

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

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TWO ANNAS

REFORM OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

[From a speech as president of the fifth session of the Gujarat Secondary Teachers' Conference at Navasari, Feb. 12-13, 1955.]

I

I am conscious that this is not a secondary education but secondary teachers' conference. Not only your insistence but your practice that the conference is not a trade union deserves commendation. I congratulate you on this insistence.

It is a self-evident truth that teaching or education ultimately depends on the teacher. That the educative process cannot suffer mechanization or rationalization in spite of various devices of educational aids and methods is obvious. The profession of teaching, that is of imparting education, will always remain a living human process in human society. It is therefore natural and inevitable that we as a conference of secondary teachers have been discussing and considering problems of secondary education.

Need of Basic Reform in Education

It is natural that since Independence our people have begun to feel an acute hunger for reform and reanimation in all fields of national activity. It becomes inevitable as a consequence of the country's constitution being democratic and based on universal adult franchise. That the life of our people which had been suppressed for centuries has now taken the road to all-round progress within a few years is surely a matter of pleasure. And it is a matter of joy that we can hold our heads high with legitimate pride on that account in the commonwealth of the nations of the world.

This assembly of teachers does not need to be reminded that the field of education occupies a place of primary significance in our national life. We are glad that it has begun to be readily recognized as such for the progress of the nation. Clear signs can be observed that the planners of our national development have begun to devote their attention to the subject.

Original Principle of Reform

I must however confess that we have not yet been able to bring in any originality or contributed any special view to this field as we have done, for instance, in the field of our national foreign policy. I am one of those who believe that we should do it. And for this reason: our

problem of education has assumed a peculiarly ugly shape after a period of slavery extending over a century and a half. Besides, Gandhiji has given us at the right moment a revolutionary view of the problem and by adopting it we can basically reform our whole system of education. Educationists the world over have welcomed and commended that view. The larger task of reconstructing of our entire system of education on that revolutionary basis devolves on us. The sooner we as teachers realized that it was as much our responsibility as of the governments in the country the better for all concerned.

Reports of Secondary and Higher Education Commissions

Reports of Commissions appointed by the Central Government to consider the questions of the reform of secondary and higher education are before us. Some of us were wondering whether steps would be considered to give effect to the recommendations in these reports or whether they would receive the proverbial treatment of being shelved in the pigeon-holes of the Government secretariat. Signs are visible that the fear was groundless. It has been announced that the Second Five Year Plan would include measures to give effect to some of the recommendations in these reports. The importance of the reform of the secondary stage has been specially mentioned in the announcement. Workers in the field of secondary education deserve congratulations on this achievement.

You all know that the Minister of Education in the Central Government, Maulana Azad, has made two or three specific suggestions and we have further been given to understand that the framers of the Five Year Plan would provide for requisite finance. It is obvious that these suggestions will have far-reaching effects and would bring about significant changes in our system of education.

The following suggestions have been made in this behalf and State Governments as well as universities have begun to consider steps for their implementation:

1. To extend the period of high school courses for a year more and to reduce the period of college courses for the bachelors' degrees like B.A. and B.Sc. to three years.

2. The high school course to begin after the previous universal and compulsory course

extending over eight years for education of children between the age of 7 and 14. And

3. That a new type of high school with a multi-purpose curriculum be started all over the country.

Field for State Governments

It cannot be said that the administration of secondary education has followed a uniform pattern everywhere in the country. It is true that as the accepted aim of secondary education was to serve as a feeder to institutions for higher education and to keep the English language in the centre of the curriculum to that end these two items may be said to form together the common feature of the secondary education system over the whole country. But Statewise variations are to be seen on such items as number of standards, number and stages of the subjects taught, authority holding examinations and such others.

The function of the administration of secondary education is included like that of the administration of primary education in the province of State Governments. It is therefore likely that differences are to be seen in the details of the systems prevailing in various States because of the peculiarities of their circumstances. But the reforms and changes now contemplated do not merely touch the external administrative set up for the system but as a matter of course touch its very basis and inner content. This sort of fundamental reform is also essential because, as I said in the beginning, the task before us now is one of bringing about a revolutionary change in our entire system of education.

Three Essentials of Reform

It would be but proper if I recounted the three essentials of the change contemplated, in the words of the report of Mudaliar Commission itself :

1. "We have to bear in mind that secondary education is a complete unit by itself; that at the end of this period, the student should be in a position, if he wishes, to enter on the responsibilities of life and take up some useful vocations."

2. "We are fully aware that the scheme of Basic Education, which has been accepted by Government as the approved pattern at the stage of mass education, covers the age group 6-14."

3. "Every high school student should take one craft. "It will be one of the core subjects common to all students, whatever the diversified courses of study that they take."

I am sure it will be obvious to all of you that the reforms recommended above affect some of the fundamentals of the present system. They would mean :

1. That the high school will not now merely remain a place for gaining entrance into the universities and for feeding them ;

2. That the function of the high school will be to carry on further the universal Basic Education imparted to children between the age of six and fourteen and to supplement it ; this would mean that the universities will not henceforth enjoy that overweening superiority over the secondary schools which they do today ; and that the high school should now realize that its func-

tion is to shape the minds of and impart education to young men and women of the nation who are between the age of fourteen and seventeen or eighteen ;

3. And that training in a craft will be introduced in the curriculum of the high school as a new compulsory subject ; that is to say that bodily labour and craft-training which have together been given the place of the medium of education by recognizing their cultural value will be allowed to continue their influence at the high school stage also.

All this is a clear vindication of the ideas of national education of the Gandhian era.

Cultural Significance of Craft-training

Please bear with me for quoting from the Mudaliar Report itself the Commission's opinion on craft-training :

"We consider it necessary that at this stage, every student should devote some time to work with hands and attain a reasonably high standard of proficiency in one particular craft, so that, if necessary, he may support himself by pursuing it. But it is not on economic grounds only that we make this recommendation. By working with the hands the adolescent learns the dignity of labour and experiences the joy of doing constructive work. There is no greater educative medium than making, with efficiency and integrity, things of utility and beauty. It trains practical attitudes, facilitates clarity of thinking, gives chances for co-operative work and thus enriches the entire personality." (p. 90, para 2)

(To be continued)

(From the original in Gujarati)

QUAKERS MEET VINOBA

(By Suresh Ramabhai)

The stream of foreign visitors joining Acharya Vinoba Bhave's walking tour party for a day, two days or three, or sometime for more, shows the deep interest of the world outside in his movement. Recently we had a quaker couple from the United States, the husband being a professor in a University there and the wife a social worker.

Vinoba greeted them with his usual smile and said, "I would like to listen to what you say. Please let me know something about the activities of quaker friends."

The professor gave an idea of the same in brief and held that if people spoke views sharply on every point without seeking truth and did not come to unanimous decisions, there would hardly be a case for which everybody would feel enthusiastic. It was, therefore, the attempt of the quakers to develop a 'new concept of democracy' and an 'act of conference' appealing to all.

"In our country also," pointed out Vinoba, "we used to follow the same thing in procedure. Of our village conferences consensus was the main feature. Our common saying is, 'What the five speak God speaks'."

"Tolstoy says the same thing for the Russian village," remarked the professor.

Vinoba then took up some questions put up by our visitor. The first was : "Do you hope to create a condition of spiritual consent that will enable the Indian Government to carry through

a nation-wide land-reform programme or do you hope to have such a national response to your campaign as to make such a legislative measure unnecessary?"

"I am trying for the latter and the least I expect is the former," replied Vinoba.

The professor turned to the religious sphere and said, "So the springs of your own spiritual renewal come from Hinduism?"

"In fact," observed Vinoba, "I don't find any difference in the various religions—Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, etc. Having grown in different nations, their outward forms are different. But in essence they are the same. So my Hinduism is not exclusive. It includes every other religion. Expression is a mere outward form of inner experience. Often it cannot be expressed. Though my grounds are in Hinduism, yet I have studied the Bible with as great respect as the Gita. Likewise, I have studied the Koran. The *Sermon on the Mount* satisfies me equally well as the Gita. But my mother tongue being Marathi, a daughter of Sanskrit, I am naturally happy at native expressions. They are a source of inspiration to me as also to those with whom I work. So my surroundings seem to be Hindu but there is no Hinduism in it."

The professor perhaps desired further confirmation. So he put forth, "What co-operation have you received from the highest Hindu religious circles in your movement?"

Vinoba smiled and asked, "Whom should I call the 'highest Hindu religious circles'? Do you mean devout followers or the Church people? Here you must distinguish as between the Church people and Christianity. You don't expect much from the former. Do you?"

"Of course, not," ejaculated our friend.

"Likewise, I do not," continued Vinoba, "expect much sympathy from those whose business is religion. Last year I got a sound thrashing when I entered a temple!"

The professor wondered in amazement and inquired, "Was it from the higher circles?"

Vinoba laughed to say, "Yes, from the very highest!"

Our quaker friend was simply astonished. After a minute's silence, he asked: "Do you conceive of a revival of Hinduism coming from your movement with a band of Franciscan-like apostles, or do you conceive of the movement strictly as a social force?"

Vinoba agreed, "You are right. In the main, Bhoodan Yajna is a spiritual force rather than a social one. When spiritual values change, they have so great influence on life that they transform its social and political sides too. I do expect that out of this Bhoodan would come out a band of workers who would identify themselves with the poorest and the lowliest. I can't say whether they would be apostles. That is a big ambition. No apostles, but humble workers at any rate."

As the couple was on its way to East and South Africa, they asked for a message to the

people there. "I wouldn't like," said Vinoba, "to give a message in so many words. Work done here is a better message. I have full sympathy with the downtrodden and oppressed all over the world. Whatever movements be there for their uplift I am with them. So far as South Africa is concerned, I am sure that the seed Gandhiji has sown there will produce its good effect."

"Do you have a word you would like to send to American quakers?"

"Let them know that I like their idea of unanimity. I am trying to work on it in institutions here. I do not think that democracy as working all over the world today, can save us. World's most intricate problems would have to be settled by the unanimous consent of the people."

An English lady, perhaps a pacifist, was also present during this conversation. She felt interested and asked Vinoba's permission whether he could give time for her too.

"Very gladly, come on please," so saying Vinoba disarmed her. She began,

"What form of Government do you wish to see in India, if not the Western parliamentary pattern?"

"The two basic features of the Government I envisage are: decentralized administration and unanimous decisions," replied Vinoba. "I don't care about the outward form of the Government which will change with circumstances. For example, a family with children has one pattern; later when the children grow old the pattern is changed, but the homely touch remains the same."

This pleased our friend. She next asked, "Is there not a sufficient public opinion for non-violence in India to prevail upon the Government to disband the army? Let India be the first country in the world to do it?"

"Unfortunately India is not today morally strong enough to take this course. I agree with you that India should be the first country to do so. On account of the special type of our struggle for freedom, the world does expect this leadership from her."

Vinoba paused for a while. The fair visitor nodded. Then he added, "I am trying to build up the nation like that. There is not yet the required public opinion for it. But the Indian Government under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru is trying to follow what Gandhiji taught us and which Panditji calls 'Co-existence'. If this idea spreads it may be possible to disband the army."

Our friend listened very attentively. Vinoba went on, "But why should not the U.S.A. take the lead? She is a Christian nation, young people with good faith, ample land and resources, and a large heart. Nevertheless, if God wills it, India will come forward."

Then she wanted to know, "Do you think something like Bhoodan is applicable to every land so that young people, I mean conscientious

objectors, can find some ground for constructive work?"

Vinoba smiled and said, "Pacifists will have to become non-violent activists. I think if England gives more attention to agriculture—at present the stress is on industry—it would very much raise herself up. And the conscientious objectors can take to voluntary poverty, for simple abstaining from war won't suffice." Then Vinoba added after a pause, "Take up the Cross." He smiled and closed with the words, "But I don't think it is proper for me to give any advice to the English people."

He folded his hands and the visitors took leave.

19-2-55

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March 5

1955

WAY OF TRUE SELF-DEFENCE

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Some notions are recently being spread among the people in the name of Self-defence with the rifle and military discipline. A young man protests against it and has written to me to say that 'as these things are being talked about in season and more often out of season in the name of Gandhiji, it naturally creates confusion in the mind of the younger generation' regarding Gandhiji's views on this point.

It is certainly a happy sign that our young men care to know and understand Gandhiji's point of view in this matter. For such a study, it would be advisable for them to go to his own writings. In fact, it is time a study of Gandhiji's mission and his writings was undertaken more seriously and on a larger scale. It would do credit to our system of education also if this study was given its legitimate place in its curricula at the different stages. I would therefore exhort those who wish to have a deeper understanding of the subject under discussion to go straight to Gandhiji's own writings on it.

Those who are propagating the idea of discipline as well as sacrifice through military training and of self-defence through rifle-training should also be a little more careful and restrained while talking on the subject. They should not create confusion in the public mind by loose talk. They need not involve Gandhiji and speak in his name in their propaganda; and if they do speak in his name they should scrupulously observe the limit that the great name sets on all of us who profess to be loyal to it.

And I submit that even these propagandists dare not ignore the fact that the world today is gradually accepting the human ideal of peace, i.e., non-violence and opposition to war. More, the Indian Constitution lays down that India will work for the peace and security of the world;

that she will foster respect for inter-national law and treaty obligations between nations; and that if differences arose between nations will seek to settle and remove them by peaceful methods. This aim of the Constitution imposes a duty on all public workers in India that they create an atmosphere which is consistent with it and propagate ideas which help its fulfilment. Can it be said that those who are propagating among the people the idea of military training and self-defence through the rifle are loyal to this duty?

That India, in the present day world as it is, is not reducing her army is one thing and asking all to have military training and to start rifle associations is quite another. For those who choose to enter the army there are schools for military training. But surely we may not think of all schools and colleges being turned into institutions of military training. In the same manner, it would be absurd to suggest that because we are compelled to maintain an army for the defence of the country, all our citizens should turn soldiers, or that they should all recruit into the army as one force or another. But asking all our citizens to be fearless and brave, to train and discipline their bodies, and to be properly equipped to be able to join some field of service for the nation is a very different matter.

These advocates of the rifle-club argue that violence is to be preferred to cowardice, as if equating cowardice with non-violence. But cowardice can as well be under violence as in the name of non-violence. The opposite of cowardice is fearlessness or courage and not violence.

The advocates of the rifle-club further indulge in psychological analysis and say that non-violence is an attribute of the spirit or the soul suggesting that it is a rare quality, and as compared to it, violence is an attribute of the flesh or the body and indicates courage which they seem to convey comes easy to everybody. This logic conceals a grave fallacy.

Not to run away from duty under any circumstances is a virtue. It has to be cultivated and practised by all, whether they believe in violence or non-violence. It does happen that a man wielding a sword loses courage and runs away from the opponent. He may even lose hold on the sword and it falls from his hand. This is because a proneness to or faith in violence is not the same thing as fearlessness or courage. To associate cowardice only with non-violence is thus obviously faulty or loose thinking.

The thing to be considered here is something quite different. The true manly virtue is fearlessness, courage or bravery. The author of the Gita has declared that it is the first among man's godly attributes. Man's acceptance of the way of violence to manifest this virtue is as old as history. But travelling on that way mankind began with simple stone missiles and has today arrived at the atom bomb, nay, has even gone further. The world is, however, perhaps for the first time in its history, so terrified by this kind of progress that it now deeply desires to avoid

war, yearns for complete disarmament of nations and for peace; so much so that we can say that the establishment of non-violence in man's affairs has become the cause of the world or the creed of the age. On account of Gandhiji, the leadership of the cause has fallen to India's lot. As I said in the beginning, not only her Constitution but her foreign policy also has this task as its basis. We have even been advocating a treaty with Pakistan on that basis. Would it not be totally inconsistent and out of harmony with our basic policy to indiscriminately propagate the idea of self-defence by starting rifle-shooting associations? And against whom are we seeking self-defence? This sort of propaganda needlessly confuses the public mind, leads it away from the need of educating itself for peace and prohibition of war as a means of settling inter-national disputes, and the need of training the nation in cool courage and fearlessness. In a healthy social order the profession of soldiering and of war has always to be limited and under proper control. Indeed such control is an attribute of a well ordered society.

Even economic considerations lead to the same conclusion. Armies can be raised and maintained only by starving the people and depriving them of the wealth they produce by the sweat of their labour. Look to post-war Japan and Germany for instances showing how quickly a people becomes prosperous if it has not to maintain armies and deprive itself of the fruits of its labour. It is true they were compelled to disarm themselves. But the lesson of disarmament is not vitiated on that account. If the world voluntarily takes to the cultivation of the virtues of peace and human brotherhood and begins to shed its armaments, it will have all the wealth and more to eradicate the evils of starvation, poverty, ignorance and disease etc.

Moreover, the state of world politics has reached such a stage that the defence of mankind itself is going to be an impossibility if we did not give up all armaments and did not prohibit all war. If we look at the question in its proper perspective even for self-defence the propagation of the virtues of non-violence and peace and training people into them is inevitable. As the future of the country is primarily the concern of its youth they should cultivate this foresight and perceive the need of the future and set their standards accordingly. The defence of the world or in other words the self-defence of mankind would be impossible unless we adopted non-violence as our creed, that is, unless the world accepted disarmament, prohibition of war, and international politics of peace and goodwill as its programme and the public mind was educated to suit it. To turn to this way of true self-defence and to establish real swaraj or freedom for herself is the task history has set for India in the present day world.

14-2-'55

(From the original in Gujarati)

FEAR AND MODERN LIFE

(By E. V. Pullias)

[This is reproduced from *New Outlook*, Dec. 1954. The writer is the Dean and Professor of Psychology, Pepperdine College, L. A., Calif., U. S. A. The article is being given in three instalments. The first describes the nature of fear, its origin, and particularly its effect upon human behaviour, in very simple and popular terms. Then he follows it up with saying that fear has increased in modern times, notwithstanding all our science and armaments. He scans its causes and then narrates some major fears of our times.

21-2-'55

M. P. J

I

Modern man is dangerously unbalanced. His mastery of the material world is great; his mastery of himself is small. Thus he is a giant in physical power and a babe in wisdom and self-direction. The resulting unbalance in individual man and in organized society is the major factor in the tragedy of this age expressed most vividly in man's unhappiness in the presence of material abundance and in his exaggerated fear when confronted with urgent problems.

Although man's knowledge of himself has not kept abreast with his acquaintance with the physical world, it is false to conclude that no significant progress has been made in understanding man. On the contrary, psychologists and those working in related fields have discovered much about man's behaviour. A wider dissemination of these insights would increase man's understanding of his own behaviour, and perhaps even more important, the behaviour of his fellows, particularly those who may be of different cultural backgrounds.

The behaviour of modern man, singly or in groups, is greatly influenced by fear. What do we know about fear that might help us to understand the strange behaviour of ourselves and others? In attempting to answer this question I do not propose to cite research, but to state some general conclusions that can reasonably be made from that research with some implications for current problems.

The Nature of Fear

Fear is basically a reaction of a person or group in the presence of real or imagined danger. Thus the characteristic behaviour of fear is mental and physical reaction designed to provide escape or defence in the presence of a situation which is or seems to be threatening.

There are some real dangers in modern life, but most fears are imaginary. That is, most fears arise out of man's perceiving as dangerous a situation which in reality is harmless. If an individual is unable to recognize actual danger, he may be destroyed by it. Simple illustrations are the careless use of seriously contaminated food and the reckless use of an automobile. On the other hand, the individual or group that constantly distorts what is seen and thus perceives danger when there is little or no danger, wastes energy and as a rule develops pathological

defenses against these imagined dangers. A clear example of this process is the mentally ill person who believes his food is poisoned or that his dearest loved one is plotting his destruction. But false fears are discernible in normal people, both at the group and individual level. Race prejudice or class consciousness, for example, often produces distortion in perception.

Governments or other organizations may strive deliberately to create fear in people to serve ulterior motives. It is notorious in history that a government that is failing to meet domestic problems attempts through propaganda to stimulate fear of some external situation in order to direct attention from the painful condition at home. Even more common is the use of fear to secure support for legislation. Thus, almost any law can be passed in the name of security provided sufficient skill is used in picturing the danger. A commercial concern may create an imaginary danger through advertising in order to sell a product. Many kinds of medicines and health schemes are promoted in this way.

The important point is that fear results when a situation is considered dangerous. Some things are not merely considered dangerous but are dangerous. Many more things are not really threatening, but because of some distortion in perception are perceived as a threat and thus are reacted to with fear. The informed and rational person (or people) is able to distinguish between real and imaginary danger with a consequent reduction in the amount of fear shown as well as a more effective behaviour in the presence of real danger. One of the most significant marks of sanity is the ability to distinguish between real and imagined peril.

In the light of these facts and principles, one is better able to understand an adage which the ancient Greeks quoted often: "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad." And what is madness but false perception of reality and the consequent distortion of behaviour? A person or a nation behaves in terms of what it sees or thinks it sees. It follows then that those who distort the truth to produce fear are in reality producing madness (insanity) in the people and contributing to their self-destruction.

The Origin of Fear

How does man get his many fears? The research is conclusive on this point: Practically all fears are learned rather than inherited. This fact means that traumatic experience, ill-conceived instruction, deliberate propaganda, and simple ignorance are the chief sources of fears. In short, the confused and fear-ridden condition of man cannot be explained on the basis of innate flaws in what is loosely called "human nature". There is an important hereditary aspect to man's nature, but there is no evidence that he is innately burdened with fear. The basic equipment through which fear is expressed is inherited, but the specific fear responses are largely the result of learning.

The Effect of Fear on Behaviour

The most important phase of this subject is the effect fear has upon behaviour. The following are some of the most evident and significant results of fear:

1. Fear destroys perspective. Under its influence the individual becomes primarily concerned with the immediate to the neglect of the far reaching and more significant aspects of a situation. When fear has subsided and perspective has been restored (as for example later in an individual's life or from the point of view of history in the case of a nation) the typical remark is: How could we have behaved so foolishly? And the answer is that perspective is so reduced by fear that behaviour inevitably becomes infantile or foolish.

2. Under the influence of fear, (nearly always) random and unintelligent behaviour increases sharply, and wisely chosen and intelligent action is correspondingly decreased. This aspect of fear-produced behaviour is so common and apparent that it hardly requires illustration. All of us have seen the fearful persons striking out both by word and deed in a random, unintelligent manner. In the face of dire fear as in the case of drowning or attempting to escape a burning building the behaviour becomes so desperate (i.e. random and unintelligent) that those who try to help the frightened person are endangered. The behaviour has the same characteristics when the fear arises from an imagined danger.

3. When there is fear, suspicion and its offspring aggressiveness, are greatly increased. The continuously fearful person or nation must find a reason for the fear. There is a strong tendency to project it into something that can be blamed and eventually hated. Thus the fearful person becomes suspicious, perceiving additional danger in every nook and cranny of his existence.

But perhaps most serious of all the fearful person convinces himself; first, that he must protect himself against the danger he perceives, and second, that he must destroy the danger before it destroys him. In this way aggression is justified. Thus, for the fearful person, the aggression becomes, in all sincerity, defence.

Over the past year or two I have had opportunity to work closely with a thoughtful and mature German student who spent almost ten years in the Nazi army. All that he and his fellow soldiers did, he maintained, was in sincere and honest defence of the beloved Fatherland. Thus they perceived the situation, and from that perception their behaviour, including serious aggression, flowed in full justification. Such is the effect of fear upon the human mind.

(To be continued)

By Mahatma Gandhi

GOKHALE—MY POLITICAL GURU

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NON-VIOLENT DEMOCRACY

The annual Gandhi Mela in Surat Dist. was held at Malekpur in the sands of the little river Mindhola. Villagers as also constructive workers and students from roundabout the countryside had come in hundreds to celebrate Bapu's Shradha Day—Feb. 12. Shri Pyarelalji, his secretary, was the chief guest on the occasion.

In the course of his address Shri Pyarelal recalled how on the last day of his life on earth, a few hours before the end, Gandhiji reaffirmed his faith in the course of an interview with a foreign journalist that the weapon of non-violence which he was trying to present to the world through India held the antidote to the menace of the atom bomb. "I will not go underground," he said. "I will not go into shelter. I will come out in the open and let the pilot see I have not a trace of enmity against him. The pilot will not see our faces from his great height, I know. But that longing in our hearts—that he would not come to harm—would reach up to him and his eyes would be opened. If those thousands who were done to death in Hiroshima, if they had died with that prayerful action—died openly with that prayer in their hearts—their sacrifice would not have gone in vain." Today their country was putting up a brave fight against the menace of atomic destruction which threatened the future of civilization and mankind. But their Government would be unable to play its part effectively unless India could present to the world the model of a non-violent democracy in action. It was an unfortunate fact that since the partition, they were spending more on armaments than the whole of undivided India was spending before partition.

It was no use blaming the Government for it. The Government could well say that circumstances beyond their control left them no choice. But more than that they must remember that in a democracy, people lie in the bed they make for themselves. If they felt dissatisfied with what their Government was doing, the remedy lay very largely with themselves.

Gandhiji had put the remedy too in their hands before he took leave of them, in what had come to be known as his "Last Will and Testament" viz. his plan for the reorganization of the Congress as a federation of constructive work organizations or Lok Sevak Sangh. In a democracy, Shri Pyarelal went on to explain, there was always the danger of party bosses and slick demagogues misleading the voters to capture power by an unscrupulous manipulation of inert majorities. Under Gandhiji's plan every Congress voter would have been required to show a solid, substantial record of day-to-day service of the people which the people could see, understand, and judge for themselves and which would enable them to know the sheep from the goats.

That plan had unfortunately been shelved by the Congress leaders and they were paying the price for it. The constructive workers could in a measure still fill the gap by taking up the

work of educating the voters by their work in their midst, and forge the sanction of non-violent organization to guide the politics of the country. For that they would have to take an intelligent and integrated view of constructive work, take up constructive work as an instrument for the building up of a non-violent democracy which postulated a social order in which inequalities and exploitation would have no place and justice and fair play would prevail. Without that outlook constructive work would be like salt that hath lost its savour.

The test of the success of any constructive work institution should therefore be, how far has it been able to transform its environment, how far has it been able to tackle and solve the crying problems of the people, how far has it been able to help the needy, the helpless and the oppressed, in short how far is it able to command the voluntary and spontaneous obedience and co-operation of the people. Gujarat, Shri Pyarelal continued, was fortunate in having perhaps the largest number of Ashrams and constructive work institutions in any province and veteran workers trained under Gandhiji. It was up to Gandhiji's Gujarat therefore to give the lead to the rest of India in that respect. Nothing would be more fatal than to allow the administrative routine of their institutional work to imprison them.

Since the slogan of the Welfare State had obtained currency, proceeded Shri Pyarelal, some people had begun to think that it was the State's responsibility to do everything for the people and the people need do nothing for themselves. He warned them that to the extent to which the sphere of the State's activities was enlarged, individual freedom would be curtailed. If the people wanted to enjoy maximum individual freedom, they should come forward in a co-operative spirit and by the dint of self-help relieve the State of as many functions as they possibly could. He ventured to say that their State would welcome such relief.

Again, it was a mistake to believe, he proceeded, that they could not solve their most crying problems without the assistance of highly paid experts and specialists. If they looked around them they would find that quite a number of their problems admitted of a very simple solution through the people's spontaneous co-operation. But the same problems became unnecessarily complicated when they were tackled by the Government. He gave instances to show how Gandhiji was able to obtain amazing results by very simple means and through very humble instruments.

If the picture of non-violent democracy could be realized in Gujarat, the example would spread. Their Government would then be in a much better position to deliver the message of non-violence to the world because it would then speak through a predominantly non-violent India. It was up to Bapu's Gujarat to whom he gave and from whom he expected so much to realize that ideal in the fulfilment of his dream.

RURAL HIGHER EDUCATION

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

I

Its Aims and Objects

1. A question is asked whether we need institutions in higher education in rural areas. This begs explanation about a point or two. As I understand it, what we need is institutions in higher education for serving rural India. This is a new type—with new aims and objects, different from those obtaining at present in our traditional higher education.

2. We do require institutions in higher education which will serve our needs newly felt by us after the advent of Swaraj. These needs are for real India which lives mostly in her villages.

3. Whether these institutions should be newly opened or whether old existing ones may be or can be converted to the new purpose is another point for consideration arising here.

4. And further, as the question from its wording appears to suggest, whether these institutions should be in rural areas is a point that requires to be cleared.

5. Taking up the last question first, by their being in rural areas these institutions will be in rural surroundings and immediately in the midst of conditions which they aim to study, improve and serve by their work of teaching and research etc. This is no doubt a helpful thing. The question therefore is whether a rural higher education institution or university is one which is situated in a rural area or whether it has another or additional meaning and significance as well.

6. In this connection I submit that a centre of higher learning and education opened in rural surroundings to start with, will, in the course of its development and expansion, become a township equipped with necessary amenities for its new living. This need not necessarily mean the kind of ones which we find in our big cities on western lines. However, those will be such as we do not usually find at present in our villages, poor and uncared for as they are today. My point is that there remains much to be desired in this behalf in our villages. Rural educational institutions, wherever they may be, will not be called rural merely because of their being in rural areas.

7. Therefore rural area should not be understood as a mere geographical term. It connotes cultural content, viz. that higher education in India should align itself with and work for the needs and aspirations—economic, social, educational and cultural—of rural India. These needs are, really speaking, the general needs of our people, the urban ones being particular and very much limited in comparison. To institute higher education for fulfilling the former is the formidable task which rural higher education should face itself with now. It is a veritable challenge to our educational statesmanship and capacity for reorganizing education now.

8. With these introductory remarks, I reply to the question that rural higher educational institutions are very necessary for us at present. But I feel that they should grow from the soil of our actual rural life and its needs of education and culture, i.e. they must flower out on the plant of Basic and Post-Basic Education flourishing in our villages. Then only can they cease to be like the exotic variety obtaining today in our country. If we do not heed to these two points there is all the fear of the new institutions almost copying the traditional urban variety existing at present, they being rural only in this sense that they might be opened in rural areas.

9. I may be permitted to quote here an apt observation made by the Radhakrishnan University Commission—

"There should be no feeling of conflict between existing and new type (rural) universities, any more than between engineering education and medical education. However, because the pattern and spirit of existing universities is so distinctly urban centred, and

because of the tendency of an old and dominant institution to impose its type upon any new institution in a similar field, it is a matter of practical necessity that new universities aiming at extending educational opportunity to the great mass of rural India, and to give vitality and quality to rural life, should have their own independent design and programme. They will have many qualities and methods in common with existing universities, and as they become established there will be general co-operation and interaction." (p. 555-56, last para)

10. There is another point of equal importance, if not greater: In this matter of starting new institutions the new type should not be looked upon as an inferior type of education as is feared by some might happen in the conditions as they are today. To guard against this, I feel it is very necessary to see that the traditional higher educational institutions also begin to amend and alter themselves and to approximate and approach respectfully the new ideas and ideals of higher education for rebuilding free, prosperous and democratic India. These can no more continue to be in their ivory towers and deny to recognize and inculcate in themselves what Radhakrishnan Report aptly describes as "the great traditions of common life in India". This is an immediate and urgent task before our educational reconstructors. It is in the climate of its speedy implementation by our traditional institutions that a new and healthy plant of rural higher education can be expected to grow and sprout in our countryside.

11. This point is so important that Gandhiji when discussing the idea of having new universities advised us as follows:

"Our two months old freedom is struggling to get itself shaped. We do not know what shape it will ultimately take. Until we know this definitely, it should be enough if we make such changes as are possible in the existing universities and breathe in our existing educational institutions the quickening spirit of freedom. The experience we will thus gain will be helpful when the time is ripe for founding new universities." (*Vide Harijan*, 2-11-47)

12. This was said when we had not framed and given to ourselves our own free Constitution. We have done that now. In it are laid down certain fundamental principles and policies both for our people and for the State to go by. These must immediately begin to energize and affect our existing educational institutions, primary, secondary, higher etc. It is only in the context of such reforms that we think of having a new type of higher educational institutions and we qualify it by the word 'rural' in its cultural sense and only to show that we have to rediscover and rehabilitate our rural life.

13. As the Radhakrishnan Report says:

"In looking at the problem of new institutions the fact should be kept in view that, as reported by the 1941 census, about 85 per cent of the population has been scarcely touched by secondary or higher education, except by the permanent withdrawal from village life of those able young people who have left the villages for the universities. The extreme poverty and lack of cultural opportunity of this population is common knowledge. The course of wisdom is not to deny or to ignore this glaring lack, but rather to create the types of educational opportunity which are appropriate to Indian rural life, and to give a quality and range to that life which will remove the disparity which is now a reality." (p. 553, para 4)

(To be continued)

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