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.....

REVOLUTIONARY SARVODAYA

Acharya Vinoba Bhave

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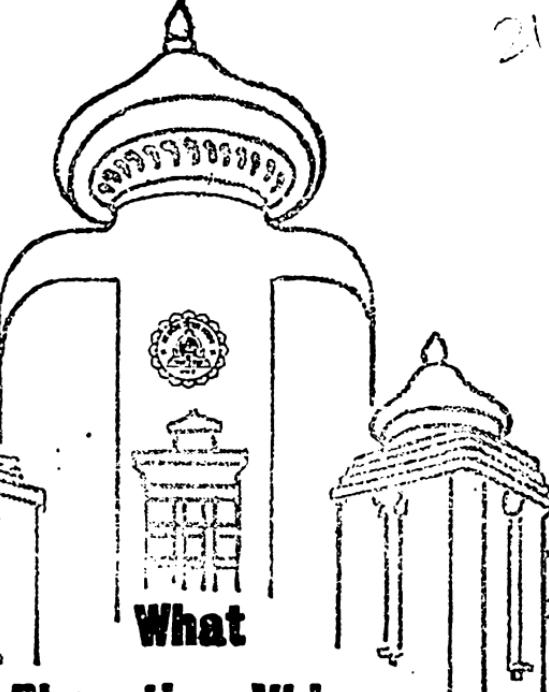
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BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN BOMBAY

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Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern.

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, iddas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

- (a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and
- (b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—
 - (i) respect for the teacher,
 - (ii) a spirit of inquiry,
 - (iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.



DATA ENTERED

आ नो भद्राः कृतवो यन्तु विश्वतः।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, I.89.i

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By

ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE

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BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

REVOLUTIONARY SARVODAYA

(*PHILOSOPHY FOR THE REMAKING OF MAN*)

ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE

Compiled and Translated

by

VASANT NARGOLKAR



1964

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bhavan's Book University volumes had rare success. About a million and a quarter volumes have been sold in about eleven years. However, there is an insistent demand for the stray volumes which the Bhavan has issued from time to time at a lower price. In order to meet this demand, it has been decided to issue the new One-Rupee Book University Series side by side with the Book University Series.

I hope this new One-Rupee Series will have the same good fortune which the other Series had, of being useful to those who are interested in the fundamental values of Indian Culture, and of reaching out to a wider audience.

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,
Chowpatty Road, Bombay-7.
Vijaya Dashami
September 28, 1963

K. M. MUNSHI

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INTRODUCTION

It was Mahatma Gandhi who first used the word *Sarvodaya* in modern times. Literally, it means 'the rise or welfare of all.' But this English translation does not fully bring out its deep connotation. While in South Africa, Gandhiji happened to read in 1904 John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. The book, as he records in his autobiography, gripped him and made him change his life. The teachings of *Unto This Last* according to Gandhiji were:

“1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.

2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.

3. That a life of labour i.e. the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living.”

Later when Gandhiji published in Gujarati an adaptation of Ruskin's book, he entitled it '*Sarvodaya*'. He had borrowed the word from a Jain scripture* by Acharya Samantabhadra who lived about 2000 years ago.

The idea, though not the word, is found in the following prayer repeated by Hindu saints and sages from time immemorial :

सर्वोपि सुखिनः सन्तु सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कथित् दुःखमाप्नुयात् ॥

“May all be happy. May all enjoy health. May all come by prosperity. Let none have misfortune for his lot.”

This couplet was, as is well known, included as the last invocation in Gandhiji's customary public prayers. While emphasizing the social aspect of religion, the *Bhagawad-gita* twice refers to holy men as सर्वभृत्यिते रताः that is, those “who rejoice in the welfare of all living beings.” Gandhiji's insistence on non-violence stemmed from this ideal for holy men. Gandhiji also knew that mere invocation of God for

*सर्वपिशमंतकरं निरन्तं सर्वोदयं तीर्थमिदं तवैव ।

the welfare of all living beings brought little solace to the oppressed, the suppressed, the poor or the needy. One had to incessantly strive and to actively help them in their immediate needs and as a long-term objective initiate a non-violent revolution, which will lead to the establishment of a society based on love, co-operation and absence of exploitation. By adopting non-violence as a creed of life and by rendering direct and utterly selfless service in various fields of national life, Gandhiji embodied in his person this ancient ideal of a man 'who rejoices in the well-being of all creatures'.

The word and concept of *Sarvodaya* suggested itself to Gandhiji, because he clearly realized the inadequacy of the utilitarian doctrine, in vogue in nineteenth century England, of "the greatest good of the greatest number." Soon thereafter, *Sarvodaya* for Gandhiji became a way of life. Though he did not refer to it as such often, in his life-time itself it came to be established as an ideology of life representing certain noble moral urges in man and certain values, beliefs and practices in consonance with the needs of modern times. Gandhiji offered it to the nation as the true panacea for all types of social or political ills. *Sarvodaya* does not stand in opposition to Democratic Socialism or even to Capitalism and Communism. In the best Indian tradition, it assimilates what is good in each of them and ignores the undesirable. *Sarvodaya* is like a sea, which is the ultimate destination for all rivers. We have been accustomed to associate violence and seizure of power with the idea of revolution. *Sarvodaya* emphasizes that a radical change in the existing patterns of thought, values, beliefs and social behaviour constitutes revolution. A revolution, therefore, must start with oneself as the nucleus and spread out to others by example. Moreover, in *Sarvodaya*, the identity of the means and the end is axiomatically assumed. What is an end today becomes the means of achieving a higher and remoter objective tomorrow. It, therefore, believes that only pure means can lead to a pure, desirable end. Consequently, insistence on non-violence becomes one of the cardinal principles of *Sarvodaya*. Successful substitution of violence by non-violence as a means of social change is by itself a revolution. Achievement of independence under Gandhiji's leadership and distribution of

thousands of acres of land in *Bhoodan* through non-violence are relevant illustrations. *Sarvodaya* has thus revolutionized the concept of revolution itself.

It was Vinobaji who after Gandhiji's death picked up the thread where Gandhiji left it. It was he who was mainly instrumental in naming a loose, non-political organization, established in 1948 to carry on Gandhiji's work, as '*Sarvodaya Samaj*' and its executive body, '*Sarva Seva Sangh*'. What with his rich experience of the meticulous observance of the tenets of *Sarvodaya* in his personal life for over decades and with his deep learning, Vinobaji has been able to considerably develop and apply Gandhiji's ideas of *Sarvodaya* to altered circumstances. The movement of *Bhoodan* and *Gramadan* and his unique method of spreading his message of compassion through *padayatra* have attracted world-wide attention. Vinobaji claims that the adoption of *gramadan* as a nation-wide programme would help solve not only many domestic problems, but would ultimately point to the solution of even international problems peacefully.

Sarvodaya is thus an integral philosophy of life. It is a product of the native soil. It stands firmly on the rock of Indian culture and points to an ideal of life, which is first and last spiritual. But because of its very spirituality, it is concerned with matters formerly considered as mundane and undeserving of attention of seekers after spirit. Selflessly striving to establish a society where work as well as sufficient food, clothing, shelter etc. would be guaranteed to the poor and needy as of right is considered under *Sarvodaya* to be as much a spiritual activity as constant meditation on and awareness of self. *Sarvodaya*, therefore, does not reject the partial truths that underlie modern Western theories or other systems of social organization which aim at material prosperity and social well-being. It positively welcomes science and technology, but would like them to be under the wise control of spirituality. There is no opposition between science and spirituality as is commonly supposed. On the contrary, a wise union of the two alone would lead the whole world to peace, prosperity and progress towards a humaner civilization. In fact, in view of the development of nuclear wea-

pons, such a union has become all the more urgent and inevitable.

In this booklet, various aspects of *Sarvodaya* have been presented very briefly, though somewhat methodically, through excerpts culled from Vinobaji's writings and discourses. Originally, these were either in Marathi or Hindi and I have tried to give a faithful rendering of them in English. I am also responsible for the sequence of presentation of the passages. I can only hope that in my translation and arrangement, I have not distorted the meaning or injected one which Vinobaji's words did not originally warrant.

These excerpts are not intended to give the readers a comprehensive idea of what constitutes *Sarvodaya*. For that, they will have to have recourse to the original complete works of Gandhiji, Vinobaji and many other eminent writers. But it is hoped that these excerpts would initiate the readers, more especially the youth, into the revolutionary nature of *Sarvodaya* and would induce them to participate in the unique silent revolution that is going on in our country. If they do so, I have no doubt that they would be rewarded with an experience richer by far than the one immortalized by Words-worth in the following two lines from a poem written at the time of the French Revolution:

“Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven.”

Vijnanashram,
Kainad:
July 17, 1964

VASANT NARGOLKAR

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I. SARVODAYA AND TOTAL REVOLUTION

1. I for one have great expectations from the youth....Our objective is to bring about a revolution in all walks of life. That alone is why I entertain about you a hope of a total revolution, embracing all aspects of life....I believe that if a revolution is to take place, it can come through the youth and the students alone....This indeed is the distinguishing mark of the youth that they introduce new thoughts and ideas in the world and act upon them bravely.

2. Not through mere slogans does a revolution take place. Effort in every direction is necessary to bring it about. Transformation in every field of life is what is required....A philosophy of life based on a penetrating insight into "the life of things" is essential for a revolution. The courage to penetrate and power to see clearly the meaning of things hidden beyond the situation prevailing around us and to act up to the discovered meaning is what is known as revolutionary insight. That philosophy which is based on the insight into the special characteristics concealed within the womb of a given situation in history is revolutionary philosophy. Revolution can take place only where there is this power of penetrating insight....Practice of *Samya-yoga** is the first distinguishing mark of a revolutionary philosophy....The second is devotion to the principle of Dignity of

* *Samya-yoga*, according to Vinobaji, is the dominant theme of the *Bhagavad-gita*. Attainment to *equanimity* of mind, social *equality* and spiritual *identity* with the Supreme should be the ideal in one's life.

Labour....The third characteristic is very important. The youth must take one vow in particular.That vow is to resist injustice....You must pledge yourselves to resist all injustice whether social or political.

But in the observance of this vow, we will have to use non-violence. For it is absolutely impossible to resist injustice through violence.

3. It is in the very nature of saints to lead others astray by themselves "going astray." Moreover, to lead *the youth* astray is indeed their life-mission.

4. *Sarvodaya* means that the good of all resides in the good of one. That there could be interests of one person, which are against the interests of another, is inconceivable. Similarly, there could be no interests of any one community, class or country which would be against the interests of any other community, class or country. The idea of opposition of interests is itself wrong....If, however, we look upon harm as interest or evil itself as good, then of course a clash of interests is conceivable.

5. It is only when a large group of people, which keeps itself aloof from positions of political power, but which is endowed with the power of discretion and devoted in every way to service, sacrifice and study, is formed on a permanent basis that the task of purifying the atmosphere and bringing about all-round progress of the country would be accomplished. I have chosen to describe such a group of persons *Sarvodaya Samaj*, a group devoted to the welfare of all. *Sarvodaya* is not just another religious sect.

6. Those alone would be considered as Sarvodayites who stand in between the rulers and the ruled. Their job would be to point out mistakes committed by either, to promote goodwill between them, to act as intermediaries conveying impartially what one has to say to the other and to consolidate the power of the people. They will remain aloof from both and serve them both truly.... They will have love for all, but will not attach themselves to any party or section of the people.... They will serve all, looking upon them only as human beings. Does the stream of the Ganges ever inquire of anyone whether it is a cow, tiger or goat? It only says this that if you are thirsty, it is my duty to quench your thirst. Just as the Gangetic stream does not discriminate between animal and animal, but metes out equal treatment to all, similarly Gandhiji has taught us to love one and all. Never look to anyone's party, caste etc. and never accept political power.

7. After Bhoodan and Gramadan, the poor have to be rehabilitated, their culture has to be improved, *Gram-Swarajya* or village self-government has to be established and Basic Education has to be universally introduced. *Gramadan* is just a foundation, on which the whole structure of Sarvodaya is to be erected.

8. With regard to students one question is repeatedly asked as to whether or not they should participate in politics. Now it needs to be first understood that we have already become citizens of the world; science has perforce made us citizens of one world. Today the whole world has shrunk and come nearer as never before. Therefore, there

would be some fighting and wrestling for a few days. But it would be followed by loving embraces later! The various countries can no longer remain isolated from each other. That is why we have to think of politics from quite a different angle. I call that politics '*Loka-neeti*', the science of democratic values. We all have now to be members of a new system of social organization wherein no one would rule another, but every person himself would regulate his own conduct through self-discipline. We have to evolve such politics and establish such a society. Therefore, politics which works for bringing into being 'a universal man' does not deserve to be called 'politics' in the old sense of the term. That is why I exhort students to become experts in the science of establishing real democratic values, which I call '*Loka-neeti*'.

9. The *Sarvodaya* ideology is so very deep in its connotation that one can only make an attempt to implement it, one can never fully practise it in one's life. For acquiring the ability to practise *Sarvodaya* in life in its totality, God-realization is essential. We have, however, to understand first what is God-realization....How is one to search for God?....God is virtue incarnate. He is full of auspicious attributes such as Truth, Love and Compassion. The full attainment to all these virtues is itself realization of God....

We have to learn to discover the good qualities of every one whom we meet. After recognizing them, one has to implant them in one's heart....One has to strive to develop each particular quality in oneself.....My entire programme, of dona-

tions, of service, of sacrifice or of *satyagraha* is only for the realization of the hidden power of God.

10. The whole of *Sarvodaya* programme is founded on the principle of appreciation of good qualities of others. If one learns to appreciate the good qualities of others, one can hope to discover God. Although this glimpse into the nature of God is likely to be partial, one is bound to get it. It is not to be expected that full realization of God can be had all at once. Today there would be realization of one aspect of God, tomorrow, of another. Suppose today the programme of donations stands fulfilled. We thereby get a glimpse into one aspect of God. We learn to discover the quality of generosity that resides in the hearts of people. If the programme of the *Shanti-Sena*, of the Peace Brigade, is adopted by the people, that is, if the people show willingness to do or die, if they are ready to establish peace in riots even by self-immolation if necessary, then one would discover the presence of fearlessness in the hearts of the people.... In this manner if we undertake some such programme of broad social significance one after another, that is, if we learn to appreciate the many-sided goodness of the people by stages, we would be able to realize God. This itself is the process for the full and integrated realization of the Supreme Being.

This is not possible all at once. So long as this mortal coil is not shoved off, there will have to be continuous effort. That is why Gandhiji used to say that his search for God was going on and that he had not still seen God face to face. Our life here is granted us for this search only.... I have, there-

fore, composed a couplet wherein I have tried to present the *Sarvodaya* ideal. It reads:

ब्रह्म सत्यं जगत्स्फूति जीवनं सत्यशोधनम् ।

“Brahman, the Absolute, is Truth and pervades the whole universe. The universe is its vibrant manifestation, which acts as an inspiration to me. Life is indeed a search for that Truth.”

II. THE IDEAL OF LIFE

1. The life of all living beings is a play of desires. To be possessed of desires is the essential nature of living organisms. Like all other forms of life, even man's life is dominated by the same play. It is just play only when one looks at it disinterestedly. But one, who is involved in it, gets overwhelmed by the onslaught of desires. That is why release from desires has been ascertained by experienced sages to be the ultimate goal of life.

2. The *Ishavasya Upanishad* is a book of Vedanta philosophy. There are for that matter many other expository works on Vedanta. But herein we have the essence of the Vedas and even here we find its gist in the first verse itself.*

Its meaning is that whatever is there in the universe is pervaded by God. There is not one single thing in life that is devoid of God. If one were to speak in terms of existence, here in this world He alone exists. His alone is all authority and He alone is the Supreme Lord. Having realized this, we must surrender everything that there is, to Him alone and accept whatever we receive from Him as a favour and blessing.....In this small verse, a great universal principle of life has been revealed along with the method of its implementation. Complete surrender to God, acceptance of everything as a divine gift, not to envy others and not to covet others' wealth—thus a perfect ideo-

*अशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्कच जगत्यां जगत् ।

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीयाः मा गृधः कस्यस्वद् धनम् ॥-ओश. १

logy of life has been placed before us in this *mantra*.

3. Our soul is restless with a longing for becoming pervasive. It feels that it should embrace the whole world. But it is we who confine it. We have imprisoned the soul within ourselves. We do not remember it at all. From morn to eve, we are preoccupied with pampering the body. The only thought that dominates the mind is the concern for measuring accurately the increase or reduction in bodily weight. As if there is no other higher source of happiness. Even the animals know the joy arising from gratification of the senses, of the palate and the like. Now would you not hereafter like to experience the delight in sacrifice, in continence and in giving up fastidiousness in food? Learn to experience what joy there is in offering a hot meal to a starving person even though you are yourself hungry.

4. Man's life is the resultant of countless impressions and influences. Innumerable actions are being performed by us. If we proceeded to keep an account of them, it would be an endless task. Even if we were to record roughly the actions performed in, say, only twenty-four hours, the number would be quite impressive: eating, drinking, sitting, sleeping, walking, wandering, working, writing, talking, reading. Besides, we will discover that there is in our mind an unending stream of various dreams and feelings of love or hatred, of honour or insult, of joy or sorrow. Every one of these passions leave an impression on the mind. If anyone, therefore, were to ask me as to what is life, I would define it as the collection of mental impressions and influences.

A merchant strikes a balance every day, every month or every year and draws a conclusion regarding profit or loss; the same is exactly true of life. There is an addition and subtraction of numerous impressions and influences and something very handy, small in bulk remains. When the last moment of life arrives, the soul tries to calculate its balance of life....whatever you think of in your last moment in life is the fruit of all your life-long activities.

All is well that ends well....Plan your life in accordance with this ideal in view....Turn the whole stream of your activities in the direction of that influence which you desire should be dominant in your mind when you breathe your last. Day and night let the inclination of your mind be towards that end.

5. Universal goodwill, peace of mind and spiritual bliss are incomparable values of life. All the three are sure to be in jeopardy in the absence of steadfast wisdom. That is why poise of mind and self-restraint that leads to such a poise, are also equally precious values. Nay, both these latter are also independent values in themselves. Not for the sake of individual development of a spiritual aspirant alone, but for the permanent moral health of the whole society also, thinkers have been unable to cite any different or more useful values than these.

6. Happiness is not to be equated with the pleasurable condition of the mind. Pleasure or pain felt by the mind is different from the happiness or sorrow experienced by a person....Medicine though bitter to the palate is sweet to the

patient. If it is wholesome otherwise, man accepts mental discomfort cheerfully. The definition of happiness or sorrow from the point of view of life in general considerably differs from the definition of mental pleasure or pain.

Those delights which tickle the mind are certainly no true delights. The true delights of life are different. They reside in peace of mind, not in its violent emotional disturbance. To start with, they stem from passionlessness. Passionlessness results in spiritual perception. Such perception leads to devotion or faith, then comes peace of mind, followed by uncloying perpetual bliss. Such is the ascending order of true delights.

7. In fact, the will-to-live is itself the dread of death. They are the two sides of the same coin. The soldiers on the battle-field are always engrossed in merry-making, dancing and drinking. Pascal says, "The reason for this is that death stares them in the face every moment. In an effort to forget its terror, they put up a show of joyfulness"....The greatest thorn in flesh for man is the desire to live....For him who gives up that desire itself, all sorrow or pain vanishes of its own accord. The great pestering sore in life is indeed thus healed. All his worries and anxieties are just no more. Life becomes an unbroken continuum of pure joy.

8. Salvation is not the private property of a man of steadfast wisdom. It is everyone's personal legacy. By constant meditation on the life of a liberated soul, we get an indication of the way of recovering that lost possession of ours. That is why the pattern of his life serves as a model and

his influence moulds both the individual aspirant and society. The lofty states of his mind, though natural to him, are for us attainable through endeavour and, therefore, worthy of imitation. We have to tread the same path on our journey thither. We have to orientate our life in that direction. We have to follow the pattern set before us by him. Even the real fulfilment of the worldly life of the entire community consists in making it oriented towards ultimate liberation of the spirit.

III. INDIA AND HER MISSION

1. Theoretically it would not be correct to say that the people in any one country are by instinct more inclined towards non-violence and those in another towards violence.... Though theoretically there is thus no difference between India and Europe in this respect, there is, however, a difference in their present disposition. The genius of India today is what it is, as a result of many experiments in social living, which in Europe are being undertaken only in recent times. The difference between the spirit of India and of Europe is similar to that between the temperament of an elderly person and a youth.

2. From the point of view of non-violence, a large population and an extensive country is our special, favourable characteristic. Why is it that we happen to have a large population? We notice that in the one continent of Europe there are many small nation-states. The population of Germany is about seventy or eighty millions, of England about forty millions and of other nations, it is just about twenty or thirty millions*.... How was it then that our population came to be about 300 to 400 millions?.... We conducted many experiments in violence and separate living and having failed miserably, founded a big nation. All this is pre-historic history. You can as well call it imaginary history. But it is nevertheless nothing but history, a record of what must have actually happened.

* Figures refer to pre-War years.

British or Western historians accuse us of having fought amongst ourselves, that we waged internecine wars. I too admit that fratricidal wars are bad. But even then, I feel proud of the charge. We did wage wars but only amongst ourselves. This amounts to an acknowledgement even by these historians that we were and are one. If a small community or a group of persons were to boast that it is united and there are no scisms within it, what special excellence would that be?

3. The Westerners hold that total transformation of society is possible through political power alone. In politics while one party forms the government, the other opposes it. In this way, both continue to act as correctives to each other and believe that thus transformation would come about only through power. We also have learnt to imitate this very system. But you are not aware of the fact that the social and political science of the West is very much backward. There are today* in India provinces such as Maharashtra, Bengal, Gujarat, Tamilnad etc. Similarly in Europe also, there are countries with people speaking different languages. In our country, though there is a demand for linguistic states within the Union, no one desires to establish a separate sovereign nation..... As against this, there are in Europe very small sovereign countries like Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, France etc..... The whole of Europe is politically divided on the basis of communalism alone..... Thus it is quite clear that so far as the social and political structure of society is concerned, Europe is very much backward compared to India.

* The reference is to early post-independence period.

4. After attaining independence, our responsibility has increased in every way. Our freedom was acquired by us in a special manner. That is why also our responsibility has increased all the more. For, it is because of this that the world entertains some great expectations about us. Apart from this, India is endowed with a civilization that is 'forever new'. This indeed is what I call an ancient civilization. According to my definition, ancient civilization is that which, though ancient, is always new. To be ever new is the hallmark of ancient culture. That civilization which can take on new forms for ever and ever is known as ancient. A civilization that is incapable of adaptation would be destroyed completely. Indian civilization discloses a special characteristic. Different cultural groups have been living here. Indian civilization has amalgamated and assimilated all their various cultures. That is why Indian culture has become so very rich and mellow. India has a peculiar characteristic, that of reconciling opposites and living in peace and amity with all. This is why we have a special responsibility.

5. We have to understand that our country is not a child; it is an old country with an experience of 10,000 years.... There is some peculiarity in the history of India by reason of which the eyes of the world are on this country. Undoubtedly, this is an opportunity for India which it did not get during the last two thousand years. The tradition of self-knowledge has existed in this country from time immemorial.

Now the power of science has revealed itself in the world. A union of India's ancient power of

self-knowledge on one hand and of the modern power of science in reference to the whole universe around us on the other, is taking place. Where there is co-operation between science and self-knowledge, good of the people in every respect is bound to result. But that good would result, only when both science and self-knowledge pervade our whole life.

6. The world knows that there has never been any aggression by India against other countries.... Those Indians who carried the message of self-knowledge and religion to China, Japan, Ceylon, Tibet, Burma and Central Asia did not carry arms with them. Neither did they wield any political power. They went only for the dissemination of knowledge.... Not only does India not wish to thrust her suzerainty upon another country, she has never committed even ideological aggression against anybody. The mission was considered as fulfilled with the spread of ideas alone. This is a great characteristic of India. This peculiarity of Indian history is a matter of great pride for us....

That traditional culture which has kept together for centuries people belonging to various religions, castes, languages or provinces is the main stream in the Indian civilization. The principle of non-violence had its birth from that tradition. Be proud of it.... The culture of India consists of the tradition set by the great religious teachers and innumerable saints and sages belonging to the Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Zoroastrian, Sikh, Buddhist and Jain religions.... In as much as our tradition is very broad-based, its pride also tends to be almost universal in its nature. In fact, it cannot even be described as 'pride'. Its chief distin-

guishing mark is its capacity to correlate present efforts to the past cultural endeavour.

7. Many people describe in many ways the grandeur and greatness of India. Some say that there is no mountain like the Himalaya, others, that there is no majestic river like the Ganges. Many other excellences also are commonly cited. But behind all these there is the sense of 'me and mine'; that is why we consider those things as great or important. Every person feels a sort of special attachment to his own country. He, therefore, emphasizes the greatness of his country. We also say

सरे जहाँ से अच्छा*

that "our country is the best in the whole world." When asked, 'why the best?', pat comes the reply, 'because it is ours'! If that word 'ours' is dropped and a comparison with other countries made, then it is likely that those excellences might fade out in significance.

It is not that the soil in India is superior to the soil in the United States. For that matter, the soil in America is comparatively new. It is capable of higher yield. There are a number of very big rivers there. Our Ganges would stand nowhere in comparison. It is true that the Himalaya is the highest mountain in the world. But apart from that, there is no physical excellence in our country which would justify our saying that our India is superior to others in any respect.

Though the claim that India's physical contour or the gifts of nature to her are superior to

* A once popular song composed by a famous national poet Mohammad Iqbal.

those in any other country is not maintainable, I do claim, however, that the spiritual lore had its birth in India alone. It is on the strength of that lore that this Bhoodan movement is being conducted. I declare, not as an Indian but as an independent and impartial observer, that there is nothing in the world that can be matched with Indian spiritual lore. I have studied a good many languages and literatures of the world. But no language of the world other than Sanskrit contains literature which with supreme confidence and faith declares to man, 'तत् त्वमसि । —Thou art That'. This spiritual lore is our strength. Herein lies the distinctive glory of India. India is "the best country in the world" for the only reason that here there is the ancient spiritual lore.

IV. SERVICE

1. I have formulated a maxim: "service to an individual and devotion to the whole society." In devotion to an individual, there is the danger of getting involved in increasing attachment. One must, therefore, develop devotion to society. On the other hand, if one tries to be of some service to society, one can achieve precious little. I believe that a son who serves his mother, serves the whole world. Service is possible only in the case of a concrete individual being, not of an abstract concept. Society is abstract, unmanifest or devoid of attributes.

2. Our method must be based on non-violence, on love. I would never gate-crash into a room. That is part of my sense of decorum. I would follow the example set by the rays of the sun. Rays enter quietly through any chink in a door, roof or wall. We must have this same attitude. Our ideology is our light.... It is not our business to get involved in theoretical disputations. We have only to finish ourselves in the very act of serving the people without rest or respite. Service indeed is the only means that we use for the dissemination of our ideas.

3. Service of the people takes the place of idol worship in our ideology. A group of a score of villages is our temple.

4. When you go to a village, a vast world will open itself out before you. You would come in contact with many men and women. Every time we must unfailingly notice their good points alone. The

tendency to find faults should be checked. I compare the mind of man with a house. A house has doors and it has also walls. Merits of a person are the doors to his mind, his vices and failings, the walls. Access to a house is easy through a door. If one tries to force entry through a wall, the result would be a broken pate. That is why a disposition to always appreciate the excellences of others is necessary. In fact, one should look upon all men and women as so many images of God. If that happens our work would be much easier.

5. Assessment of service, whether physical or intellectual, in terms of money or economic advantage is itself wrong in principle. For, service belongs to a moral category; and hence its value can be assessed only in moral terms. How is it possible to evaluate in terms of economics the service rendered by a servant of the people to a patient in his illness by bestowing care on him or by keeping an anxious watch at night and otherwise exerting himself? How could you measure the importance in terms of money of impartial awards given by a judge? How can we calculate arithmetically the price of an act of meritorious service such as rescuing a drowning person or one trapped in a raging fire? This terminology of economic gain from service or duty duly performed must be rejected outright. An individual should according to his utmost capacity render devoted service to society and society should, on its part, undertake to do its duty of providing means of maintenance to the individual. This should be the approach to the performance of service or duty.

6. Service of those who happen to be around you, service of the saints, service of those in distress and service of those who hate you is the best service.

7. Wherever the sun goes, it carries with it daylight. A servant of the people must do the same. Whatever the moment and the place, and whatever the work that he is engaged in doing, the consciousness of his being a servant of the people must always accompany him.

8. When a country becomes independent, the source of strength gets shifted. Then strength does not reside in politics, it resides in social service. For, then the main task is to transform the pattern of society, and to remove economic inequality. All this type of work has to be undertaken in the social sphere. While engaged in this task, there are many occasions for sacrifice, many hardships have to be suffered, the desire for sensual enjoyment has to be kept under restraint and there is some need for some asceticism. That is why strength resides in the sphere of social service alone.

9. There would be no harm if after having acquired a broad outlook and the habit of thinking in universal terms, students take to work in a small area. But if they commence work in a limited field before they have imbibed broad-mindedness, their whole life would become parochial. Even when the chosen field of service happens to be restricted and even when one has limited it to one's family, village or country, service should be rendered from a broad, universal point of view. Students cannot but have such a universal outlook. To the extent your outlook is liberal, the value of

service would be greater. The value of service does not depend upon its quantity.

10. The realization that the body is an instrument of service would come when attachment to the flesh ceases. And then the body would also be restored to its true dignity....In order that we should be able to exact work from it, it is necessary to feed the body, as we feed a locomotive with coal. When the body is used thus, it becomes valuable and attains to its dignity, even though it is worthless in itself.

V. EDUCATION

1. In study it is not the length and breadth that is important, it is the depth that matters. To continue to read for hours on end and to study numerous subjects is what I term 'the length and breadth' of study. To study for a little while daily a definite subject regularly with intense concentration is what I call deep study....

Knowledge is impossible to attain without deep study and complete absorption. Aimless and extensive study is mostly self-delusion, apart from the waste of energy involved. Nothing worthwhile can be obtained by indulging in superficial and extensive reading on a number of subjects. Study should make a person's intellect independent and turn it into genius. Genius is creative faculty which puts forth newer and newer sprouts. New ideas, new vigour, new research and new inspiration signify genius. This genius would precisely get crushed under the weight of aimless and extensive reading.

2. There are two types of learning worthy of acquisition. One is science which signifies the capacity to examine closely things around us. And the second is spiritual lore which implies the capacity for self-control based on self-knowledge. Hence language becomes necessary as a mere medium in between. We have to learn it only with that object. Language does the job of a postman.... Language acts as a vehicle of thought and learning.

3. The idea that knowledge can be acquired through reading of books is wrong. Through ex-

cessive reading, a stage is reached when our intellect becomes blunted and we come to consider whatever we read as correct. Too much reading deprives the intellect of the power of independent thinking.

4. The principle of non-possession has to be made applicable to knowledge also. To accumulate useless sundry knowledge is improper.

5. Listening cannot compensate for lack of meditation.

6. So many objections have been raised against the old system of education that there is nothing more left for me to add. But its worst aspect stands clearly before my eyes when I am reminded of those supervisors who were appointed to keep a watch on us at the time of examinations. And they used to be there for this purpose that students should not copy from each other. I used to be pained at the thought that if it was presumed from the very beginning that we students could thus act dishonestly, it was obvious that as students we had failed at the very outset. What other examination was needed thereafter?

7. The boy who has had to imbibe the influence of our schools up to the Matriculation class, not only fails to realize the dignity of labour, but loses the dignity of his own self. Such is the great glory of our education! In spite of this there are persons who plead that 'advantage' should be taken of this system of education as far as possible. Where the relation of teacher-pupil is non-existent, from where virtues like sacrifice or the spirit of service has been outlawed, where there is no moral atmosphere, no religious instruction, no place of

honour to the mother tongue, no dignity of labour, no value placed on independence of thought, what possible 'advantage' could be taken of by going there?

8. One who is a preceptor is bound to be a disciple; one who is not a disciple could never be a preceptor.

9. To testify to the knowledge acquired by a disciple is the only function of a preceptor. For the rest, the disciple has to be self-reliant.

10. Education means association with good people. I am unable to define education in any other way than this.

11. There is not enough harmony among our people. There are many reasons for this.... The only remedy for this is that the system of education should be completely overhauled. I am surprised that even though there was a change of government in our country in 1947, there was no change in the system of education. I had said on the very first day of our independence: 'Today the old rule is over; and just as now the old flag cannot remain in its place even for a moment, similarly the old system of education must be replaced forthwith.' But that very system continues undisturbed to this day. It is well known that England needed as civil servants a few persons to run the administration here. That is why they imparted to us their education. Consequently, those who were educated under that system of education became completely separated from the common people and there arose a barrier between them and the people. Even today that education continues

to be given. How can there be unity and harmony in the society?

12. Today the literary books that are prescribed for study are completely useless to the students. Even when Sanskrit is taught, there too erotic literature is selected. Neither the *Bhagavad-gita* nor the *Upanishads* are taught. The students on their part frequent the cinema houses.... When such is the state of affairs, how could the students be expected to behave themselves? There are some people who argue, 'Why do you speak against this education? Lokamanya Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi were the products of this very educational system.' I say to them that Lokamanya Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi came to be what they were, not because of, but in spite of this type of education. These were their own words and yet their names are cited and this worthless education continued. I am greatly surprised that in spite of this wretched education that is being given, the students are so very quiet and tractable!

13. I am not this body. I am different from it. Our true nature is beautiful and absolutely pure. It never contracts impurity nor does it commit mistakes either. Mistakes are committed by the body. It is the body that falls ill or gets soiled, but not I. The consciousness of the soul as apart from the body is itself education. Where there is no consciousness of our true nature as apart from the body, there is neither any system of education nor any institution of education.

VI. DIGNITY OF LABOUR

1. If students are to be expected to do physical work, the teacher also must work with them. The class room needs to be swept clean and so either peons are appointed to do the job or students do it. We never see the teacher sweeping the class-room. Normally it should be like this. If the students come to the class first, they should sweep the room; if the teacher ever comes first, he should do it. But we consider the work of sweeping low and so below our dignity. How possibly would the teacher think of doing it then?

2. I have often said that the people of the villages serve God and the town-dwellers should keep contact with them. Villagers render direct service to God and people of the cities must thus serve the servants of God. If there develops such love between the villagers and city-dwellers, then real unity and harmony would be established in India.

The city-dwellers have to study carefully the good points of the village people. The villagers are accustomed to hard physical labour. Those who live in towns and cities are not habituated to it. Educated people do not exert themselves at all except when they take physical exercise. They hold dumb-bells in their hands and flourish them in the air. Work is considered to be dignified when it is completely unproductive. What needs to be carefully considered, however, is, what harm would be there if we work for the sake of production and are described as labourers? But we have so much disdain for the labourers that we do not approve

even of the name. We consider him as socially low who does manual work. He who commits nuisance would be honoured as citizen. While he who does the job of scavenging would be called an 'untouchable.' City-dwellers should give up this attitude and should, in fact, become the servants of the rural population.

3. Today a professor gets Rs. 500 a month as salary. There are holidays totalling about six months a year and there is work only for six months. Even during these six months, he does not work for more than three hours a day and yet his work is valued at Rs. 500 a month. It comes to Rs. 6000 a year. At the rate of three hours a day for six months, the total number of hours that he works for in a year comes to 600, while he gets Rs. 6000. A professor thus gets Rs. 10 per hour. On the other hand, a labourer who is engaged in physical work would get two annas per hour... at the most. Under such conditions of inequality, how can one expect religion to prosper? That is why I say that religion has not yet been founded.

4. The main cause of the prevailing misery is laziness. If all were to make a resolve to do manual labour, all that misery would vanish.

...There is a universal tendency to avoid physical labour. Those who have to do manual work to the point of complete physical exhaustion do not take up such jobs voluntarily. They stick to them only because they have no other go. Wise people proffer spacious excuses for avoiding physical exertion. Some say, 'why waste time for nothing in doing physical labour'? But these people would never be heard saying, "Why this sleep for no-

thing? Why should one waste time in eating and drinking?" They eat because they feel hungry. They sleep because they feel sleepy. But when it comes to doing physical work, then, of course, they start arguing, 'why waste time in doing tedious labour for nothing? Why must we do this kind of drudgery? Why must we toil? We are engaged in performing intellectual work!" My dear fellow, if you are engaged in doing mental or intellectual work, then take only intellectual food and have only mental sleep. Devise some method of imbibing mental food and having mental sleep!

5. 'Bread Labour' which means working on wages for earning bread is a word with which many must have become familiar only recently. But it is not new. Tolstoy has used this word before.... I have not only been thinking on this subject but trying to live up to the idea for the last about twenty years. For both in life and in education, I give first place to 'bread labour'.

6. All the inequality, all ideas of high and low, slavery and violence have originated chiefly from the economic sin of avoiding bodily labour. Children and the aged should not do physical work, students and teachers should not do it, the ailing and the ascetics should of course not do it, the employed and the unemployed should not do it, recluses and patriots should not do it, thinkers, propagandists and managers should not do it. If that be so, who is to do all the manual work? The ignorant and the helpless? Unless we overcome this dangerous state of affairs, no other theory, ideology, political system, pattern or structure would be of any avail.

VII. ETHICS

1. There is no inherent strength in untruth. Even for its existence, it has to rely on truth.

2. In fact, there is nothing as easy as truth. Even a child understands this. On the contrary, it is very difficult to act dishonestly. In order to palm off one untruth, one has to invent in advance another.... Not all are intellectually equipped for this kind of thing. That is why a special category of persons has been instituted. It is known as 'the statesmen'!

3. Among the means cited as essential for attaining to self-knowledge, truth stands first and it is of great importance. If all the moral codes from the various countries of the world were to be placed in one pan and truth in another, the latter would be found to tip the scales. Truth is the highest moral law, while all other aspects of morality are relatively secondary. That is why, it has been given the pride of place. Especially for attainment to self-knowledge observance of truth is indeed of great importance. This truth does not mean mere verbal truth. It is the triple truth of thought, word and deed. If a man's life were to be founded on truth there is bound to be self-realization.

4. He who based his ethical principles on God has his whole structure built on a firm foundation.

5. The higher one climbs on a mountain, the more majestic is the scene that opens out to view. The grandeur of ideas depends upon the high achievement in practice.

6. If on the rise of a desire, one were to avoid with resoluteness the gross outward act issuing therefrom, the desire will not get fixed in the mind.

7. It is easy to invent an idea to bring about world unity. But it is difficult to conquer anger in one's mind.

8. It is hard to give up an evil habit. It is because of bad habits that self-control becomes difficult. Otherwise it is a very simple thing. How could it be that a man would not know what a tortoise knows? A tortoise knows that he has to withdraw his limbs within whenever there is danger and to extend them freely where there is none. It should not really be difficult for a man to eat only enough to satisfy appetite and to drink water when thirsty; but never to overeat nor to oversleep. One must not, however, sleep less than what is necessary. Are these really so difficult things that we should be required to undergo training and practice? But because of the wrong type of education that is being imparted, this is regarded as very great penance. For this very reason, the practice of self-control is looked upon as difficult. But in *Sarvodaya* ideology, this is a cardinal principle that one must learn to control one's mind and subjugate the senses.

9. Prayer is a duty, spinning is a duty and eating is also a duty. I perform all the three only as sacrificial acts. But the mental ease that I feel while doing the first two is absent while doing the third.

10. I would not be happy to rise high like a hill. I would be delighted, if after dissolution, my dust is spread evenly on the surrounding ground.

11. The height of humility is beyond measurement.

12. There is more joy in endeavour than in achievement.

13. One side—The world is not meant for the pious. The pious should, therefore, keep aloof from worldly affairs.

Another side—The world is for the pious alone. That is why the pious should have patience.

The purport: Whether the world is for the pious or not, the pious should never abandon their piety.

14. Where there is godliness, there is beauty. Where there is beauty, there is poetry.

15. A woman is capable of defending herself under any circumstances whatsoever. Even all of us have to learn the art of living our life by dint of our spiritual strength, instead of depending on our physical strength.... This idea is not difficult to grasp, but living up to it seems rather difficult. For the whole pattern of our life has become totally body-centred. Whether with regard to concept of beauty or of strength, our point of view is dominated by the physical aspect. So long as this excessive preoccupation with the body continues, fear is bound to have a firm foothold in the minds of women. Tyrants have taken considerable advantage of this obsession with the flesh. This itself is the source of all fear.

16. One gets one's mother naturally, one is not called upon to make a choice. Similarly, if one

develops a faith that a husband also is acquired as a matter of course under God's dispensation, there would be less mental distress. For God is not a physical entity. He is to be grasped by the mind alone. Marriage and the like are just devices to learn to see the whole world with perfect love.

17. If the idea that the body is not an end in itself but a mere means, gets firmly rooted in the mind, then man would not be so unnecessarily and fussily preoccupied with minor matters as he is at present. Life would appear to him in an altogether different light. He would then not feel glorified in decorating this body. In fact, it should suffice if this body is covered with some ordinary clothing. But no, he must have it soft. It must be adorned with coloured designs and frills....What is all this for? Was the creator devoid of intelligence? If the body really needed beautiful stripes, frills or lace-work, would He not have provided your body also with all these, as He has the tiger with stripes? Was it impossible for Him? He would have, if He wanted to, bestowed on you a beautiful plummage as He has done on the peacock. But God has created men, of one undifferentiated colour.... Man is beautiful just as he has been made. It is not God's intention at all to decorate the human body.

18. "Brahman" means any lofty, exalted idea. The life of a *bramhacharin*, a celibate consists of penance and self-control. But when related to the lofty idea before his eyes, all that continence is just play to him.... If any one keeps service of the poverty-ridden masses as an ideal of life before him, that service itself becomes *Brahman* for him. Whatever he may do to achieve his

objective would be regarded as *brahmacharya*. In brief, some grand, noble idea must be in view for observing the vow of celibacy; then practice of celibacy becomes easy. Soaring idealism and practice of self-restraint for implementing it, is what I term *brahmacharya*. This is the main thing about *brahmacharya* that I have placed before you.

But there is another that I want to relate to you. It is that there must also be self-restraint in the smallest details of daily life. Even minor matters such as eating, drinking, speaking, sitting, sleeping etc. must be properly regulated. To behave wantonly and to expect to succeed in achieving self-control is futile. Even if there be a small hole in an earthen pot, it becomes useless for storing water. The same indeed is true of our mind.

VIII. RELIGION

1. Love for one's religion, respect for that of another and indifference towards ungodliness constitutes religion.

2. There is never an opposition between two religions. All religions are, however, opposed to unrighteousness.

3. Which is the cardinal religion of man? Humaneness.

4. If God is not found in the world, there is no hope of finding Him outside.

5. I always say in my public prayer meetings—I have made it a regular practice these days: in prayer, I implore God to grant us 'Truth, Love and Compassion.' The three divine incarnations Rama, Krishna and Buddha appeared in India one after another. They represent Truth, Love and Compassion. And these very principles of Truth, Love and Compassion are the essence of all religions, not just of those in India only. Belief in Truth is the subject-matter of the Upanishads; among the Jains loyalty to Truth alone is the norm. In Islam and the Devotional School of Hinduism, the virtue of compassion is given prominence. Islam describes God as 'Rahaman-ur-rahim'—the All Merciful. God's attribute of Love dominates the thought among some devotional schools and the Christians who declare that God is Love. Thus the core of the teachings of various religions of the world is included in Truth, Love and Compassion.... There are innumerable attri-

butes of God for that matter. Yet I prefer to invoke these three qualities.

6. Hinduism, Islam and other religions are different formulations of only one basic religion, namely, Truth. And therefore, though each may have its own peculiarities, there is no opposition between them. One who sees this, really sees. Swami Ramakrishna Paramahamsa convinced himself of the unity of all religions after having himself undergone the different spiritual disciplines of many religions. The Maharashtrian saint Tukaram recognized the essential oneness of all modes of worship without having ever practised any other mode except his own. He who practises the tenets of his own religion faithfully would naturally hold in reverence other religions. It must indeed be surmised that that he who harbours irreverence for other religions does not practise his own properly.

7. Today we do have faith in religion; but what sort of faith is it? Our faith consists of some such thing as performing perfunctorily the worship of some deity, going through some religious ritual like moving the sacred oil lamp round the idol and offering fruit and flowers to it; that is all. Even this faith, however, is some sort of a spiritual prop to the poorest and meanest. Had even this semblance of faith not been there, then the country would have presented a very sorrowful appearance. Today in spite of poverty, it is because of this devotion that peoples' faces still look somewhat bright. Here even those who are suffering smile it away. Had this fundamental religious belief in God been absent, one cannot imagine what would have been our plight.

Thus it is quite evident that this faith is only a foundation. The edifice of religion has yet to be constructed.... Formerly, it was not an age of science. That is why those who constructed the edifice of religion founded it on faith alone. When it was attacked by the other side, the rationalists, it collapsed. But now the edifice of religion would be erected not on the basis of superstition and naive belief, but on the firm foundation of rational thinking.

8. A question arises as to how should religion be protected? Three things will have to be done for this: (i) Non-essential elements which have found place in religion should be removed and it should be declared in clear and unmistakable terms that they are quite unnecessary. (ii) Moral values which are acceptable to all should be established and efforts should be made to lead one's life according to them, instead of advocates of various religions continuing to oppose each other on subtle theological points and other matters and magnifying opposition to the proportions of a religious conflict as at present. Those subtle points should be taken up later. (iii) Religious thought should be presented to the people in a proper order and by stages. It is only by doing this that both religion and faith would find a permanent place in peoples' hearts and science also would continue to prosper.

9. Now religious devotion would be transformed into *Sarvodaya*. 'That capacity to see all beings with an equal eye' should not now be known as '*para bhakti*'— परा भक्ति —as the highest type of devotion as it has been described in the

Gita*. It should be looked upon as a type of devotion that is to be practised by all; it is thus to become 'the commonest form of devotion'. Formerly, only some exceptional person used to experience while in *samadhi*, in trance, that all created beings are his kith and kin, that all differentiation between them was unreal and it must be done away with. But now every one must learn to have this experience. In other words, we must today be able to practise social or collective *samadhi*...In this age of science, *samyayoga*, the science and art of attaining to equality or identity, is no more an experience to be had only in *samadhi*, but it has to be experienced and practised in the whole society.... We will have now to base our entire life on *samyayoga*. This indeed is the demand and need of the scientific age.

*समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भूक्ति लभते पराम् ।—गीता, १८-५४.

IX. BHOODAN AND GRAMADAN

1. Through *Bhoodan-yajna* I intend to solve the land problem, which is the main problem for the whole of Asia. If we try to solve this problem through violence, the feeling of hatred among our own people would be on the increase. In this scientific age, its consequences would not be beneficial. If, on the contrary, we are able to solve this big problem through non-violence, love and peace, then co-operation among the people and strength of the whole community will grow and people will be happy. Some people ask me, "Why is it that you go on walking for nothing? Why do you exert yourself so much for the Bhoodan work? Why don't you get the work done through legislation? That would be easy and everything would be achieved." But how can everything be achieved through legislation? Suppose an act were to be passed confiscating land from the present owners. If an agriculturist then were to refuse to part with his land, he would be imprisoned. That is all that law can do. The sanction behind any law is the coercive power of the state which implies the power of the army. That is why what we expect to happen after preparing people's minds for it, would be voluntary action. If there is no co-operation of the people and if a reform is thrust on them through legislation, it would not only fail to achieve its objective and there would be wide-spread violence and hatred in society.

There is a place for law alongside of non-violent effort. If a particular reform is voluntarily

adopted by a number of individuals and if that voluntary action prepares the public mind for the change, then whatever little work is left to be done could be achieved through the process of law. Thus even in non-violence there is a place for legislation. But that place comes last. The effort that is at present being made for the solution of the land problem through non-violence is itself a great power in this age of science.

2. Yet I consider it a small achievement that the problem of land is being solved through Bhoo-dan and Gramadan. What is of greater importance is that the level of thinking gets elevated as a result of this movement. People of an entire village would constitute themselves into a family. Air, water and land—which all are just gifts of God to man—would be shared by all. The villagers would take to co-operative endeavour. A villager will begin to think, “I shall work not for myself but for the society. I shall care not only for myself but for the whole village community.” When we adopt such an attitude, the entire moral plane is changed. That is the reason why I experience so much vigour and enthusiasm in conducting this movement. I am now rather advanced in age and yet I do not feel any fatigue. The reason is that I have within me an extraordinary feeling of bliss. It is not possible for me to describe it in words. I am enjoying this nectar of everlasting bliss and I desire to share it a little with all and make them also taste it.

We have to mould a new man. Old order has already changed yielding place to new. Now even the national borders cannot last long. Once a friend from Australia had come to see me. He ask-

ed me. "What is the significance of the Bhoodan movement to the world?" I replied: "This itself that there is ample land in Australia, while there is not much in Japan; so what you have to do is to invite the Japanese to come and settle down in Australia." The poor fellow was speechless for a while on hearing this. Later he said, "Yes, we have enough land to go round; but we desire that our civilization should be kept intact. That is why if people from Europe whose civilization is very nearly like ours wish to come to Australia, we would be willing to accept them." I told him: "This indeed is the poison, to destroy which the *Bhoodan Yajna* is being conducted. The civilization of Japan is different, that of Australia, Europe or India is different, similarly the culture of the Hindus is different, that of the Mussalmans is different—it is just to bury all such wicked ideas that *Bhoodan-yajna* exists. We have no small ideals before us in the Bhoodan movement. We profess to change human life completely and create a new world.

3. Judging from the course and method of the Bhoodan-Gramadan movement that is going on here in India, people of the world have begun to feel that there is some hidden power in this type of work which will ultimately open the way for solving the various problems between nations. That is why during the course of my *padayatra*, many people from countries in Europe, America and Asia continue to come to meet me. They join me in my march, write books and articles after returning to their countries and nurse a hope that from this movement some true way out would emerge for the establishment of world peace.

4. One friend asked me: "This *gramadan* of yours sounds very fine, yet perhaps it is being thrust on people. In other words, if you declare that land belongs to the community, would there be freedom under your scheme for men to live according to their own inclinations?"

I am pleased when such questions are asked. It is my earnest desire that if there be any element of evil in an otherwise good idea, that element should be removed forthwith. I myself am not prepared to swallow uncritically any good idea, however noble or great. I always like to examine it thoroughly. A good many people are pleased when they hear of *gramadan* and say that now *Baba** speaks of abolishing the ownership of land. Now land will belong to all. All the available land in a village would now be pooled together and big schemes of co-operative farming would be launched on an experimental basis. Then questions are asked to me whether I really intend to do some such thing. I say in reply: "You can have big schemes of co-operative farming if you want to or you may also *not* have them if you are so inclined. In *gramadan*, I believe in "also-ism" and not in "only-ism". In other words, this also would be permissible, and that also would be permissible. It would be decided according as the villagers think it best. *Gramadan* is as it were a voluntary declaration of *Gram-a-swarajya*, the commencement of real village self-government. Therefore, that system alone will prevail which the villagers after mutual discussions and understanding approve of. No system or arrangement would be thrust upon

* *Vinobaji*.

them from outside. If each of them prefers separate individual cultivation of the land, he can do so; and if two, four or even more persons want to come together or even if the whole village wants to have collective farming they are welcome to follow their inclination. All will, however, work with complete unanimity. If the opinion seems to be divided, both the experiments would be undertaken. But the ownership of the land will vest in the village as a whole and consequently there would be real village self-government in each village.

5. If we use bad means for a good end, then problems would continue to crop up in India. But if we use non-violent means for solving our problems, there would be no problems at all in the world. This is the reason why I want to solve the land problem peacefully. I am asking people to donate land in *Bhoodan*. I am not begging alms... When a demand is being made by me in my capacity as a representative of the *Daridra Narayan*—the God in the form of the poor—it is not alms I am asking for; I am thereby imparting to the people instruction in the rudiments of social obligation. In other words it is *deeksha*—initiation—and not *bhiksha*—alms. I have, therefore, come to this conclusion that the noble work which God wanted to get done through the Buddha has now been entrusted to a weakling like me.

6. I have all along been saying that if the village people declare their village as *gramadan* of their own free will, it could be considered as *the best defence measure*. If a world war were to break out, this Five-Year Plan would all collapse to the ground. For, the plan is mostly dependent on the

exports and imports of the country. If a war starts, all imports and exports would come to a standstill, the prices of food-grains would shoot up and the even tenor of national life would be greatly disturbed. What will save the country at such a juncture? It is my considered view that the co-operative, non-violent structure of the gramadans would prove to be the only real defence of the nation.

X. GRAMA-SWARAJYA AND SHANTI-SENA

1. State power and self-government are two different things. Power can be seized through violence. But self-government is impossible to be achieved without non-violence. That is why thinkers do not aspire for political power. But they earnestly want people to unite and work together for the achievement of self-government. 'I have no desire to rule others'* and 'Let us endeavour to attain to self-government'** are their prohibitory and commendatory political slogans respectively.

2. The process of joining together alienated hearts has been a continuous one in India. I started the *Bhoodan, Gramadan* movement for this very purpose that separated hearts of the people should once more be united. There are many reasons for estrangement of hearts. People's hearts are estranged as a result of religious feuds, linguistic conflicts and communal riots as well. In times of economic distress also hearts which were once united get alienated for ever. In order to remove all these various causes, I want that today's villages should be transformed into 'grama-swarajya' units. I have come amongst you people with the message of *grama-swarajya* alone. *Gram-a-swarajya* is a device to cement hearts together.

3. When we declare our resolve to establish village self-government, that is, *grama-swarajya* in

*न त्वहं कामये राज्यम् ।

**यतेमहि स्वराज्ये ।

a village and make ownership of land communal, then every one gets a small share in land. We provide village industries to those who do not get enough land and prepare schemes for producing in the village itself all the primary necessities of life.

4. If every village prospers, the country prospers and attains to glory. If every limb were to function smoothly, the whole body would function properly. If even one of these were to give less work, the body would not be in a position to function efficiently. Similarly, when all the villages would conduct their affairs properly and there would be real self-government in each village, then alone there would be the content of real self-government in the country. The people must, therefore, run the government in every village. There would be as many departments for policy-making and as many different sections of work in a village as there are in a country. There is a health department in a state government, similarly, there would be a health department in a village administration. There are ministries for industry, agriculture, education, justice and law in any central government, so would there be all these in a village government.

5. Nothing whatsoever should be done which would harm the village industries. In this connection our principle is that those industries, the raw material for which is produced in the villages and the finished product of which happens to be an item of daily use by the villagers, should be kept reserved for the village sector. Why can not a few industries be reserved for the villagers just as we keep reserved forests?

6. The defence potential of a country must reside in every place. This protective power I have named as "Shanti-sena".

There is a great difference between the armed forces and the Shanti-sena. Though there may be some similarity between the two armies so far as drill, discipline etc. are concerned, there is a difference in their main characteristic. The armed forces work more efficiently where they have no acquaintance. For, there the only question is that of shooting people. This work is best done where there is no previous acquaintance.

On the contrary, a non-violent army, that is a Shanti-sena, is able to work much better in a familiar area among familiar people. A person who has earnestly and for a long time served a particular area is most suited to become the Shanti-sainik of that area. If any non-entity from India takes into his head and goes to France to do Shanti-sena work, he would fail miserably. Local servants of the people alone would be in a position to function as Shanti-sainiks in any area.

Now-a-days I have begun to feel that there could be no stronger inspiration to work than the proposal to organize a Shanti-sena. I think that at present all should give up their various assignments and with enthusiasm busy themselves with this work. The nation needs today the services of the Shanti-sena most. I do not make the claim that the Shanti-sena will be in a position to replace the army immediately. But today many small disturbances and riots take place here and there in the country. If there is a Shanti-sena available for work on such occasions, it can to a large extent put

a stop to such evils. All this wickedness manifests itself when the standard of humanity degenerates, the armed forces can do nothing to check the degeneration. On such occasions of inhuman behaviour on the part of the people, the Shanti-sena alone proves useful.

All agree that if the strength of the Shanti-sena increases, the life-sustaining power of the nation would also increase correspondingly. People belonging to all political parties declare that this work is good but that they would not be able to do it. These disputes and conflicts which take place periodically are sometimes caused by political parties also or the political parties are at least somehow associated with them. That is why these party people say that they may be in a position to function as Shanti-sainiks on some occasions all right, but that they are incapable of accepting the responsibility of this work independently. They, however, want this kind of work to grow.

This work happens to be of such a nature that it has the blessings of one and all. It helps us to seek entry into each and every house in the country. If as a result of the work of the Shanti-sena, we are able to relieve the Government of the country from anxiety on the score of internal disorders, it will strengthen the power of the Government. One can go from village to village and develop this strength. This will lead to the lessening of the worries of the Government and to the further growth of national solidarity.

XI. NON-VIOLENCE AND A NEW WORLD ORDER

1. To resort to cruelty for freeing oneself from the blame of cowardly behaviour is like flying from frying pan to fire. Cruelty and cowardice are just two sides of the same coin....Bravery is as far removed from cowardice as from cruelty. A brave person is fearless and therefore, indeed, non-cruel.

2. The people have these days shifted a good many of their responsibilities on to the shoulders of the government. The most that they would sometimes do is to offer a little co-operation. As funds are required to raise a big army, people pay taxes and thus think that now they, the citizens of the country, are safe. But so long as they themselves are not fearless, they should not consider themselves as well protected; they are on the contrary, weak and defenceless. For, they rely entirely on the army. The confidence that they can defend themselves is lacking in them. All their faith is in the army. They have given themselves to sensual enjoyment. They daily attend the cinema shows, read erotic literature, are addicted to evil habits, keep very late hours at night, do not get up at day-break, are afraid of going out in the rain, are unable to work in the hot sun. All the people have become soft and easy-going. Under such conditions if they happen to hear that a war has broken out and our army has had to withdraw,* what happens? The entire people feel helpless and

* This extract is from a speech delivered prior to October 1962, when the Chinese attacked NEFA and other border areas.

weak. They begin to think of their own uncertain future. It would appear as if the morale of the whole country has collapsed. The army is unable to protect a cowardly people. That is why every citizen of the country—every boy, girl, man and woman—must learn to be fearless. We must not lead a lotus-eater's life. We must not go on multiplying the means of enjoyment. If the nation follows such a programme of action and practises sternly the penance of fearlessness, the nation would become strong. It implies that there must be qualitative development of the people.

3. It is quite safe to love one's enemy.

4. There is some difference between the methodology of a war of violence and a war of non-violence. What do we do in a war of violence? When we find that our weapons are powerless before the weapons of our enemy, we invent new weapons deadlier than before and use them.... The method of conducting a non-violent struggle more vigorously differs from that of the violent method. In a violent war, it is necessary to increase the deadliness of the weapons, in a non-violent struggle it is necessary to enhance the purity of the means.

5. Gandhiji gave us a word—'non-violence'. Surely non-violence cannot mean inaction. Non-violence is a great power. And power, like any deity, has to be propitiated. What kind of propitiation is implied here when I use the phrase 'propitiation of the deity of Non-violence'? All of us who are inhabitants of India must live as brothers. Our mutual relations and behaviour must be based on love. No one is to be considered low, no one high.

We should suppress none, we should fear none. This constitutes the worship of the deity of Non-violence.

I have not an iota of faith in the power of weapons. A weapon is weak. It has no inherent strength of its own. It is only when we lend our strength to it that it becomes powerful. Instead of lending our strength to the weapon, why then should we not confer it upon ourselves? That is why Gandhiji drew our attention to this power of the Self.

6. Question: When other nations still believe in violence, could one nation alone remain an adherent of non-violence?

Answer: According to the theory of non-violent social organization, the consent to the division of one human race into various separate nations or states is given only for the sake of convenience. If any one single country happens to think soberly and adopts non-violence, it will never consider itself as aloof from and in conflict with other nations. It will be as watchful of preserving and protecting the legitimate interests of its neighbouring countries as it would be of doing its own. Though believing in violence, indeed not all of them go mad at one and the same time. Not only that, these nations have become believers of violence on account of competition and mutual fear. Man never approves of violence for its own sake. Therefore, if a nation desiring to tread the path of non-violence and seeking to keep friendly relations with the whole world in conformity with its declared faith comes into existence, it will evoke and encourage sober-mindedness in its neighbours and to

that extent win them over to the path of non-violence.

7. Someone asked me as to what preparations I would make if I were to be invited for talks with Pakistan. I told him: "So long as I do not dispense with the armed forces, I would not have the necessary strength in me to hold negotiations with Pakistan. In fact, real strength during parleys resides in cool-headed wisdom and that we would not be able to acquire, so long we place our trust in the armed might of our nation. The power to win over my brother would not be available to me unless I have faith in non-violence. But when I make known these views of mine, people think that this person must be a specimen of a bygone age or of an age four thousand years hence.

Today this does appear to be the raving of a lunatic. But somewhere in the world, in some country, this strength has to be developed so that that country reduces its armed forces without waiting for others to do so. If this strength has not been sufficiently developed today, it has to come tomorrow. And in order that it should come tomorrow, we have to plan today. If we talk of increasing our military power through fear of Pakistan, can we have a face to advise Russia and America to reduce their armed forces? It is well known that we do not have the strength that resides in unilateral disarmament; but we must acquire it. Whichever country acquires this strength first would save the whole world. When I take a look of the entire history of mankind I feel that India can develop this strength.

8. Seeing that preparations for violent defence are being made on such a vast scale, I for one am completely convinced that it is absolutely certain that this demon of violence is indeed going to die. Formerly there used to be small wars. It is possible that those wars had some justification and were beneficial. But today, a war is 'a total war.' What is a total war?.... Men from one side stand in conflict with men on the other, women from this side with women on the other and bullocks from this side with bullocks on the other. Even mules and donkeys from one side would be opposed to those on the other.. If bombs fall, then donkeys, horses, women, all, all would be destroyed outright. The poor American mules hardly know that they stand in opposition to the mules in the U.S.S.R!.... The implication is that in a total war, no single thing, animate or inanimate, retains its civil nature. Everything takes on a military aspect! Science, however, has now grown to such dimensions that this demon of violence is surely going to destroy itself and non-violence will replace it automatically. That is why when there are preparations for violence on a large scale, I am not at all afraid. For violence will now make an exit and I will be privileged to stage an entry. The lamp flame burns brighter when it is about to burn out. These tremendous war preparations, therefore, are the beginning of the disappearance of violence from the world for ever. Non-violence alone will come to stay thereafter.

9. Occasionally some foreigners join us in my *padayatra*. Once an American was with me. Before leaving, he asked me to give him some

message for the people of the United States of America. I told him I was not so presumptuous as to send a message to the American people. I only know how to render humble service and am engaged in doing that. But he persisted, saying: "After my return to the States my countrymen will naturally ask me about what I saw and heard here. What shall I say to them if they ask me what *Baba* had to say to them?" I relented and felt that I must say something. So I said: "I want to address myself not only to the U.S.A. but also to the U.S.S.R. I would tell them to continue to produce deadly weapons, missiles, bombers and submarines, which they are already doing. Otherwise, there would arise for them a big problem of unemployment. But I want to tell you one thing more. Both of you are increasing your armaments enormously*. But when a war starts between you two, America would be destroying the aeroplanes and ships of Russia and Russia in return would do the same. This you must not do. Both Americans and Russians are mostly Christians. The Christmas, the day of birth of Jesus Christ falls on the 25th of December. On that very day sink your respective armaments, aeroplanes and ships with your hands into the sea. Russia should sink her own aeroplanes and ships and America should do same with her own. It is a hundred times better that you should sink your respective ships on the commendable principle of self-reliance than that the Russians should sink yours and you theirs. This course will ensure the observation of the tenets of peace and

* The reference is to a situation much earlier than the signing of the Partial Test Ban Treaty.

love as expounded by Jesus Christ, there will be no problem of unemployment and no trouble to any one concerned! Even the children would be allowed to witness the ceremony. Declare a holiday for four or five days for all and reopen your respective ordnance factories from the first of January!"

On hearing this, the friend started laughing. I told him that laugh as he might, this was my serious message to his people and to the world.

10. Love of freedom to the extent that no one should rule over us is not much of a virtue at all. It is found among the animals also. He is a real lover of freedom, who feels that he himself also must not rule over others.

11. I have not written one single article in English and yet the news of our movement has spread far and wide in countries like Germany, France, America and England. The reason is quite clear. The world is hungering for peace. If we sink a well anywhere, the thirsty are bound to know about it, because they realize the need for water. The question before you, therefore, is this indeed. What special kind of work are you doing in your village, whereby you, as a citizen of the world, contribute something to the world? It is all right that you have your breakfast, you have your meals, you go to the movies and you look after your other personal interests also quite well. But all these activities of yours are not going to give any guidance to the world. World citizenship is the only practical message that befits the scientific age.

12. Unless the paternal authority of God is recognized and respected, human brotherhood would not be established in the world.

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ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE

VINAYAK NARHARI BHAVE, son of a textile technologist of Baroda, came to be known as Vinoba soon after he joined Mahatma Gandhi in 1916. Though engrossed in direct service of the villagers around his ashram near Wardha and in his own spiritual development, Vinobaji did not keep aloof from the non-violent struggle for Indian independence. Significantly enough, in 1940 he was selected by Gandhiji as the first *Satyagrahi* in the Individual Civil Disobedience campaign.

It was, however, with the inauguration of the unique Bhoodan movement in 1951 that he came to be known as 'The Walking Saint', not only to the millions of people in India but even outside. A vast literature in many languages has been written during the past thirteen years round his life and work, all of it based on love and compassion.

Genius and utter humility are not always compatible, however, they have compatibility. So much so that even the great men of the world could be variously described as a *Yogi*, a religious reformer, a social scientist, an educationist, a political theorist and lastly, a revolutionary thinker and teacher of mankind.



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