

# HARIJAN

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TWO ANNAS

## CALL OF THE AGE

(By Vinoba)

1

### Bhakti is Service of Man

I have no doubt that India has saved herself so far and will also save herself in future, by the way of *bhakti*, i.e., devotion to God. But we have clearly to understand what *bhakti* means. God has given us thirty-six crores of brothers and sisters. The responsibility to serve them devolves upon us. Let us therefore devote ourselves to their service realizing that it is God Who is standing before us in so many forms. The highest way of *bhakti* is surely shedding all narrow personal self-interest. The one characteristic of the *bhakta*, i.e., the devotee of the Lord, is that he reduces himself to zero and believes that whatever exists around him is the manifestation of God Who is Perfect. The *bhakta* should always bear in mind that all men and women who live around him are but so many forms of his Master and that he is their servant. This is true service, true surrender as the servant to the Master, and indeed this is true *bhakti*.

### 'Heaven on Earth'

I must however warn you that if one who has devoted himself to the service of all around him also begins to feel that he was doing something big, something particularly meritorious, and so begins to cultivate pride within himself that he is superior to his fellows on that account, then surely his service of his fellow-men will not be *bhakti*. You know how Hanuman constantly served his Master, Ramachandra, how he reduced himself to zero before Him. Even so, the way of one who will completely efface himself in the service of those around him will be known as the best form of *bhakti*. Such devotion and complete surrender of oneself to God will lead to one's welfare here in this world as also in the other one. The problem facing us today is how to bring together and canalize in one direction the various capacities in all the men and women who inhabit this land, because if it could be done this world will transform itself into heaven. It is believed that men go either to heaven or to hell when they leave this world. But one can even experience heaven or hell here, while living in this world itself.

If in the village where we live we were to quarrel among ourselves, to exploit each other, to harass one another, and to keep it dirty, surely such a place will be but hell. While moving about in our land I had the misfortune to witness that in many of our cities as also in our villages inhabitants pass their lives in a veritable hell. Wherever you turn your eyes you see nothing but dirt in these places. Cleanliness is rare. So, just think what place would come to the lot of those who make a hell of the earth around them! If we kept the whole of our village tidy and clean, if we did not allow human and animal excreta to foul the atmosphere by leaving it open to the sun, if we were careful enough to cover it with dry earth, we would, in return for our labour and care, have abundance of good manure, we would have our surroundings clean and tidy, and we would, by our own effort, create

heaven around us. Our care and labour would also result in yielding good crops. Further, if we loved one another in our village, if we were ready to die in the service of each other, the life of our village will be surcharged with love and we would transform it into God's own residence.

Please do not be misled into the false impression that God resides in some particular corner of this universe. Remind yourselves of what Lord Shri Krishna did when he resided in Gokul. Did He not collect all His fellow-cowherd boys about Himself? Did He not ask all of them to bring bread and butter from their several homes and share all that was so collected with all of them? This was how He taught everyone to love his or her friend and brother and so transformed Gokul into God's residence. Later on He went and lived with others in Dwarika and set up a new township there. But He did not become its ruler. That position He gave to his elder brother Balarama. He did not allow Himself to be crowned as an emperor but crowned Dharmaraja Yudhishtira as one. Arjuna was a staunch devotee of His. But He was so full of love for Arjuna that He served him in various ways, indeed became his charioteer and drove his horses. Lord Krishna has thus by His deeds and His life taught us the way of *bhakti* as also how it is to be practised.

### Bhoodan—A Form of Bhakti

If our asking for land from those who possess it for distributing it among those who do not was viewed as transacting some worldly business and not as service of the Lord, it would be a misleading view of *bhoodan*. It would surely have been a different matter if we dispossessed the owners of their land by force and distributed it to others. But when we lovingly persuade the owner to part with his land and thus cultivate in him the urge for *bhoodan*, it becomes as much an act of service of our fellowmen—in truth, service of God, and an act of religion as in its outward form it is a worldly transaction.

### Compulsion of the Call of the Age

Wherever there is love and sacrifice you have the essence of religion; that also is the way of *bhakti*. Let us realize that this is the demand of the age. And what the age demands of us as a duty becomes the creed of the age. The compulsion of the creed of the age is so strong that no one can afford to ignore it.

Anandapur (Orissa), 16-2-55

2

### Self-sufficient Village Government

The heart of India throbs in her small villages. Most of the peculiarities that make Bharata are to be seen in them. The people living in our villages have certain virtues but those virtues are being undermined nowadays in various ways.

The highest virtue that these people in our villages show is love. But as money has begun to occupy a big place in our lives the love in the hearts of our villagers is being attacked from all sides.

God has endowed every human heart with love. But those of us who gather together in the cities hardly know each other. They go to these places and live in them solely for the purpose of earning money. Men and women living

In the same neighbourhood are rarely acquainted with one another. The larger the city and the greater the value set on money the less of love between its residents and lesser the evidence of mutual acquaintance between citizens.

But the villages are small. People there live in mutual love and besides they have been living together from ages past. If something happens in one home in the village the rest come to know of it very soon. If anyone were to fall ill in some homestead the whole village learns the news. A boy is born in some family and the whole village shares the happiness. This conduces to mutual acquaintance as also to love between them. But the atmosphere of the cities is slowly sneaking through into the villages. So the villagers too have begun to set great value on money. And where money enters love runs away.

#### Love cannot Thrive along with Money

To what use can money be put? It cannot be eaten for nourishment, nor can it be drunk to quench thirst, still less can it be worn to protect the body. But people have now begun to say that if they could but secure money they could secure the whole world to themselves; why, they feel they could have God Himself at their command. In this vicious atmosphere surcharged with the value of money the oil-man begins to assert that he will not buy his shoes from the local cobbler, giving as his reason that they prove costly; he insists that he will buy them from the city. The cobbler rejoins by refusing to take the oil-man's product; he says he too finds it very dear and would buy his oil from the oil-mill in the city. And both of them tell the weaver that as cloth from his loom proves costly they would go and buy their cloth from the textile mill. And the weaver in his turn tells both of them that he cannot afford to go in for their products, their shoes and their oil, for they prove very dear and that therefore he will go to the city to purchase his needs in oil and leatherware. This vicious circle has led to a sorry state of affairs in the villages. All industries and channels of gainful employment open to the villagers have been destroyed. Only farming and literally nothing else remains to them. And what sort of employment does farming give? The farmer gets work for four or six months in the year. And if the rains fail, even this short employment is lost to the villager employing himself on land.

This is why I have been telling the villagers, 'Brothers, be warned, live in mutual co-operation and harmony and labour to produce each others' needs.' If we in the villages supplied and bought our needs from the villages themselves they would all transform themselves into so many contented and self-sufficient families united in their labour and love. Let our villagers see to it that they supply their needs from among themselves. Let them have their own cloth, their own sugar in the form of health-giving *gud* and everything else. Thus will the villages be enabled to grow their own food, to have milk and ghee in plenty from their own cows, to grow vegetables and fruits for their own use, to have their own oil pressed from oilseeds grown by themselves, to have their shoes and other leatherware manufactured by their own labour, to have their own houses built from bricks baked at their doors, to have their own cloth from their own spinning wheels and their own looms, to have their own vessels and other earthenware, and also to have their own tools made by their own artisans.

#### Let Us Realize Our Duty to Our Villages

What however do we actually see today? Cloth is imported into the villages from outside, the imported cloth is sewn into clothes elsewhere, and villagers have begun to supply their needs by buying readymade clothes. The city-dwellers have money but these village-folk have none. So they are compelled to sell away the good food they grow in exchange for cash. They manufacture ghee but are forced to deprive their children of it. Why do they not give the ghee produced by themselves to their own children? Surely, because they have somehow to have money. Do not their children relish ghee and do they not like to keep it for them? But surely they must have money. And

why do they want money? They require it because they have to buy almost all their needs for cash; they have to buy their cloth to cover themselves with; they have to buy oil to supply their undernourished bodies with fat; they have to buy shoes to protect their feet against thorns and the burning hot dust of the roads they walk on. This is why I am endeavouring to persuade our villagers by telling them, 'Brothers, now is the time for you to wake up and to begin to take pride in your villages, to realize your duty to your villages, to cultivate *gram-dharma*.' I point out to them that their villages have land. But some few in the village have most of it while some others have none. Try therefore, I tell them, to realize that the whole village is but one family and I ask those who possess land to part with it and to give some of it to those who do not have any. This will lead to the spread of brotherly feeling among you, I exhort them. It will make your villages strong, I persuade them. I also warn them that from now on they have to manufacture the things they need in the villages themselves and that if they allowed the vices and the evils of the cities to enter the villages the latter would soon be ruined.

#### Let Not the Atmosphere of the Cities Enter the Villages

We see that our villagers have learnt to smoke *bidis*, even cigarettes. If such habits and vices entered the villages, they would be utterly ruined and their character would be undermined. Do we not see the villagers quarrel among themselves and take recourse to courts in Katak and Puri to get their disputes settled? It is up to the villagers to make up their minds here and now that they will not carry their internal disputes to be settled elsewhere outside their village, because that leads to their ruin. Such quarrels only fill the pockets of the lawyers and the quarrels do not end; they tend to lengthen and increase. I would warn my brothers, the villagers, to see that the evils from the cities find no entry into their villages.

Ramachandrapura (Orissa), 17-2-55

(From the original in Hindi)

#### LAND AND ARTIFICIAL FERTILIZERS

(By Louis Bromfield)

In the old days when a farmer (in U.S.A.) "wore out" a farm he could go West and take up another on virgin soil for a dollar an acre. That day is past. Today's frontier lies not in some distant state or country but right here at home, at our feet. On 50 per cent of our farms production per acre could be doubled by better farming, the check of erosion and run-off water, the use of lime, organic material (green or manure), a proper land-use and fertilizer programme.

Most "worn-out" farms are not really worn out at all. They have simply been farmed so badly that the fertility of their soils has become unavailable to plants. Much of the fertility is still there, but the crops cannot touch it. Unless the land is eroded down to rock or hardpan, most such farms with good subsoils can be brought back into good production. It is possible today to find farms in the older parts of the United States once called "worn out" which, by the expenditure of moderate sums of money and the use of common sense and knowledge, have been brought to a higher productivity than they ever had even as virgin soils.

Actually we have learned more about soils and their fertility in the past 20 years than in the whole history of the world before. Today we

know how to *make* good soils — better and more productive soils than all but three or four types of soil created by nature herself. The only limiting factor is the cost.

Much of our land has been farmed only eight or nine inches deep for a hundred years or more. In many cases this eight-to-nine-inch layer has been eroded away. In other cases it has been completely depleted through leaching and failure to replenish its fertility, either by commercial fertilizer or through the natural mineral fertility which lies deeper down in the subsoils.

Here the deep-rooted grasses and legumes are of immense importance. They tap that deep natural fertility and bring it to the surface in the form of roots, stems and leaves. A single clump of broom grass or orchard grass will root down as deeply as three or four feet and develop a root system containing as much as 300 miles of fine hairlike roots. Annual sweet clover (hubam) will penetrate to a depth of four to five feet in one season and sweet clover (Madrid) will penetrate as much as 10 to 12 feet in two seasons in soils where the water table is not too high. Alfalfa roots have been traced to a depth of 46 feet, and a depth of 15 to 20 feet is common.

These deep-rooted legumes and grasses are the cheapest form of fertilizer, cheaper even than barnyard manure, because the labour costs involved are lower. Not only do they bring the subsoil's natural mineral fertility to the surface (together with leached-down commercial fertilizers); they also create great quantities of organic material in the form of roots and (if ploughed in) stems and leaves. The legumes too can create out of the air as much as 400 pounds of nitrogen to the acre. And they tend to create better drainage and to check erosion. In most cases these grasses and legumes can be grown on worn-out land by the expenditure of reasonable sums on lime and commercial fertilizer as a "starter".

I have heard a good farmer say that a blind man can tell good soil merely by walking over it. He meant that you can recognize good productive soil by the feel. It does not feel like cement. It does not feel like sand. It does not feel like muck. It feels like what it is — well-drained soil that is full of organic material taking its part in the vital cycle of birth, growth, death, decay and re-birth. In such soil there is a whole universe of life at work — of molds, fungi, worms, bacteria and acids working to convert the inert, inorganic minerals into forms in which they are available to plant life.

At one time it was thought by some that commercial fertilizer was all that was necessary in order to farm profitably and to get big yields. Today not even the commercial-fertilizer manufacturers would support such a belief. We have had to learn the hard way that a commercial fertilizer, used exclusively, will not in the long run

produce profits and fertility. Worse, it can actually destroy the fertility of the land and create serious problems of erosion.

When the farmer ignores the element of organic material, all the processes by which mineral fertility becomes available are disrupted, and soil acquires a cementlike quality, refusing to drain in flat land and to absorb moisture on rolling land. As the organic content declines, so do the living elements of fungi, molds, earthworms and bacteria. Land can reach a point at which ten dollars spent on commercial fertilizer will not produce one dollar's worth of effect, because without moisture and the natural processes of living soil the fertilizer is simply not available to crops. Commercial fertilizer is of the greatest benefit in providing highly available mineral fertility, in replacing the minerals carried off in the form of grain, meat, milk and bone, and in re-starting the natural processes of fertility. But it is of maximum value only when used in conjunction with abundant organic material, moisture, good drainage and those processes which take place in a truly living soil.

In the treatment of soil, modern agricultural machinery has played a great role. Today, in the Great Plains wheat country, the mold-board or turning plough has virtually disappeared in favour of disc or field-cultivator ploughs.

Rough-ploughing and trash-mulching have in some areas replaced the old conventional clean-ploughing, harrow-fitting operation. The new way checks erosion, improves drainage, conserves all rainfall in semiarid regions and actually builds better soil. The chisel or subsoiler and other new implements break up hardpans and permit the deeper penetration of roots.

These new methods have added hundreds of thousands of dollars to farm income. Most significantly, they have brought to our priceless heritage, the land, an increasing and permanent fertility.

(From the *Reader's Digest*, March 1954)

[We in India who are being encouraged to use commercial fertilizers must be forewarned from the above, coming as it does from the land of the Dollar. The surest and the truest line of work is not the Sindri factory way, but the one of using all organic waste, plant leaves etc. for preparing compost manure. It is the most scientific thing to do and is perennial source, provided by Nature.]

15-2-55

M. P. J

By Mahatma Gandhi

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# HARIJAN

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1955

## BASIC TASK FOR NATION-BUILDING

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

In order to mark the inauguration of its successful programme of Prohibition the Bombay State, from the sixth to the thirteenth of this month, celebrates its Fifth Prohibition Week. That the Planning Commission has earnestly taken up the question and a committee on its behalf is considering ways and means of implementing the programme all over the country is a distinct advance in the direction of the success of the cause. It would be in the fitness of things to go over the entire question on this occasion.

1. It does not yet seem to be fully realized that Prohibition is an all-India measure touching the welfare of the people. The Constitution has given a directive regarding it to all the Governments of the country and they cannot ignore or disregard it as a mere fine looking, high sounding platitude put on paper. In fact it has immediate significance here and now.

2. Because Prohibition is a cause for the welfare of society as a whole the ancient leaders of religion and culture in India have insisted in their teachings since times immemorial through popular education that the use of intoxicating drinks and drugs is sinful. As a consequence the evil habit has been reckoned as want of culture or good upbringing amongst over ninety per cent of our people and thus uprooted. Even if it has persisted in the rest of the ten per cent, it has not been considered a reputable or decent habit; indeed, it has been regarded even by them as a shameful weakness.

3. During the British regime this ancient cultural tradition of ours was as if shown to be something wrong. The British are a drink-loving people. They do not regard the habit of drinking as a sin as we do. They are a nation who organize meetings of entertainment and dinners in which drinking is the central item. They were then naturally tempted to make drinking a source of excise revenue and wines and drinks were given a place of honour in the system of taxation in their country. And as the character of the rulers determines the quality of the life of the ruled the evil of drink entered into the life of various classes of our people and it became one of the bases of the income of the State. This was how drinking found a reputable place in the administration of India.

4. This was a reactionary or perverse trend which was entering the cultural and social life of India. By associating the task of countering the trend with the struggle for the nation's free-

dom Gandhiji supplied a corrective to a serious cultural setback that had set in.

5. If temperance or drinking in moderation has any meaning or reform value in a society where the majority or almost everyone drinks it is for the leaders of such a society to say. But in a society where an insignificant number of people drinks and at the same time reckons it a vice it has absolutely no such meaning. In the latter total Prohibition is the only true way to reform. Nations who pinned their faith on temperance or moderate drinking as a corrective for the evil, after long experience, are coming to learn that total Prohibition is the only true and effective principle of reform. Their experience is worth our attention.

6. Where Government undertakes to supply intoxicating drinks to the people drinking gets legal sanction. Such a state of affairs denies that assistance of the law to reformers which they have a right to. In fact the reverse happens! This defect can be remedied only by Government enacting a Prohibition Law. This clearly means that expecting people to give up drinking on their own and Government running shops for vending intoxicating drinks under law, both cannot go together. Government has here its duty to perform, which it must, that it should not run shops or booths for vending liquor. On this basis only could the efforts of the people to reform be sound and hope to succeed. This line of argument leads us to the conclusion that enacting a Prohibition Law becomes the natural and inevitable duty of Governments who seek to establish a Welfare State.

7. This is why revenue from drink proves itself of no value. More, by deriving revenue from the people in this manner we positively harm them. What shall we say about hard earned incomes of the people being turned to their own triple ruin—economic, domestic and moral too? Even according to the science of taxation this method of deriving revenue from the people is degrading and should be given up. If for no other reason only on this account this way to revenue should be closed.\*

\* Deriving revenue by ruining the people is serious enough. But a more serious reason for condemning this source of revenue obtains particularly in our country. The revenue comes from only ten per cent of our population. That ten per cent happens to be the poorest, that is, such as cannot afford to pay taxes, and should, therefore, in all fairness, not be taxed for revenue. Besides, the revenue collected from them is used for the service and benefit of the whole people. During the British regime this particular revenue was utilized for education! Now, under the new regime, it is being demanded for purposes of development! This fact clearly indicates that for this purpose revenue should be collected from the rich. If we derive income for the State from drink this does not happen. Such a state of affairs conduces to the advantage of rich classes. Greedy of the advantage they enjoy; these classes are the loudest in opposing Prohibition in the name of illicit distillation of liquor. This fact also deserves our attention. For an illustration see how a year or two back the imposition of the sales tax by the Bombay

8. That the Taxation Enquiry Commission did not express a definite opinion on this aspect of the question is thus tantamount to their having shirked their responsibility. Taxes should not and cannot be imposed without a social purpose in view; taxes can and should be imposed only for the welfare of and in the interest of the people as a whole. Following this logic the Commission was expected to condemn the revenue derived from liquor and to recommend that it be given up. It is good, however, that while considering the problem set for their enquiry, from what I have seen of the substance of their discussions in the daily papers, their approach is not opposed to Prohibition. The Commission deserves congratulations for it.

9. The excise revenue from drinks and drugs goes to the States. It is estimated to be about fortyfour crores of rupees. It can be roughly stated that about four times that amount is being spent by the people after intoxicating drinks. This makes about 1,500,000,000 or 2,000,000,000 rupees in all. For one thing as a result of Prohibition this huge annual wealth remains in the pockets of the people as so much purchasing power. And for another Government directly distributes rupees fortyfour crores mainly among the poor classes and thus secures their welfare. So this amount can on no account be called a deficit in the budget revenues; the States should in fact view and realize that this money is spent towards health and welfare of the people.

10. If the purchasing power of the people were to increase to the total amount of rupees calculated above Governments can easily make up the welcome deficit resulting from giving up the excise revenue through other measures of taxation. I would here remind our State Governments of the famous saying of the British statesman, Mr. W. E. Gladstone :

"Do not speak to me about revenue from strong drink. Give me a people who do not squander their substance on strong drink and I will find an easy way to raise the necessary revenue to carry on the Government."....."The ravages of drink are greater than those of war pestilence and famine combined."

11. All State Governments should wind up the excise department and open a Prohibition department instead; and they should put it in charge of a minister who has faith in the cause.

12. By what it has achieved during the past five years the Bombay State provides a fine illustration of the fact that loss of excise revenue is not a disadvantage but on the contrary a positive advantage. By measures of taxation such as the property tax, the sales tax and estate duties, the State was in the main opposed by the rich industrial and trading classes. This opposition clearly demonstrated in the end that it was directed against the basic fact that the sales tax was filling up the breach in revenue resulting from giving up the excise revenue from drink.

State has not only been able to make good the deficit on account of the loss of the excise revenue and to balance its budget for the last five years but has also been able to provide for an amount of about rupees hundred and fifty crores for development works according to the Five Year Plan. It should also be noted here that the amount is the largest provided for the purpose by any State. After this clear demonstration no one in India has a right to argue against Prohibition in the name of loss of revenue and to mix up two distinctly demonstrated facts for the sake of interested propaganda.

13. A question is being asked: Would it not be better to transfer the subject of Prohibition which according to the Constitution is at present in the list of subjects allotted to the States to the list of subjects allotted to the Centre? The idea behind this suggestion arises from a psychology of shirking responsibility and therefore deserves to be condemned. It is also suicidal in another manner. Such a transfer would result in slowing down the reform and also in giving a pretext to the States who are taking up the reform one after another to cease to do so altogether. The logic of the psychology behind the suggestion ultimately leads to the idea of abolishing the States and of having only one Central Indian Government which will administer its provinces. Viewing the history of the course of progress India has made till now in politics and administration the idea proves not only improper but reactionary.

14. It has become a fashion to raise the bug-bear of illicit distillation of liquor as an argument against Prohibition. Those who howl in the name of this bug-bear conveniently forget that illicit liquor was in vogue even when the licit was vended at the bars and booths. Besides, American experience teaches us that illicit distillation of liquor is on the increase in the United States of America though the law of Prohibition has been repealed!

15. Figures showing the extent of the evil are in the nature of things unavailable. One could merely have a guess or rather speculate regarding them. Such guesses yield highly exaggerated figures. Truly speaking they serve only to scare the people and to create a psychology against Prohibition. The wild guesses also serve as a pretext to a State to shirk its duty to enforce Prohibition.

16. The law of Prohibition should be given effect to in the same manner as other laws. It does not do credit to the machinery of law to blunt its sense of duty and sense of responsibility by shouting at the people that they do not offer their co-operation.

17. The common complaint heard in the States where the law of Prohibition is in operation is that the class of the officers of the Government which is expected to do the work does not do it

faithfully ; indeed the complaint goes further that the class itself is involved in illegal practices. It is up to the Governments concerned to remedy the defect in the working of the law in time. To this end Government servants and ministers of Government should have faith in the cause of Prohibition. Governments can well consider to have a pledge from them for the purpose.

18. The idea of introducing Prohibition piecemeal in the States gradually and by stages or districtwise is unsound. It must be introduced in a State as a whole and fully. This would obviously facilitate the administration of the law in the State.

19. That as the administration of the law of Prohibition is new to all parties concerned, it has to be vigilantly amended whenever necessary should not be deemed an objection against the law. It should be realized by all concerned that it is inevitable. The experience of the State of Bombay would prove valuable to other States in this regard.

20. It is not proper that the army and such other classes are sought to be exempted from the operation of the law of Prohibition. On the contrary Prohibition is sure to do immense good to the army and should be considered as such.

21. Organized institutions of the people like caste should consider the cause as their own and should constantly and vigilantly apply themselves to popularize Prohibition.

22. Small hand-industries can be as useful in aiding the addict to free himself from the habit of drinking as entertainment. Work by the hand has great capacity to soothe strained nerves.

23. Prohibition entails unemployment mostly in the case of the profession of tapping palms for toddy. Such unemployment can be met with by starting work for supplying *nira* as a health-giving drink to the people and for manufacturing *tad-qua*. All natural wealth in the country should be fully utilized for the benefit of the people. Vigilance against *nira* being converted into and used as toddy should surely be cultivated. But the mere fear for *nira* being put to such unlawful use should not be allowed to thwart the production of real wealth.

24. Just as we have built up a tradition of culture in society against crimes like stealing, so we should also build up a cultural tradition against crimes regarding the law of Prohibition. The task devolves upon those who devote themselves to popular education. Such education will lead to a decrease in the number of addicts for no new ones would then add themselves to it and the old ones would either be cured or be finding their way to a better world.

25. To finish the task of bringing about Prohibition fully it is necessary that the whole of India should undertake its responsibility with

faith. If the whole of India set itself to the task in the spirit of executing a mission we could make the necessary arrangements for it in three or four years. Unless we cultivate faith and patience we cannot hope to fulfil the tasks which are basic to the building up of our nation, such as Prohibition, Khadi, Village Industries and Basic Education. These are the main elements of planning our country's future order on a true socialistic pattern.

23-3-'55

(From the original in Gujarati)

## HOW TO INCREASE NATIONAL INCOME

(By V. M. Kothari)

Since 1947, after the attainment of Freedom, attempts have been made in our country to give greater employment to the people and to increase our National Income. The Indian Government inaugurated the First Five Year Plan in 1950, with this purpose. The period of the First Plan will be over in 1956 March. So preliminaries for the Second Plan have been begun, all over the country. Under the circumstances, it is necessary that the aim of the Second Plan be made more explicit and the new plan be conceived with a broader outlook.

The following opinions are worthy of consideration, in this connection :

"In the first place, it has to be recognized that production *per se* is not an end. Increase of production has necessarily to be planned for, in a manner, which is in harmony with the second object of increasing the volume of employment, and which can be achieved without detriment to the third objective of securing better distribution." (V. L. Mehta in *Harijan* of 5-2-'55)

"What is really wanted is a plan that will deliver to the poor section of our people, whose need is first and greater, the new wealth that may be produced under the national Five Year Plan. The plan should particularly see how wealth that is aimed at to be increasingly produced distributes itself." (M. P. Desai in *Harijan* of 22-1-'55)

Recently, Shri Chandulal P. Parikh, M.P., has brought out a booklet *Towards Doubling National Income* in which he has considered this problem in detail. While doing so, he has not allowed his connection with Textile Mills to come in his way of forming proper opinion in favour of Home and Village Industries, in the broader national interest. He has presented his opinion with facts and figures, a short summary of which I attempt to give below :

1. The contribution made by the small establishments and hand trades is Rs 950 crores in our national income of 10,010 crores, while with regard to the factory establishments, although they produce articles worth about 2,500 crores, an amount of only 690 crores is calculated to be their contribution to the national income.

2. Next to agriculture, small establishments and hand trades provide the largest employment to 115 lakhs workers in our total working population of 1432 lakhs.

The present employment of 29 lakhs in factories, large and small, is only 2.1 per cent of our total working population.

3. With all our progress of industrialization, the big factories cannot employ more than 60,000 persons a year, while 18 lakhs of persons come into the employment fold every year.

4. Instead of total employment of 49 per cent of the population in 1911 and 1921, we have reduced the total employment to 40 per cent in 1951.

5. Out of our working force of 14.3 crores, 10.3 crores are employed in production in agriculture. They are able to find work for five to six months in a year, and for the remaining six to seven months, their energies do not function for production. We are apt to underrate the seriousness of this partial unemployment of the rural millions, in comparison with that of the urban areas; but the first is not less serious than the latter, though the latter may figure more in print and papers.

6. Emphasis is laid on the increased cost of production and the inferior quality of cottage industry products. It is forgotten that in reducing the cost of production, the factories are employing one person instead of ten and they are careless as to what happens to the remaining nine persons.

Although, the cost of production will be 20 per cent to 25 per cent higher for the cottage scale products, the advantage will be the increase in the buying power of those who will find employment. It will not matter if they have to increase their budget by Rs 30 per year, if they are able to increase their incomes by above Rs 150 to 170 per year, by the employment afforded through the cottage industries.

In course of time, both cost and quality will also improve.

7. Some industries cannot be carried on a cottage scale from the very complex nature of their manufacture. The advocacy is only for such industries as can be carried on a cottage scale. Vested interests mix up these two arguments in order to avoid or side-track the issues.

8. In a planned economy, production should be organized for local consumption. The processing of agricultural commodities, viz. milling of cereals and pulses, oil crushing, gur making etc. should be carried on in villages on small scale. If we do so, a lot of cross transport will also be saved.

9. The wages in the urban areas are Rs 3 per day and the employment is for the whole year. In the rural areas, the wages are Re 1-6-0 a day and the employment for many is for five to six months only. It is much better that for all additional production in certain industries we engage ten persons at Re 1-6-0 wage on cottage scale than continue to employ one person at Rs 3 wage in a factory.

10. The acid test of solving the problem of unemployment will be to offer eight annas wage

for local works programme, and if we have not adequate funds for that, we should find some other occupation for them, and offer them minimum eight annas for a day's work.

11. The big establishments have a limited scope for providing employment even with a rapid industrialization of the country. With systematic development of small and cottage industries, we are likely to provide employment to three times the number employed at present and thus contribute three times their present share in the national income, within a period of less than twelve years.

12. The following measures should be taken, if we really desire to encourage small-scale and village or home industries:

(a) A cess on the competing large scale units should be levied, as it is done in the case of mill-made cloth, and thus try to equalize prices of the products of cottage industries and the factory.

(b) Exemption or reduction from sales tax should be given to goods produced in cottages.

(c) Adequate financial assistance and technical guidance should be given and technical schools and work centres should be established.

(d) Assistance should be given for establishing industrial co-operatives.

(e) All assistance and guidance should be given for improving the technique of production, though the production be on small and village scale.

(f) The various industries should be demarcated into large, small and cottage scale, in order that the weaker man's field is not encroached upon by the stronger one.

(g) Preference should be given for purchase of such indigenous products, both by the Government and the people.

If the Second Plan is conceived in this light and a regular economic policy is laid down for the encouragement of small and village industries, lakhs of people will get employment and the national income will, no doubt, increase thereby to a greater extent than in the First Plan. It is expected that, by following a policy as shown above, the national income will be double in the next twelve years. By following any other policy, total national income may increase to some extent, but it will not be well distributed among the toiling millions and the problem of unemployment will not be solved.

(Adapted from Gujarat)

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## ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND GOVERNMENT CONTROL\*

(By D. V. Potdar)

The Union Government has published the Report of the Secondary Education Commission. Some time before this, they also published the Report of the University Commission. These two comprehensive Reports naturally deal with almost all important subjects connected with Secondary and Higher Education in India. Both the Reports are full of wise counsel and sober guidance.

When, however, I begin to reflect what powers, what opportunities, what resources and what freedom the Secondary Teachers possess to realize the very commendable aims and objects described by the Secondary Education Commission, I have to confess, I am sorely disappointed. Look at the Codes, Rules, Regulations, Orders and you feel yourself like a chained prisoner. Where is the freedom? Where the incentive to try and experiment? On the other hand you are constantly held down by fear lest you transgress this order, or violate that resolution. Text-books have not only to be got approved for content, but also for type, printing, cover, number of pages and price! Fee-rates have to be also sanctioned; freeships and half-freeships also must be within prescribed limits; the school holidays have to follow the lists published; limits of age, limits for the size of the class, plans for school buildings, the gratuities, pay, pension, provident fund, leave, are all regulated from outside; admissions to school controlled; school accounts and registers must conform to such and such pattern; and what not? All controlled, all regimented from outside. If you do not conform to the same, you are doomed. Not only do you stand threatened with a cut in your grant-in-aid but your recognition itself may be withdrawn. Rather than face such ordeals, common sense orders otherwise. People quietly submit and the caravan continues its march. This surely is not the way to make education a living and vitalizing force in the country. You cannot build up personality under such depressing conditions.

Lest I may be misunderstood, let me assert that I am not arguing against Government control. Far from it. A true Welfare Government has its responsibility and it must not abdicate. It must come forward to fulfil it with courage. In the field of education it can exercise its authority in the following directions. One of them is the positive way wherein the Government will themselves start and run ideal educational institutions. These have obviously got to be directly controlled by the Government. Through these Government institutions the Government should endeavour to place before the country the

\* From the Presidential address at the Bombay State Secondary Teachers' Conference, Ahmednagar.

pattern of education they think best. Thus by actual demonstration they should exert to stimulate people to emulate them. Another way is to help institutions satisfying Government standards and ideals in the most liberal manner. Of course, the tax-payers' money rightfully belongs to all and has to be justly and fairly distributed. But whatever we may say, in practice it is bound to be somewhat discretionary. At best a just Government may establish a Fair Common Council consisting of very respectable, experienced and impartial experts and follow their advice. Besides there would be a set of general rules and after such inquiry and inspection as the Government may think necessary, funds may be released for grants-in-aid.

The Government have another great responsibility to discharge. It is the maintenance of Law and Order in the country. Activities of a subversive nature lead to lawlessness. Hence strict discipline must be ingrained among students of all categories. Anything calculated to affect general peace and order has to be properly dealt with. This I consider to be the negative side or way in which Government can work and exercise control. But beyond this they should have no right to interfere with the freedom to be enjoyed by the managers of schools. They cannot refuse recognition, merely on the ground of religion or sex or colour or caste, or non-conformity to Government pattern. Where Government finds any case of cheating, or unsocial, illegal, immoral act, or subversive activities, or danger to peace and order, Government should bring the offenders to book, prosecute them and deal with them under the Common Law. The right of association is a fundamental right and must hold good in the case of educational institutions. But mind you, friends, mine is not a plea for all freedom and no control, but a plea for just freedom and just control.

Unless such freedom becomes assured, there is no likelihood whatever in my opinion of revitalizing our Secondary Education, enabling us to get from it real results and a true fulfilment of the ideals held out before us.

By Bharatan Kumarappa  
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