

GANDHI MEMORIAL LECTURES 1951

A NATION BUILDER AT WORK

By
PYARELAL

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

After Gandhiji's death, to perpetuate his memory, the University of Agra decided to institute a series of lectures bearing on various aspects of Gandhiji's life and teachings, to be delivered annually in one of the colleges affiliated to it.

In December of 1951, I delivered the third of this series at the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, Kanpur. I was then engaged in writing my book *Mahatma Gandhi — The Last Phase*. Naturally, quite a lot of what is in that book will be found in these lectures.

The lectures were subsequently serialised in the *Harijan* and in the *Hindusthan Standard*. Later they were brought out, with the kind permission of the University of Agra, by the Navajivan Publishing House under the present title. The second edition of the same is now being published with some revisions.

I am thankful to St. Nihal Singh for going through the text and making valuable suggestions.

New Delhi,
December 27, 1958.

Pyarelal

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A NATION BUILDER AT WORK

THE PRACTICAL IDEALIST

As I stand before you, memories of thirty years crowd in upon my mind. In 1920, I, too, like you, was a college student when life suddenly opened out and I had the privilege of sitting at Gandhiji's feet.

The story of the intervening years has been a stirring saga. We have passed from bondage to political freedom. Thinking people have begun to wonder whether its advent has fulfilled the expectations with which it was hailed and which filled the minds and actuated the efforts of those who strove to win it.

Let us learn to be wary of slogans. Again and again mankind has dreamt great dreams, made reckless, sometimes even foolhardy, sacrifices to realize them, only to end in bitter disillusionment. We all remember the anguished cry of Madame Rolland: "Liberty, Liberty, what crimes have been committed in thy sacred name!" In our own times and nearer at home we have seen irreligion practised in the name of religion and crimes committed in its name which make one blush and almost despair of humanity.

Let us, therefore, not be carried away by catchwords. Let us try to analyse their contents and examine all propositions on their merits

instead of being led away by prescriptive sanctities. Let us find out for ourselves what is the content of freedom which we want to realize for ourselves, and what is the method by which it can be realized. Is freedom to starve, to wallow in the dirt, to oppress others, freedom? No, it is a misnomer — you will agree. The freedom which we fought for and strove to win was freedom in which the least should have as much right, opportunity and scope to realize the highest in life as the tallest. There are two ways of realizing equality. We can realize it by eliminating the weak as uneconomic ballast. This is the violent approach. The other is to realize it by sharing with even the weakest and denying ourselves what cannot be shared with them and till it can be shared with them. The principle has, of course, to be taken with certain limitations. This is the non-violent approach to the question of freedom, democracy and equality which Gandhiji introduced.

Has Gandhiji's method and approach any validity today? Can it provide a solution to the many challenging problems that confront us — or is it only a spent force, an extinct tradition which has outlived its usefulness and has now only historical interest? It is my conviction that never were his message and method needed more than they are today. We are in the habit of kicking away the ladder by which we have climbed to success. But we must remember that freedom can only be conserved, retained and enlarged by the very methods by which it was attained. If we stray from the royal road on which we were

launched by the Father of the Nation, we shall lose what we have gained and the golden apple of independence will turn to ashes in our mouth. I go further and say that many of the ills from which we are today suffering and much of the frustration that fills the hearts of our youth are traceable to our deviation from those principles and methods.

Let us study in a spirit of scientific detachment some of those principles as exemplified in the life of Gandhiji and the epoch-making movement into which they effloresced. To many of you the story of his career and the struggle for freedom which he conducted has already become a legend. I had the privilege of intimate association with Gandhiji during the crucial period of the epic fight. I am, here before you today, therefore, to bear witness to it. This sacred debt it is a pleasure for me to discharge.

What made Gandhiji an epochal event of our times? If we examine his life closely, we shall find that at the core of it was his passion for truth. It was the mainspring and fountain source of all the other things in his life. They all flowed from it.

What was his conception of truth and how did it become the core of his philosophy of life? He made a clear distinction between relative truth, which is the means, and absolute truth. Relative truth is truth we perceive in relation to a particular set of circumstances. It is not the whole truth. What may be true in one set of conditions may not be true in relation to

a different set of circumstances. To take a very simple instance, lukewarm water is hot in relation to cold water and cold in relation to hot water.

As against relative truth is the absolute truth—the ultimate reality—which alone is, was and for ever shall be. In its absolute sense Gandhiji identified truth with God. He worshipped God as Truth. In this sense Truth is the end—the *summum bonum*—of man's existence.

But finite man cannot grasp the whole truth—not even relative truth in its entirety. What may, therefore, appear as truth to one person may appear to be an error to another person. And yet both of them may be right from their own point of view. Proceeding along this line of reasoning, Gandhiji early came to the conclusion that pursuit of truth does not admit of violence being inflicted upon one's opponent. Hence the necessity of patience, and patience means self-suffering. Therefore the doctrine of truth or *satya*—which Gandhiji described by the word Satyagraha or holding on to truth—means vindication of truth through self-suffering, in other words, love. For you cannot suffer in your person for your opponent unless you love him.

To Gandhiji truth and non-violence or *ahimsa* were not abstract ideals or virtues for a cloister. They were to be realized in life. Truth to him meant not the uttered word, not the professed belief but something that had to be lived. If we say something and do its opposite, profess

one thing and do not practise it, we live untruth. It was Gandhiji's constant endeavour to work out in his life to the full all the implications of the ideals he professed. This was his *sadhana* — striving — for truth. It made his entire life a ceaseless round of worship at the shrine of truth which is God.

As a corollary to this is Gandhiji's ideal of non-possession or *aparigraha*. If we love our neighbours as ourselves, we cannot possess, much less crave for superfluities when others lack even the necessities of life.

Non-stealing, the fourth cardinal principle of his life is again derived from the interaction of truth and non-possession just as non-possession is derived from the interaction of truth and non-violence, stealing being breach of non-possession plus breach of truth.

The fifth and last basic principle of his life, *brahmacharya* is the all-in complex of the other four principles and like them is derivable from truth and *ahimsa*. *Brahmacharya* literally means to walk in the Lord's (Brahma's) way, in other words, complete dedication — body, mind and soul — to God, the immanent Spirit, the eternal ultimate Reality. In common parlance and in a restricted sense it means continence or chastity. It includes complete control over one's sense organs, particularly over the organ of generation.

Once undivided allegiance is given to Him, carnal desire shrivels away. Again, since true *ahimsa* must mean equal love for all, Gandhiji

argued, one cannot fully live up to this ideal and indulge in carnal desire. One cannot share carnal love with all women. But one can give equal love to all by regarding all women as mothers and sisters. Hence the necessity of continence in single or even in the married state for one who aspires to realize the ideal of *ahimsa* in full. It occupied an important place in Gandhiji's plan of discipline for Satyagraha. As he put it: "without *brahmacharya*, the Satyagrahi will have no lustre, no inner strength to stand unarmed against the whole world... His strength will fail him at the right moment."

It is a fascinating theme — this theme of Gandhiji's basic disciplines. I have just referred to it in passing. Gandhiji's outlook and approach in regard to these was not that of the orthodox moralist — he refused to accept their traditional interpretations of these disciplines — but of a revolutionary scientific mind, an experimental seeker after truth. He charged them with meanings that often left the orthodox gasping. But in the limited time at my and your disposal I may not pursue this theme further.

I have shown how his intense idealism coupled with the passion not merely to find truth but to live it, led to his adoption and practice of the other basic principles of his life. Idealists are generally classed as impractical visionaries. Gandhiji's idealism was not utopian. He was no "ineffectual angel beating his luminous wings in the void". He claimed to be a practical idealist and proved to be such. He showed how goodness

could be made effective, how good ethics must also be good economics and *vice versa*, and what was moral was also practical. He wanted people to be good but not goody-goody. "Good must be joined with knowledge. Mere goodness is not of much use as I have found in life," he remarked on one occasion. "One must cultivate the fine discriminating quality which goes with spiritual courage and character. In a crucial situation, one must know when to speak and when to remain silent, when to act and when to refrain. Action and non-action in such circumstances become identical instead of being contradictory." His insistence on truth and full practice thereof gave him a firm hold on reality and endowed him with that unrivalled knowledge of human nature — its potentialities as well as its weaknesses — which enabled him to choose his instruments with an unerring instinct and to turn heroes out of clay. Perhaps no other person we know of, was able to draw round him men and talent of such diverse types as Gandhiji, or make them work together as a team.

II

Pandit Nehru has recently described with his usual brilliance how Gandhiji commanded not only the homage of the multitude but also the devotion of a curious assemblage of human beings. "We were an odd assortment," he writes, "very different from each other ; different in our background, ways of life and ways of thinking . . . but from our different view-points . . . (we)

looked up to (him) as a great and magnificent personality."

To mention a few concrete instances, his intimate circle included shrewd capitalists and businessmen like G. D. Birla and Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, sceptics like Acharya Kripalani and intellectuals and revolutionaries like Pandit Nehru, statesmen and astute politicians like Pandit Motilal Nehru and Vithalbhai Patel, men of faith and renunciation like Vinoba Bhave, subtle-minded lawyers like Rajaji, humanitarians like Dr. Rajendra Prasad, profound scholars and divines like the Maulana Azad, brilliant medicoes — geniuses in their own line — like the late Dr. M. A. Ansari and Hakim Ajmal Khan Saheb, colourful personalities like the irreverent, yet motherly, Nightingale of India — Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, blue-blooded society ladies like Mira Behan, and last but not least our Man of Iron — the granite pillar of free India — alas, now gone the way of all flesh, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The list is only illustrative.

What was the secret of his amazing hold over the minds and loyalties of these men? What made this illustrious company — each one of them a hero in his own right — look up to this man as the best of them and the best part of each one of them? It was his intense and many-sided realism that drew them all to him. He held them together by his tact, by his sympathy, which is the key to right understanding, and delicacy of feeling and personal charm, which are the hallmark of true *ahimsa*.

G. D. Birla and Jamnalal Bajaj were, for instance, drawn to him by his shrewdness in practical affairs, godliness, personal purity, sincerity and courage. Acharya Kripalani became his bondsman when he found in Gandhiji the rebel and revolutionary that he himself had ever aspired to be. Pandit Nehru — refined and intellectual — was captured by his dynamism and perfect artistry in life. I remember how, on one occasion in the course of a heated discussion, Panditji impatiently broke out, "I want revolution, this is reformism", to which Gandhiji rejoined: "I have made revolutions while others have talked about them. When your exuberance has subsided and your lungs are exhausted, you will come to me, if you are really serious about making a revolution!" There was no more argument after that. Pandit Motilalji with his patrician pride and aristocratic temperament found in him a political astuteness and statesmanship which he envied. I was once asked to escort the elder Pandit to his residence after a visit to Gandhiji, who was at that time at Juhu convalescing from his operation for appendicitis. For a span we were treading silently the sands. Suddenly Motilalji stood stock still. Pointing to a tall palm he broke out: "That is the Mahatma among the trees — head and shoulders above the rest." He then proceeded to reminisce: "I have told Mahatmaji, I do not believe in your spirituality and am not going to believe in God at least in this life. I am an atheist. Our difficulty is that in politics you beat us at our own game."

“And what did he say in reply?” I asked. Pandit Motilalji replied : “He only laughed. And then becoming serious added — ‘People admire the rebel in me who has dared to challenge the might of the British Empire. They little realize that the power of my assault springs from my capacity and ceaseless striving for complete self-surrender’ !”

The Maulana Saheb found in Gandhiji a profound religious thinker like himself and a catholicity in action which he had himself tried to derive from his deep study of the Koran. To Vinoba Bhave his *Satya-sadhana* (striving for truth), *Bhagawadbhakti* (devotion to God) and *tapashcharya* (penance) were reminiscent of the Vedic *rishis* of old. Rajaji found in him a clarity of thinking and perspicacity, a marvellous quick grasp of the opponent's case, and a legal acumen which put to shame the forensic acrobatics of the conventional legal celebrities. Dr. Rajendra Prasad found in him a personification of the passion for the service of the poor for whom his own heart ached. Dr. Ansari — like many of his contemporary medical celebrities — found in him a fellow savant with a scientific approach to the question of health and disease. The strict objectivity of Gandhiji's experiments in nature-cure, his ‘quackery’ as he delighted to call it, often confounded and set at naught their academic medical theories and the “laws of science” propounded in their text book. Shrimati Sarojini Naidu with her poetic insight discovered in him a “poet in action”, the deliverer

from bondage of an ancient, proud people, a warrior with a heart as tender as any woman's. To Mira Behan he brought that deep spirituality which the starved soul of the mammon-worshipping West hungered for. The bridge-playing, chain-smoking barrister Patel, sardonically scanning the Indian political scene from the seclusion of his *Bhajia* (fritters) club at Ahmedabad found that in Gandhiji at last there was a political leader who was no talker, but a man of action, who made things happen and who never failed to deliver goods once he had undertaken to do so.

And so they all became his bondslaves and found it difficult—nay almost impossible—to tear themselves away from his moral and intellectual leadership and above all from the leadership of his practical wisdom, when in later years their varying temperaments and the diverse settings in which they had to function made it more and more difficult for them to adhere to his ideology in action.

III

The universality and power of Gandhiji's appeal were due to the fact that he never exploited his instruments. A military dictator uses his soldiers as cannon fodder to win glory. Gandhiji never put anybody to a use which was not in the best interests of the person concerned. He used his instruments to draw out and develop the best in them so that day by day they grew in strength and stature.

He never expected others to make sacrifices which he himself was not prepared to make. He

was as tolerant of the weaknesses of others as he was intolerant of his own. Remembrance of the hard way by which he had achieved the mastery over self made him tolerant of other people's faults. He often said that one must view one's own shortcomings through a convex glass, those of others through a concave one. He called it the "duty of exaggeration". He strove consciously to be partial to his opponents, to those who differed from him, in order to be fair, knowing how prone human nature is to be biassed in one's own favour. In argument he never tried to overbear or overwhelm the opponent by intellectual bludgeoning. He made him a fellow seeker after truth and helped him to discover the flaws in the opponent's reasoning and in the process sometimes discovered gaps in his own. The aim always was to convert, never to coerce or to suppress. The opponent never smarted under the humiliation of defeat but shared in full the thrill and joy of the discovery of truth which, he was made to feel, was as much his as Gandhiji's. This made the mind of the opponent receptive, instead of resistant.

This technique of spiritual identification with the opponent gave him the power to utter the bluntest truths without causing hurt, to perform the most drastic spiritual surgery with the full and joyful co-operation of the patient. I have used the word 'patient' advisedly, as Gandhiji regarded all kinds of delinquency and deviation from normal behaviour as a species of mental and spiritual sickness. This was particularly illustrated during his 'do or die' mission

in Noakhali, where day after day he had to deal with people, who had taken part in the disturbances. He told them the bluntest truths, spared none, suppressed nothing, glossed over nothing, held back nothing. Yet his words did not hurt. Everybody in the audience felt as if he were hearing his own better self speak. The anguished voice of love they heard excluded nobody, not even the oppressors. It felt and suffered equally for all. What came from the heart went straight to the heart.

Because he excluded all brute force from his technique, he became the greatest moulder of men that our age has witnessed. It led him to delve into the secrets of human psychology and made him master of all the varied strings of the human heart, like a born leader of men.

The fact that he worked through non-violence also influenced the choice of his instruments. They included children and illiterate women, even decrepit old folk. People often wondered how he could afford to give so much of his time and attention to sick and ailing men, women and children of his Ashram. Thus, he found time in the midst of his round-the-clock activity to give massage with his own hands to Parchure Shastri, the leper. When some Ashram people objected to his being kept in the Ashram, he told them that if there was no room in the Ashram for Parchure Shastri, there could be none for him. The reason was that non-violence works best through insignificant little things. His own life was made of things which taken by themselves looked commonplace and small. If Satyagraha did not turn

upon the marshalling of little things it would be incapable of being wielded by the masses at large. His instruments had to be commensurate with the capacity of the human material that had to handle them. Nobody who has studied the mass movements which Gandhiji organized and led can miss the tremendous part which women and children played in them. They constituted the leaven that gave to his movements their swelling energy.

IV

I cannot close this review of Gandhiji's personality without dwelling upon some of the paradoxes that his rich and varied personality presented. He believed in simplicity but not in slovenliness or untidiness. His simplicity was not so simple an affair as it looked ; it was, to say, a highly complex art as he used. Its artistry gave him an ineffable charm. The Naked Fakir found himself at home with Viceroy, potentates and heads of States.

He wanted people to be ready for all kinds of hardship and suffering that in bearing witness to truth might fall to their lot, but he never made a cult of discomfort for its own sake. He believed in living in the face of danger but not in living "dangerously" and always discouraged running foolhardy risks. In Noakhali, when I once unwittingly ran into a nest of danger from which I came out barely by the skin of my teeth, he wrote : " You are not to rush into danger needlessly, but should be prepared to face all dangers

that might come your way in the natural course. If in this way every one of you is wiped out, I would not shed a tear but, on the contrary, rejoice. People who go to work in the Noakhali villages have to learn to live and move cautiously like the proverbial she-elephant."

There was not a trace of the martyrdom complex in his psychological make-up. Indeed, he regarded the desire for martyrdom to be unethical, sinful — since it can be fulfilled only at the cost of someone else's perdition.

His heart was softer than a rose petal but he could also be harder than flint. He was the greatest democrat but he had no hesitation in proposing himself as a dictator. Again, mark the paradox: his was a dictatorship that had no sanction behind it save that of love and persuasion, and he was the fittest person to be a dictator because he hated to dictate to anybody.

"He who sheds tears cannot wipe the tears of others," he remarked on a memorable occasion. Having constituted himself the champion of the downtrodden and the poor, he steeled his heart against weak pity. He was at times cruel to be kind, because he knew that in this hard, cruel world, weakness gets no quarter. So, he could talk unperturbed of India attaining her freedom through rivers of innocent blood — not of the opponent but of her own children — and set his face like flint against the whole present-day philosophy of contraceptives, which suppresses the consequences but sanctions the exploitation of woman for man's lust.

His iron will transmuted his deep emotion into a relentless self-discipline and self-denial. This was often mistaken for self-mortification and self-suppression by casual, superficial observers but it was as different from either as chalk is from cheese.

That also explains his attitude towards sex. Woman to him was suffering and self-sacrifice personified. He strove to transmute her self-sacrificing suffering into *shakti* (power) and had the courage, alone perhaps with the author of *Kreutzer Sonata*, to tell the whole truth in regard to her without prevarication or gloss.

People have often talked about his asceticism. Whatever it was, it was not devoid of spiritual gaiety. It was so infectious that the late Maulana Mohammad Ali used to make a grievance of it: "Mahatmaji, you are very unfair to us," he once told him. "We come to you full of grouse, to quarrel with you, but you make us smile and laugh in spite of ourselves. So our grouse remains unventilated and you think it is all right with us!" And he quoted the celebrated couplet of Ghalib to describe his dilemma :

अनके देखेसे चेहेरे पे जो आ जाती है रौनक
वे समझते हैं कि बीमारका हाल अच्छा है ।

(The radiance that overspreads my face in her presence makes her think that all is well with the victim of her love.)

His asceticism never gave him a morbid dread of his fellow creatures but liberated

him into the largest possible circle of pure and noble relationships. "I hope you have not missed the woman in me," he once wrote to Shrimati Sarojini Naidu. This is not a trait associated with the traditional picture of a monk but, as a contemporary has aptly pointed out, it was a striking characteristic of St. Francis of Assisi — "his great faith, great fortitude, great devotion, great patience, great tenderness and great sympathy. Women would sense that in him they had found a fellow-traveller, one who had passed along the road they, too, were travelling, and could give him an affection deep, pure and untouched by any play of sex emotion."

"I associate him (Gandhiji)," says the same writer, "with growing flowers, fresh fruit, the wide and open river, the prayer before the morning star has risen, the walk in the unsullied air of dawn."

This was in brief the amazing personality that burst upon the Indian scene at the commencement of the first world war, armed not only with the power but also the sweet graces of his basic disciplines.

We shall next examine the technique of action which he evolved out of these basic disciplines and some of the phenomenal results he obtained therefrom.

HIS TECHNIQUE AND ACHIEVEMENT

Yesterday I spoke to you about the basic disciplines which made Gandhiji, some of the leading traits of his personality and his extraordinary power to mould human material. Let us now see what use he made of that power, what was the technique that he evolved for its application to the tasks that confronted him and the phenomenal results he obtained from it.

Gandhiji's career in India may be divided into four periods. The first period extends from 1914 to 1919. It was devoted to a close survey, observation and study of the Indian scene. The period was marked by a series of local Satyagraha struggles like that of Champaran and Kheda and the Ahmedabad mill-hands' strike of 1918. It was during this period that he discovered his devoted, talented secretary, who became his alter ego — Mahadev Desai — and some of his best lieutenants. Three of them later formed the nucleus of the Congress High Command, viz. Rajendra Babu, Sardar Patel and Acharya Kripalani. Besides them there were the Maulana Mazharul Huq and Abbas Tyebji, and Braj Kishor Babu of Champaran fame — to mention only a few ; and the bulk of the constructive workers of Gujarat, typified by the late Mohanlal Pandya, who during the Kheda Satyagraha struggle was affectionately nick-named the "onion thief" when he removed overnight

onions attached by the Government distress-warrant officers for non-payment of revenue by the Kheda cultivators.

It was during this period, again, that Gandhiji established the Sabarmati Satyagraha Ashram — his first Power House of non-violence and his Satyagraha laboratory. And a strange conglomeration of humanity it was. In fact my sister Dr. Sushila Nayar told me that one of the first English sentences she learnt was the following from Gandhiji's pen : " Cranks, faddists and madmen often find their way to the Ashram." He himself in conversation would proudly add : " And I am the maddest of them all ! "

His modesty would not let him say that Ashram included also some geniuses and at any rate one saint in the making. There was, for instance, Maganlal Gandhi, whom the Master lived to mourn as his 'best companion', and whose death brought spontaneous tributes from such diverse personalities as Lord Irwin and Pandit Motilal Nehru. A versatile genius, he was equally at home with scavenging or secretarial work, gardening or type setting, account keeping or designing and constructing improved types of spinning, ginning and carding instruments, building a house or expounding Satyagraha. There was the young Vinoba Bhave with his long flowing locks and flaming, unrivalled Sanskrit scholarship, dividing his time between teaching *Raghuvansha* to the Ashram children and cleaning the latrines, which hardly left him any time for his three unusual 'recreations' — grammar, mathematics and metaphysics ! One met there

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the redoubtable Chhotelal, the ex-revolutionary, a close understudy of Maganlal, sharing with him his versatility — which made him by turns an expert in spinning, weaving, apiculture, *tad-gur* * and bread-making. To his genius for learning languages — he was equally at home with Tamil, Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali and Hindustani — he joined a soldierly discipline and a sense of meticulous tidiness and punctuality. As in the case of Kant, the philosopher, people set their watches whenever he emerged from his cell for his morning walk or for his daily visit to the river side for bathing. He was a soldier, who unquestioningly took orders — lived only to 'do or die' — and never failed. There was "His Holiness Shri 108 Swami Anandanand" — as he loved to call himself — the incurable celibate who worked like a horse and slept like a horse and dubbed himself "a eunuch in the matter of eating and drinking"! None of them was a graduate, and Swami, Chhotelal and Maganlal were not even matriculates, but they were Gandhiji's 'hands and feet'.

There were besides, Kakasaheb Kalelkar — the born school-master — with his capacity for lucid exposition, spilling his dilettante versatility right and left from the sheer exuberance of it; the staid and solid Narhari Parikh — educationist and author — and dialectical K. G. Mashruwala, who later became editor of *Harijan* weeklies. There were among the women of the Ashram, seasoned Satyagrahi soldiers, who, armed with nothing more than the basic Ashram disciplines,

* Jaggery made from palm juice.

had made history in South Africa, and a troupe of children whom Gandhiji had put through their initiation by making them run the gauntlet of the martial law in South Africa as couriers, messengers and errand boys when they were just at the threshold of their 'teens. Lastly, there was Gandhiji himself, with his iron constitution as yet unimpaired, and iron will, abjuring milk and milk-products and subsisting on a fare of un-roasted ground-nuts, red tomatoes and bananas ; grinding corn by the hour without changing his hand when almost every other fellow-grinder was forced to do so ; sternly sitting in the hot sun to make a lazy-bones inmate of the Ashram do digging in the field in the summer's hot sun as penance for his remissness in duty.

The Ashram was the means Gandhiji used to introduce among the people the leaven of his basic spiritual disciplines, which provided the energy and drive during all his subsequent Satyagraha campaigns. Indeed, it may safely be said that without his Ashram organization none of those campaigns could have been organized or sustained. Wherever there was an Ashram, people learnt the secret of Satyagraha ; wherever there was a Satyagraha, there sprang up Ashrams in its wake. They set not only the pattern of the type of the worker that was needed for organizing non-violent mass movements in a country like ours but of the non-violent type of organization too.

Let me illustrate. A young man comes to see Gandhiji in his Ashram. He is a member

of a secret, under-ground revolutionary organization. He looks furtively to the right and to the left, before and behind to see if he is watched, as he enters Gandhiji's room. He breathes fire against the British officials and asks in an undertone if there are any C. I. D. about. He tells Gandhiji that the youth are burning with indignation. Gandhiji points out to the visitor how his cult of violence has made a coward of him, by making him feel afraid of the C. I. D.

Gandhiji calls : " Chhotelal, Chhotelal " !

Chhotelal appears and is instantly recognized by the newcomer as a fellow ex-revolutionary, who had suffered in one of the earlier conspiracy cases. Gandhiji tells Chhotelal to explain to the newcomer how in the Ashram they deal with members of the C. I. D., who are detailed to watch them.

Chhotelal tells the young man how he (Chhotelal) had come to Gandhiji and abjured the cult of violence, having found in Gandhiji's non-violence a more effective weapon. " The person you saw me talking to outside is a member of the C. I. D. We have no secrets here ; he knows it. We provide him daily with detailed information about the movements of various members of the Ashram and visitors. He performs odd jobs for us, has become like a member of our family. In fact, we ask him to meet the arriving guests at the railway station and escort them here ! "

Chhotelal introduces the newcomer to another inmate. " He was charged with political

murder," explains Chhotelal. "He came to Bapu seeking asylum. Bapu bade him make a clean breast of it and sent the confession to Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, with a covering note, saying how he was trying to wean the misguided young man from the cult of violence. The charge still hangs over his head, but the Viceroy has ordered its suspension."

The newcomer is very impressed. He tells Gandhiji, he wishes to become a member of his Ashram. Gandhiji tells him if he comes under his discipline, he will learn the art of making a real revolution.

To begin with, Gandhiji asks him to go to the untouchables, clean the latrines, sweep the floors and scrub the community kitchen utensils. As Gandhiji goes out a couple of hours later, he finds the newcomer — now an ex-revolutionary — chatting and shaking hands with the member of the C. I. D. at whose shadow he had trembled only a little while ago.

In Bihar there were the popular leaders — Rajendra Babu, a rising legal luminary, Acharya Kripalani, the ardent revolutionary, and others. They had tried and exhausted all constitutional methods. Terrorism they had renounced; among other reasons it had proved ineffectual. They were faced by a blank wall. The hiatus between the leadership of thought and leadership in action was complete. There was no common denominator of what they could plan and what the people could execute. The result was deep frustration. Gandhiji came to

them as the evangel of action. It filled them with a new sense of hope. As the first thing, he made the leaders transform themselves into servants. He made the irrepressible Acharya forget his professorship and assigned to him the duty of a peon and a *darwan* (door-keeper), and when the Acharya could not quite master his pugilistic temperament, sent him to work in the kitchen as a cook ! At his bidding, other leaders, the cream of the legal profession in Bihar, turned themselves into clerks — silent workers. He made them clean their own dishes and wash their clothes. These they had never done in their life. They were tasks fit only for menials. He thereby made them realize their identity with the toiling masses in however limited a manner and prepared their minds to think in terms of the mental capacity and daily experience of the common folk, which is the basic preparation for any mass movement. He sent forth the women of his Ashram, untrained and uneducated as these expressions are commonly understood — headed by his wife Kasturba Gandhi, who was almost unlettered — to minister to the men and women in Bihar's villages. He provided them with only three drugs — quinine, castor oil and sulphur ointment. Their other equipment consisted of the basic disciplines into which he in his Ashram had initiated them and which enabled them to move about freely and fearlessly in remote villages among utter strangers and to find interest and inspiration in ministering to them in the humble way without feeling jaded or fagged. They set up a school at Motihari and became school masters !

"But what shall I teach them, I myself know next to nothing?" asked an elderly sister.

"You teach them history," suggested Gandhiji quietly.

"That would be fine," replied the lady. "But don't you see, I know nothing of history myself? How can I teach it to others?"

"But you have seen the world for fifty years," rejoined Gandhiji. "Who could be a fitter person than you to teach history? You tell them what you have seen of the world in your lifetime."

She became a teacher of history forthwith!

This was the basic education needed in the villages, not the history of England or of the various dynasties and Governors-General of India.

These simple-minded, unsophisticated workers gave to thousands the relief they needed but which nobody ever gave or thought of giving to them. They carried to them the message of literacy, industry, health, cleanliness and sanitation. They emancipated the women from *pardah* and instilled in them some of their faith and courage. Before long the whole countryside boiled over. There was hope and enthusiasm where there was only blank despair before.

II

The second period (1919-'33) of Gandhiji's life may be said to have opened with the agitation against the Rowlatt Act. On the 6th of April, 1919, mass Satyagraha on nationwide scale in India was born. It was observed by fasting, prayer and abstention from normal work — things within the mental reach and capacity of every man, woman and child of India. It taught the common people to say 'No' when they meant 'No'. When an entire people learns to say 'No' in a disciplined manner, no power on earth can hold them in bondage. But this could be possible only under non-violence. Gandhiji for the first time taught the country the secret of its power. The result was a surprise even to the author of the movement. It exceeded all expectations. It evoked a response even in the remotest hamlets in the interior — beyond the reach of the courier, the post office or the telegraph. It showed that there was something in the technique and the programme presented which gave expression to some hitherto unrecognized, deep buried impulse in the hearts and consciousness of the people. The people discovered themselves and their latent inherent strength.

The people realized their power. But they had yet to learn the conditions that govern that power. And a bitter lesson it proved to be. In places people went mad. In Amritsar on the 13th of April, 1919 they had to pay for it in the tragedy of the Jallianwalla Bagh. It was, however,

found that where the people had lost their senses and indulged in acts of violence, as in certain parts of Gujarat, repression produced depression. But where innocent blood had been shed by the Government, the people came out purified and strengthened from the ordeal.

The non-co-operation movement that followed in its wake marked a further stage in the development of the technique of organized, non-violent resistance. The picture that confronted Gandhiji was that of a nation of three hundred millions, lying prostrate at the feet of an alien imperial power, which had used the arm of "political injustice" to crush the indigenous crafts and industries of the people, and was draining it of its wealth by exploiting its raw materials to feed its own industry. The vast bulk of the Indian masses were condemned to forced unemployment and idleness during the greater part of the year.

The humiliation of the political subjection of his country sunk into Gandhiji's soul. He denounced it as Satanic. Behind his indignant revolt was his deep moral earnestness which was outraged by the spectacle of the utter demoralization of three hundred millions who dared not speak what they felt, whose cowardly existence had become a living lie and a denial of God under the incubus of foreign rule. Not a little of the power that characterized his writings and utterances at that time, and which fired the country from one end to the other, had its root in his impassioned devotion to truth and the importance he attached to moral freedom.

If the people refused to be parties, willing or forced, to their own exploitation and enslavement, the evil of foreign rule could not continue for a day longer, argued Gandhiji. Evil by itself is sterile; it exists and flourishes through the implication of good in it. If, therefore, all good people completely ceased to co-operate with an unjust and tyrannous system of rule, it must collapse under the weight of its own iniquity. We all remember how in the *Gita* Lord Krishna shows to Arjuna, in the vision of the cosmic form — विश्वरूपदर्शन — Duryodhana and the other Kauravas as self-destroyed — destroyed by their own evil. He says: कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत् प्रवृद्धः — “I am a *priori* time, seated in a *priori* space.” In Shelly’s *Prometheus Unbound*, too, it will be remembered, Zeus, the principal of evil, is dethroned, not by any form of force; it topples down by its own weight. It is dethroned by Chronos, which again is the same thing as “a *priori* time, seated in a *priori* space”.

But the difficulty is that we wish to overthrow evil but are not prepared to renounce personal benefits that accrue to us from it. We co-operate with the evil principle by ourselves imitating what we condemn in the adversary, and thereby sustain the evil we strive to overthrow.

Out of this reasoning developed the programme of the triple boycott — boycott of the councils, of the law courts and of the government or government-aided educational institutions — also boycott of all mill-made cloth, whether foreign or indigenous, renunciation of titles and,

finally, non-payment of taxes. The spell that had hypnotized the people — particularly the intelligentsia, so that they hugged the very chains that bound them — needed to be broken. The triple-boycott was the means.

Non-co-operation with the Government must mean co-operation amongst all the sections of the people — the rich and the poor — caste and outcaste, Hindu, Muslim, Parsi, Christian and Sikh. The programme of non-co-operation thus included universalization of spinning and *khadi*, as the bond uniting the rich with the poor, communal unity, removal of untouchability, enrolment of volunteers and collection of funds to work out the new programme. This was the positive aspect of the programme of non-violent non-co-operation of which the various boycotts were the negative aspect.

To put into action this programme on a national scale, the Congress machine had to be reorganized. From an annual show, Gandhiji turned it into a serious, well-knit body that not only laid out programmes but also implemented them. This, in its turn, brought into being a network of organizations all over the country, a wide basis of primary membership and a body of workers who took up politics not as a hobby for leisure hours but as a whole-time occupation. And, in order that it might be worth the while of a man to give his whole time to it, politics had to be so conducted as to enable a man to realize the highest in life. It had to cease to be a 'dirty game' and become spiritualized. In other words, it had to be based upon truth, non-violence,

honesty and personal purity. Without these it would not be possible to gain or to retain the confidence and allegiance of the vast masses.

The complexion of politics thereafter underwent a complete change. Platform oratory, boosted up by the 'fiery element', went out of fashion. Rhetoric became an object of deep distrust. Sincerity, purity and the spirit of self-sacrifice became the criteria of real worth in a public worker. This is not to say that this ideal was fully realized or that insincerity, hypocrisy and fraud vanished at a stroke. There were plenty of exceptions but the norms had changed. He found us a rabble, he left us a disciplined nation.

Ridiculed by the official world as "the most foolish of all foolish schemes" when it was first launched, the non-co-operation movement came in the words of Sir George Lloyde, the then Governor of Bombay "within an ace of succeeding". But there was the proverbial slip "'twixt the cup and the lip". The outbreak of brutal mob fury at Chauri Choura came as a warning bell. The ever watchful general ordered a strategic retreat. "The first thing one does when one discovers one has lost one's way is to retrace one's steps and get back to the point where he missed it. Then alone can he advance." He silenced the dissenters with: "Let them dub me a fool if they like, I cannot help it. It is the law of my being... Better the abuse of the world than the judgment of God."

The author of the movement was tried and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. But

morally the triumph was his ; it was the British Power that was really put in the dock and stood self-condemned.

When he came out of prison, the face of things had changed. Various communal organizations, vested interests and reactionary bodies that had suffered eclipse upon the advent of non-co-operation, had rallied during the interval, not without secret sympathy, guidance and active encouragement from the powers that be. Some of his erstwhile colleagues had broken away from his programme of non-co-operation and formed a separate party to work out a programme of "non-co-operation" from within the legislatures. Under a different sky and in a different clime, this might have developed into a serious political split. Many a political movement and political organization had disintegrated in an analogous circumstance. But the introduction of non-violence made all the difference. Instead of fighting the dissenters, Gandhiji handed over to them the Congress organization, dissolved the party that had been formed in support of his political programme during his absence in prison and brought into being the All India Spinners' Association under the auspices of the Congress, but as an autonomous body, to build up non-violent strength. He told those who professed belief in his principles to testify their faith by working out for all they were worth, the constructive programme chalked out by him. He thus constituted them into the other wing of the Congress, instead of making them its rival. A net-work of Ashrams

and constructive work organizations sprang up all over the country between the years 1924 and 1928. Sap began to rise once more in the withered trunk. The Bardoli No-Tax Satyagraha of 1928 was a portent. It pointed the way to organic Swaraj. The country was ready for the 1930 movement.

In Satyagraha, we have not to wait upon events, events wait upon us. The appointment of the all-white Simon Commission in 1929 provided the opportunity. The dissenters, who had broken away from Gandhiji's programme but who, thanks to the alchemy of his love and non-violence, could not break away from his moral and spiritual leadership and above all from the leadership of his practical wisdom, again aligned themselves with him. 1930 provided a complete vindication of the 'surrender' by Gandhiji of the Congress organization to the dissenters in 1925 at Patna. They realized that they could not change a system by obstruction from within.

Six years of silent, solid, constructive work had rejuvenated the country beyond recognition. The spirit of the basic disciplines had permeated the rank and file of workers. The shock therapy of the Bardoli halt of 1922 after Chauri Choura had done its work. People had no longer any doubt in their minds as to Gandhiji's meaning. They no longer thought in their heart of hearts, as some of them had at one time, that he said one thing and meant another, that he was secretly prepared to welcome violence, provided it could be successful, though he might openly

condemn it. The 'lie in the soul' that had necessitated the Bardoli halt in 1922 had been purged. The changed condition allowed a change in the technique of the fight to be introduced.

Gandhiji took the initiative and guidance in regard to the 1930 Salt Satyagraha movement out of the hands of the Congress organization — which represented diverse elements, including those who did not believe in non-violence as a creed — and assumed sole charge. The movement, this time, he declared, would on no account be called off.

As before, the high officials laughed. But the last laugh was to be with the author of the Salt Satyagraha. "Even if they make free salt for seven years, it won't make a dent upon our revenues," chuckled the high Government officials in New Delhi, when they heard of the inauguration of the Salt Satyagraha. But in the end Lord Irwin had to inform his superiors in London that the only alternative to truce was the "peace of the grave". He could not, with any show of decency, jail millions, he could not order lathi charges against women picketers, standing peacefully with placards round their necks and hands folded in entreaty before the foreign cloth shops and liquor shops, or against the *Vanar Senas* ("Monkey Force") and *Manjar Senas* ("Kitten Brigades") of boys and girls in their early teens. And, if the liquor vendors or foreign cloth dealers allowed that to take place, they were liable to find doors shut in their face by their own wives, when at evening they returned

home! And so the insignificant pinch of salt picked up at the Dandi beach in the grey of the early dawn on April 6, 1930, became the dynamite which shattered to smithereens the British prestige in India.

We have it on record that there was jubilation among the higher British officials, and glasses clinked at the dinner table in the Viceroy's House, when the Gandhi-Irwin truce was signed. There was rejoicing because it was thought that the Congress had been forced to pare down its demands. Even some of our own people felt that to save face the keys of the castle had been surrendered. Pandit Nehru wept. But all that changed when it was realized that a vital principle had been conceded by the British power, when it negotiated a treaty with rebels on equal terms. The redoubtable Churchill could scarcely swallow his disgust at the "nauseating spectacle of the half-naked fakir, in his loin-cloth climbing up the stairs of the Viceregal Palace to parley on equal terms with His Majesty's representative."

As the implications of the truce began slowly to dawn upon the bureaucracy, they became more and more impatient to retrieve lost ground. In this they partially succeeded in 1932, when they forced a fight upon the Congress before it had had an opportunity to recoup from and clear away the debris of the last Satyagraha fight. But once again the wonder-working magician, with no other wizardry than that of his penance, turned a partial reverse into victory when all

alone, from behind the prison walls, he made the British Cabinet to retrace its steps. The settled decision of the British Prime Minister in regard to the electoral arrangements for the Scheduled Castes, which would have resulted in the perpetuation of the 'bar sinister' and dismemberment of Hindu society, was unsettled and the ages-old citadel of untouchability laid low. The full story of that epic is told in my book *The Epic Fast*.

In April, 1934, diagnosing the symptoms like an expert physician, he once more called off civil disobedience, confining the freedom to relaunch it to himself alone. The message of non-violence had suffered adulteration in the process of being transmitted to the masses, owing to the imperfections of the human medium through which he had been working. He conserved it in the germ for a future occasion.

The same year he retired from the Congress organization in order to "serve it the better from outside", and remained its unquestioned dictator till the end.

III

We now come to the third period (1934-'40). He settled down at Wardha. From there he shifted to his village retreat at Sevagram, to carry out his work of educating and rejuvenating the people and through that the Congress, for the last fight. The way to inculcate non-violence as a living force, he reasoned, was by making millions weave the pattern of non-violence into the

basic activities of their lives and in their everyday social relationships. He gave it the name of constructive non-violence.

The names of the organizations which he founded for the purpose and through which he worked is legion. I need not enumerate them or describe them here. A few characteristics which are common to them all, however, may be noted. Firstly, they all had the imprimatur of the Congress but functioned autonomously of the Congress. Secondly, they were instruments for building democracy, but they were not democratic in their constitution in the sense that their executives were not elected by popular vote. A reformer and a pioneer cannot afford to be democratic in the sense of following majority decisions. His function is to educate, to lead. Thirdly, whilst they all had their separate funds, the funds were intended to be spent away and not to be hoarded to enable the institutions concerned to live on interest. The latter were to vindicate their existence by the service they rendered. This served to remove the contradiction noted above between their purpose and constitution and gave to them a truly democratic character in spite of their "undemocratic" constitutions. If they did not cater to a felt need, or if they failed to win public confidence, public support would dry up and they would be forced either to close down or reform. They would never stagnate.

The clouds of the Second World War had already begun to gather on the horizon when, in fulfilment of his long-cherished dream, he set out

for the North-West Frontier Province to collaborate with that great Pathan leader, Badshah Khan (Abdul Ghaffar Khan) popularly known as the Frontier Gandhi, in his efforts to inculcate the non-violence of the brave among his people. Already the Frontier Gandhi had performed the miracle of nearly converting the fierce, fighting Pathans of the rugged North-West Frontier into soldiers of non-violence. The British power, which had always admired the Pathan's fine fighting qualities, found in the unarmed, non-violent Pathan a more formidable adversary than the Pathan with his rifle and muzzle-loader *jezail*. But more spade work was needed to deepen and widen the foundation of the Pathan's non-violence, which he had so far practised largely as a soldierly discipline. How the two Gandhis planned and dreamt together great dreams, how the outbreak of the Second World War interrupted their plans, how on the eve of partition, the Frontier Gandhi returned to his Province to bear testimony to his faith which he had received from the Master, and how he is today bearing witness to it in a Pakistan prison, in a manner worthy of the heroes and martyrs of old, will be found recorded in my book *A Pilgrimage for Peace*.

IV

I now come to the last phase of Gandhiji's life. Though to all appearance he had retired from the Congress, there was one more fight in his belly — the biggest, the best and the last. World War Two flung a challenge in the face of India's self-respect, when she was declared a belligerent country without her consent. But so keen was nationalist India's desire to play her part in the defence of democracies that the landslide in favour of helping the British war effort continued inspite of repeated rebuffs and refusals on the part of the British Government to give her the chance to do so effectively or even with self-respect. Frustration was writ large on every face. Out of that well of despair was born the "Quit India" cry. Never were conditions less favourable for the launching of a non-violent struggle. To many it seemed sheer madness. But with an inner certitude and determination, which staggered everybody, Gandhiji overcame all opposition and rallied round him once more his "old guard" for a final struggle. To him it was an act of faith. To the sceptics he said in effect: "I know that the country is not ready to offer civil disobedience of the purest non-violent type today. But a general who runs away from action because his soldiers are not ready, writes himself down. God has vouchsafed to me a priceless talent in the weapon of non-violence. If I hesitate to put it to use in the present crisis, God will not forgive me. I do not want India to remain a

passive and helpless witness when the fate of humanity hangs in the balance. India must not lose her soul."

Pandit Nehru, torn between the conflicting loyalties of the head and the heart, divided between his concern for the democracies and his impatience of the continuation of the alien authoritarian rule in India "saw and heard the passion in Gandhiji's eyes" as he discussed with him the pros and cons of the proposition and realized that "on the whole that passion was the passion of India. Before that mighty urge petty arguments and controversies became small and without much meaning." The Congress took the plunge.

As had happened before, once again the inner voice of the Prophet proved to be a truer oracle than the arithmetic of political wisdom. In less than four years the seditious slogan of August 8, 1942, became the official programme of action of the British Government, and before long even "Quit India" became outmoded and gave place to "Quit Asia".

It is rarely given to a Prophet to lead his people into the Promised Land. That privilege was to be his. But before that, he had to pass through one more ordeal.

In October 1946 an orgy of communal madness was let loose by the Muslim majority community in Noakhali in East Bengal which set the pace for a chain of similar cataclysms in other parts of India. Gandhiji read in these happenings the writing on the wall. "We are not yet in the

midst of civil war. But we are nearing it," he wrote in *Harijan*. "At present we are playing at it." Immediately he set out on his historic "do or die" mission of peace and healing in Noakhali. It was followed by similar "do or die" undertakings on his part in Bihar, Calcutta and Delhi. From this point onward, his life became a ceaseless quest after the secret of power that is non-violence of the strong. If only he could discover it, he was convinced, it would provide the master-key that would unlock all locks, avert the division of India and set up a chain reaction of non-violence that would inevitably envelop the whole world. Thus would India fulfil her mission of bringing freedom from fear to a distraught world, by presenting to it the gospel of *Ahimsa* as she had done three thousand years ago but in its expanded form.

Both in his objective and the method of realization Gandhiji, thus, harks back to the tradition of India's ancient saints and seers to which he has imparted a new meaning and content. "*Ahimsa*, which is the core of Hinduism, as I have studied Hindu religion, is sought to be explained away by its so-called exponents. But I literally believe in the truth of Patanjali's *sutra* (aphorism) — अहिंसाप्रतिष्ठायां तत्तन्निधौ वैरत्यागः — which means that *Ahimsa* must dissolve all hatred. Even wild animals are known to shed their fierceness in its presence," he wrote in his journal. To realize it in full became the passion of his life.

In this he nearly succeeded. His fast unto death at Calcutta in September, 1947, achieved a

near miracle when the rising tide of communal frenzy was quelled and the "one-man-boundary-force", as Lord Mountbatten called him, accomplished without the use of arms what a boundary force of 50,000 could not in the Punjab. The tidal wave of goodwill which swept over the country as a result of his final "all-in-fast" at Delhi in January, 1948, had all the characteristics of an atomic chain reaction.

He had advised the Viceroy and the British Government in effect to quit India with their troops, handing over power to any party they liked, even if this meant chaos. "There might be chaos for a while," he said, "we would have to go through the fire no doubt, but the fire would purify us." But his "master plan", though it appealed to the Viceroy, was not acceptable to his own colleagues, and so the partition of India came in spite of him. He accepted it as a *fait accompli*. A votary of non-violence may sometimes find himself so placed as to feel the need to endorse a decision which he himself would not have made. He would have been untrue to his faith if he had resorted to non-co-operation with his colleagues because their judgement differed from his own. He was a born democrat, and when the country and his trusted colleagues accepted partition, he could not very well oppose it by non-co-operation. Only by patient persuasion and service could he induce them to join in his belief, not by imposing his own views upon his best friends. He admitted that for the time being, he had lost the hold he once had on them. The experience was nothing new. Had he not

been through the same thing in 1925, when he handed over the Congress organization to those who had broken away from his programme, only to pave the way for their voluntary return in 1930 ?

On 15th August, 1947, India attained independence. But the event brought little joy to its principal architect — the man who had toiled more than any one else to realize it. The wave of madness that had swept over the country on the eve of and following upon the advent of independence saddened him beyond measure and made life to him a veritable bed of agony. Surrounded by the pomp and circumstance of the capital city, he found himself in complete spiritual isolation from his surroundings and from almost all his old colleagues. But he was content to pursue his lonely furrow in hope and in faith. Never did he show himself to greater advantage than during that hectic period, when like a mighty Titan he rushed from one danger spot to another to prop up, as it were, the crumbling heavens. His utterances became commands, passwords, orders of the day. One wonders if the Congress leaders, now rulers, after all realized the wisdom of his advice against partition and their own mistake in not accepting it in time !

Gandhiji did not even now despair of realizing the fundamental unity of the Indian people, though India had geographically been divided. A Muslim leader of Pakistan, who met him soon after his Delhi fast, envisaged to him a 50 mile procession of Hindus returning to Pakistan with

Gandhiji at the head. The idea enthralled Gandhiji. There was the Kashmir fight. He had accepted it even as he had the partition, not that he was reconciled to it or had in any way changed his fundamental attitude towards war, but because he was still engaged in perfecting his weapon which, though it had demonstrated its matchless efficacy so far as the struggle for India's independence had been concerned, needed to be overhauled or perhaps redesigned to perform the duty that now confronted it in the new set up. That it could be so redesigned, he had not the slightest doubt in his mind. He had a rough idea how he would proceed. He even felt that he was on the brink of the Great Discovery. But it was not given to him to conduct his experiment to a successful issue, though he regarded it as a present possibility. In his writings, there is sufficient indication of the technique with which he was working and proposed to work. Let those who are interested study it for themselves.*

And then the curtain finally dropped. On the 30th of January, 1948, the crown of martyrdom descended upon him and he passed from life upon earth into immortality.

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम् पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

“Om, infinite is that, infinite (too) is this ; from infinite, infinite springeth ; take infinite

* A fairly detailed description of it will be found in the second volume of my book *Mahatma Gandhi — The Last Phase*.

from infinite and what remains behind is infinite."

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It is for us to consider what use we are going to make of the rich heritage he has left us. Shall we wisely use it and enlarge it, or shall he have lived and died for us in vain ?

AT THE CROSS-ROADS

Yesterday I outlined to you the technique of action which Gandhiji evolved out of his basic disciplines and how he used it to win India's freedom. Let us now see how application of that technique can enable us to realize the fruits of freedom and to sustain that freedom.

Democracy is a plant of slow growth. It needs patience, peace and staying power. Let us see what will give these to us in the easiest and quickest manner.

Translated in terms of the millions, the four ingredients of democracy are food, clothing, health and individual freedom. Let us take the question of food first.

We are faced with a crisis on the food front. Last year we had to import 2 million tons. This year (1951) the figure will be 5 million tons. In the coming year (1952), we are told, there will be a food deficit of nearly 7 million tons. The problem, it has been explained, has been accentuated by the steady growth of our population.

As an immediate solution, the Government have resorted to the policy of importing food from abroad at the cost of 100 to 150 crores of rupees every year. For long term solution there is a tendency to promote large-sized consolidated holdings and mechanized farming, helped by fertilizers — natural and chemical — imported or home-produced. Should an uncovered margin be still left, and the Planning Commission tell us, it

is likely to be left, the gap will be filled by importing food, the cost being met by our earnings from the export of raw material and manufactured goods. In practice, this has actually led the Government to substitute non-food-crops like jute and cotton, in certain parts, for food crops.

Internally, we have set up a system of procurement and control to regulate the crisis, specially in the interest of the non-producing city-dwellers. There are, besides, certain deficit areas and seasonal shortages to cope with. They are covered by imported food material and by drawing upon food supplies from areas where there is a surplus at the time. The biggest factor which has accentuated the problem is the requirement of our fast-growing non-producing population, particularly of the industrial and urban areas. The total offtake for all rationed areas, urban as well as rural, comes to 7 to 8 million tons. This is partially met by internal procurement which comes to about 4 million tons, leaving 3 to 4 million tons to be made up partly by food imports and partly by squeezing the supplies from the unrationed areas.

This, in brief, is the background of our food problem. Before Gandhiji died, he warned us against the trap into which we would run if we pursued the policy of relying for food on outside supplies. The import of food and the ebb and flow of food stocks within the country as basic features of our food economy are, at best, palliatives that serve to mask the symptoms. It is much better, as Gandhiji told us, to let deficit

areas appear deficit, so that we do feel the pinch and not lull ourselves and the people into a false sense of easy-going complacency, than to convert the whole country into a deficit area artificially and cover up the dismal fact by begging food from outside. Let the shortage in deficit areas be met by a nationwide austerity programme or even by imports, provided the imports are strictly used for the deficit areas only. The local surpluses when they arrive can be utilized to build up regional grain reserves, so as to reduce to the minimum the internal movements of grain. The balance of the whole country should not be disturbed. Even if this costs us more in money, it does not matter. The extra expense will be worth the contentment and peace it will bring to the people and the stability and staying power it will confer upon us. These are assets whose value cannot be over-estimated, whether in peace time or in the eventuality of a war. Probably, in the long run, the cost will not be heavier than what we have to pay in order to maintain a highly paid, extensive and corrupt machinery of control, procurement and movement of food-grains, which has done more than anything else to lower the standard of public morality and bring into disrepute the administration. Let the open sore remain exposed. It will serve as a constant reminder and warning.

The administration will then be compelled to tackle the evil at the root and end the crisis in the shortest possible time or have to clear out and make room for a better one. Released from the jugglery of experts, we shall breathe freely

once more and be ready for a genuine, popular effort.

But what about the uncovered deficit in the meantime? Is it inevitable? The reply is 'no'. I am afraid, we have not learnt or taught our people to utilize our internal food resources and food-producing capacity to the full. Our country is rich in food resources. We have an endless variety of edible herbs, roots and tubers like sweet potato, yams, cassava and tapioca, whole jungles of jack fruit and mango and banana, cocoanut, palm and cashewnut, and extensive crops of groundnut and gingili, linseed and other edible oil seeds — to mention only a few. And there are simple, homely and inexpensive ways of preserving them and using them to provide all the nutrition we need. We have recently started a chain of non-cereal Annapurna cafeterias and their extraordinary popularity has surprised everybody. These Annapurnas are, however, only urban novelties. The principle is capable of countrywide application. The trouble is, we have neither the men, nor the leadership, nor the machinery to inspire the masses. The Government machinery continues to be the white elephant it was. The various political organizations in the country — including the Congress — are more anxious to capture power than generate power by humble service of the people in the way Gandhiji taught us. I dare say, if instead of railing at the various evils, we all made up our mind to supplement one another's efforts, if the various political organizations, instead of engaging in mutual recrimination, spread themselves out in

the country to help the people, we should be much nearer the solution of our food problem than we seem today, and the food problem would cease to be the bug-bear it has become. Students can play a great part in it. They can go to the villages, equipped with the requisite knowledge which can easily be acquired in a short time. I say this on the strength of experiments I myself made in Noakhali. It showed to me how little can go how far when it is done in the right way and the right spirit, and how its effect outruns mere arithmetical progression. But I must resist the temptation to enter into further detail.

I can very well understand the eagerness of those who favour large-scale collective farming. The cat was let out of the bag by a friend who happens to be in the administration. "Large-scale collective farming is the method *par excellence* for making procurement easy and increasing it to capacity," he remarked. "If we have a system of small-scale individual farming on a co-operative basis, procurement will not be so easy; there will be fierce resistance, and we shall find it difficult to meet the growing needs of our industrial areas." Must we continue to subsidize the needs of our "industrial population" by a step-motherly treatment to the country-folk in non-rationed areas? I ask.

I have referred to the problem posed by the growth of our population. Population control, of course, is the ultimate answer. How it should be done is another question into which I will not enter here. But it is clear that our policy in

regard to agriculture should be such as to enable us to maintain the maximum population on our limited acreage for the longest period of time without exhausting the soil. I shall presently show that this can best be done by adopting a system of intensive, individual farming on a co-operative basis, supplemented by handicrafts and cottage industries, as advocated by Gandhiji, instead of large-scale, collective, mechanized farming and a policy of heavy industrialization.

Prince Kropotkin showed by his experiments what results could be obtained by intensive, small-scale cultivation. Here is another witness. This is what F. H. King, that great American authority on agricultural-physics and soil management writes in his *Farmers of Forty Centuries*. "We desired to learn," he says, "how it is possible, after twenty and perhaps thirty or even forty centuries, for their soils (he refers to China, Korea and Japan) to be made to produce sufficiently for the maintenance of such dense populations as are living now in these three countries. We have now had this opportunity and almost every day we were instructed, surprised and amazed at the conditions and practices which confronted us whichever way we turned; instructed in ways and extent to which these nations for centuries have been and are conserving and utilizing their natural resources, surprised at the magnitude of the returns they are getting from their fields."

And this is what he found : In the Shantung province of China a farmer was having 12 in his

family. He kept one donkey, one cow, both exclusively labouring animals, and two pigs on 2.5 acres of cultivated land where he grew wheat, millet, sweet potatoes and beans. "Here is a density of population equal to 3,072 people, 256 donkeys, 256 cattle and 512 swine per square mile. In another instance where the holding was one and two-thirds acres the farmer had 10 in his family and was maintaining one donkey and one pig, giving to this farm land a maintenance capacity of 3,840 people, 384 donkeys and 384 pigs to the square mile, or 240 people, 24 donkeys and 24 pigs to one of our forty-acre farms which our farmers regard too small for a single family." The average of seven Chinese holdings which Mr King visited and where he obtained similar data indicated a maintenance capacity for those lands of 1,783 people, 212 cattle or donkeys and 399 swine, — 1,995 consumers and 399 rough-food transformers per square mile of farm land.

And what made all this possible ? " Both soil and subsoil are carried into the villages and there between the intervals when needed they are, at the expense of great labour, composted with organic refuse and often afterwards dried and pulverized before being carried back and used on the fields as home-made fertilizers. Manure of all kinds, human and animal, is carefully saved and supplied to the fields in a manner which secures an efficiency far above our own practices."

Mr King also figured out the economic value of this human waste. " The International Concession of the city of Shanghai in 1908, sold to a

Chinese contractor the privilege of entering residences and public places early in the morning of each day in the year and removing the night-soil, receiving therefor more than \$ 31,000 gold, for 78,000 tons of waste."

In India the total manureal value of the excreta and urine of our human population has been calculated at Rs 230 crores in round figures. Similarly India's enormous cattle wealth could yield 983.5 crores worth of manure. Even if 25% of it could be conserved, the total manure recoverable from the excreta of the human and cattle population of India would be worth 303 crores of rupees. And yet our Ministry of Agriculture proposed to spend 173.8 crores * of rupees over a period of six years (1951-'56) on a scheme of importing artificial fertilizers "which will be run on no profit and no loss basis".

In the Talimi Sangh basic school at Seva-gram, one of the first things that the children do is to learn to conserve and turn into compost the human waste and put it back into the soil. The resulting improvement in soil fertility and increase in the crop yield serves as an eye-opener and object-lesson to the villagers all around, apart from the difference it has made in the health and sanitation of the village-folk. They have learnt to erect trench-latrines and to convert human and cattle waste into compost. This is just a small part of the basic system of education which Gandhiji conceived and introduced.

* After the establishment of the Sindri factory the figure was reduced to 23.4 crores.

Closely related to the system of agriculture based on cattle and human economy is the question of handicrafts and cottage industries. Agriculture must have supplementary cottage industries to sustain it. Recent advances in agronomy have brought an increasing realization of the importance of the 'Law of Return' i.e. the necessity of returning all animal and vegetable refuse back into the soil, for building up soil fertility. In a country like ours, where agriculture and health of the soil depend upon the maintenance of proper balance between the cattle population and human population inhabiting it, preservation of cattle wealth becomes a basic need. And in order that this may be economically feasible, both human and cattle population must be multipurpose. The cattle that turns the soil must also fertilize it, turn the oil-press, lift the sub-soil water and draw the bullock cart, when it is not turning the soil. Similarly the human population must engage in processing their field produce, and practising handicrafts and other cottage occupations when they are not engaged in agriculture. This, if it is intelligently done, would develop their mental faculties too and provide them with the whole education needed for life, so that in the constant company of oxen they do not become Markham's "brother to the ox". This in its turn means that both our human and cattle population in the villages must be protected from the competition of mechanical power.

Let us take the next necessary of life — clothing — which, inspite of mills, has remained

unsolved. Yet it is so easy. The present (1951) per annum availability of cloth in India is 11.5 yards and the utmost the Planning Commission promise is that they will give 15 yards of cloth per annum at the end of their first five year plan. Now, 20 seers of ginned cotton (or 70 seers of unginned cotton) will yield 480 to 512 standard hanks of yarn (of 840 yards each) in 1460 man-hours. Thus, each member in a family of say five, by spending 48 minutes daily, or the whole family giving four hours daily collectively, to spinning and ancillary processes will produce enough yarn to be woven into 121 sq. yards of cloth. That will give per head 24 yards of cloth per annum. Nor is this a mere theoretical calculation. The 7th grade children of about 14 years of age in the Sevagram Basic School produced 60 sq. yards of cloth in 947 man-hours (from cleaning of cotton to the production of finished cloth). This means, that if the quota of 15 yards per head is prepared at home, a family of 5 will have to give $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours or each individual 30 minutes daily. Therefore, Gandhiji suggested, that spinning should be regarded as a daily must in which each and every one of us should engage as a matter of national duty thereby solving the unsolved cloth problem permanently.

II

Here you will ask : What about the standard of living ? Will not adoption of Gandhiji's system of economy result in a 'lowering' of the standard of living ? Let me once more warn

you, as I did in the beginning, against being swept off your feet by words and phrases. Everybody today talks about raising the standard of living of the masses. If by this is meant that those who have not enough to eat should have plenty, those who are naked should have clothing, those who live in ill-lighted, ill-ventilated hovels, should have sunny, airy, decent houses to live in, I am wholly for it. Judged by this criterion, I make bold to say that the economic system recommended by Gandhiji is the most efficient, the most inexpensive and the surest way of insuring a decent standard of living to the people at large in the immediate present. But perhaps this is not what is generally meant, when people talk of raising the 'standard of living'. The false standards of values in which we have been educated make us think that if a man consumes home-grown, garden-fresh vegetables and fruit, it means a lower, primitive standard of living. On the other hand, tinned fruit and vegetables are equated with a high standard of living. If we give our people training in music and they grow up in healthy, natural surroundings, so that they sing out of sheer joy of living, it is primitive simplicity; but if they glumly sit around the radio and listen to 'canned' music, in the selection of which they have no choice, it is considered the hallmark of a high standard of living. If the worker or the craftsman can stay and ply his craft in his village home, where he will have fresh air and sunshine free the year round, it is rustic style of living. But if he is provided a fortnight's escape from the dull, monotonous and

soul-killing toil of the factory, by being allowed a free holiday in the countryside once in an year, it is acclaimed as a realization of the worker's Utopia ! I recently read a very enthusiastic, futuristic description of air-conditioning. The ideal envisaged is a densely packed city — densely packed so as to reduce the air-conditioning expense. It is enclosed in a giant steel or glass capsule from which all sunlight and natural air have been excluded. Sunshine is provided by synthesized day-light or natural day-light piped through solid quartz tubes. Temperature and humidity are controlled by the air-conditioning plant. The air is filtered and purified by chemistry, rain will be provided wherever desired by hydraulic gadgets. There will be imitation breezes, synthetic warbling of birds and rustling of leaves and even the musk of flowers. Only the musk will be of coal-tar parentage and flowers and leaves a monument to the triumph of the chemistry of plastics and aniline dyes. And mind you, this was not a skit, but a serious contribution in a leading United States magazine.

I do not wish you to despise material goods. I do not despise them myself, nor did Gandhiji. Nobody did more than he, in his own way, to provide a little more of the material means of life to the masses. He went even so far as to say that God cannot appear to the starving poor except in the form of bread and clothing. As I have already said, democracy and freedom lose their meaning to people who lack elementary means of subsistence. But beyond a certain limit, hankering after more and more material goods

becomes a hindrance to freedom. It can only be satisfied at the expense of democracy.

It has been suggested that socialization of industry will rid mechanized mass production of most of its capitalistic evils and insure for us the twin boon of freedom with abundance. The assumption betrays a misapprehension of the basic issue. As a talented young writer, in one of the most brilliant monographs on the subject that I have seen, has pointed out, so long as the common man has no comprehension or control of the factors which affect his life, self-government in the true sense of the word will remain at best an illusion. He will be at the mercy of experts and bureaucratic managers, oligarchies of ambitious individuals and adventurers, who, once they come to stay, as the experience of all history shows, remain to rule. Only when the factors which effect the elementary well-being of the common man are compressed and brought within the range of his mental horizon, will he be able to govern himself and realize true democracy. In the baffling vastness created by the present day method of production, he gets lost. He is surrounded by a world whose working he does not understand, much less control. Far flung markets are created for goods which are produced at one end of the earth to be consumed at the other. Price mechanism becomes mysterious and incomprehensible to any but the specialist. The worker produces only what others have planned. I have slightly compressed and adapted the writer's argument.

In the economic set-up envisaged by Gandhiji, the common man may have a little less of the "gaudy" goods of life but the bounds of his freedom are enlarged. It will be a world which he can understand and therefore control. He will plan as well as produce. Freed from the domination of intellectual aristocracy, he will learn to take his destiny in his own hands.

Would this mean a return to the pre-scientific era or a rejection of our recent gains in technology and science? No, Gandhiji's world too will have scientists and technicians. But their energies will be harnessed to solve the everyday problems of the common man in the villages. Science and technology will no longer be the monopoly of the privileged few, the big producer or the sophisticated city-dweller as they are largely and primarily today, but belong equally to all. Not only shall we not ban machines which supplement human labour or increase its efficiency but we shall have many more of them besides what we have today. The level of machinery or organization that we may from time to time or ultimately adopt cannot be arbitrarily fixed. It will probably vary from place to place, the guiding principle always being that it must be within the mental reach of common people and their financial capacity to own them individually or collectively. The same principle must apply to the motive power used.

Before I close this topic, I should like to examine one or two current fallacies. Too much reliance seems to be placed on the "inevitable dispersion" of industry owing to the menace of

atomic warfare. This is sometimes confused with decentralization. The threat of atomic warfare might lead to dispersal of industry, not its decentralization. Industry dispersed in this way will still be centrally controlled and powered. Dispersion of industry under the threat of war and decentralization of industry with a view to putting the destinies of the people in their own hands are two different things. As an economic and social policy, decentralization can be effective only on the basis of individual production and individual production is no more mass production on a reduced scale than a wrist-watch is a tower-clock in miniature. The two are built on different principles. Individual handicrafts-production and dispersed mass-production respectively rest on two incompatible, mutually exclusive and rival systems of economies with different norms, *raison d'être* and spheres of utility.

In the early stages of the labours of the Planning Committee, appointed by the Congress, a discussion once took place in Gandhiji's hut between Gandhiji and some of the 'experts' on the Committee on the question of encouraging village industries. Pandit Nehru was the Chairman of the Committee. It was suggested that if an excise duty of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent or something like that were put on mill cloth and an equivalent subsidy given to *khadi* to begin with, it would equalize the prices of *khadi* and mill cloth. The reply he received was that it would be wrong in principle to prop up "inherently uneconomical industries" and make them compete with machine products to the detriment of the latter as this

would curtail the "productive capacity" of the country. Gandhiji answered that it was the factory product that had over long periods been, and was even now being subsidized at the cost of the common man in a number of ways, as for instance, by cheap railway transport, special municipal facilities and agricultural and food policies especially designed to cheapen raw materials and food for the industrial population at the expense of the non-urban and so on and so forth. Now, all this does cost the country something — does it not? But we do not mind the expense because of the concomitants of city life which result from it, e.g. quick travelling, motor cars, the radio, the cinema, electric light and a thousand and one thrills which Stuart Chase has called the 'toys of civilization' and which the city-bred intellectual, who today guides our social destinies, cannot do without. The so-called economical character of factory production is not an 'inherent quality', but only a 'conferred attribute', depending upon the standard of values which we have adopted for ourselves. Gandhiji's plea was turned down and we decided to continue to support the unpatriotic sugar and textile industries to the detriment of their village-counterparts with the result that both our sugar and cloth problems remain unsolved to this day and we have had a crop of scandals in regard to both which should make us prick up our ears.

We have today made the pursuit of that will-o'-the-wisp called 'national prosperity' our objective, as if 'national prosperity' can exist

independently of or at the expense of the immediate basic well-being of large numbers of our people. This deviation from the ideal of 'unto this last', in our national policies, on which Gandhiji laid so much emphasis, makes a person like me feel extremely uneasy. It might well prove to be our bane.

There is, however, a more serious reason that can be pressed against this system of economy. I concede it in advance. It will not enable us to build a mighty war potential. The nature of modern war is such that it cannot be successfully waged by any nation which does not possess a highly developed system of capital goods industry, supplemented by mass-producing consumers goods industry, capable of rapid conversion to war time needs in armaments and other war material. Again, it cannot be waged successfully except by nations that can mobilize their entire man power in military or industrial conscription. And the universal conscription of population as well as conscription of wealth in the form of heavy war-time taxation can most easily be enforced under a system where large numbers of people are dependent for their subsistence upon large-scale private employers and corporations or the one, all-embracing corporation—the State. I was once discussing this question with the Governor of one of our Provinces. "What you say is all right," he said at the end of the argument. "But what about the military expenditure? Cottage industries cannot finance our growing war machine." And today our Commander-in-Chief too is telling us, we

must have rapid development of our "home industry" if we wish to be a "great power in the modern world."

We have therefore to make our choice. If we wish to have armaments—a mighty war machine—let us go in for centralized mechanized system of mass production. We too then shall have our armament kings and 'Merchants of Death', our Schneiders and Skodas, that will not scruple to amass profits by selling armaments to potential enemies in peace time to keep their show running. And these will be used to slaughter us and our folk in the event of a war. On the other hand if we want health, freedom, leisure, sunshine and life, food and clothing for the millions, we have to take the way that Gandhiji showed us.

"But then our neighbours will swallow us," people tell me. Friends, it is an unworthy fear. A people that could bring to its knees the mighty British Empire in the short span of one generation cannot be so easily swallowed or digested by any neighbouring power if they have not discarded or forgotten the use of the weapon with which the Father of the Nation armed them and led them to victory.

Again, is there any guarantee that armaments will necessarily prove effective against aggression? Let us not be caught in the philosophy of the Maginot Line. That philosophy failed France in her hour of trial, just as its counterpart failed Hitlerite Germany later and spelt its utter ruin. And if armaments fail—as they inevitably do before superior armaments

and sometimes even before inferior ones — what then ? Shall there be no other alternative except abject surrender in such conditions ? Even the British power in India found itself reduced to a position when it had to declare that it would have to retire to a remote line of defence beyond Allahabad perhaps, abandoning the entire coastal belt and the densely populated areas behind it to the Japanese invasion. Usually, when we put our reliance on armaments, there is nothing but abject surrender left once our armaments are overpowered or taken away from us. But there is a potent and unfailing means of vindication of their honour and self-respect still available to the people who have been trained to wield the weapon of Satyagraha. That was the power revealed to us by Gandhiji at the time of the threatened Japanese invasion during the darkest period of the last world war. It enabled us to keep our heads high and our spirits braced. Extinction under Satyagraha is not annihilation. And if war unto death is an admissible solution of the problem posed by possible aggression by a powerful neighbour, why not non-violence unto death without surrender ? I suggest, it is the nobler and by far the more effective solution.

III

In any case, there is not much meaning in jeopardizing even in peace time popular freedom for the fear that it might be lost in the event of a war. Let me explain. It has very aptly been

observed that as a result of technological advances during the last century on many points nature has been conquered but man and his liberties have sustained a succession of defeats. Paradoxical as it may seem, progress in science and technology instead of widening the frontiers of individual freedom, has been a causative factor in the decline of liberty and concentration of power in the hands of the ruling oligarchies during the last century. As Aldous Huxley has pointed out, never were the political bosses armed with more efficient instruments of coercion than they are today. Not only has technological advance provided them with bigger and better instruments of coercion with which they can bend large masses of people to their will ; it has also provided them with instruments of persuasion incomparably superior to any that the earlier rulers possessed. A political party or an oligarchy controlling the Press, the telephone and the radio can hypnotize millions by its propaganda. The masses have no weapons comparable to those in the arsenals of the rulers of today. In a country, therefore, where the democratic machinery may be suppressed or where it may cease to function properly, people who feel oppressed are likely to find themselves without any effective mode of resisting the oppression unless they can offer resistance on a plane where technological superiority does not count. So far the only hopeful issue that has been discovered in this respect is Satyagraha. And the pre-condition for successful Satyagraha, apart from the cultivation of the basic disciplines among the people, particularly

the leaders, is that a good part of citizens should have easy access to natural resources and possess sufficient manual skill to be able to provide themselves with the elementary means of subsistence without depending upon the big capitalists, big employers or the one, all-embracing employer — the State.

If we could bring about non-violent organization among the people — and the only known and tried way to do this is by means of constructive work — we could cure many of the ills like black markets, controls, corruption and so on, from which we are today suffering and as a result of which the hearts of the youth are filled with frustration.

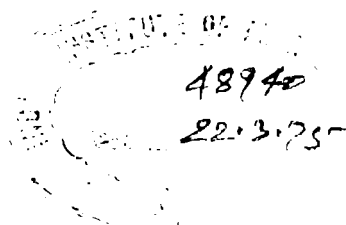
We are all familiar with the complaint that the Congress leaders in power do not interest themselves in the development of what Gandhiji called 'constructive work'. It is no surprise to me. The function of constructive work is to forge a non-violent sanction. Its use is to bring strength to the elbow of the Government in power, if they make it their own, or to put a brake upon it if they go wrong. The Congress leaders were keenly interested in the development of a non-violent sanction when they were fighting the British. But since they have come into power, they have a more handy sanction ready at hand, and one has a suspicion that they do not very much care for — if they do not actually fight shy of — non-violent strength of the masses. For, this weapon can prove double-edged if the rulers are not very careful as to the path they choose to tread.

This reluctance or disinclination is fundamental. The first concern of the State will naturally be to strengthen the hands of the politicians or the group that is in power, not to arm the people with the power of resistance which the rulers no longer need for themselves and which is capable of being turned against them. And that applies to political parties in opposition too. Intrinsically they share the limitations of the present Government in power. As regards the personnel when one finds that they do not scruple to steal each other's members, who become angels if and as soon as they join them and are dubbed as blackguards if they don't or if they go over to the other side, the difference between them is only that between half a dozen and six ! They have all equally lost faith in non-violence as the weapon of choice. The tussle is for a share in or capture of power only. If they were installed in power tomorrow, they would be forced to follow the same pattern of conduct as the present Government by the logical necessities of the premises which they share in common with it. Their denunciation of the latter for neglect of the constructive programme and deviation from Gandhiji's ideologies no less than their pledges to do better in this regard, if they are put in power, therefore leave me unimpressed. I would like us to cease to depend upon the use of Government machinery for the development of constructive programme or the implementation of Gandhiji's basic policies and apply ourselves to creating the non-violent sanction which is the only remedy for our present ills and ultimate

guarantee of our liberties in peace time or in war. Let us put the destinies of the people in their own hands. For that we have to work from outside and from below, occupy ourselves with little things and forget the big. We shall then get big results.

And, one word more : do not despise the basic disciplines as outmoded vestiges of the pre-scientific era. The world needs them more than ever.

A young English friend, who came all the way from England to meet Gandhiji at Sevagram to understand the problem of non-violence, wrote to me about a year back : " The third world war has already begun under the table. There can be no world peace unless there is a return to spiritual disciplines and religious convictions." He is an Oxford don and a brilliant, successful playwright. He doubted if the West would be able to achieve it. Let that privilege be yours — ours — India's.



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