object in desiring to promote village or cottage industries? What do we want village industries for? These questions, I think, are more important than any discussion as to the degree of decentralization or the limit of mechanization. If we only want village or cottage industries to produce goods for the market or to feed large-scale assembly plants as in Japan or some other westernized countries, we would be creating a body without a soul. If we produce for the market, all sorts of questions, like protection from the competition of mechanized industries, reduction of costs, increase of so-called 'efficiency' etc. crop up. In my humble opinion village or cottage industries cannot survive in this context.

We must make it clear that we want village industries not simply because India happens to have a large unemployed population at present, not simply because decentralized methods of production in themselves are preferable to centralized methods, not simply to produce goods indiscriminately for the market but because *we consider organizing production for self-sufficiency to be of paramount importance in order to minimize the chances of exploitation and thus root out violence from society.* We want to relate production to direct consumption and not mainly to the market or to sale. We want village industries in order to be able to build up society on the basis of non-violence. All questions about the extent of mechanization, the nature of the tools or raw materials, the so-called technical efficiency and competition from mechanized industries etc. must relate themselves to this fundamental objective.

Unless we emphasize this aspect of village economy, namely, the achievement of self-sufficiency, we will not be able to organize the same for the establishment of a non-violent society. The example of Japan is bandied about, day in and day out, as one of successful organization of village and cottage industries. But we know that the so-called village or cottage industries of Japan were nothing more than a different type of economic organization from the one prevalent in western countries and one better suited to the temperament of the people and to the exigencies of the situation. The ultimate objective was not different. All small-scale indus-

tries of Japan were as much the props of a militarist regime and of capitalist economy, as the large-scale and highly centralized industries of other nations. They could not prevent the defeat of Japan or save the country at a time of crisis from economic ruin. This I think very clearly illustrates the truth of the point brought out by Shri Vinoba in his article on "The Problem of Disarmament" in the same issue of the *Harijan*, namely, that it is not necessary that "where there is village economy, there will definitely be non-violence."

Hence, if we want village economy and village industries for the purpose of organizing a non-violent society, we must emphasize every time the objective, namely, that of organizing production for direct consumption, i.e. for self-sufficiency. Unless we do so, we are likely to drift from our path and fall a prey to attractive slogans like the one of "new orientation" for cottage industries raised by Dr S. P. Mookerjee, the then Minister for Industry and Supply, or the one of "increased production" raised by Dr Trone, the American 'expert'. We need not close our eyes to the advantages conferred by science or mechanization. But we must relate all these to our main objective, namely, reorganization of society on the basis of self-sufficiency in order to minimize the chances of exploitation.

Jaipur

SIDDHARAJ DHADDA

THE MISSING LINK IN ECONOMIC THOUGHT

A very interesting discussion went on for a few weeks in the columns of the *Harijan* since its issue of June 10, on *Sarvodaya* or Gandhian economics. The discussion was much more fundamental and material than what might appear in the eyes of industrialists and orthodox economists. The pathetic short-sightedness of these people is born of over-emphasis on merely the economic or material values of life, almost to the neglect of or blindness to the human and spiritual values, which being not material, are immaterial to them. But as all history shows, these values can be ignored only at the cost of peace and tranquility of the human world and the individual. What is immaterial becomes really the material factor, as mankind does not live by bread alone. The orthodox economic and industrial view of life and economy misses this very vital point.

In India we have at present to solve the problems in an economy of want. We as a people are underfed, underclothed, underworked and underworking, idle, indolent, mentally lazy, and ignorant of the dignity of labour. The economy of want that sets in upon us in its wake is, therefore, nothing surprising. We have to remove this condition of want, idleness and poverty. The call of this immediate good is more pressing and looming before us. But the call of the ultimate good is none the less there and always speaking to us in its invisible though

very material way; the human heart can never cease to hear it. It may be, we as a people should first see the plenty before we feel this inner need as a group.

The machine is believed to remedy the conditions of want. Is the belief well-grounded? Is it true? The modern machine, while it produces more goods, thanks to modern science and technology, displaces still more hands at work, creating the problems of unemployment, markets and the tug-of-war between trade and tariff both in and out of the country. The unemployment or under-employment that follows the use of the machine is often named 'leisure', which is allied with the needs of culture and progress, which again is more a product of machine and worries than art, skill and peace of mind. The machine in short establishes a vicious circle wherein the position of vantage is all its own, and the satisfaction of human needs, culture, progress, etc. gets entwined in its wheeling gamut.

Again, it helps grow conditions in which wealth and economic power is totally lodged in the hands of a small number, whether they are owners, capitalists, financiers, experts, administrators, or managers. The economic life of the community is handed over bag and baggage to these few, who create an order very aptly described by Tolstoy as the 'Slavery of our Times'.

The psychological and cultural problems created by unearned or not-well-earned and idly passed leisure are patent to our age; and the machine surely cannot understand them, much less solve them. Thus machine-manufactured plenty, on the one hand, goes with the economic rule of the upper few, and on the other, with the human cussedness and an inwardly devastating insatiety which seeks useless palliatives in drink, gambling, prostitution, free love, modern cinema etc. This is the price that human beings have always to pay if they miss what I have described as the ultimate good as against the immediate goods. This is not to argue for an order of want and poverty. Nor do I suggest that it is more in tune with the "missing link" in the creation of a truly happy economic order. Crushing want or overpowering plenty are but the two sides of the same coin. Not merely the first, but the second also is a problem demanding solution, as ultimate human satisfaction lies in realizing an economic order which is not unmindful of the ultimate human good. Not to see this is the peculiar blindness of our machine age and the social and economic order of the governing few.

In vivid contrast to our country, America stands as one which may be very well said to be the heaven of the imagination of the industrialist and the economist. Can it be said that the Americans have, through the machine, solved the problem? They are in the clutches of the economy of the over-flowing plenty. And how do they feel under it? I may better quote an

American writer, who very clearly defines the issues:

"Every culture has its aspirations. In ours the technological emphasis has been predominant. We must amass quantities of goods and frequently we test well-being by material affluence. Progress comes to be measured by the advance in motor-car output, in electrification, and in the sale of refrigerators or of bottles of milk. We tend to judge other peoples by the standards which we emphasize and frequently fail to recognize that there are different ideals of attaining a good life. Consumer education must face the problem of the divergent nature of consumer wants.

"To what extent should aesthetics be emphasized? To what extent material accumulations? To what extent religion? Should mankind reach out for the suburban bungalow and the two-car garage or emulate Gandhi? What place should be given to ornamentation and to conspicuous display as a symbol of achievement? How should energies be divided between work and leisure? Should our societies encourage or discourage great inequalities in income?

"This field is one which has not been tilled extensively by the social sciences. Our education has commonly assumed the validity of our culture and has not sought to probe into its content. We want more goods, and even more complex goods. It has been deemed the function of the economic order to provide these.

"The role of consumer education must include that of fairly presenting the alternatives facing the consumer in the hope that the individual will be less influenced by the traditional patterns and the strong conditioning influences that surround him. If, as Thorstein Veblen alleged, we are spending our lives in a fruitless attempt to emulate those of greater affluence, it is essential that truer values be discovered.....

"While we cannot dogmatically say that we need a steady advance of all goods and services, we can try to discover how the economic system may afford a minimum of serviceable goods so that the populace will have at least a level sufficient to allow an assessment of the values that lie in optional channels of consumption. Moreover, we can enforce rules of equity which will correct gross inequalities."*

The machine, at best, can give more goods and nothing more or nothing better. This creates an order for which the machine is surely responsible. The problem is, how to square the machine with this its ugly by-product? Or is it a problem of squaring the circle? Or fitting in a round peg in a square hole?

And more: the economy born of the machine is really and ultimately not the economy of prosperity, as the upper few in power fondly lull us to believe, but it is an Economy of War. The world today lives and groans under that economy, and hankers to have one of real Peace. That is the ultimate good which is sadly missing. Like the missing link of biology, this is also a missing link in the economic and social view of life today. Will the upper few in pelf and power heed to it?

19-6-'50

MAGANBHAI DESAI

* *Consumer Education* (p. 5-6). Ed. James E. Mendenhall and Henry Harap, 1943, D. Appleton—Century Co., New York and London.

HARIJAN

July 29

1950

HINDU EVACUATION OF EAST BENGAL

After my last article was sent to the press, I received a letter from Shri Satishchandra Dasgupta not to take an alarmist view of the situation in East Bengal, assuring me that I need not have been scared away by the criticisms on my article, "War Mania", which in his opinion erred rather on the side of mildness than otherwise. It should be remembered that Shri Satishbabu does not speak like a man living in a safe fortress. He lives and works in Noakhali, one of the very difficult districts of East Bengal. He now works alone with his own assistants, — all those from other provinces, who had been working with Gandhiji, having returned to India for one reason or another. And Noakhali boasts of some dangerous and influential Muslim communalists, too strong to be curbed by the East Pakistan Government. Some of his co-workers were harassed and persecuted in various ways. Still he believes that the situation has improved. There is also similar news from a prominent advocate of Dacca. Of course, there are difficulties in the way. They cannot be minimized. The greatest difficulty is how to make the middle-class Hindu adopt a bolder attitude. It must also be remembered that all his fear does not originate in East Bengal alone. The behaviour of the Hindus towards Muslims in Bharat itself is a factor which cannot be ignored. Who can assure him that nothing will happen in Bharat to excite the Muslims of East Bengal? It is not possible for the people to take a strictly judicial view and judge the Muslims and the Hindus apart, making each community responsible for its own acts, irrespective of the behaviour of the other in Bharat or Pakistan. For, deep down in the heart there is a common conviction that, partition or no partition, the whole country is one.

So I shall consider this problem on the assumption that the situation is still very unsafe for the average peace-loving timid Hindu householder to live in East Bengal, and that the average Muslim has taken it for granted that Hindus must not remain in Pakistan, except on very humiliating terms. Even then, I strongly feel that the evacuation of East Bengal by the Hindus is no solution of the problem and should not be thought of.

I would like to apply three tests to a solution suggested for an intricate problem. Is the suggestion in accordance with Truth, or the spiritual law? Is it in accordance with Good, or the moral law? Is it in accordance with Utility or the material happiness of the people for whom it is offered? Evacuation of East Bengal by the

Hindus, whether accompanied with a similar transfer of the Muslims to Pakistan or unilaterally, is not in accordance with Truth or the spiritual law. If the term spiritual law is repugnant, call it natural law in its highly evolved and best form. One can understand enterprising men leaving their ancestral homes in search of better material prospects and colonizing elsewhere. They would be natural voluntary migrations. But to be compelled to leave the ancestral home because of the adoption of different forms of religious, social, economic, or other man-made institutions, is an indication of a departure from Truth somewhere. There must be something unspiritual and demoniacal, extremely artificial and unwholesome in the system, organization and training of either those compelling migration, or those compelled to migrate, or of both. If Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims feel that they cannot live together and become a harmonious organic society, and if they think that it is so because of their religious and social organizations, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam must all be deemed to be tainted with seriously false principles, ideas and customs, and their basic principles must be regarded as requiring a thorough revision. They must be deemed to have failed as deliverers of God's message, if as the result of accepting them with zeal, their followers have become enemies of one another. Either their messages have lost something in their delivery or have been vitiated with Satan's interpolations. Migrations have brought to light in a very unmistakable manner the defects of all these religions and the social institutions based on their authority. For this reason, if for nothing else, no state must be founded in the name of any particular class, creed, race or culture; and the mere fact that the majority of the people in one are Hindus, in another Muslims, and in a third Sikhs, should not be made a reason to develop it into a state based on or dedicated to the culture, religion, or principles of that majority. The principle of evacuation or expulsion of any community offends against the fundamental law of the unity of mankind, and therefore it is not a solution, but a wicked and wilful play with the fortunes of the masses. Thus, the suggested solution does not satisfy the first test.

The suggestion fails also to satisfy the second test of being Good, that is, in accordance with the principles of morality. The migrations have been accompanied with murder, rape, abduction, arson, loot and other barbarous acts perpetrated on both sides, and with displeasure towards not those who have extolled and encouraged such acts, but towards those, who have worked for peace, amity, patience, and unity. They reveal the utter immorality of the idea. I beg my critics' pardon if my language appears harsh when I say that in the matter of migrations, several members of the wealthier and upper classes of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Kashmir, the two Punjabs, Sind, the two

Bengals, U.P., Delhi, etc. sought their own safety or better political and economic prospects and let down their masses. Speaking as a Hindu to Hindus, we proved ourselves cowards in a two-fold manner. We committed crimes, which for several centuries the Hindus were regarded as never capable of. In fact, on several occasions we outdid the Muslims, of whom it is usual to speak as if they were always capable of them. Gandhiji's gospel of non-violence had not in the least acted as an inhibiting factor. And still, — and this was the second form of cowardice, — we fled without offering the least resistance. Let us realize that — even if in a minority — our numbers were still considerable, and we had greater stakes in the provinces evacuated by us. But the principle of 'safety first' for oneself, and the caste mentality which has created in us a callous disregard for the fate of the poor and the lower strata of our society, made us flee at the sight of danger. Our conduct shows that however much we may talk of Hinduism and take pride in its great principles we are not a society, but a crowd of individuals hardly better than house-flies. And the flight showed that the middle-class Hindu is capable of being easily outraged, and so those who remain behind become special targets of attack in a subsequent disturbance. If there had been sufficient spiritual and moral urge and fellow-feeling in us, there need not have been the partitions and the hostile acts and feelings thereafter.

Let us now see if the evacuation passes the third test, namely, the material good of the displaced persons. No one can say a word in its favour. The problem of rehabilitating them is still standing defiant. Only a handful of people have become tolerably rehabilitated. The physical, moral and economic condition of most of them is pathetic beyond description. To invite further batches of them is as cruel as to ask them to plunge into the Padma with a stone tied to their neck. It is easy to express sympathy for those who are still in East Bengal. But, as a blunt critic wrote once in the *Kaiser-i-Hind* of Bombay, it is lip-sympathy. He pertinently enquired, to what extent have the different provinces and particularly the Hindus there helped the refugees assigned to them to be rehabilitated? Are they not regarded by the local shopkeepers and others as a nuisance rather than fellow-beings in difficulties? Is there an appreciation of the fact that they are victims of the Independence India enjoys?

So the suggestion does not pass the test even of Utility or the material happiness of the immigrants.

To my mind a spiritually and morally right solution is the only one which should be sought, even if in the immediate future it means material losses, unhappiness, even fear of extinction. Even if the Pakistan Government were as fanatic and the Indian Government as weak as they are depicted, the Hindus must stick to their

place and resist their expulsion — even at the risk of being exterminated to a man in the attempt. If those East Bengal Hindus who have migrated to India have the courage, they might also return, determined to stay there even at the risk of their life. Non-violent resistance would be better, quicker, safer and, being more moral, capable of winning the sympathy of the world — including the Pakistanis themselves. But, if somehow it appears difficult or of doubtful value, violent resistance would be preferable to cowardly submission to humiliation or expulsion.

It was a breach of the spiritual law to have made the partition; it was a double breach to have partitioned the Punjab and Bengal along with India; it was a breach of the moral law to have migrated and compelled migrations in a brutal manner; on the practical material side it was purely invitation to and infliction of unnecessary misery on innocent masses. Both India and Pakistan have to see and accept the truth. It is no use Pakistan resenting that Indians are not reconciled to the partition, or India being afraid to utter that word, lest Pakistan may take it ill. But, at the same time, India cannot utter that word as long as within India herself there are strong communal and linguistic forces asking for all sorts of partitions and divisions. I cannot but reiterate the eleven principles enunciated by me in my article, "All-India Unity" (March 12), and developed in subsequent articles as the way to the right solution of this intricate problem.

Wardha, 17-7-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

FLOOD HAVOC IN CUTCH AND SAURASHTRA

Heavy rains during the last week have wrought a havoc in parts of Cutch and Saurashtra. When misfortune visits a family, it is the women who have to suffer the most; in a calamity befalling a people, it is the poor who are worst hit. They live in mud or grass huts generally built on low-level grounds, which cannot resist heavy showers. Even if they do not actually collapse they get filled with water wetting their few clothes, damaging their small store of food, and leaving no dry place to occupy. They have to take shelter on trees, or on isolated high-level grounds, which become small islands, and pass a number of days without food and sleep, until succour comes, or the water recedes sufficiently enough to enable them to return to their former place.

At the time of the Bihar earthquake, Gandhiji had the temerity to express the unmodern opinion that such great upheavals in nature are the result of man's sins, and he was ridiculed for having said so. In an air-plane crash or a railway accident, it is readily accepted that man had committed a fault somewhere. Either the controller of the movement or some other person had made a mistake or played mischief somewhere or there had been a defect in

the manufacture of the machine. But when such a statement is made in connection with a major accident in nature, even men of religion shake their heads incredulously. Is man in any way responsible for such natural calamities?

Perhaps there are still regions in the world, where people have never heard of the atom bomb and its destructive capacity. If a bomb were burst upon them from a height beyond the clouds, the people would take it as a natural calamity like the falling of a meteor. They would never suspect that man had anything to do in the matter. But we know that their acquittal of man would have been the result of their ignorance.

In the ultimate analysis, all creation and every movement in the universe is the outcome of the will of the Spirit. The capacity to will is inseparable from the Spirit. It would not be Spirit, if it would not will. "God said, 'Let there be light, and there was light,'" says the Bible. "The *Sat* (Ever-existent) perceived, (and said), 'Let me be manifold,' and it produced light," and so on, says the *Upanishad*; and at another place adds "*Atma* (the Spirit) is *satyakama* and *satyasankalpa* (What It desires and wills comes true)." These are not mere flights of poetic imagination. They are conclusions reached after close scientific observation and study of the Self and the world.

We cannot say when and in what form or manner a particular item of will is first conceived of in the physical universe. Some one gets its first glimpse and if he is also the first to reveal it to the world, he is regarded its author. But very often more than one person have seen it simultaneously or independently. In the beginning it looks like a wild wish impossible to be realized in the physical world. But gradually it does seem realizable and is ultimately achieved in the world of reality. Take for instance the modern scientific achievements. We read in the *Mahabharata* descriptions of weapons of warfare as powerful and strong as the modern ones. They speak even of the *kalpataru* (the tree which gives what you will as soon as requested). Even if it cannot be proved historically that such weapons existed at the time, there is no doubt they had entered the realm of man's conceptions and desires. And in every age, there were people who made earnest efforts to make these desires take concrete shapes. Their efforts necessarily followed the methods of achievement then known. The achievements of modern science are fruits of wills and dreams conceived several thousand years ago.

Similarly there have also existed such wills as "Truth shall triumph", "Evil shall bring destruction", "When the load of sin becomes too heavy, the world will drown in water, a dozen suns will heat the world simultaneously, there will be twelve years of continuous draught,

followed by an equal period of incessant rain. Earthquakes, fires, heavy dust storms, typhoons and floods will constantly show themselves up as divine punishment for evil." These inauspicious thoughts are forces, which, too, have their influence on the universe. They gather momentum when people are in despair and see no way out. The belief that gradually they have their effect on the material energies of nature may not be discarded as a mere superstition. Law, i.e. the rationalized explanation of any phenomenon, is ultimately will—whether good or evil, wise or crude, regular or spasmodic.

It has been often observed that in an atmosphere of all-round and heavy moral degeneration, men of intense religious and moral inclinations lose the desire to live. The suicide of Sane Guruji is a recent instance. Even the ever optimistic and dauntless Gandhiji lost his long-cherished desire to live for 125 years after the partition and the communal killings. It was impossible for him to commit suicide. But the desire that he should no longer remain a witness to the evil which surrounded him fulfilled itself in a manner befitting his whole career and conceived by him years ago.

The point to emphasize is that evil acts and inauspicious and unhealthy desires of men have the capacity to bring the destructive forces of nature into action. The correctives against these are cleanliness of life and dealings, repentance and prayer (entertainment of healthy and auspicious desires). Sympathy, aid, service etc. of the victims of calamities generally are the outward symbols of return to clean life and repentance.

Let no one believe that since Cutch and Saurashtra have been hit by nature, it must be only these regions, where evil has increased and that charity and penance must therefore proceed from there. God knows no such partitions and political divisions. With him the entire world is a unit, or a tiny part of a unit, and the good or evil in any corner of it is the good or evil of the whole world. The reform of life and the aid to the afflicted is a responsibility of every one.

Gujarat (in which I include Saurashtra and Cutch) has a reputation for largeheartedness on such occasions. I hope, it will keep that reputation.

Wardha, 22-7-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

New Publications

STRAY GLIMPSES OF BAPU

By Kaka Kalelkar

Pages viii, 153 Price Rs. 2 Postage etc. As. 8

GANDHIAN ETHICS

By Benoy Gopal Ray

Pages xii, 70 Price Re. 1-0-0 Postage etc. As. 2

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD

CATTLE-KEEPING IN CITIES

I take the following from the fourth annual report of the Bombay Suburban District Village Industries Association :

"The work of removing carcasses of dead cattle of the Bandra Division was taken away from our hands in 1949, but it has been re-entrusted to us during the current year. We are also entrusted with the work of removing the dead cattle of the Are Milk Centre. The latter work has just begun. Having regard to the modern methods of work and sanitary and medical facilities set up in this centre, we expected that the cattle mortality here would not be very great. But we find that it is not less than elsewhere in proportion to its cattle population. Besides the death of grown up cattle, that of calves is still greater. At times we collect as many as 10 to 15 calves every day, and the general average is expected to come to between 5 and 10 per day. In view of the heavy expenditure (some crores) incurred in establishing this centre, the heavy mortality of the calves must be regarded a grave matter for consideration."

These figures must be regarded as shocking. Thoughtful people have urged from the very commencement that there should be no cattle stables in cities. Rupees one crore and a half are said to have been sunk in the construction of the Are centre. Several people who had made a study of the problem opined that this was a huge waste. No satisfactory explanation was given for persisting with the scheme. The maximum number of cattle that can be kept here is said to be 15,000. Even if the average death rate of calves comes to 4 per day, and that every cow or buffalo yields a calf every year, it means that not a single calf born in the centre will grow up to be a full animal. Those who eat beef slaughter the cattle for food. But the citizens of Bombay kill cattle and calves for simply milk. This is an instance of inhuman brutality man becomes guilty of, when the supply of every human need is made a part of industry and commerce.*

Does not this condition suggest that the Are centre must be removed from Bombay in spite of the heavy amount spent upon it?

The soft leather slippers and purses made from calf-skin are undoubtedly very much appreciated by the fashionable men and women of Bombay. And perhaps they compliment themselves for using them without incurring the sin of cow-slaughter. But I doubt if these articles should be considered as made of *ahimsak* (non-violent) leather. Mutton is not taboo in one of the Buddhist sects, but it must be of an unslaughtered goat. So, they say, the pious follower ties up the mouth of the goat and allows it to die of suffocation after a few minutes of intense pain. The articles made of the leather of the above calves are not more *ahimsak* than the meat of such a goat.

K. G. MASHRUWALA

(Translated from Gujarati)

OFFERING OF YARN HANKS

[Last December, when Shri Narandas Gandhi was at Sevagram to attend the meeting of the Trustees of the A.I.S.A., there was, among other topics, a discussion about the ways and means to meet the expenditure of the Ashram. Until now the Ashram has run on donations and gifts of friends and wealthy people who had deep regard for Gandhiji and his Ashram. Never was any public appeal made for it by Gandhiji.

It is not impossible to maintain it in the same way hereafter. Moreover, the Gandhi National Memorial Trust can also shoulder the responsibility for it, it being one of the responsibilities expressly imposed upon it under the Trust. But with a view to make the Ashram a self-supporting institution, it was suggested that it should go in for some additional land in order to meet its budget. There was also a suggestion that the scope of some of the Ashram activities might be reduced. But among these suggestions the one placed by Shri Narandas Gandhi before Shri Vinoba, Jajuji and members of the Ashram was an original and important one. The idea is capable of being adopted by similar other institutions doing public service. It will serve as a step in the direction of getting free from the bondage of money economy. Under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi an experiment was made in yarn currency at Sevagram. But on account of the 1942 movement, it had to be abandoned. The present suggestion of subscriptions in the form of yarn hanks is a further step in the same direction. I reproduce below the main principles of his scheme.

— K. G. M.]

To meet the requirements of the Ashram,

(1) No donations in the form of money should be accepted;

(2) No contribution in money form even from the Gandhi National Memorial Trust should be accepted;

(3) The Ashram should not increase its landed property, even for becoming self-supporting;

(4) No activity that is now being carried on in the Ashram in accordance with the original objects, should be wound up without a special reason;

(5) Voluntary presents of yarn hanks from friends and well-wishers of the Ashram should alone be accepted for the requirements of the Ashram; and the Ashram should meet its expenses out of such presents only.

Looking to the present requirements of the Ashram about 50 to 60 thousand yarn hanks would be needed for the yearly expenses of the Ashram. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that looking to vast numbers of friends and admirers of Gandhiji and the Sevagram Ashram, so much yarn would be easily forthcoming from the public. But with me the question of meeting the expenses of the Ashram is not so important as the deep implications and significance of the idea of carrying on public institutions on contributions of yarn.

Gandhiji called the spinning wheel the symbol of non-violence. It was conceived as the Sun round which other constructive activities revolved. The practice of gifting yarn hanks will not only spread the message of the *charkha* in the villages throughout the country, but tie the hearts of millions of people to the Ashram

with the thread of love and impress upon them the message of the *charkha* as nothing else will.

If a man spins for five minutes only every day, he can easily spin 12 hanks per year and obtain the internal satisfaction of having laboured out of love for the Ashram. Of course it is not obligatory that the minimum donation should be 12 hanks. One can send even one hank. A village, an institution, or a union can also collect the yarn and send it to the Ashram.

I believe my suggestion has appealed to the inmates of Sevagram Ashram but it might take time before they finally and fully accept it. In the meanwhile I appeal to all the workers of the Saurashtra Constructive Committee to resolve from today and spin for some time daily for the Sevagram Ashram. And they should not rest content with spinning personally but move in the villages and ask others to do the same.

I hope the people of Saurashtra from the Premier to the peasant will contribute their share in this sacred *yajna*. Those who make a resolution to spin for the Ashram may please send their names, addresses etc. to the Saurashtra Constructive Committee, National School, Rajkot.

15-1-'50

NARANDAS K. GANDHI

(From Gujarati)

COLOUR FOR VANASPATI

Shri Satishchandra Dasgupta is as great a scientist as he is a great *Sarvodaya* worker. In the midst of his manifold activities, he took up the challenge of finding a suitable material for colouring *vanaspati*. He has named two substances which satisfy the conditions of health, easy detection and difficult removability.

One of the colours suggested by him is carbon ground to a particular fineness. An addition of 1 : 14,000 (or 1 grain in 2 lb. of *vanaspati*) gives the hydrogenated oil a faint grey colour. The colour is less dark than a new corrugated iron sheet. It can be got rid of only by passing the mixture through a filter-paper — a process which cannot be done on a large scale. The Ministry was satisfied that it passed the prescribed tests, but thought that the colour was not pleasing to the eye and would be unacceptable to customers.

Thereupon Shri Dasgupta experimented again and suggested another colour — red oxide of iron, a substance which is cheap and easily available in the market. An addition of 1 : 1,000 (7 grains to a pound) gave the *vanaspati* a red tinge, as if a little dry chilli powder had been mixed with it. But an addition of even 1 : 5000 (7 grains to 5 lb.) would also do. This gave to the *vanaspati* a faint rosy tinge, such as is often given to ice-creams. It was in no way repulsive to the eye. Shri Satishbabu claims the same qualities for it as for carbon. The opinion of the Food Ministry on this is awaited.

This is in answer to the opinion of the experts that no satisfactory colour was available. On the merits of the question Shri Satishbabu says :

"Government should have the courage of sacrificing the revenue of Rs 4 crores, in the interest of public health, and to save the cow. Otherwise the income of Rs 4 crores will be more than counterbalanced by the loss of the cow, resulting in the loss of milk, *ghee* and the bullock and, so, food and agriculture also.

"But we have lost the capacity of right thinking, and have become victims of inertia. For instance, it is very important to make use of non-edible oil seeds; but we make no effort in that direction. Instead of inspiring us to new forms of creative activity, Independence has made us indolent. Take another instance; the stone of *jambu*, if given in a crushed form, is a very nourishing food for cattle. So also the stone inside the kernel of the mango-seed. It can be eaten even by man after giving it a good wash. But we do not feel interested in such experiments."

Shri Dasgupta opines that to the extent *vanaspati* is needed for soap and other industries, its manufacture might be permitted provided it is made unfit for human consumption.

"If red oxide of iron in the proportion of 1 : 1000 is added, it cannot be mixed with *ghee*. So please consider this point.

"I, too, have heard about adulteration of *vanaspati*. It is possible to adulterate it with cheap paraffin oil. It is also used as an adulterant of cocoanut and other oils. *Vanaspati* can be made so as to melt at high or low temperature as desired. It is possible to get some *vanaspati* made which melts at a higher temperature, and mix white oil in it when in a liquid form. This can be done by traders easily.

"You have rightly objected to the giving of an artificial aroma to *vanaspati*. Doing so would lead to the destruction of the manufacture of *ghee*."

He writes further,

"A strong propaganda is being carried on in favour of *vanaspati*. Agents have been asked to take signatures from people on forms which say that since *vanaspati* is cheaper than *ghee*, its manufacture should not be prohibited. One of the advertisements says that if *vanaspati* was prohibited, *ghee* would become three times more costly. I wonder how the Food Ministry allows such false advertisements to be published. Please refer to this in *Harijan*."

I do not know how this calculation has been arrived at. But price is not the essence of the question. The important thing is Truth. What should the people eat, and what should the Government and the Industry make them eat? This is the question they have to answer.

Wardha, 17-7-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

CONTENTS	PAGE
QUESTION-BOX ... K. G. MASHRUWALA	185
THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF VILLAGE INDUSTRIES ... SIDDHARAJ DHADDA	186
THE MISSING LINK IN ECONOMIC THOUGHT ... MAGANBHAI DESAI	186
HINDU EVACUATION OF EAST BENGAL ... K. G. MASHRUWALA	188
FLOOD HAVOC IN CUTCH AND SAURASHTRA ... K. G. MASHRUWALA	189
CATTLE-KEEPING IN CITIES ... K. G. MASHRUWALA	191
OFFERING OF YARN HANKS ... NARANDAS K. GANDHI	191
COLOUR FOR VANASPATI...K. G. MASHRUWALA	192