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HAS DONE FOR INDIA

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ON GANDHIJI'S LIFE AND WORK



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INTRODUCTION

When the history of the twentieth Century comes to be written, Mahatma Gandhi will find an honourable and a unique place in its pages. Whatever criticism may be made of his teachings or even of some of his actions, India nay, the whole world—will remain obligated to him for the great contribution he has made to the welfare of the world, particularly of India.

In these pages, several writers have co-operated to make a brief but frank survey of his distinctive contribution to the various phases of life. It is not a book of eulogy nor is it written with a view to bolster up the Mahatma. It is an analytical survey, no doubt written by those who hold him in high esteem, but who do not necessarily agree with all that he says or does. Every contributor was left free to write as he deemed fit subject to the main purpose of the book. The Ilami Markaz is in no way responsible for the opinions expressed, though it considers it a privilege to place this book in the hands of the public.

6-1-1946.
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B. L. RALLIA RAM.



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Gandhian Era in Indian History

(BY A STUDENT OF INDIAN HISTORY)

From times immemorial the history of India has been the story of her great men. Individuals rather than movements have dominated our annals. There are hardly any main currents running through the ages. The people usually docile, have generally kept quiet, unless they have been harried by a Nadir Shah or led by a man like Asoka. Leadership was usually confined to the rulers or the saints. Indians, it is said, love to be ruled. They, it could be asserted with still greater certainty, yearn to worship religious ascetics.

In the long line of great men who have dominated Indian History, Mohandass Karamchand Gandhi, respectfully known as Mahatma Gandhi and more affectionately called by his associates as Bapu, stands without a rival. Gautama Buddha started a new cult and he preached his philosophy only within a limited field. His influence during his lifetime was confined to a few thousands. Asoka a great monarch transformed Buddhism from a local sect to a world religion. But he used the resources of a mighty empire and in many ways coerced his people to live a new way of life. As he dropped the sceptre, there was a reaction to his imperial tyranny. Shankracharya in trying to preach his philosophy created bitterness and antagonism. Akbar in trying to harmonize the Hindus and the Muslims antagonized his own

community. Gandhiji stands above all ; he has brought about a change in hearts not by coercion but by love ; he has preached a philosophy which knows no geographical bounds and above all he has equipped the defenceless Indians with a weapon which wins but does not kill. For the last quarter of a century Gandhiji has been supreme on the Indian stage. In foreign countries, India and Gandhiji go together; in our own nothing of importance happens without him. The Gandhian Era in Indian History extends from 1920 to as long as Gandhiji lives and even beyond that. During the last twenty-five years he has revolutionized the social and political life of India. Lifting it up from the dismal abyss of despair, he has given India a new hope, pointed a new path, and aroused a new zeal. With the faith which moves mountains, with the courage which knows no obstacles, he fought without weapons, without arms, the greatest Empire in the world. After many a setback he appears dangerously near victory.

II

Born in Porbander on Oct. 2, 1869, Gandhiji belongs to a family of administrators. Both his father and grandfather were Chief Ministers in a small state of Kathiawar. After matriculating Gandhiji went to England, studied law "aped the English Gentleman" by trying to learn dancing and elocution. On his return to India, the struggling lawyer did not make much headway in his profession and migrated to South Africa in 1893. Gandhiji's stay in South Africa was his political, moral and religious apprenticeship. He was a success as a lawyer and before he realized

the change, he had become the leader of the considerable Indian population within the dominion. It is not within the scope of this article to recount the various stages in Gandhiji's struggle in South Africa and the service which he rendered to his countrymen in that far off land. He fought against the social prejudice, he gave a new self-confidence to the Indian "Coolies", he gave up a lucrative practice and established an Ashram-type colony and perfected his technique of non-violence.

At first Gandhiji was an extremely loyal citizen of the British Empire. During the Boer war, he organized an Indian stretcher-bearer corps, in the Zulu rebellion he supported the British forces. But the indignities suffered by his countrymen and the race and the colour prejudice turned him into a leader of Indian agitation, first against the Transvaal authorities and later on against the Dominion Government itself. It was in these agitations that Mahatma Gandhi made his first experiments with passive resistance. Deeply influenced by the writings of Tolstoy, Ruskin and Thoreau, Gandhiji tried to put their theories of non-violence into practice. He established a paper "Indian Opinion" and before long became the undisputed leader of the Indians in the Dominion.

Gandhiji's first passive resistance movement was organized in 1906 and after a good deal of suffering he was able to convince his opponents of his cause. He went to jail three times, made his countrymen break the invidious laws. He displayed great qualities of leadership; even his enemies began to appreciate his sincerity and devotion to truth. One trait of his character emerged

very early in his political life ; whereas he was always willing and eager to come to an agreement, he would never compromise on a matter of principle. As a result of Gandhiji's agitation Mr. Gokhale was sent by the Government of India to negotiate with the Dominion Government and in November 1913, Lord Hardinge—the Viceroy himself expressed "the sympathy of India, deep and burning, not only of India, but of all lovers of India like myself for their compatriots in South Africa in their resistance to invidious and unjust laws." As a result of these protests a Commission of Enquiry was appointed and an Indian Relief Act was passed. It was in these circumstances that the last world war broke out and Gandhiji came back to India at the age of forty five, well equipped to play the leading role in his own home country.

III

"Out of South Africa, there came a wizard across the Seas" said Mrs. Sarojni Naidu about Gandhiji's return to India. He came back with a name and experience. In pre-war India people considered him a moderate. He was a friend of Mr. Gokhale and at one time sought admission to the Servants of India Society. He supported the war effort by exhorting the Gujerati peasants to join the army. He defined Swaraj as an equal partnership within the Empire. His first reactions to the Montford reforms were quite favourable and he worked as a member of the Commission which was appointed by the Government to inquire into labour and agrarian troubles in Champaran district.

Gandhiji's transformation from a moderate to an extremist in Indian politics after the post-war years can be explained by the selfish attitude of the Europeans in this country. There grew up a general feeling that the Government was bent upon restoring the pre-war conditions. In this wave of indignation Gandhiji found his opportunity and came to the top.

In the post-war years, Gandhiji and his followers got the control of the Congress party, altered its structure and aims and gave it a new shape. The first manifestation of this change was seen in the agitation against the Rowlatt Act. Gandhiji employed western political methods with a religious appeal. He employed *Satyagraha* and *Ahinsa* as political weapons to offer unarmed resistance to the Government. He declared a general strike as a protest against the Bill. The political movement was obviously becoming a mass movement under his leadership.

The disturbances which followed in the spring of 1919 were spontaneous outbursts of popular feelings and were result of economic and political discontent. The Jallianwala tragedy changed Gandhiji from a co-operator to a non-co-operator. He broke of his relations with the British, returned the Kaiser-Hind Gold Medal and wrote to the Viceroy as follows: "I can retain neither respect nor affection for a Government which has been moving from wrong to wrong in order to defend immorality—The Government must be moved to repentance. I have therefore ventured to suggest non-co-operation which enables those who wish to dissociate themselves from the Government and which if unattended by violence must compel the Government to retrace its steps

and undo the wrong."

"The shadow of Amritsar" as Duke of Can-naught pointed two years later, while opening the new legislature, "lengthened over the face of India." The whole of the country rose without noise. A new chapter began in the history of Indian Nationalism.

IV

Ever since then the history of national move-ment in India is the life story of Mahatma Gandhi. This is the period, which forms Gandhian era in Indian History. The first phase in the new era was the non-co-operation movement. Gandhiji now experimented with his South African tech-nique in India. He had a name and a weekly paper "Young India" became his mouthpiece. The new movement was the result of various factors— firstly the Muslim in India was greatly dissatis-fied with the British policy towards Turkey, secondly there was a good deal of dissatisfaction towards the new reforms which introduced Dyarchy in the country and finally there was deep indignation against the action of General Dye being vindicated in the House of Lords. Gandhiji started non-co-operation as a movement of protest against Britain's indifference to Indian sentiment. The Congress declared its goal as *Swaraj*, "by all legitimate and peaceful means." In a special session of the Congress, the Non-Co-operation programme was approved. It called upon the Nationalist India to give up all Government titles and honorary offices, to give up all govern-ment appointments, to withdraw their children from Government schools; it asked the police and

military to withdraw co-operation from the Government.

Before long Non-co-operation spread all over the country, it was mass movement after many years. All over the country-side, *charkha* and home-spinning became popular. The Congress had a uniform, a technique and a method. Thousands of men and women went to jail, but the general mass of the people were yet unprepared for the discipline expected from them and in Feb. 1922, an angry mob hacked and burnt to death a group of policemen at Chauri Chaura. As a result Gandhiji cried halt; he talked of humiliation, of the Himalayan blunder and started a fast to purify himself. In 1922, he was arrested, pleaded guilty and asked for maximum punishment. The judge gave him six years' rigorous punishment, but Gandhiji was released after two years.

By 1923, new forces had arisen within the Congress. So far the congressmen under Gandhiji's instructions had boycotted the reformed councils. Under the leadership of C. R. Dass and Pt. Moti Lal Nehru, the Congress decided to capture the legislatures and obstruct the Government constitutionally. Indian nationalism had entered a new phase. From 1924 to 1930 the Indian political scene saw a number of Commissions of Inquiry, "formal and informal consultations with leading Indians, which were to culminate in the Round Table Conferences and the Act of 1935." This period has been described by an eminent journalist as "years of tension, feeling for position and delay." Gandhiji who had been released in 1924, concentrated his attention on the Harijan uplift, Hindu Muslim Unity, *Charkha* and

constructive programme. A sense of impending political change fanned communal claims and resulted in Hindu-Muslim riots. The outbreak at Kohat was so serious that Gandhiji undertook a 21 days fast which was followed by a Unity Conference to devise ways and means to solve the problem. Its deliberations resulted in pious declarations which were without much effect.

The sense of political frustration in India was broken by the appointment of the Simon Commission to inquire into the working of the Reforms. The Indian opinion unanimously boycotted it on account of its non-Indian composition. Meanwhile the Congress expanded in spirit and influence. Mahatma Gandhi concentrated all his energies in making it a mass organization and enlisting as large a number of members as possible. The growing self-consciousness of nationalist India manifested itself in the Lahore Congress Session of 1929, which declared complete independence as its goal. Gandhiji had gradually regained his position as the undisputed leader of the Congress. In spite of Lord Irwin's declarations regarding Dominion Status as the goal of British policy, the mutual distrust grew. Gandhiji put forward his demands, which were refused and he started his second Civil disobedience movement by breaking the salt laws, in 1930. The historic march to Dandi lighted a fire of agitation all over the country. Gandhiji himself was imprisoned. "On bended knees I asked the Government for bread," he declared, "and I got a stone instead." For the first time, educated Indian women in large numbers took part in the agitation to hamper the police. The boycott of British goods and institutions was more effective. Meanwhile the first Round Table

Conference had concluded its deliberations in London and Lord Irwin invited Mahatma Gandhi at Delhi. As a result of their negotiations, Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed in March 1931 and the civil disobedience movement was suspended. Gandhiji attended the Round Table Conference as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress. In London Gandhiji lived in a working class house among the poor, put forward his own point of view in the Conference, delivered his message of non-violence to the western world and returned both disillusioned and disappointed.

On his return from Europe Gandhiji was in no hurry to revive the Civil disobedience. But even before his arrival many of his closest friends had been imprisoned. Within three weeks of his arrival in January 1932, Gandhiji was back in prison and the Congress an unlawful organization. The Government followed a determined policy of repression. Thousands were jailed, Congress funds were confiscated and various preventive measures were adopted to check acts of disobedience. Civil disobedience movement had spread dangerously among the masses but by 1934 it had fizzled out. Gandhiji was released from the jail after a fast unto death which he had undertaken, to heal the breach between the Harijans and the caste Hindus which had been created by the Communal Award. The agreement reached between the leaders of Caste Hindus and Depressed classes was subsequently adopted by the British Government. Gandhiji now devoted himself to social and economic reform. He gradually withdrew from political activities and even resigned the four-anna membership of the Congress. But he had already become a sort of an unofficial adviser of

the great political organization and continued to be its referee and arbiter in critical occasions. No one could be any body within the Congress without his consent; nothing of importance could be done without his advice. Dr. Khare, the C. P. Premier had to go, on Gandhiji's decision and Mr. Subash Chandra Bose, though elected by the Provincial Congress Committee as President of the Congress, could not carry on, on account of lack of support from the Mahatma. His hold on the Congress is so rigid and strict, that as long as he lives Gandhiji is Congress.

Meanwhile the British statesmen had hammered out a new constitution out of the deliberations of the Round Table Conferences introducing Provincial Autonomy and Federation in the New Government of India Act. The Congress practically swept the polls in 1937 election; in seven provincial legislatures it enjoyed absolute majority. It hesitated to work the reforms on account of special powers of the Governors and demanded an assurance that these powers would not be used in the day-to-day working of the administration, before it formed the ministries. The compromise evolved by Gandhiji after a few months of haggling put in office eight Congress ministries.

It was in these circumstances, that the War broke out in the autumn of 1939. The Congress from the beginning showed an anti-fascist leaning, but refused to be a party to the war as it had not been consulted when the Government of India declared the war. It asked the Congress ministers to resign and demanded a statement of the British war aims with reference to India's future. Gandhiji was opposed to Nazi aggression and we know that he broke into tears (in his interview with

the Viceroy) visualizing the destruction of historic places in London. But he had been working for a long time on the philosophy of Non-Violence. The willingness of the Congress to support war effort was at first something of a shock to him and he stood aside. When the Congress demand for National interim Government was refused by the British, Gandhiji was again restored to leadership. He met the Viceroy and demanded freedom of expression of opinion to preach non-violence. The Government engaged in a life and death struggle could not allow preaching of a principle which would have cut at the very roots of the war effort. Negotiations between the Congress and the Government came to an abrupt end. In the period of individual Civil disobedience which followed, over 1500 Indian Leaders were jailed. Meanwhile the Japanese continued making preparations for an invasion and there was a growing dissatisfaction with the state of affairs. In 1941, the leaders were released and the negotiations resumed.

The entry of Japan into war quickened the pace of events in the country. The British Government sent Sir Stafford Cripps with certain proposals for the Government of India which were rejected both by the Congress and the Muslim League. The Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, began to prepare for a mass Civil-disobedience movement. The policy was laid in the well-known "Quit India" resolution. But the Government once again arrested the leaders including Gandhiji—the arrests being followed by general rioting and sabotage in certain parts of the country. The movement was suppressed with a strong hand and the Congress

was held responsible for all what had happened. Gandhiji undertook a long fast in the jail which practically endangered his life. In April 1944, when his health practically broke down, Gandhiji was released from the jail. His offer to the British was refused and his negotiations with Mr. Jinnah proved fruitless. Finally, in June 1945 he was invited by Lord Wavell to join the Conference at Simla to discuss the Viceroy's scheme for an interim government. It was here that Gandhiji gave a new lead to the country and the Congress. He assumed a new role of the adviser to the Congress, to the Viceroy and to the Indian people. The Simla Conference had failed, but the people look up to him for guidance. As long as he lives, he must remain the centre of Political India.

V

It is perhaps too early to estimate Gandhiji's contribution to India or to the world events. But hardly any one else in our times has influenced such a vast mass of humanity so deeply or altered the course of events, or influenced religious or political thought more profoundly than this ascetic politician of India. Hundreds of years of alien rule in India had made democracy something foreign to this country. To Gandhiji belongs the credit of reviving the democratic tradition in Indian History, of restoring the common man to his rightful place, of infusing in him self-respect and self-confidence.

Whatever faults or whatever shortcomings the critics may find in his long and eventful association with Indian political life (and perhaps no one is more conscious of them than the Mahatma him-

self) no one can deny the extent and decisiveness of his influence. You see his stamp on every day life in India. He has given his name to the most common head dress in India, it is on account of him that the people wear Khadi. On his bidding thousands have gone to jail, hundreds have left careers of promise and devoted themselves to service of motherland. His teachings permeate the Indian intellectual life, his ways and methods are followed by millions without demur. He has brought Indian village to the fore, in the age of machine he has revived the village industries. He has raised the Harijans, he has uplifted the down-trodden; his name would forever be remembered as the friend of the poor. Oriental submissiveness is proverbial. We in India love to be ruled. Centuries of foreign rule had created in us lack of self-assurance and a deep inferiority complex. Gandhiji appeared as a leader of new movement of regeneration, he taught Indian people to look up, to live forward. He made even the women of India participate in the new movement. The revival of self-confidence in an average Indian, may ultimately prove to be the greatest contribution of Gandhiji in building Indian Nation.

An American Press representative once asked him, "Is India making progress to your liking?" The Mahatma became thoughtful and replied, "Yes, it is. I get frightened sometimes, but there is progress at the bottom and that progress is sound."

Gandhiji has often been called an extremist and an idealist by his critics and a moderate by his followers. The paradox can be explained by the fact that his aim is liberty, while his method is non-violence. He is both a saint and a politician. Once he said to S. L. Polak, "Many say that I am

a saint losing myself in politics. The fact is that I am a politician trying my hardest to become a saint. This combination of secular and spiritual particularly appeals to Indian mind. He has brought religion into politics and spiritualized politics; he has brought politics into religion and secularized many an issue which were purely religious.

Gandhiji is the first Indian national leader to win international fame. To the rest of the world he represents the spirit and sentiments of India. And he more than anyone else has been responsible for awakening the political consciousness in Indian masses. "To Gandhi" says Lord Samuel, "more than to any other Indian will be attributed the independence of India, when independence is at last won. To him also will be attributed the vast achievement of making his people worthy as well as capable of independence, by revising their native culture, quickening their sense of personal dignity and self-respect, disciplining their inner lives to self-control, making them spiritually as well as politically free."

In the history of Congress, Gandhiji's greatest contribution has been that he turned it from a drawing room organization to a mass organization. Prof. John Macmurray says, "Weilding like Rousseau's legislator, an authority which is not authority, he had created a general will and made India a nation."

Twentieth century is a century of great men; Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Roosevelt and Churchill have all been great in their own way. But every one of them has achieved greatness by force and by violence. Gandhiji alone shines among them like a moon in the galaxy of stars. Who else in

this list of great men can look back and say that he has uplifted the dignity of a nation and given it self-respect, that he has preached a philosophy of life which opposed to brute force can achieve miracles; that he has rescued from degradation millions of down-trodden, suffering under ignorance and injustice.

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Mahatma Gandhi's Daily Routine

(BY K. RAMA RAO)

AT the age of 76 Mahatma Gandhi, in spite of the heavy work he does, keeps up his health well. The secret lies in his being methodical and systematic in his daily work. He is a peculiar combination of a slave to his watch and a master of his time. He works whenever he pleases and is thus a free man, freer than kings and viceroys. But work has got to be done and he does it according to a system which leaves nothing undone at the end of the day. He carries a watch all the time, but one suspects that it is intended as much to help him as to keep off people who want to take a minute more of his time than they should. After the one hour Mahatma Gandhi gave originally to Louis Fischer, he showed the American journalist the watch. His time was up. In his book Fischer tells us, with pardonable regard to his own position as a journalist, that Sevagram was the only place where he was shown the watch.

Secondly, Mahatma Gandhi is an indomitable optimist. He lives for a great cause which he is determined to lead to a successful conclusion. His self-confidence is so superb that he openly and repeatedly proclaims, as if to spite somebody in heaven, that he must not be expected there for another half a century.

Thirdly, Mahatma Gandhi's sense of humour is excellent. And humour has been described as

'the greatest of the saving graces after the Lord's Prayer.' One day an impertinent inquiry was addressed to him by an angry correspondent whether he had a sense of humour at all. The correspondent had felt that the Mahatma was so red-hot in his creeds and convictions that he appeared humourless. The Mahatma replied that, if he had not had a sense of humour in him, he would not have been able to get on with men like the angry correspondent.

Fourthly, he is a man of God, and believes that more things are wrought by prayer than the world dreams of. To those who believe, prayer is the very staff of life.

Fifthly, Mahatma Gandhi himself and the people round about him take meticulous care of his health. If the patient is his own best doctor, Mahatma Gandhi is one. It is not only that competent medical advice is at his beck and call but that he watches it himself carefully and corrects the balance at once by the exercise of restraint on food and work.

Here is a chart of his daily round :—

5 to 5-15 a.m. Wash, etc.

5-15 a.m. Morning prayer for half an hour with inmates of the Ashram.

5-45 a.m. to 6-30 a.m. Nap or work.

6-30 a.m. Breakfast.

7-30 to 8-30 a.m. Walk.

8-30 to 11 a.m. Massage and bath.

11-30 Lunch. Newspapers are read out to him.

1 to 4-30 p.m. Work, Nap, if necessary.

4-30 p.m. Spinning.

6 p.m. Food. Newspapers are read out.

7 p.m. Prayer.

7-15 to 8-30 p.m. Walk.

9 to 10 p.m. Work.

10 p.m. Sleep.

Mahatma Gandhi's 'wardrobe' consists of six pieces of cloth, three loincloths, and three chaddars (upper cloths), the chaddar serving as shirt and blanket in one. An extra pair is kept for use in an emergency.

He bathes in warm water always. No soap is used. He has first a massage with oil and lime-juice mixed. Another massage in the bath with a piece of rough cloth and the whole body becomes perfectly clean.

He shaves himself with a safety-razor without, however, a mirror before him, with the result that at times some small islands of unmown hair are left over for the next operation. An occasional hair-cut is performed by one of the ashramites.

'Gold and silver have I none,' runs a line in the scripture. As an exponent of *aparigraha* (non-possession) this suits him admirably. The frame of the spectacles he wears is apparently made of a very uncostly metal. They indeed appear to belong to an old dispensation.

Mahatma Gandhi's work these days consists mainly of correspondence and receiving visitors from all over the world, seeking advice and guidance, listening to newspapers as they are read out to him, giving instructions about answering letters, and reading books which are of particular interest to him. Mr. Pyare Lal, one of the busiest secretaries in the world, and a faithful attendant, if there is one, disposes of most of the correspondence. Gandhiji sees only a few letters, which are generally read out to him, and instruc-

tions are taken down of the manner in which they should be answered. Nothing else could be done with the heavy mail that is received every day. Gandhiji writes a few letters himself. These must be such as to be really important and these are generally to old friends or to sick people whom he knows. He replies mostly in Hindi, and in Gujerati to those who know that language. English is used only when absolutely necessary. The correspondence is of various kinds and comes from all parts of the globe. There is not a question or a conundrum which is not addressed to him, the idea being that he is wiser than Solomon and nature has given him an extra pair of eyes to delve deep into all problems, political, social, religious, personal and ethical. Some of the letters are written in not easily known Indian languages and often a search has got to be made for the man who knows that particular language.

The mail includes newly published books, which are sent by the authors and publishers either as tributes of affection and esteem or for 'kind opinion'. These would make a handsome library. There is reason to believe that they are kept where they should be, which does not happen to less fortunate individuals.

It is one of the unpleasant jobs of Mr. Pyare Lal to keep off the numerous visitors. He does it at times without ruth, at times with great tact, as occasion requires. The select few who are allowed into Gandhiji's presence, have their time 'rationed'. They should not always expect to be received with the Mahatma sitting. He receives them in his bed when he feels tired. Questions and answers to pressmen are written both ways. During hours of silence he communicates in

writing. On Mondays the silence is as complete as possible.

Gandhiji's reading is select rather than vast. His main concern now is the Constructive Programme, and he reads all the literature that comes to his hand, bearing on the subject concerned. Three books he was recently reading were one on *Tridosh* (Ayurvedic), the second on *Rashtra Bhasha*, (common language for India), and the third on the cow and the cattle wealth of India. In jail his reading was extensive. He read half of Shakespeare and a good deal of Bernard Shaw. Mira Ben put Browning in his hands and he liked *The Grammarian's Funeral* and *Rabi Ban Ezra* most. He made such an intensive study of Marx's *Das Capital* that today he can give points to sworn Communists.

Gandhiji does not sit down to do his thinking in solitude, as some great men do. He is thinking while he is speaking. He is formulating his conclusions while workers from all parts of India are supplying him with material.

It can only be the worst possible weather that can prevent his morning and evening walks. During these walks he is accompanied by one or two ashramites, Sushila Ben as a rule, but it also happens that whole crowd follows him when big functions are taking place at Sevagram. It would be difficult for him then to shake them off, even if he put on his fastest gait. Those who cannot see him personally in his hut at Sevagram or at his residence wherever he is, seek this opportunity of the walk to feel his personal presence, and to write home about it.

Prayer-time is eagerly looked for, not only because it gives an opportunity for 'darshan' but

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to believers nothing could be more welcome than the company of a saint. The spiritual menu is variegated. The *Gita* is recited every day, so as to complete one reading in a week. The Ashram hymnal contains well-known songs, the recital of which comes as a balm to the faithful. The Muslim prayer (Kalma) is uttered as regularly as the Hindu prayer. Gandhiji is very catholic in his outlook. Recently an avowed atheist was placed before him for conversion. I do not exactly remember what happened by way of argument between them. But Gandhiji was satisfied that an atheist with a good character and a spirit of service could reform the world as well as the most prayerful individual. A godly man is as good as one who believes in God.

After prayers are over, Gandhiji sits on the platform to sign autographs. The tariff is five rupees a signature. He can sign in fourteen languages. The collections go to the Harijan Fund.

A wooden plank with a thin mattress on it is all the bed on which Gandhiji sleeps. Formerly he used to have three pillows, but now he wants none. He spends eight hours in bed under medical advice and rests for half an hour to an hour during the day. Formerly he had hardly six hours rest in 24 hours. It is rarely disturbed. At times he is restless, as a result of heavy work or when he is wrestling with a difficult question. He does not believe in reading himself or being read to sleep.

Gandhiji, as is well known, takes very spare but carefully chosen food, which he eats with an artificial set of teeth. Before he goes out for his walk in the morning he takes 16 ounces of orange

juice and a teaspoonful of *amala-ka-murabba* which contains vitamin C, and generally an ounce of gur (jaggery).

His lunch at 11-30 consists mainly of six to eight ounces of boiled vegetables, and about two ounces of raw vegetables. Salt is taboo. Add to these 1 to 2 ounces of bread of a special kind, which is made of wheat flour and goat milk and appears like a home made cream-cracker. Years ago he took a vow not to touch milk as animal food, but ill-health on one occasion compelled him to go in for goat milk. It is the special responsibility of his host or hostess to get ready a number of goats in advance of his stay. An alternate menu consists of boiled dates and apples, with mangoes thrown in during the season. The 'tea' consists of eight ounces of hot water with honey and soda bicarbonate.

The food of the ashramites is a little more liberal, containing wheat and rice and vegetables with salt, and onions added to taste.

Lady Thackersay, his hostess at Morarji Castle at Mahableshwar, left nothing to chance where her distinguished guest was concerned. He was her guest at Parnakuti in Poona, after the Epic Fast of 1943 and after his release in 1944. She pays unstinted attention to the Women's University of Poona, founded with the splendid benefaction of her husband, the late Sir Vithaldas Thackersay, millionaire, millowner and legislator. She is a member of the Central Board of Education and one of the governing spirits of the Vanita Vishram, of Bombay, which has been founded for the uplift of women. Last year she was the chairman of the reception committee of the All-India Educational Conference. She

speaks English perfectly and has travelled round the world twice.

Mahatma Gandhi does not employ servants. He needs none. All the things which he cannot do for himself are done by the people around him. Mr. Pyare Lal is his chief secretary, looking after visitors and correspondents, Mr. Narhari Parekh, and Mr. Hamenta Kumar Nilkantha, assisting him. Mr. Kanu Gandhi, his grand-nephew, attends on him, and besides keeps accounts and helps in conducting the prayers. Dr. Shushila Nayar, who runs a model village dispensary at Sevagram, takes special care of the health of the Mahatma who, she tells me, is on the whole a difficult patient, who will obey the doctor very well once he makes up his mind to do so, but that is rare. She shares with her brother, Mr. Pyare Lal, the duty of reading out the important news of the day to the Mahatma. After the reading is over the paper is lavishly mangled for the wanted items to be preserved.

The daily routine goes on undisturbed wherever the Mahatma is, whether in the plains at Sevagram or on the hills at Mahableshtar. Its keynotes are three. No waste of time; no waste of efforts, and keen watchfulness. Mahatma Gandhi is a past master in the art of husbanding his physical resources for the vast amount of highly responsible work he has to do. It is why his health is a national asset and a national concern.

What Gandhiji has Done for the Indian Village

(BY BHARTAN KUMARAPPA)

THE whole of Gandhiji's work can be summed up in the effort to be rid of exploitation of the down-trodden and oppressed, or, to state it positively, to put into effect his ideal of non-violence. And who is more exploited than the people of the village? As cultivators and as producers of commodity goods they form the backbone of our national economy. They pay the bulk of the revenue which the Government uses for its administration, military, police, railways, posts and telegraphs, education, public health, and such like. They feed and clothe the nation. And yet they are the ones who can afford the least even in the way of the necessaries of life. They have very little to eat, no adequate water supply, roads, lighting, houses, sanitary arrangements, education, recreation, or medical relief. Their one job is to work with the sweat of the brow, only to see the fruit of their labours go to others—money-lenders, middlemen, commission agents, landowners and to the Government in the way of taxes. What actually remains with them as their earnings is not more than about one rupee a head per month. How they are able to live at all on such a meagre income is a matter for wonder. Theirs is a struggle for bread, a struggle for barely keeping their bodies and souls

together. Consequently their life is without joy or hope. They know only drudgery, disease, dirt, debt and starvation. They find no way out of their miseries but death. They are helpless, paralysed, and incapable of pulling themselves out of the mire of poverty and disease in which they are fast sinking.

Gandhiji's sympathy with the poor and the oppressed and his living faith in non-violence would not give him any rest till he did what he could to remedy this terrible situation in our villages. To him non-violence was not merely a matter of not inflicting physical injury on another. It was something much more positive and dynamic. It meant removing the violence under which people suffer, and making it possible for them to live a life of fulness and freedom. This of course involved ceaseless effort, untiring struggle with the forces of exploitation and oppression, and organising the people in such a way as to put courage and strength into them, to make them united and self-reliant and to realise their own great power, and to refuse to submit to tyranny and injustice. In essence this has been his main contribution to life in the village. It has expressed itself in various ways as we shall presently see.

1. *Political*.—The peasants of Champaran in Bihar were being tyrannised by European planters who forced them to grow indigo on portions of their land, though growing of indigo was not at all profitable to them, and the wages they received for their labour were but nominal. Further, the planters enhanced the rent to be paid by peasants and extorted various illegal exactions and imposed fines. The local Government

was aware of these grievances but did nothing as it was too much under the influence of the planters. When Gandhiji heard of this he went to Champaran in April 1917 with a band of workers, instituted an enquiry, formulated the demand of the peasants and submitted it to the Government. The result was that the enhancements of rent were reduced, part of the money taken illegally by the planters was refunded to the peasants, and forcible cultivation of indigo was abolished.

Similarly in Kaira, in Gujerat, Gandhiji taught timid peasants to be men and to resist oppression. Till then the Indian peasant had never imagined that he had any right to question Government assessment, even in years of acute famine. He took the assessment as a natural calamity, like flood or earthquake, which he had to meet in spite of the most adverse circumstances. But in 1918 Gandhiji inaugurated a new era. It was a year of very bad harvests, almost approaching famine. All, petitioning the Government to suspend the collections, had failed, and Gandhiji had no alternative but to advise the peasants to refuse to pay the assessment. The peasants signed a pledge saying that they would rather let their lands be confiscated than make it appear that their case was false or compromise their self-respect with being forced to yield to what they were convinced was unjust. It was a unique event in the life of the peasant—to question the Government's right to tax him, to shed his fear of officials and to defy the mightiest empire the world has known. It meant for him attachment of his cattle and other movables, threats of confiscation of land, fines

and even imprisonment. But he was prepared for the worst. The Government finally yielded and granted suspensions to poor peasants without however making a public announcement or letting the people feel that they had obtained a settlement. Whatever the material gain from the movement, "the lesson", says Gandhiji in his Autobiography, "was indelibly imprinted on the public mind that the salvation of the people depends upon themselves, upon their capacity for suffering and sacrifice. Through the Kaira campaign Satyagraha took firm root in the soil of Gujerat".

Through thus living and fighting for the masses, Gandhiji introduced an entirely new element into Politics. Till then the Indian National Congress was concerned chiefly with making petitions to the Government; and politicians sought for nothing more than to have power transferred from British to Indian hands. But Gandhiji saw that mere petitioning was of no avail and that nothing substantial could be accomplished by mere transference of power to Indian hands. For him, the power must go to the people, if they are to be free from oppression. His method, therefore, was one of organising the masses for direct action and depended on their disciplined strength. Politics thus shifted, under Gandhiji's leadership, from being the preserve of a few city men who sought power and position for themselves to finding its roots in the village. Its motive became service of the masses and the desire to free them from all exploitation. The people of the village became central in Politics, and all that affected them the sphere of the politician.

Hence it is that unlike the usual politician who concerns himself merely with party cries and policies of state, Gandhiji lays such stress on the Constructive Programme. His politics is the welfare of the people. Hence for him Politics and the Constructive Programme are inseparable. Politics without the Constructive Programme is for him but chaff without the grain. Gandhiji's insistence on the Constructive Programme is thus not mere rhetoric or even an instinctive reaction to frustration in the political sphere, but follows logically from the fact that for him politics does not merely relate to the art of Government by whomsoever it may be, but to Government by the people themselves of all that concerns their everyday life. This means, for him, reviving the old self-governing village units and educating and training the people in these units to manage all their affairs themselves, in which case alone they would be free from exploitation and would have achieved real freedom. So all efforts at education and bringing about unity, co-operation, discipline, training in the technique of non-violence, self-reliance, courage and self-confidence among the people of the village, and this is what is aimed at by the Constructive Programme, become an essential part of political work. It is because many of our politicians have not been able to grasp this new orientation which Gandhiji has given to Politics that they do not have any heart in the Constructive Programme or see much sense in it, but pay only lip homage to it. They indulge in platform oratory and election speeches and hope thus to obtain power for themselves. Not so Gandhiji. For him political life is to centre in self-sufficient

villages, His efforts in this direction have taken various shapes. The foremost of these is the economic.

2. *Economic*.—Gandhiji found that if our village folk were poor, it was because of the break up of the old self-sufficient village economy according to which production in the village took place primarily to meet the requirements of the people of the village, and correspondingly consumption was limited to what was produced in the village. Under the present economy, on the other hand, the needs of the village are not considered at all. Production takes place along lines which bring the greatest amount of profit, even though it may be only temporarily. Take for instance agriculture. Instead of producing food for the inhabitants of the village, commercial crops like cotton, jute, tobacco, groundnut are grown, not for use in the village but for export. The rates for these are fixed in the international market, in the light of prices at which similar produce of other countries like the United States of America, Canada, Argentine and Australia are available. But these countries have enormous stretches of almost virgin soil, plentiful supply of water and have adopted the latest machinery for large scale cultivation, while the Indian cultivator has to produce what he can on tiny fragments of land which has been impoverished by centuries of intensive cultivation; he has to struggle against the vagaries of the monsoon and attacks of wild beasts and insect pests, and use age-old implements. What chance is there for him to be able to compete fairly in the international market? Besides through such commercial crops the cultivator falls into the

hands of innumerable middlemen who swallow the bulk of the profits. He therefore sinks from poverty to debt, starvation and disease. Gandhiji finds therefore that the only way to bring prosperity as of old to the village is to tell the agriculturist not to bother about distant markets, but to produce for the needs of the village. In that case, sufficient food for the village, fodder for the present half-starved cattle, and raw materials needed for industries can be grown.

Or take industries. Under the present economy, the industries which formerly kept the village folk busy are dying or dead. Instead of themselves manufacturing all that they want, the villagers are importing cheap factory goods. This has meant unemployment in the village and hence poverty and demoralisation. They are therefore being thrown more and more on the land which already has more people depending on it for a livelihood than it can support. What better plan than to tell them not to import factory goods but to produce for themselves what they want, with the limited resources available to them? This will at once give them a source of income. If Gandhiji has during the last quarter of a century been insisting on spinning, it is not because he thinks that through other means, but only that he finds it to be the easiest, simplest and quickest means of the people supplementing their all too meagre an income. If they are able to earn well through other means, they are certainly at liberty to do so. But when they are not, surely earning a few pice through spinning is a God-send to them. A few drops of refreshing water may mean nothing to one who has plenty of it at his command, but it may mean

all the difference between life and death to a man who is dying of thirst. The strongest argument for Khadi is that it has actually helped innumerable of the poorest of the poor in the villages. They at any rate have not resorted to it out of any considerations of sentiment. If they have taken to its production by the thousands it is because of the hard cash that it has brought them. Let the figures speak for themselves. Through the efforts of the All-India Spinners' Association established by Gandhiji, from 1924 *i.e.* about the time of its inception to 1944, Khadi produced was to the value of Rs. 9,34,94,201, and its total sales amounted to Rs. 11,96,13,515. Wages distributed to spinners, weavers and other artisans by the Association during the period amounted to Rs. 5,60,90,368. Who can say in the light of facts such as these that the Khadi work initiated by Gandhiji was but a mere fad with nothing substantial about it? It has fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and brought light and life to thousands of the poorest in the villages of our country, irrespective of caste and creed. Who else can claim to have done so much for the poor of our villages? The attractive feature of the work is not that so much money has been doled out to the poor as charity; but that work was found for idle hands. After all the best form of philanthropy is one which helps a man to help himself. This ennobles both him who gives and him who takes. And it was left to Gandhiji to put into practice on a nation-wide scale this principle in respect of Khadi.

Not content with merely teaching people to spin during their idle moments, in order thus to

supplement their income, Gandhiji directed his attention to other village industries. Khadi is the most universal industry in that it can be carried on in most villages by most people and meets a universal need in our country for cotton cloth. But Khadi was for Gandhiji only symbolic of all other village industries. So having set the All-India Spinners' Association on its feet, Gandhiji at the end of 1934 moved the Indian National Congress to go further along the same lines and establish the All-India Village Industries Association. This Association was to do for other village industries what the All-India Spinners' Association had done for Khadi. Working on the same principle, the All-India Village Industries Association has selected such other industries as are universal or in other words meet the primary requirements of people, and at the same time are within the resources available to village-folk. Consequently it has taken up, amongst others, first and foremost, industries connected with food, such as Paddy husking, Flour grinding, Oil pressing, Gur and Sugar making, and Bee-keeping. Mills have recently begun to appear in villages for hulling paddy, grinding flour, pressing oil and making sugar, thus taking away employment from large numbers of the people. Not only so, the mill product goes through excessive processing which destroys much of the nutritive value of these articles of food, and what is worse makes them injurious to the human system. Thus mill polished rice leads to beri beri, white flour to constipation, and sugar to calcium deficiency leading to teeth troubles. These mills are therefore doubly a curse to the villagers in that they both

deprive the people of employment and feed them with de-vitalised foods which fail to nourish their bodies and give rise to various disorders. The Village Industries Association therefore is seeking to make it easy for people to husk their paddy, grind their flour, press their oil, and make gur and sugar, without resorting to mills. It is conducting research in the implements and processes used for these purposes in order to improve them. Its efforts have met with a fair degree of success, and its improved chakkis (hand-worked mills) for husking paddy and grinding flour, as well as its improved ghani (bullock oil-press) have been much in demand. Owing to transport difficulties on account of the War, these implements could not be sent to distant places. But with the aid of sketches, diagrams and small wooden models, and carpenters trained at the Headquarters of the Association, it has been possible to manufacture these improved implements even in distant places. About 300ghanis of the improved pattern have been set up in the Central Provinces and 300 in Bihar. In the United Provinces, it is reported that as many as 2,000 of these improved ghanis are operating. The Association finds that its ghanis can quite easily compete with oil mills, provided the oilmen's difficulty about finding capital for buying seeds at harvest time is overcome. It can be overcome if customers store their own oil-seeds and bring them to the oil-man to be crushed. But this, not all, are able to do. Other ways of meeting this difficulty are therefore now being devised.

Subsidiary to the Oil-pressing industry are manufacture of Soap, Paints, Boiled Oils and

Varnishes. In regard to Soap ways have been found of producing it out of entirely indigenous materials like saji, matti (white earth found in river beds), and experiments are being conducted in the manufacture of Paints, Boiled Oils and Varnishes on a cottage industry basis. Such industries together with Oil-pressing should keep an oil-man and his family fully employed and enable them to earn quite a decent income. To further promote the Oil-pressing industry and to prevent the drain of crores of rupees every year for importing kerosene oil for lighting purposes, the Association has devised the Magan Dipa, a lamp for burning vegetable oils. If this lamp can successfully displace the kerosene lamp, it will mean that the money now exported will remain in the country to maintain thousands of oil-men and tin-smiths in the villages.

In regard to Gur making, the Association has been advocating the use of palm gur. The reason for this is that sugarcane requires good cultivable soil and plenty of water, while the palms, like the date and the palmyra, grow wild on land which is not cultivated or irrigated. Thousands of such trees are to be found all over the country, and many of them are not used at all even for purposes of extracting toddy. What better plan than to get people to use them for production of Gur and sugar? By doing so, they would be producing wealth out of what is now going waste.

Or take an industry like Paper-making. There is an ever-growing demand for paper in the country with the spread of literacy. Paper can be produced in villages out of materials available there, like sunn, hemp, jute, paddy straw, rags,

plantain fibre, and grass. All that is necessary is training and a certain amount of financial help in the initial stages. The Association has been providing the required training in this industry at its Headquarters at Wardha, and several paper manufacturing and training centres are now running in almost every province of the country.

Another very important village industry, which because of its importance has had a separate Association formed to look after it, is Dairying and Cattle Farming. The cow supplies milk and milk products, like butter and ghee, for human consumption. In a country where vegetarianism prevails for cultural reasons it is most important that the deficiencies of an exclusively vegetarian diet should be made good by increased consumption of milk and milk products. India has the largest number of cattle in the world and yet is the lowest in milk yield. If her people are not to die prematurely (the present expectation of life in India is the lowest in the world being only 26 years as against 63 in U.S.A. and 62 in Britain) their diet has to be improved, and one of the best ways of improving it is to make it possible for them to consume more milk and milk products. Gandhiji has therefore established the Go-Seva Sangh to concern itself with problems relating to milk production and cattle. Not only is the cow important to us as vegetarians more than to others, because of its milk, but it is also important to us more than to others because it produces bullocks which are needed for small scale agriculture, irrigation, transport and for village industries. By tackling problems relating to Dairying and Cattle Farming, this Association

deals with what is most important for the villager, *viz.* his health and his bullocks which provide him with the only motive power available to him outside of his own hands and legs.

Cattle being thus central to the economy of our villages, tanning and making use of every part of the animals when they are dead—their hides, hair, horn, bone, fat, etc.—assume great importance. At present tanning is being carried on in a slipshod fashion by illiterate chamars, who handle the dead animal carelessly and thus spoil the hides even before they are tanned, and all the other parts of the animal are just thrown away as so much waste. Several institutions have now sprung up under the inspiration of Gandhiji to experiment on and improve the processes of tanning carried on in villages, and to make use of other parts of the dead animal besides its skin. In this way new life is sought to be put into an old village industry and fresh channels of employment found for the people.

Another use which cattle have for our villagers is that they provide manure. It is most important for an agricultural country like ours that this manure as well as human excreta should be carefully stored and used to enrich the soil. Gandhiji has regarded this as so important for the health and prosperity of our people that he has included it among the main items in his Constructive Programme. By collecting farmyard and human refuse into manure pits, the village will be clean, unlike what it is now littered with dirt and human excreta. Village sanitation occupies one of the foremost places in Gandhiji's scheme of village uplift work. And quite rightly. For unless the surroundings in

which people live, the roads, the open spaces, and the drains are kept clean, flies and disease-carrying germs will abound and adversely affect the health of the people.

3. *Physiological*.—Although Gandhiji is moved by the grinding poverty in our villages and has therefore sought first and foremost to do what he can, through revival of dead or dying village industries, to alleviate this poverty and to provide people with gainful occupations, his interest is not merely economic, but human. He is anxious that the villager should not only be able to earn more but that he should lead a healthier, happier life, and find ways and means of realising his personality. Hence Gandhiji's interest in village sanitation, diet, health, hygiene and preventive medicine. Working on the principle of "a healthy mind in a healthy body", he has realised that if we want our people to have well-developed minds we must see that their bodies are not neglected. For when the body is diseased, the mind is without hope, life, energy or ambition. No effort to improve our people can succeed unless their bodily state of health improves through better diet, and sanitary habits. Hence these form part of the work which Gandhiji has started in villages.

4. *Educational*.—Naturally, however, Gandhiji's interest does not stop with the body. He is keen that every aspect of the individual's life—his mental, moral, artistic and spiritual nature—should develop. He finds that the present system of education is all too academic, divorced from contact with life and theoretical. The pupil learns hardly anything about his immediate environment—the trees, birds, animals, and living

conditions around him—and his mind is stuffed with information for which he has no use in ordinary everyday life. On the other hand the education which will really transform the pupil and help him to assimilate what he learns is one which is imparted in the process of doing, *i.e.* in the process of working at some occupation, be it agriculture, carpentry, spinning or metal work. Intelligence, character and artistic sense have not, after all, dropped on us from the clouds. They have developed in us in our struggle for existence, even as the tiger's claws and teeth. And if we would develop them we must put them in their proper setting in nature as aids to overcoming practical problems in the living of life, and not hope to develop them within the four walls of a classroom as in a vacuum. This is the meaning of Basic Education initiated by Gandhiji, and now being organised in various parts of the country by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh. The teacher under this system of education is not to be merely a teacher of text books but an elder brother to children, a friend of parents helping and guiding them in their problems, and a leader of the village community, interesting himself in all that makes for the progress and development of the village. The school house is to be the seed-house for all new ideas, the centre of enlightenment and progress, leading to the mental and moral advancement of the community.

Lately Gandhiji has directed that the funds raised in the memory of Kasturba should be used for the education and welfare of women and children in the villages. Women have been suppressed under custom and law, and they have

few of the opportunities for education and self-development which are available to men. In his eagerness to free the oppressed, Gandhiji's sympathy is at once with the women. He wants them to be companions and co-workers with their men-folk and not their slaves. For this they must be given education and opportunities for developing themselves. Further women play an important part in shaping the mind of the child, as they are almost in complete charge of it during the most impressionable stages of its life. They also exert an influence, as mothers and wives over men, which most men find irresistible. However progressive a man may be in his views, he cannot put them into effect in his home unless his womenfolk are first converted. You may educate the child, you may educate the man, but so long as the woman is neglected, things will remain much as they are. The woman therefore holds the key to the cultural progress of the race. So if we want our villages to go forward we have to do intensive work amongst women.

5. *Social*.—Today the village is torn by factions, by caste and by creed. Gandhiji's crusade for doing away with untouchability, and for promoting Hindu-Muslim unity is but an effort to weld the disintegrating elements into one corporate whole bound together by their common life together in the village and in the country. For in union is their strength. A people who are in perpetual strike with each other are bound to be exploited by a third party. The only way to free them from such exploitation is to get them to be united and to work together for their mutual advantage. The person which in respect

of caste intolerance and arrogance culminating in untouchability, has been eating into the life of the nation cannot be eradicated in a day. The Harijan Sevak Sangh under the guidance of Gandhiji has as its sole task to serve the so-called untouchables, to befriend them in the inhuman isolation to which they have been condemned for centuries by the caste Hindus, and to wipe out from the hearts of men all man-made distinctions of higher and lower between one man and another. Gandhiji has been so earnest about this that he was willing to fast to death rather than allow untouchability to remain and obtain official sanction in our constitution in respect of votes. He wants the "untouchables" to become merged in the Hindu community and become one with it, without any trace of their former isolation. There is no doubt that in this he is only giving expression to the spirit of non-violence, which will not brook shunning one's fellow-men and treating them as of lesser breed. His work in this connection may not be spectacular in results, but he has sown seeds which are bound sooner or later to bring about a revolution in the Hindu community and through it in all communities living in this country, a revolution which will level down all distinctions of high and low and lead to respect of man as man.

One of the factors that divides us from each other is language. If our 7,00,000 of villages are to be bound together and feel affinity with each other, there is need for a single language which can be understood by all of them. As Hindustani is the language which is known to most of our population, it is naturally the one which is best

fitted to fulfil this function. Gandhiji has therefore helped to establish institutions for the spread of a knowledge of this national language, or Rashtra Bhasha, in provinces where it is not known adequately.

Drink is an evil which in our country exists chiefly only among the poorer classes. But amongst them it has played havoc, ruining many homes and taking away from women and children their daily bread. Men become brutes under its influence and are thoroughly enslaved by it. Gandhiji who wants them to be free, to be fully in possession of their powers, and to do their duty by their women and children, has been waging war against this evil. Under his direction the Congress Governments instituted Prohibition of intoxicating drinks in selected areas. He would rather that the revenue obtained from drink be done away with than that the Government should provide facilities for education of the people on money obtained from what is literally ruining the poor and their families.

These are some of the ways in which Gandhiji has sought to get a move on in our villages. It is obvious that he has touched practically every side of life in villages—the political, the economic, the physiological, the educational, and the social. The remedies he has suggested and the reforms he has initiated are so far-reaching that if they are given effect to, we may find the Indian village transformed beyond recognition. It will be a little self-sufficient unit managing its own affairs, a model of co-operative organisation, where there will be more or less uniform prosperity, nourishing well balanced food

and the other primary necessities of life, employment for all, little or no exploitation, no distinction of high and low, women the equals of men in every respect, education of the hand, the eye, the heart as well as of the head, fellow-feeling and a bond of unity holding together not only the people of the village but people of all villages and therefore the nation. Men and women will be able to control the factors that affect their everyday lives and thus be truly masters of themselves, unlike what happens under the centralised economy of Capitalism or Communism where they have by force to submit to orders from the centre whether they wish to or not. There will thus be true democracy or rule of the people. And as when people are organised in small self-sufficient village groups, there will be no need for them to look at other lands with greedy eyes for raw materials and markets, as they will produce primarily only for their own requirements, there will be an end of war for economic reasons, as today, and in its place the possibility of genuine international brotherhood and world peace. Then and then alone will non-violence reign supreme.

This is not merely a utopia or a shadowy picture of Gandhiji's dreams but it is a consummation for which Gandhiji has been working and towards which he has actually set forces in motion, as we have tried to show. Work such as this cannot be weighed, counted, labelled, indexed, and reduced to statistics. For it has not to deal with things but with men. What Gandhiji has done is to let loose revolutionary forces, which are always incalculable. They may appear today to be no more than a cloud of the

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size of a man's hand, but they may spread tomorrow to cover the sky and flood the land.

What Gandhiji has done for Indian Labour

(BY GULZARI LAL NANDA)

I do not find myself equal to the task of putting in words or figures the magnitude of the debt which the working class in India owes to Mahatma Gandhi. His personal share in building up the labour movement is large. The material gains which the labour has secured as a result of his direct help are numerous. Of much deeper significance and of far greater value, however, are, what may be described as his indirect services and "intangible" contribution to the cause of labour in India. He has given labour a clear view of its true goal and lighted up its path. By his stupendous activity for the nation as a whole, he has also cleared the way of the working class for marching forward to its destination,

We may first consider the indirect succour which Gandhiji has rendered to the workers, through the movement of freedom, led by him for nearly three decades. It is a familiar fact that the birth and early growth of the labour movement in India almost synchronized with the first political campaign in this country started by Gandhiji. This was no mere coincidence. Gandhiji's countrywide agitation was marked by a spirit of revolt against unjust and irresponsible authority. Labour witnessed, and was, in many

places, drawn into the mass demonstrations of those times. It could not remain unaffected by the prevailing atmosphere of high hope and great endeavour. Labour was made to feel that the lowly too had rights, and that, it was possible for them to stand up for those rights. The psychological as well as the social barriers which had held up the onward march of labour, began to crumble down as Gandhiji's multipronged campaign went sweeping ahead. It might have been years—it is difficult to say how many—before labour in India could have made itself articulate, if Gandhiji had not intervened with his all round programme for the emancipation of the Indian nation.

Gandhiji mobilized a strong force of "intellectuals" and middle class youths to perform the hundreds of tasks which he set before the nation. In this, the labour movement secured a ready-made source of pioneers, leaders, and helpers. So conspicuous was the part which the political intellectuals played in the early days that in the case of a strike, the self-justification of an employer was considered complete, the moment he uttered the words "outside agitators" and "political motives," whatever might have been the grievances, which caused dislocation of work. The contacts thus established and the awakening created among the workers could have easily been used for feeding the agitation and unrest of those days, even at the risk of causing a degree of embarrassment to the workers and injury to their immediate interests. Gandhiji did not allow such a tendency to manifest itself. He has, however, all along kept up his insistence that national workers should interest themselves in the welfare

of the working class, and miss no opportunity of helping it to remove its industrial and social handicaps.

It will need too much space to record here the benefits which labour has derived from the manifold activities of Gandhiji in the social sphere. Two items deserve special mention—Prohibition and Untouchability Removal. Only those who have seen it can have an idea of the havoc wrought by liquor, among the poor toilers who fall a prey to it. I have witnessed the woes of the women, the pitious plight of the children, the tightening grip of disease and death, and the progressive damage to the moral fibre, for which the drink evil is answerable. There are no words to describe the depths of degradation and helplessness to which working class families sink down, on this account. Under the influence of liquor, the worker—and this is of the gravest consequence from the standpoint of the working class—proves to be his own worst enemy in his struggle with the forces which are bearing him down. Liquor leads the workers into wrong ways and destroys the only means which they possess, for their deliverance viz. their solidarity and their power of resistance.

To overcome this menace, Gandhiji initiated and vigorously pursued the Prohibition Campaign as an important item of the national programme. It was because of his personal interest and insistence that the Congress ministries pressed forward with measures of Prohibition, and big industrial centres like Bombay and Ahmedabad were declared to be dry areas. The Ahmedabad Prohibition Research Advisory Board appointed by the Government of Bombay made unanimous

report that the scheme of Prohibition, enforced in that area, had succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations and had resulted in an enormous material and moral benefit for the working class.

Gandhiji's work for the removal of untouchability has no small bearing on the progress of the labour movement in this country. Almost all the so called untouchables belong to the labouring community and form a large proportion of it. They are the most down-trodden section of labour. Gandhiji's incessant endeavour in their behalf has rid them of many disabilities, particularly in the urban areas, and has brought much strength to the labour movement by closing up, to a considerable extent, this breach in its ranks.

By his own shining example, by bringing into vogue simpler modes of living, by the dress reform he has introduced, by rehabilitating Indian languages, and in a score of other ways, Gandhiji has gone far in bridging the gulf between the intelligentsia and the working masses. His constant advocacy of the claims of the poor, his stress on the dignity of labour and his propagation of the ideas of economic, social and political equality, have done a great deal to promote the peaceful social process, which would through a progressive levelling up and down, eliminate the disparities of wealth and power and establish a harmonious social order.

Gandhiji's direct personal association with the labour movement dates from the days of his stay in South Africa. That country was in need of workers to develop her economic life. India had spare man power. For years, a stream of indentured Indian labour flowed to South Africa and other Colonies. The Indian labourer who

was found to be a useful helper in the earlier stages came, in course of time, to be viewed by the white settlers in the light of a dangerous rival. In all these regions, the Indian labourer was compelled to submit to exceedingly bad social and economic conditions, but the political disabilities assumed the worst form in South Africa. Gandhiji came on this scene and started preparing the Indian community for organized resistance of the passive and peaceful kind. The prominent stake in this case was the human rights of the immigrant of whom the large bulk consisted of Indian labourers. Gandhiji launched a series of campaigns in which the Indian community courted imprisonment and suffered severe hardships. At one stage, thousands of Indian labourers in coal mines laid down tools and went on strike smarting under the wrong and humiliation of the 3 £ head tax which indentured labourers were liable to pay. The strike spread to the sugar plantations. It was suppressed by force causing injury and death to a number of labourers. About 6,000 labourers joined Gandhiji in the Great March of which the objective was to set at naught the Government ban on the entry of Indians in Transvaal. The passive resisters stood their ground in the face of brutal treatment and unspeakable sufferings. Before starvation, disease, and death, they did not quail. The 3 £ tax was repealed, and for the moment, the other immediate objectives of the movement were attained. This was a grand exhibition of moral force displayed by masses of ignorant and illiterate labourers under the guidance and inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi. The struggle in South Africa has rightly been treated as a heroic phase

in the history of the Indian labour movement.

Gandhiji may be counted, in a real sense, as the first leader of the Indian labour movement. Gandhiji was the first to espouse the cause of Indian labour, stationed in a foreign land, and the first to lead it in an organized fight on a mass scale. Back in India, he again found himself right in the midst of the working class and at the head of a labour struggle of such proportions and importance as had never been witnessed in the past in this country. This happened in Ahmedabad in March 1918. The local textile industry was already big enough to employ half a lakh of workers. The weavers had asked for a rise in wages in view of the heavy increase in the cost of living, owing to the conditions created by the world war. The employers, not willing to go beyond a small concession, declared a lockout of all the employees. Gandhiji examined every aspect of the question, and came to the conclusion that the workers were entitled to an additional remuneration to the extent of 35 per cent. The millowners were adamant in their refusal to consider this proposal and would not go to arbitration. Gandhiji advised the workers that it was their duty to resist unbending arbitrary authority, to their last breath. The workers took a solemn pledge that they would not resume work in the mills till their just demand was accepted. Gandhiji planned every detail of the struggle and took charge of its conduct from day to-day. He addressed a daily meeting of the workers and issued a pamphlet everyday containing information and directions for the workers. A time came—after about a fortnight—when owing to the propaganda of the millowners and the various

devices employed by them for demoralizing the ranks of the workers, a section began to show signs of weakness. This came about partly on account of the strain of hunger and privations. Gandhiji could not brook the idea of even a single person turning away from his pledge, because of want. He decided to go without food himself. This began his first historic fast. It was intended to be of indefinite duration. During this period, arrangements were made to relieve the hardships of the workers by providing them with alternative temporary employment. The building operations just then started for housing Gandhiji's Ashram at Sabarmati, became the means of placing in the hands of workers a few pice a day. Gandhiji's fast had not progressed far when the millowners were moved to revise their attitude to save Gandhiji's life. They accepted arbitration and the workers eventually obtained an increase in wages to the full extent of 35 per cent. Gandhiji's fast meanwhile raised the labour question in the country to the plane of a national issue of outstanding importance.

The bond which was then created between Gandhiji and labour in Ahmedabad has been growing stronger with the passage of time. He has directed numerous fights of the workers since then. He inaugurated their unions early in the year 1920 and tended them with care during their period of infancy. It is largely due to his help, aid and counsel that the Ahmedabad Labour Association occupies its present pre-eminent position in the country.

The achievements of the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association are of special significance as furnishing a test of the efficacy of Gandhiji's

ideas with regard to the conduct of the labour movement. It would not be out of place, therefore, to give a brief outline of the position and activities of this organization.

The Association has, at present, a record membership of 65,000 textile workers, who pay in their dues regularly at each wage payment. The income of the Association on account of membership fees amounted to nearly Rs. 2½ lakhs during the year 1944-45.

The Association has arranged for the study and progressive record of the working and living conditions of the labouring community in the city. Complaints from individuals or groups of workers are recorded, investigated and attended to. The Association receives about 7,000 such complaints each year. Negotiations with the authorities concerned are conducted by personal interviews for the most part. When private settlement is not reached, full use is made of the conciliation machinery provided under the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act. The Association always insists on recourse to arbitration in cases of disagreement to avoid direct action. A strike is declared when there is no other course open. Each strike becomes an occasion for setting up elaborate campaign. The preparation for it, as well as its actual conduct, make very large demands on the moral and material resources of the Association. The aim is to keep up a non-violent atmosphere, preserve the morals of the workers, combat strike-breaking activities, and to bring to bear social and moral pressure on the employers, so that they may agree to refer the dispute to arbitration or adjudication.

The Association assists the workers in obtain-

ing their due under the various legislative enactments, including the Workmen's Compensation Act and the Maternity Benefit Act. It provides legal aid for members, and renders such help during strikes as circumstances may permit. The workers who are victimized by the employers for trade union activity are provided due relief.

The Association now maintains about 20 social centres which cater to the intellectual and social needs of the working class in the neighbourhood of each centre, by setting up libraries and reading rooms and by providing facilities for physical culture and recreation. It conducts 6 day schools and 2 night schools. Hostel accommodation is provided for working class girls to pursue their studies in the various educational institutions in the city. There is a Bal Mandir which attends to the needs of 65 children. Homes for students have been opened in the labour residential areas to furnish accommodation, instruction, and cultural background for young working class boys. Scholarships are made available to working class students receiving education in secondary schools.

The Association has also a well-equipped dispensary with an average annual attendance of 75,747. Arrangements are made to secure admission in the local hospitals for those workers who are in need of indoor treatment. A programme of opening maternity huts in the different wards, arranging for medical examination of the workers and their dependents and for supplying systematic health education has been adopted and is making satisfactory progress.

The Association endeavours to promote co-operative facilities for savings in deposit accounts.

It is running a Khadi Bhandar and a general store of which the annual sale amounts to about Rs. 2,10,000.

It makes continuous endeavour to assist the workers in securing their civic rights and discharging their civic responsibilities. Nearly 500 complaints of neglect and inattention to civic needs of working class families or localities' on the part of the Municipality, are dealt with every year. The Association participates in municipal elections and endeavours to secure adequate representation for the working class on the Local Body. In the last elections, labour secured 19 seats out of 52 on the General Board of the Ahmedabad Municipality. The Association has its own press. About 30,000 copies of the "Majur Sandesh", the fortnightly organ of the Association, are issued for circulation. Small pamphlets touching the needs and problems of the workers are brought out from time to time. The word of mouth, however, occupies a far more important place in the trade union and social propaganda carried on by the Association. Arrangements exist for the collection of the relevant facts and figures which is an essential trade union activity.

Through the efforts of the Association, organizational work has been promoted in various textile centres in the Province and outside. The Unions in these places obtain from the Association such help and advice as they need. The membership of these associated organizations exceeds 20,000

The affairs of the Association are governed by Boards composed of the elected representatives of the workers who are members of the

Association. These Boards are re-constituted every two years, after completing an elaborate procedure of elections to ensure the proper exercise of the workers' democratic choice in the composition of their Governing Body. About 838 representatives sit on these Boards. They elect the executive and the other committees. There were in the year 1943-44 about 106 meetings of the elected bodies. To attend to all this work, the Association has maintained a paid staff of 236 persons at present.

It should cause no surprise if I reckon as part of Gandhiji's work for labour his exertions to promote the handicrafts of the country of which Khadi still remains the centre as well as the symbol. Through Khadi, Gandhiji has extended his helping hand to a very large but scattered mass of workers whose plight is incomparably worse than that of the industrial workers in the towns. They suffer in ignorant and helpless silence. The only feature which relieves the dark misery of their existence is that it covers a brief span. The activities of the All-India Spinners' Association bring measure of relief directly to three lakh persons in the rural areas.

The personal ministrations of Gandhiji could not, in the nature of things, extend beyond a section of the Indian working class; but the beneficent influence of his work for labour has travelled to every place where men, women, and children toil in this country. Every labourer and every sympathiser of labour can have access to the body of ideas evolved and applied by Gandhiji through a quarter of a century, on the basis of the doctrines of Truth and Non-violence

Pr. NEHRU'S HOMAGE

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in a message to the press on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's 77th birthday, says, "The 2nd October has become a significant date for India, for that day was Gandhiji's birthday 76 years ago. Whatever the day of the month or year, Gandhiji is ever present in our minds, for he has dominated the Indian scene, moulded our national life and intimately affected innumerable private lives. What we are to-day nationally or individually, we are largely because of him, whether we realise it or not.

"So to-day on his 77th birthday we offer our homage to him, and the love and affection which flow to one who has not only been a very great leader but at the same time much more than a leader—a friend, a comrade, a guide and sure haven in time of trouble and distress.

What Gandhiji Has Done for Women

(BY KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADIYA)

THE great leap forward made by the Indian women is one of the significant milestones in our national progress. Cramped by age old customs, bound by mouldy traditions, they had lain languishing behind the four walls of their little domestic yard, seemingly untouched by the passing juggernaut of swift changes, until one day almost like a tornado the great gale of nationalism swept the land crashing down the ancient boundaries and setting into motion new currents, weaving new patterns of thought and living, breaking through and across the deep cuts of ancient usage. Movement is the law of life. But it is given direction and form by man. He who rides the crest guides the movement. He gives meaning to the inspiration and shape to the tide. Gandhiji has been one such leader. But Gandhiji is much more than a leader of a political movement. He is the creator of a new technique of living based on non-violence. But non-violence can be the expression of only a well adjusted society and this can only come out of a unit whose every constituent is free and untrammelled, where one section does not dominate over the other. This logically means he must also stand for an equality of status and a free comradeship between the sexes. For maladjustment must necessarily lead to hatred and conflict, while balance leads to harmony

which is peace. Gandhiji's attitude towards women is therefore influenced by more than mere humanitarianism. It is part of his philosophy of life, as he puts it in his own inimitable way.

Writing on this question Gandhiji says : " My own opinion is, that just as fundamentally man and woman are one, their problem must be one in essence. The soul in both is the same. The two live the same life, have the same feelings. Each is a complement of the other. The one cannot live without the other's active help... The division of the spheres of work being recognised, the general qualities and culture required are practically the same for both the sexes... Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in very minutest detail in the activities of man, and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him. She is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere of activity, as man is in his. This ought to be the natural condition of things, and not as a result only of learning to read and write. By sheer force of a vicious custom, even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve, and ought not to have. Many of our movements stop half way because of the condition of our women. Much of our work does not yield appropriate results... Man and woman are of equal rank, but they are not identical. They are a peerless pair, being supplementary to one another; each helps the other, so that without the one the existence of the other cannot be conceived, and therefore, it follows as a necessary

corollary from these facts, that anything that will impair the status of either of them will involve the equal ruin of them both..."

He realises only too well that ancient usages outgrow their use, that a path once clear gets overrun by wild growth, that a well once clear can become contaminated by fungus, that to pursue such a way is to get lost in a wilderness, that to continue to drink at such a well is to suck in disease germs. Commenting on the attitude of the smritis towards women, Gandhiji says: "The saying attributed to Manu that for woman there can be no freedom" is not to be sacrosanct. It only shows that, probably, at the time when it was promulgated, women were kept in a state of subjection...It is irreligion to give the religious sanction to a brutal custom. The smritis bristle with contradictions. The only reasonable deduction to be drawn from the contradictions is that the texts, that may be contrary to known and accepted morality, more especially to the moral precepts enjoined in the smritis themselves, must be rejected as interpolations. Inspiring verses on self-restraint could not be written at the same time and by the same pen that wrote the verses encouraging the brute in man...It is sad to think that the smritis contain texts which can command no respect, from men who cherish the liberty of women as their own, and who regard her as the mother of the race."

He lashes out against obsolete customs, which masquerading under religious guises, inflict untold suffering upon the weak and the helpless. Like Christ in the Temple of Jerusalem, his strong arm grips the broom to wipe the place

clean of unclean things, for surely God can dwell only where man can live in dignity and health. "The honour of a country," declared Mazzini, "depends much more on removing its faults than on boasting of its qualities."

The ancient is, therefore, not sacrosanct to Gandhiji if it has turned to dross. His heart bleeds for those who suffer under the burden of traditions. Amongst these, perhaps, the child widow takes the first place. All through his life he has pleaded movingly, passionately, vigorously for justice for these helpless victims. Like Jehovah's mighty wrath his righteous anger has burnt into society. "This custom of child-marriage is both a moral as well as physical evil," says he. "For, it undermines our morals and induces physical degeneration. By countenancing such customs, we recede from God as well as swaraj. A man who has no thought of the tender age of a girl has none of God. And undergrown men have no capacity for fighting battles of freedom or, having gained it, for retaining it. Fight for swaraj means not mere political awakening but an all round awakening, social, educational, moral, economic and political. What is kanyadan in case of little children? Has a father any rights of property over his children? He is their protector, not owner. And, so he forfeits the privilege of protection when he abuses it by seeking to barter away the liberty of his ward...It is a crime against God and man to call the union of children a married state, and then to decree widowhood for a girl whose so called husband is dead...The statement that widows attain moksha if they observe brahmacharya has no foundation what-

soever in experience. More things are necessary than mere brahmacharya for the attainment of the final bliss. And brahmacharya that is superimposed carries no merit with it, and often gives rise to secret vice that saps the morals of the society in which that vice exists."

His sense of justice as well as his sense of proportion urges him to offer a remedy for those tender ones who have already been victimised by these brutal customs. That is where he advocates widow-remarriage, one of the many tangled Indian problems on which he has come into conflict with orthodox Indian opinion. So he pleads again and again: "I have repeatedly said that every widow has as much right to remarry as every widower. All the young widows, therefore, should have every inducement given to them to remarry, and should be sure that no blame would be attached to them if they chose to remarry, and every effort should be made to select for them suitable matches... The least that a parent, who has so abused his trust as to give in marriage an infant to an old man in his dotage or to a boy hardly out of his teens, can do is to purge himself of his sin by remarrying the daughter when she becomes widowed. As I have said in a previous note, such marriage should be declared null and void from beginning... In the giving away of a little girl by ignorant or heartless parents, without considering the welfare of the child and without her knowledge and consent, there is no marriage at all. Certainly, it is not sacrament, and, therefore, remarriage of such a girl becomes a duty."

But Gandhiji is not content with a mere

general appeal. He seeks to give it a practical shape by trying to enlist the active co-operation of students in this arduous task. He addresses the students directly thus: "What I would like you, young men around me, to do is that you should have a touch of chivalry about you. I want you to make this sacred resolve that you are not going to marry a girl who is not a widow, you will seek out a widow girl and if you cannot get a widow girl you are not going to marry at all. Make the determination, announce it to the world, announce it to your parents, if you have them, or to your sister...Do you suppose that we can possibly call ourselves men, worthy of ruling ourselves or others or shaping the destiny of a nation containing 40 crores, so long as there is one single widow who wishes to fulfil her fundamental want but is violently prevented from doing so? It is not religion, but irreligion."

His vision penetrates through the tough overgrowth right into the heart of things. It is the core which matters to him and not the rind. Once when a case of sati was reported to him, forthright came his reaction: "Self-immolation at the death of the husband is not a sign of enlightenment, but of gross ignorance as to the nature of the soul. The soul is immortal, unchangeable and immanent...Again, true marriage means not merely union of bodies. It connotes the union of the souls also."

Even clearer and more unequivocal are his views on the duties of the wife. Marriage is probably the oldest social institution and the most abused. In this unequal struggle of women against social tyrannies imposed on them, nothing

has played so high a part as marriage. It is in fact the base from which the continuous attacks on them are made. For men it is a cloak which covers a multitude of their failings, their betrayals of their social obligations. Many a great leader has fought shy of touching this convenient cloak. But Gandhiji's search after truth knows no frontiers. He has wrenched the sham aside to boldly reveal the naked reality. "Hindu culture has erred on the side of excessive subordination of the wife to the husband, and has insisted on the complete merging of the wife in the husband. This has resulted in the husband, sometimes usurping and exercising authority that reduces him to the level of the brute. The remedy for such excesses, therefore, lies not through the law, but through the true education of women."

He to whom all problems have a vital reality is not content with mere expression of views, what one might call lip sympathy. Gandhiji is essentially a man of action. With him to be convinced is to act. He is not deterred by the present impediments. To him absence of legal provision is no excuse for sitting still. He gives clear direction: "When either wife or husband holds views out of the ordinary there is danger of jars. In the case of the husband, he has no scruples. He does not consider himself under any obligation to consult his partner's wishes. He regards his wife as his property. And the poor wife, who believes in the husband's claim, often suppresses herself. The wife has a perfect right to take her own cause and meekly brave the consequences when she knows herself to be in the right, and when

her resistance is for a nobler purpose..."

Gandhiji's revolutionary mind overleaps the little barriers of common conventions. His inner eye is fixed on the spirit which lies hidden. "Charity is not a hot-house growth," he asserts. "It cannot be superimposed. It cannot be protected by the surrounding wall of the purdah. It must grow from within, and to be worth anything, it must be capable of withstanding every unsought temptation. It must be a very poor thing that can't stand the gaze of men. Men, to be men, must be able to trust their women-folk, even as the latter are compelled to trust them. Let us not live with one limb completely or partially paralysed...Morality is rooted in the purity of our hearts..." His whole being has revolted against the nauseating caging of delicate flowers. Writing of his reactions to a "purdah meeting" he commented sadly: "The sight of the screen behind which my audience, whose numbers I did not know, was seated, made me sad. It pained and humiliated me deeply. I thought of the wrong being done by men to the women of India by clinging to a barbarous custom which, whatever use it might have had when it was first introduced, had now become totally useless and was doing incalculable harm to the country. All the education that we have been receiving for the past hundred years seems to have produced but little impression upon us, for I note that the purdah is being retained even in educated households, not because the educated men believe in it themselves, but because they will not manfully resist the brutal custom and sweep it away at a stroke..." He puts the finger on the right spot when he says: "Good sense

must govern the relations between the two sexes. There would be no barrier erected between them. Their mutual behaviour should be natural and spontaneous. . . .”

Gandhiji is the embodiment of service. “The true life is the common life of all, not the life of the one. All must labour for the life of the others,” said Tolstoy, whose great influence over himself Gandhiji acknowledges. It is his way of self realisation, and to many others, especially the women, he has pointed this noble way. To him this offers a solution to many a problem that confronts women. The sense of suppression, helplessness, and of futility felt by widows or deserted wives, the stultification which is the lot of the idle rich, the aimless drift of the educated young, can thus be magically transformed into a meaningful life filled with purposeful action and rich experience. Addressing a group of students he stressed: “Your parents do not send you to school to become dolls; on the contrary, you are expected to become sisters of mercy...She becomes a sister of mercy immediately she thinks less of herself, and more of those who are poorer and more unfortunate than herself...”

If Gandhiji occupies today a preeminent position in the heart of the Indian people, it is because he touched the heart of the common man and made him realise that he too has a great destiny before him, he too has an important role to play in the larger national affairs. The woman, along with the suppressed common man, had been amongst the forgotten, unwanted ones. Then Gandhiji came like a magician. He has often been described as the “wizard.” One might al-

most believe in his supernatural powers, so dynamic, so swift, so revolutionary are his achievements, so spectacular his performances. But he is too human to be superhuman. That is the secret of his greatness. He is just one of us, he is Bapu. He is not God the father, handing down tablets from Mount Sinai. He is shot through with our own weakness and sentiments. He suffers and he rejoices with us. That is why he is so close to us. That is why his voice stirred the slumbering inert mass which was India.

The women, like the rest, had grown apathetic, lost all initiative, all sense of dignity and self-respect. They were content to be the domestic drudges and the appendages of men. They had slipped so imperceptibly from their high pedestal, that even that ancient memory had become blurred.

Their life had ceased to have any direction of its own. It moved impelled by the one single pole-star-man. Over the calm surface came his voice. And in his case, word was truly made flesh. "More often than not, a woman's time is taken up, not by the performance of essential domestic duties, but in catering for the egoistic pleasure of her lord and master and for her own vanities," he wrote. "To me, this domestic slavery of woman is a symbol of our barbarism. In my opinion, the slavery of the kitchen is a remnant of barbarism mainly. It is high time that our womankind was freed from this incubus. Domestic work ought not to take the whole of a woman's time..."

Gandhiji compelled women to extricate themselves. For the first time woman grew conscious of herself as an entity, of her mission in life, grew

to a realization that in her shackles was society fettered, that in pushing her down the alley man had slipped headlong after her, that her regeneration was intrinsically bound up with the regeneration of the nation. She stirred from her bad dream of weakness and helplessness to the walking awareness of strength and power. That she counted vitally and in infinite ways was to her now a real experience. She was the vehicle of national fulfilment. Her mission went beyond her old domestic frontiers, even beyond the national ones. Gandhiji's clarion voice rang out : " In this non-violent warfare their contribution should be much greater than men's. To call woman the weaker sex is a libel ; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater power of endurance, has she not greater courage ? Without her, man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with women, "

The ancient wall of tradition crumbled as did once the walls of Jericho. The helpless maiden of yesterday was the valiant soldier of today. History had turned a whole page at the gentle touch of this little man. I recall pleading with him for a special message to call out the women, during his Dandi march, " But why do you suppose they need a special message from me ? " he asked. " Because women have not yet become sufficiently aware. They are still lost in their ancient slumber. They may lose the chance, this one chance of our life time, if you don't strike a special note ". I replied in a sort

of helpless impatience. "If that is your estimate, all I can say is, you don't know your sisters," he replied, with a knowing indulgent smile. He handed out the message, nevertheless, if only perhaps to prove me wrong.

The great day came when Gandhiji picked salt on the Dandi shore, with almost an impish delight and India witnessed a few incredible sequences. But none so startling as the sight of woman marching in the forefront of the battle. Women with pale eyes and blushing cheeks, they who had been gently nurtured behind silken curtains, women who had never looked upon a crowded street, never beheld a strange face, stripped aside those silken curtains, threw off their gossamer veils and flung themselves out into the blinding glare of day, unshaded, unprotected. Women whose feet were as velvety as rose petals, habituated to sink but into soft Persian carpets, walked unshod on hard stony paths, unmindful of scars and bleedings. They who had been nurtured on the lightest of delicacies crunched bravely the tough sandy jail rotis. Their delicate limbs now reposed on the rough blankets. They faced perils and privations with a happy light in their eyes and a spring in their limbs. Almost overnight their narrow domestic walls had given way to open up a new wide world in which they had a high place. Their traditional duties had enlarged even as their courtyard. Their life had expanded and taken on a new meaning. Their thoughts and actions now mattered and made an infinite difference to the lives of 400 millions. The unlettered and untaught proved as capable and efficient as the tutored. They assumed high

offices and fulfilled their duties with care and diligence. They became dictators and captains. They organized and ran the entire foreign cloth boycott and picketing program, giving shape to an old dream of Gandhiji. They faced persecution, beatings, assaults with indomitable courage. It was hard to bend them, and impossible to break. They gave a meaning and reality to this non-violent struggle which they alone could have given. "The part that women played in this struggle should be written in letters of gold," said Gandhiji.

This undoubtedly is one of Gandhiji's greatest achievements. For, it is not what the woman actually did in the Satyagraha movement which matters so much as what the movement did to her. It changed the face of Indian society. What social reformers had been struggling to achieve over half a century, Gandhiji did almost overnight. The status of women was completely transformed, for in life there is rarely a going back. The women of today carry themselves with new dignity and a consciousness of their larger responsibilities.

Gandhiji's vital relationship with the women can be best gauged by surveying his own life. Two of the most intimate influences in his life were those of women, that of his mother and his wife. The intimacy of a child with the mother is said to colour its entire relationship with the world. The relationship between the two was a most ennobling influence on Gandhiji. This is certainly confirmed by the story of his life where his mother's strong hand is seen moulding his early life.

Equally great was the influence of his wife.

though perhaps only the few who had the opportunity to come into close contact with them realised it. There is a general belief that she was the typical much-suppressed Indian wife. Nothing could be further from the truth. His strong will was matched by hers. To the last she retained her own individuality even while she adjusted herself to him and the terrific changes he wrought in their lives. She had a mind of her own that was never allowed to be crushed. She did not hesitate when she felt moved to do so to stand up to him on whose glance millions hung, he before whom millions bowed in awe, he whose every single word was law to millions. There was perfect ease and freedom between the two, which made for not only a happy union, but also his happy relationship with womanhood in general. Even as he became Bapu, she became Ba to the world, on her own, not as an appendage to him. That is most significant. She could talk with him the most mundane affairs and find in him a most attentive and responsive mate. That was the secret of their happy comradeship. Whatever the agony and effort, they had attained it. She was not the wife who walked in his shadow, she was one who shed a light of her own.

To the women, however, Gandhiji is much more than a leader to revere and respect. He is also the father whom they love and have faith in, to whom they can carry their little troubles and quarrels.

Gandhiji expects much more from women, for they are the ballast which gives weightage and stability to his work. In his khadi and Harijan work, the two things closest to his heart, he has

assigned women a high place. "The restoration of spinning to its central place in India's peaceful campaign for deliverance from the imperial yoke, gives the women a special status. Spinning must, as of old, fall on your shoulders. Two hundred years ago, the women of India spun not only for the home demand but also for foreign lands... The economic and moral salvation of India thus rests mainly with you. The future of India lies on your knees, for you will nurture the future generation. You can bring up the children of India to become simple, God-fearing and brave men and women, or you can coddle them to be weaklings, unfit to brave the storms of life... It is for the women of India, a large number of whom do not get even an anna per day, that I am going about the country with my spinning wheel and my begging bowl.....".

In these soul-stirring words which surely no woman can withstand, Gandhiji has placed a great duty on the shoulders of the women of India. Equally great and responsible is the task he has allotted them in his Harijan programme. In no uncertain terms he defines the desire of his heart when he addresses the women in the following words :

"I want you, above everything else, to root out untouchability from your hearts and serve the Harijan boys and girls as you would serve your own children. You should love them as your own relatives, your own brothers and sisters, children of the same Mother India. I have worshipped women as the living embodiment of the spirit of service and sacrifice. Man can never be your equal in the spirit of selfless service with which Nature has endowed you.

Woman has a compassionate heart which melts at the sight of suffering. If, then, the suffering of Harijans move you and you give up untouchability and with it the distinctions of high and low, Hinduism will be purified and Hindu society will take a great stride towards spiritual progress. It will ultimately mean the well-being of the whole of India, that is of 35 crores of human beings. And the wonderful purificatory process that one-fifth of the human race will undergo, cannot but have a healthy reaction on the whole of humanity..."

Is it any wonder that before such heart rending appeals, women, even the hardest and vainest among them, young maidens and even little girls, so readily strip off their jewels and put them in Bapu's lap. For who can resist his cry, the call of our better selves to banish this evil stench from our midst ?

Gandhiji's Moral & Spiritual Contribution to Indian Life & Thought

(BY RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR)

Gandhiji has been the 'Polar Star' in India's horizon for the last quarter of a century. History records no parallel to the following he commands not only in his own country but in the entire world. His life is an open book. Those who have not the privilege of knowing him personally can know him through his writings. No autobiography has laid bare the innermost soul of the writer in quite the same way as Gandhiji's "Experiments with Truth". He was born and bred in a religious atmosphere. The impress of his mother, a profoundly religious woman from his picture of her, has never left him. It was her influence that kept him from falling a victim to temptation when he was left to fend for himself in England. It was she who first sowed the seeds in his young heart which have helped to develop in him that worship of *Truth* and *Love* which are the hall-mark of his character. He has been a votary of Truth since childhood. When punished for non-attendance at a gymnastic class at school because the master would not believe that having no watch, the cloudy weather had deceived him, the young boy wept in anguish not at the punishment but at the mere thought of having been accused of telling an untruth. When he was tempted

hidingly to eat meat by his school companions, the knowledge that he was deceiving and lying to his parents was always gnawing at his heart and it was this hurt to his growing moral stature that finally made him decide to abstain from it. Again it was the innate love of truth which sent him as a boy of 15 to make the touching confession of having stolen to his father. The latter's tears of love and sublime forgiveness made the boy's repentance complete and have been described by him in his autobiography as an object lesson in pure "Ahimsa". Early in life the 'Ramayana' of Tulsidas made its impress on him; early in life, thanks to the opportunity of listening to religious conversations between his father and his friends, he got a grounding not only in Hinduism and its sister religions but in other faiths also which inculcated in him a spirit of tolerance and respect for all religions.

Of those boyhood days he writes, "But one thing took deep root in me, the conviction that morality is the basis of all things and that truth is the substance of all morality. Truth now became my sole objective. Truth began to grow in magnitude every day". Since then his conception of Truth has widened to "Truth is God". Pari passu with this passion for seeking Truth he writes: "A Gujrati didactic stanza likewise gripped my mind and heart. Its precept "return good for evil" became my guiding principle. It became such a passion with me that I began numerous experiments in it. Here are those (for me) wonderful lines :—

" For a bowl of water give a goodly meal ;
For a kindly greeting bow thou down with
zeal ;

For a simple penny pay thou back with gold ;
 If thy life be rescued, life do not withhold.
 Thus the words and actions of the wise
 regard ;
 Every little service ten-fold thy reward.
 But the truly noble know all men as one,
 And return with gladness good for evil done."

With the religious background of his home and with the early realization by this outstanding moral genius of the spiritual values of life, it is small wonder that Gandhiji decided early in life to choose the strait and narrow way, the path of renunciation, the path of suffering, the path that leads to eternal life. Opportunities of leading a life of pleasure backed by the capacity to earn wealth did not tempt him. A burning passion for reform within, an irresistible urge to give up all to serve fellow-man, became the motivating power behind all his actions, once he had found his highest self in South Africa. When he came to India, having left South Africa for good, he had had immense experience in contacting human nature in all its phases, in leadership, in organisation, in administering public funds, in training the young, in journalism, in ministering to sick and suffering humanity, in dealing with government and, above all, in self-restraint and suffering. Through this experience his faith in Truth and Non-Violence as the key to all moral and spiritual progress and the only means of attaining man's deepest aspirations had taken firm root in him.

Luminaries like Gandhiji are sent once in an age by Providence to lighten the darkness with which humanity through its own weakness envelops itself from time to time. They bring

hope and cheer in place of despair ; they are pointers to those who have seeing eyes and understanding hearts. It is India's good fortune that she has had a man of his moral and spiritual stature to guide her in her righteous warfare against the oppression from which she has been suffering for centuries. It was only natural that a man of his calibre should at once come into the arena to raise suffering Indian humanity from the mire into which it had fallen. The Indian struggle in South Africa had lasted eight years. Satyagraha had been applied for the first time to masses of men and had won through. "A Satyagraha struggle is impossible without capital in the shape of character," writes Gandhiji. Not all the gold of Sheba would have made it successful if the participants had not been prepared for self-purification through self-suffering and had not been self-reliant. The way of Satyagraha and Ahimsa have been Gandhiji's richest gifts to India and through India to the world. As he says, "the world rests upon the bed-rock of 'Satya' or Truth. 'Asatya,' meaning untruth also means non-existent, and 'Satya' or truth also means that which is. If untruth does not so much as exist, its visitory is out of the question. And truth being that which is can never be destroyed. This is the doctrine of Satyagraha in a nutshell". In India his first victory was in the Viramgam customs question in 1915, and the second in the abolition of indentured labour in 1917. Gandhiji says these were the result of preparedness for Satyagraha. After this came the Champaran struggle where "satyagraha" was actually offered and won a victory. He has called this "a bold experiment

with Truth and Ahimsa". It was through service of the exploited there, that he became convinced that work of any permanent nature was impossible without proper village education. Scarcely was Champaran finished, when he became involved in the dispute of the mill-hands at Ahmedabad with the Mill Owners. A strike was called in which for the first two weeks the labourers' exhibited great courage and self-restraint. But after that signs of weakness began to creep in and Gandhiji was impelled, as the representative of labour to undertake a fast because of *their* lapse, not to coerce the mill-owners. The net result was an atmosphere straightaway of goodwill, and Gandhiji's contact with labour there later resulted in the birth of a union which stressed the human relationship between labour and capital for the first time by introducing the principle and procedure of arbitration. The Kheda struggle, the agitation against the Rowlatt Act, the fight to right the Panjab and Keilafat wrongs followed one after the other. In fact, up to date, his life has been one long struggle against violence and untruth. It could not, for him, be otherwise. The cause of suffering humanity had to find its biggest champion and servant in him. Since means and ends are convertible in his philosophy of life, it is natural that throughout all these years he has been endeavouring to win freedom for India through non-violent and truthful means. "Violent means will give violent 'Swaraj'. There is no wall of separation between means and end. Indeed the Creator has given us control (and that too very limited) over means, none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that

of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception". The non-violent struggle of the Congress against the mightiest empire the world has ever seen, is Gandhiji's unique contribution to suffering humanity. To cling to truth, to invite suffering on oneself and never even think of injuring the opponent is surely the highest way for man, if man could only rise to his full moral stature. Gandhiji claims for Satyagraha a complete substitute for armed revolt. Its victory is the victory of the moral sense in man. We live in times when the utter brutality of war has appeared before us in all its horrible nakedness. How true Professor Joad is when he says, "Gandhiji is a moral genius and his method belongs to the coming generation. He has announced a method for the settlement of disputes which may not only supersede the method of force, but as man grows powerful in the art of destruction *must* supersede it, if civilization is to survive". We have had ample proof of the success of non-violent warfare in India in the last quarter of a century. If it has not brought us complete victory so far, that is due to our own weakness. Gandhiji's insistence on Truth and Non-Violence in politics is a vital contribution. How vividly has it been brought home to us that where the doctrine of force prevails, there is no room for truth. "I want to see God face to face. God I *know* is Truth. For me the only certain means of knowing God is non-violence—ahimsa—love". It is this insistence on Truth which has made him fearless and which has always made his opponents fear him. He cannot isolate politics from what to him is dearer than life. "My politics are not corrupt, they are

inextricably bound up with non-violence and truth". It is this bond which makes him non-co-operate with evil in whatsoever form it exists. But his non-violent non-co-operation, as he says himself, "is a prelude to co-operation." Behind it, there is always the keenest desire to co-operate if there is even the slightest change of heart in the opponent. He sees life as one. He owns kinship with all God's creation. Man being made in the image of God has it in him to be true to the divine spark within. Gandhiji has boundless faith in human nature. In his eyes no man is beyond redemption. His non-co-operation, therefore, has its root in infinite love for the wrong-doer and a deep hatred for evil. "I am by instinct a co-operator. I have presented non-co-operation in terms of religion because I enter politics only in so far as it develops the religious faculty in me". He has never regarded politics as different in kind from any other activity. "Religion", he says, "should pervade every one of our actions. Here religion does not mean sectarianism. It means a belief in ordered moral government of the universe. It is not less real because it is unseen. This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, Christianity etc. It does not supersede them. It harmonises them and gives them reality". All his strivings, as a seeker after God (Truth) have had their beginnings from and been permeated with the idea of establishing the 'Kingdom of Heaven' on earth. The Ram Rajya of his dreams is not mere political freedom. This is how he recently described it: "Perfect democracy in which inequalities based on possession and non-possession, colour, race or creed or sex

vanish. In it land and state belong to the people, justice is prompt, perfect and cheap and there is freedom of worship, speech and the press—all this because of the reign of the self-imposed law of moral restraint. Such a state must be based on truth and non-violence and must consist of prosperous, happy and self-contained villages and village communities. It is a dream that may never be realized. I find happiness in living in that dreamland, ever trying to realize it in the quickest way."

Apart from his unique leadership of the Congress for the political freedom of our country, Gandhiji's contributions to the social and moral regeneration of India have been immense. And here it must be noted that he has never preached what he has not himself practised. Non-violence, truth, non-stealing, continence, non-possession, bread labour, conquest of the palate, perfect fearlessness, equality of all religions, swadeshi, removal of untouchability—are the *eleven* observances which he asks those who have thrown in their lot with him to carry out with inflexible resolve and perfect humility.

Non-stealing is not merely stealing in the ordinary sense of the term. It includes spending more on yourself than your need. It embraces even time spent on yourself which might have been given to service. All waste is stealing. To eat without work is thieving.

Non-possession signifies the complete surrender of oneself and one's goods to the service of suffering humanity, inasmuch as everything one has is a trust bequeathed by God. I dare not possess anything which I do not want...You and I have no right to anything that we really have

until the starving millions are clothed and fed. We must adjust our wants and even undergo voluntary privation in order that they may be nursed, fed and clothed.

Gandhiji is quite clear that marriage is a sacrament which imposes strict discipline on the partners. Physical union may only be indulged in for the purpose of procreation. "The ideal that marriage aims at is that of spiritual union through the physical. The human love it incarnates is intended to serve as a stepping-stone to divine or universal love". His own experiments with brahmacharya have continued ever since, as he himself put it, "I freed my wife from my authority as her lord and master, and I became free from the slavery to my appetite which she had to satisfy." But his brahmacharya is far more than mere celibacy. "It means complete control over all the senses and freedom from lust in thought, word and deed."

He has always refused to believe that the ideal is impossible, for he maintains that "the natural affinity between man and woman is the attraction between brother and sister, mother and son, or father and daughter. It is this natural attraction that sustains the world. I should find it impossible to live, much less carry on my work, if I did not regard the whole of womankind as sisters, daughters or mothers."

The Control of the Palate is described by him as one of the most difficult vows to follow. But he maintains that to control all one's senses is man's duty. To eat to live and not live to eat is the ideal. "Human society is a ceaseless growth, an unfoldment in terms of spirituality. If so, it must be based on ever-increasing res-

traint upon the demands of the flesh". There can be no self-realisation without self-restraint.

The high calling of "*Bread Labour*" was first brought home to Gandhiji in South Africa after reading Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. The moment he discovered that the life of the tiller and the handicraftsman is the life worth living, he "arose with the dawn, ready to reduce these principles to practice". The love for doing personally has been a moving passion with him all his life and no work has been looked upon by him as being beneath man's dignity. "Search for the real is not a spare-time occupation. Work is part and parcel of it. Not the drudgery at a machine, of course, but the happy sunlit work in the field, or the garden, or amongst friends and family".

In a country dominated by foreign rule for centuries it was only natural that Gandhiji should be struck by the paralytic fear that gripped our people. To fear no one but God has been his guiding principle. "If you want to follow the vow of Truth, fearlessness is absolutely necessary". "Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality. Cowards can never be moral".

Swadeshi has been conceived by him as a religious principle, not as a boycott movement undertaken by way of revenge. He has described it as "that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote". It is the departure from the swadeshi spirit that he holds responsible for the gap that divides the educated from the masses and for the grinding poverty of the latter. The spirit of toleration in Gandhiji has been a light in the veritable darkness of communal strife in our unhappy land.

While, for him, as he says, Hinduism is all-sufficient, his religion is not exclusive. His respect for all other faiths is unbounded. "I believe that it is impossible to estimate the merits of the various religions of the world and, moreover, I believe that it is unnecessary and harmful even to attempt it. But each one of them, in my judgment, embodies a common motivating force, that is, the desire to uplift man's life and give it purpose".

For no cause, not even India's political freedom, has Gandhiji worked so hard as for the removal of untouchability. He regards it as the greatest blot on Hinduism and he declines to believe that it has religious sanction. Every member of his Ashram has to do the work of a scavenger and do so with pride. It is not for nothing that he has chosen to settle in Sevagram, a village of Harijans. The citadel of untouchability has been stormed with all the vigour of non-violence by Gandhiji, and is fast crumbling.

No one has done more to restore woman to her rightful position in society than Gandhiji. He condemns man for his injustices to her throughout the ages. He is uncompromising in the matter of women's rights. He looks upon woman as "the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities." He has pleaded for child-widows, he has raised his voice against child marriage, he has denounced marital subjugation of the woman, he refuses to recognise one moral law for woman and one for man. Above all, he has shown her a way whereby she may come into her own. He holds that it is her unawareness of her latent moral strength which has made her believe she is the weaker sex. "If

non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman". Woman is the incarnation of 'Ahimsa'. Ahimsa means infinite love..... Let her transfer that love to the whole of humanity, let her forget she ever was or can be the object of man's lust. And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man as his mother, maker and silent leader. It is given to her to teach the art of peace to the warring world thirsty for that nectar. She can become the leader in Satyagraha which does not require the learning that books give but does require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith".

In the *Spinning Wheel* Gandhiji has given to India the symbol of non-violence. The khadi spirit means fellowfeeling with every human being on earth. It means a complete renunciation of everything that is likely to harm our fellow-creatures. "Khadi represents human values, mill cloth represents mere metallic value". India in Gandhiji's mind connotes village India, poor, ignorant, starving humanity. He stresses the importance of village industries because he wants the future structure of our state to be built on the solid foundations of simplicity, non-violence, the sanctity of labour and human values. Man is to him the supreme consideration, and economies that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or nation are, in his eyes, sinful. "I must confess that I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics". As long ago as 1908, he sensed that large-scale machinery had begun to desolate Europe. He has had no cause to change his views. Was he not a veritable prophet when he wrote in 1909 that "Germany and England"

are living in the Hall of Death? He wants India to unlearn what she has learnt from 'Western Civilization' because the latter has lost its soul in the mad rush after money.

It is the desire that every individual should be a productive member of society that has made him evolve *Basic Education* as the best form of training for our children. Manual training brings out the creative faculty and stimulates the brain as nothing else can. "True education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of the children".

Fasting and Prayer are the bedrock of his religious faith. "I believe that there is no prayer without fasting and there is no real fast without prayer". He does not, however, believe that there is any inherent merit in mortification of the flesh. A spiritual fast is for self-purification, "a complete and literal denial of self, the truest prayer". Gandhiji has often fasted in answer to the "inner voice", never to coerce, always for purification of self and others and in order to remove distress and injustice by soul force. His fasts have been prayers to the Almighty from an anguished heart. He admits that "like all human institutions fasting can be both legitimately and illegitimately used. But as a great weapon in the armoury of Satyagraha it cannot be given up because of its possible abuse". Gandhiji is nothing if not a man of prayer. The only real thing in life, he once said to me, is prayer. "As food is necessary for the body, prayer is necessary for the soul". "He who has experienced the magic of prayer may do without food for days together but not a single moment without prayer. For without prayer there

is no inward peace". The inward peace which enables Gandhiji to battle against raging storms with complete calm and unflinching faith is the outcome of prayer, the prayer that springs from the heart and frankly recognises man's dependence upon God in all details of life.

It may be said without any semblance of exaggeration that all Gandhiji's activities are motivated by religion. Whatever movement he has started, whatever institutions he has created, have been with the sole desire to raise the moral and spiritual stature of those whom he serves. And he serves equally those against whom he wages moral warfare. He is no idle dreamer. He has given ample practical demonstration of what man can achieve if he will follow the true path. His complete dedication to service of all his inestimable gifts, his renunciation of all that is perishable, his merging of himself with the poor and downtrodden, his rugged honesty, his abomination of cruelty and injustice, his boundless love and compassion which knows no barriers of race or creed or caste, his deep humility, his living faith in God are as a city set on a hill which cannot be hid and which will shine as a light to lighten the world for all time. These are what have drawn and will continue to draw to him men and women of all classes and creeds, not only in India but from the four corners of the globe. These are what have enshrined him in the hearts of the poor and the oppressed. These are what entitle him to be called the 'Spirit of India'. In a world drowned in an ocean of hatred he has been the only lighthouse to which men could turn for hope and rescue. He has believed in India's destiny. He has called

her "fitted for the religious supremacy of the world". But it must be the awakened India of his dreams. Himself a seer, he has tried to bring India "along the bloodless way of peace that comes from a simple and godly life." Indian independence alone will not satisfy him. Through her deliverance he seeks to deliver all humanity everywhere that lies crushed or broken by brute force. His India must be "free and strong so that she may offer herself a willing and pure sacrifice for the betterment of the world". He wants her, therefore, to resist the onrush of the material West for her own sake and for that of the world, if her freedom is to revolutionize humanity's outlook on peace and war. "India must learn to live before she can aspire to die for humanity". I believe it is to give her this life, and give it more abundantly, that this great Prophet of the modern world has been sent to her by God.

WHAT SIR TEJ SAYS

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, on the occasion, says :
“ In my opinion more than anyone else during recent times Mahatma Gandhi has summed up the self-respect of India and directed its path towards the road to freedom. If freedom is no longer a hypothetical issue but an issue which has got to be solved in the immediate future it is solely due to Mahatma Gandhi's personality,

“ I have no doubt that whether we agree with him on a particular issue or not, the future historian of India would give him the first place among the makers of a free nation in the 20th century. I wish him many happy returns of this day.”

What Gandhiji Has Done for Harijans

(BY L. N. RAO)

These words of Mahatma Gandhi written in 1937 sum up his great love for the fifty millions of our countrymen who have justly focussed attention of the whole country on their problems during the past decade and a quarter. There is something magical about the Gandhian touch. It looks as though he holds dust in his hand and it transforms itself into gold. He took out the dust laden *charkha* and it has become the symbol of national freedom and the hope of the social and economic underdog. The depressed classes, the Scheduled Castes, the *Antyaj*, the *Achhut*, the *Asprisy*a and the Untouchable, a host of such irritating, insulting and unpronounceable names were used and are still used by certain sections of the people to denote the fifty million less unfortunate brethren of ours. But Gandhiji struck a different note and gave to them the sweet name of "Harijan", the offspring of God. The country caught it. Spiritual minded as India is, could there have been a better approach to the people than this to pin their attention and sympathy to the problems of these countrymen of ours? The meek and the humble, the suffering and oppressed are the most beloved of God's children, so they bear the brunt of the miseries of this earthly existence.

The Harijans have had champions in the past. Chaitanya, Tukaram, Nanak, Kabir,

Dayanand Saraswati and a host of them were there who espoused the cause of these people and tried to emancipate them. Lord Buddha himself was probably one of the earliest reformers and saints who befriended these unfortunate social outcasts. These reformers and saints did their best to make people love the scorned untouchable by their example as well as precept. Chapters from the lives of these great men of religion are soul-stirring and are beacon lights to the modern reformer. Their love for the despised Harijan is a great legacy for us.

But Mahatma Gandhi is unique among such reformers. To say so is not to belittle the work of the noble reformers of the past even in the least. Probably time spirit is responsible for making Gandhiji such an unrivalled champion and worker for the emancipation of the Harijans from their social and political degradation. He would of course never claim for himself anything new or great in his service of the Harijans. He has approached the problem of removal of untouchability, the social stigma attached to the Harijans, with the penitence and humility of a sinner. His heart has bled for this social evil which he has proclaimed, day in and day out, as "the greatest blot on Hinduism." After launching the crusade against this social evil, he has fought courageously and successfully the orthodox opposition. He has declared and proved that untouchability was no part of Hinduism and Hinduism would die if untouchability continued to exist.

Gandhiji organised a nation-wide campaign against untouchability in the years 1932-33 and 1933-34 after the historic fast of September 1932 in Yeravda prison. The country was galvanised

by the Fast unto Death that the Mahatma undertook on 20th September 1932 to protest against separate electorates granted to the Harijans in the Award of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, the then Premier of Great Britain. He saw in it the seeds of disunity sown by the foreign rulers among the Hindus. He would resist the attempt to separate Harijans politically from Hindu community with his life :

“I would far rather that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived.”

His penance bore fruit in less than a week. But what travail he passed through during those six days of his epic fast: One shudders at his rigorous self-inflicted suffering.

However, as a result of the fast, the Pact between the leaders of the Harijans and non-Harijan Hindus, now known as the Poona Pact, was arrived at and the political part of it was accepted by the British Cabinet. What is it that this Pact gained for the Harijans? The answer to this question will be an epitome of Gandhiji's work for the Harijans. Some critics may say that Gandhiji has gained his point of joint electorates by this fast and that benefits only the non-Harijan Hindus! How does that benefit the Harijans? Well, the Poona Pact has benefited the Harijans in a way almost undreamt of before.

The Pact gained for Harijans more than double the number of seats reserved for them in the Provincial legislatures by Mr. Macdonald's Award. The Premier had provided 71 seats and separate electorates. The Poona Pact got 148 seats and joint electorates, though, with certain limitations. A panel of four candidates for each

reserved seat has to be elected first by the Harijans themselves before the general electorate chooses its Harijan representative. Imagine the big jump from 71 reserved seats to 148 reserved seats in the Provincial legislatures! Later it transpired that the Harijans got 3 more seats making a total of 151, in the Govt. of India Act of 1935. This meant a big lump of power in the hands of Harijans and the Hindu community has cheerfully accepted this position. Even in the Federal Assembly according to the Act of 1935, 18 per cent of the seats allotted to the general electorate was reserved for Harijans, on the basis of the proportion of their population to the general Hindu population. It is a different matter that the Federal part of the Government of India Act of 1935 has not been implemented. But so far as the Provincial sphere is concerned, Harijans have enjoyed the benefits of the generous provisions of the Poona Pact, which was the fruit of Mahatma Gandhi's penance. It is true that some of the leaders of the depressed classes bargained for more seats during the epic fast of Gandhiji before the Poona Pact was arrived at. But supposing Gandhiji had not risked his life? They would have got only 71 seats, though they could have had the privilege of contesting other seats in the Hindu or "General" constituencies. According to the 1935 Act, Harijans got the following reserved seats in the eleven provincial legislative assemblies.

1. Assam	...	7
2. Bengal	...	30
3. Bihar	...	15
4. Bombay	...	15
5. C. P. & Berar	...	20

6.	Madras	...	30
7.	N. W. F. Province	...	nil
8.	Orissa	...	6
9.	Punjab	...	8
10.	Sind	...	nil
11.	U. P.	...	20
			<hr/>
			151
			<hr/>

For the first time in recent history, Harijans as community got political power in the 1936 general elections. Some of them became Parliamentary Secretaries and some Ministers of the Provincial cabinets. Since 1936 Harijans have been gaining more and more influence in the country and their voice is now heard. Fifteen years ago theirs was a cry in the wilderness but now they count as an important element in the national life of our country. To this happy change Mahatma Gandhi has contributed the greatest.

Soon after the Poona Pact was arrived at, the Hindu leaders of various political groups met in Bombay on 30th September 1932 under the Chairmanship of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and formed the Servants of Untouchables Society now known as the Harijan Sevak Sangh. This is another great and unrivalled service rendered by the Mahatma to the Harijan community. He was not content merely by the Poona Pact. That meant for him only the beginning of the end of the age old wrongs perpetrated by a section of Hindus on the Harijans. He declared, soon after he broke his epic fast, in emphatic terms :

“ The Settlement is but the beginning of the end. The political part of it, very important

though it no doubt is, occupies but a small space in the vast field of reform that has to be tackled by caste Hindus during the coming days, namely the complete removal of social and religious disabilities under which a large part of the Hindu population has been groaning."

He warned his fellow reformers and the caste Hindus in general that the breaking of the fast carried with it a sure promise of its resumption, if the end was not relentlessly pursued and achieved within a measurable period. As Rajaji put it, "Gandhiji's life is verily held in pledge for the debt." Gandhiji himself said that his life might be held as hostage for the due fulfilment of the Poona Pact. The official agreement concerned only the political part of the Pact. But for Gandhiji the social and religious aspects were at least as important and probably more important than the political. Clauses 8 and 9 of the Pact read as follows :—

" 8. There shall be no disabilities attaching to any one on the ground of his being a member of the Depressed Classes in regard to any elections to local bodies or appointment to public service.

Every endeavour shall be made to secure a fair representation of the Depressed Classes in these respects subject to such educational qualifications as may be laid down for appointment to public services.

9. In every province out of the educational grant an adequate sum shall be earmarked for providing educational facilities to members of the Depressed Classes."

To Gandhiji this reform has had a deep

spiritual and religious significance. He pleaded and still pleads earnestly that the caste Hindus should "embrace the suppressed brethren and sisters as their own," invite them to their temples, to their homes, to their schools." His heart bled and still bleeds for the social and religious disabilities of Harijans. His campaign against these disabilities is ceaseless and untiring. Apart from his personal service to Harijans which he has been doing since long before the starting of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, he works through this great and India-wide organisation. Of course, he does not hold any official position in the Sangh. But he is the guiding spirit as well as its great moral support. He undertook an extensive, all-India tour in 1933-34, lectured about removal of untouchability and collected nearly Rs. 8 lacs for welfare work among Harijans.

There have been several organisations before and even after the birth of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, working for the amelioration of the conditions of Harijans. Their work in several cases is indeed great. But none can beat the country-wide work of the H. S. Sangh, which is just finishing the thirteenth year of its useful existence. It has a net work of provincial, district and even Tehsil branches practically all over the country and carries on its social and educational work silently. A large number of Harijan boys and girls studying in schools and colleges receive scholarships from the Sangh. Over a hundred free hostels are conducted by the Sangh for Harijan boys and girls in several parts of the country. Wells are constructed by the Sangh for providing drinking water for Harijans. A watch is kept by the workers of the Sangh over the

interests of Harijans and any injustice done to them is noted and redressed whenever possible. In some of the important towns and cities the Sangh looks after the interests of the Municipal sweepers who form a section of the Harijan community, by appointing welfare workers. The grievances of this body of useful public servants are brought to the notice of the municipal authorities by the workers of the Sangh from time to time. Industrial schools, though few in number, are conducted by the Sangh to teach useful handicrafts to Harijan children and to make them self-reliant. Two such schools are located in Delhi and Madras.

The Harijan Industrial Home in Delhi is an institution providing training in carpentry and cabinet making, leather works, tailoring, spinning and weaving, paper making and artistic work, on leather articles. Each handicraft is taught in a three-years course. General education through the medium of Hindi is also given. Tuition as well as boarding, lodging and clothing are provided free to Harijan boys. About 10% non-Harijan boys are admitted on payment basis. At present there are nearly 170 boys undergoing training in Delhi. About half this number receive similar training in the Harijan Industrial School at Kodambakam near Madras City. The graduates of these institutions turn out into useful citizens and are able to make a decent and independent living.

Special mention should be made of the Girls' Hostels and the reform work done through them. The Sangh has carried the message of freedom to the Harijan homes. No social reform worth mentioning has ever been effected anywhere

without the willing co-operation of the women folk. Hence the Sangh realised the necessity of educating Harijan girls as well as boys. Scholarships are therefore awarded to Harijan girl students even in the lower classes. Three of the big girls' hostels of the Sangh are located in Okhla near Delhi, in Sabarmati near Ahmadabad and in Bezwada in Andhra. The institutions in Okhla and Sabarmati are in fact residential schools for Harijan girls. The Bezwada hostel provides boarding and lodging facilities for girls' receiving education in different schools of the town. Over 60 girls reside there. The girls section of the Harijan Ashram of Allahabad needs also special mention. Harijan girls are given the trainings of Dayis in this institution.

This is just a glimpse of the extensive work of the Sangh. In all, the Sangh spends about Rs. 5 lacs throughout the country every year for the welfare work among the Harijans. The Central Office of the Sangh alone spends over Rs. 1½ lakhs per annum nowadays on welfare work and administration. All this great work is of course the result of the endeavours of the sage of Sevagram. It is not merely his spiritual support that sustains and propels the Sangh. He is even a financial asset to the Sangh. The Central Office of the Sangh gets a big part of its income through the collections of the Mahatma. For example look at the latest figures of donations received through him by the Central Office of the Sangh:

1937-38	Rs. 26,027 15 9½
1938-39	„ 44,576 14 1½
1939-40	„ 32,634 4 6
1940-41	„ 5,219 3 3
1941-42	„ 25,855 0 6
1942-43	(Mahatmaji in jail)
1943-44	43,453 3 0

The sums are not negligible. In fact they are substantial and show Gandhiji's untiring efforts in the cause of removal of untouchability and improvement of Harijans. In 1942 he himself wrote about his collections as follows :—

“ If the collections I make at railway stations and at evening prayer when I am out of Sevagram are any index to the progress of removal of untouchability, it must be very substantial, for I notice that the response is more liberal than before. Hardly a bystander at stations or a visitor to the prayer meeting refrains from giving his mite. Much need not be made of the response. But there can be no doubt that if the cause did not make any appeal, the response would be meagre, if any. Whereas it was hearty and willing. It gave me great jay as I studied the smiling faces of those who gave. The Bombay collection for the seven meetings was Rs. 4,000. Each days collection showed a substantial rise on the previous day. Thus the first day's collection was Rs. 205-5-6 and the last Rs. 1,342-10-9.”

Note the half pies in the above list of figures. Yes, these collections are mostly in annas and pice. They are not big donations. They are the loving contributions of the poor and the middle classes and as such are much more valuable than the contributions of the mighty rich

from their overflowing coffers. During the month of April 1945, to quote the latest figure, his collections for Harijan work amounted to Rs. 15,835/14/6. Thus the effort goes on.

Due to the work of the Sangh some of the great temples of South India are thrown open to Harijans by the free will of the caste Hindus. When the mighty gates of the ancient temple of Meenakshi at Madura opened and welcomed Harijans in 1939, the country acclaimed it a miracle. It was indeed a miracle. The so-called orthodox and conservative South India changed its heart and made an undying gesture of goodwill and brotherhood. It was a spontaneous act. As Gandhiji remarked "The opening of Shri Meenakshi temple is a great event in the campaign against untouchability and the movement for the opening of temples to Harijans. The Proclamation opening the state temples of Travancore (in 1936) was no doubt a very big step. But it was the prerogative of the Maharaja. But the opening of the celebrated temple of Madura is a greater event in that it is the popular will that has brought about the happy consummation." Temple entry reform has been effected in Indore, Baroda, Gwalior and some other states also.

All this is heartening progress. But no doubt the problem of untouchability is not yet solved completely. Gandhiji knows it. On 12th April 1945 he declared that "untouchability in the villages was still very acute". The Sangh also makes prominent mention of this fact in its periodical publications and annual reports. But the campaign has not grown less intense. It has even gained momentum by its solid and silent

work.

There are other directions in which Mahatmaji has rendered unique service to the Harijans as a community and as an integral part of the Hindu Society. But some may refuse to accept this as a service rendered to the Harijans. However, it is a well known fact that by his profound interpretation of Hinduism and strong and fearless condemnation of proselytization, he has prevented mass conversions of Harijans to other faiths. By this prevention, he has preserved social integrity and helped the Harijan community to rise to dignified status within the Hindu fold, avoiding the dangers of social disintegration. In October 1935 Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the learned and great leader of the Harijans, made a startling speech in Nasik. He asked the members of his community: "Choose any religion which gives you equality of status and treatment. I had the misfortune of being born with the stigma of untouchability, but it is not my fault; I will not die a Hindu, for this is in my power." There was country wide agitation and "a scramble on behalf of the various non-Hindu Missionary organisations to claim the possible renegades to their own folds." The Christian Missionaries said, "The touch of Christ is our offer to India's untouchables." Sikh and Muslim missionaries also offered a welcome for the Harijans to their respective folds. But the reform movement of Mahatmaji stemmed this. In fact no mass conversions took place directly as a result of this threat of the great leader of the Harijans. He himself seems to have sobered down by experience. Several Christian missionaries wanted to associate themselves closely with the

work of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. But Gandhiji warned them and exposed to the world the intention of proselytisation which is at the bottom of all the Christian Missionary work. He declared that "Liquidation of untouchability cannot be attained by the conversion of untouchables to Islam or any other religion. For it is the so-called caste Hindu who has to rid himself of the sin of untouchability." "I believe that there is no such thing as conversion from one faith to another in the accepted sense of the term. It is a highly personal matter for the individual and his God. I may not have any design upon my neighbour as to his faith which I must honour even as I honour my own. For I regard all the great religions of the world as true at any rate for the people professing them as mine is true for me. Having reverently studied the scriptures of the world, I have no difficulty in perceiving the beauties in all of them."

To-day there is a large unpaid army of sincere and devoted workers in the cause of removal of untouchability throughout our vast country whose guide is the Mahatma and his word. The great fight against the centuries old social evil is going on though slowly but steadily. The reform movement is marching ahead according to plan. The inspirer and the soul of the movement does not tarry a while. No resting on oars for him. Work of removal of untouchability and restoring to Harijans their proper status in the Society are one of the strongest passions of his life. It is rather difficult to find a day on which he does not stretch forth his begging bowl for the Harijan cause. When out of Sevagram, every evening at the end of his open air prayers,

he asks people to contribute and thus collects appreciable amounts. He begs from his countless admirers at wayside stations as he travels by a Railway Train. His zeal has not waned. It would not wane until the problem of untouchability is removed completely. And India moves with him. So is it too much to hope for the day when untouchability will be dead history and the vast mass of Harijans occupy a dignified status in society? Political power is already in their hands. To it must be added and will be added social and economic progress. This movement is for the establishment of the brotherhood of man. Gandhiji proclaims "Unless and until we befriend the Harijan, unless and until we treat him as our own brother, we cannot treat humanity as one brotherhood. The whole movement for the removal of untouchability is a movement for the establishment of universal brotherhood and nothing less."

Who can stem this tide of progress ?

What Gandhiji has done for Indian Education

(PROF. DIWAN CHAND SHARMA)

I

The time has not yet come to give the final answer to this question for Gandhiji's tremendous vitality, physical, intellectual and constructive, still leaves us guessing as to what he would do next. Still one can outline briefly in what directions his influence has been most keenly and urgently felt. In this matter we have to reckon with the example that he has set, the ideas that he has propagated and the achievements that stand to his credit. All these three make very fascinating studies and one wonders at the all-roundness of this dynamic little man.

II

First we should take note of the imponderable and incalculable influences that he has released. No one will deny that Gandhiji is essentially a self-educated person. A matriculate of an Indian University is a by-word of reproach these days, but even in the good old days success in the matriculation examination could not have been a symbol of any superior wisdom or merit. We also know what being called to the Bar means. At best it is only a passport to the study and the practice of law. Yet so far as regular studies go, Gandhiji's credentials, if not meagre, are very ordinary. But in the course of his life he has given evidence of tremendous powers of thinking

on a large variety of subjects and illuminating powers of exposition. All this is the result of the process of self-education to which he has always submitted himself. He is, in many ways, the student par excellence, the learner and the inquirer. He has, however, never wasted his time on useless education as explained by Dr. C. E. M. Joad. He has gone on learning useful things, things of practical importance, throughout his busy life. Only one instance will show what his method of approach has been. In his autobiography we are told how he began to study midwifery and other allied subjects when the first child was expected in his family. This shows his practical approach to the problems, domestic or national, with which he is confronted. He studies the subject, he discusses it with others and finally he makes up his mind. It is no wonder that he knows so much about so many things. His knowledge is not, however, mere lumber; it is something handy and useful. By his example he has given impetus to self-education. He has done for India what Benjamin Franklin and others of his generation did for America. He has clearly shown that the so-called regular education imparted at schools and colleges is not of much avail. What matters is how a man educates himself for the needs of his own life and how he prepares himself for solving the problems of his own existence. By this he has given hope to countless people who are trying to make good the deficiencies in their own education.

III

In another way, he has perhaps been one of the greatest educators that modern India has produced. Once an English statesman said about

some great Greek philosophers that one could not discuss any problem concerning modern life without seeking illumination from them on the subject. The same is true of Gandhiji even in the field of education. All the problems that confront us in this domain have been dealt with by him in a suggestive way. One may not agree with him always but one is forced to admit the force of his arguments and the power of his intuitions. At least there are some aspects of modern education which have received the necessary emphasis at his hands. Manual education, the training of the hand, was thought to be incompatible with cultural or liberal education, but he has shown that education consists in acquiring certain skills. This is not merely a bread-earning device but also something which releases the inner spiritual forces of man and enhances such intellectual qualities as precision and the adjustment of the means to the ends.

This is what he has said: "I am afraid you have not sufficiently grasped the principle, that spinning, carding, etc., should be the means of intellectual training. What is being done there is that it is a supplementary course to the intellectual course. I want you to appreciate the difference between the two. A carpenter teaches me carpentry. I shall learn it mechanically from him, and as a result I shall know the use of various tools, but that will hardly develop my intellect. But if the same thing is taught to me by one who has taken a scientific training in carpentry, he will stimulate my intellect too. Not only shall I then become an expert carpenter but also an engineer. For the expert will have taught me mathematics, also told me the difference between the various kinds of timber, the place where they come from, giving me thus a knowledge of geography and also a little knowledge of agriculture. He will also have taught me to draw models of my tools, and have given me a knowledge of elementary geometry and arithmetic. It is likely you do not correlate manual work with intellectual

training which is given exclusively through reading and writing. I must confess that all I have up to now said is that manual training must be given side by side with intellectual training, and that it should have a principal place in national education. But now I say that the principle means of stimulating the intellect should be manual training. I have come to this conclusion because the intellect of our boys is being wasted. Our boys do not know what to do on leaving schools. True education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of children. This education ought to be for them a kind of insurance against unemployment."

His insistence on moral education has been another fruitful idea. It is true he did not advocate its inclusion in the scheme of national education for obvious reasons, but throughout his crowded and busy life he has never missed a chance to give priority to character training in any system of education. The present war has demonstrated the dire necessity of this kind of education and educationists all over the world have come to feel that mere education is not enough and that character-formation cannot be left to take care of itself. That Gandhiji has thrown the weight of his whole personality in favour of this much-neglected aspect of education entitles him to the gratitude of all. In another respect, too, he has exerted a very wholesome influence. Somehow, the system of education devised by the British Government for the benefit of India has resulted in accentuating some kinds of social and intellectual snobbery. This system has benefited a few men at the top out of all proportion to their deserts and has left the people lower down in the scale as helpless as ever. Our educational edifice has been like an image which has a head of gold but feet of clay. This has been due to the erroneous theory of infiltration

from the top as enunciated by Lord Macaulay. The noble peer said that a few men at the top should be well educated and their influence and example would automatically level up the whole society. But this has not worked. Culture and education have not travelled downward in a regular line ; rather their course has been arrested somewhere near the top. At the same time, a big wedge has been driven into the ranks of our society. A wide gulf separates the highly educated from those who are poorly educated or not educated at all. In a sense, we have two distinct layers of society in the country. There are those who live in cities and boast of their superior attainments and there are the many who live in villages and have been denied the blessings of education. Gandhiji has tried to bridge this gulf by promoting better contacts between the so-called cultured city-dweller and the unsophisticated rural citizen. He has himself set an example for this. He has identified himself with the villagers of India and his noble work has been followed up by others. He has made it incumbent on all who accept his lead to go to villages and share with the inhabitants the fruits of their knowledge and culture. This is the reason why Gandhiji has asked his colleagues and co-workers to organise camps in villages and to settle down in villages permanently, if possible, to give the inhabitants the right kind of training. On another subject which lies at the very root of our educational system he has expressed himself unequivocally and emphatically. This is the problem of the medium of instruction. No one will deny that some of our modern Indian languages are capable of being used as the mediums of

instruction for the lowest as well as the highest grades of education. If there was any doubt on the point it was quelled long ago by the Osmania University of Hyderabad, Deccan. There almost every subject is taught through the medium of Urdu. But our departments of education and our universities have been so slow-moving and conservative that they have not sought to solve this problem very efficaciously. They have introduced this principle gradually so far as our secondary education is concerned with the result that no one has felt satisfied with this policy of gradualism. Gandhiji has given a great deal of impetus to this movement. He has always believed that education, especially at the primary and the secondary stages, should be imparted through the medium of the mother tongue. In fact, he has insisted that every educated Indian should be able to use his mother tongue as well as an All-India language such as Hindi or Hindustani. This does not mean that he is for the exclusion of English. He wants English to be studied, but abhors that it should be made the medium of instruction.

IV

Again his contribution to national education is vital. In 1920 he made the boycott of schools and colleges an essential element in his programme of civil disobedience. But this may be thought to be very disruptive and entirely negative. It may be thought to be a protest against the British-dominated system of education prevalent in India. It may be looked upon as a clever device to recruit volunteers for carrying on the national work. Yet Gandhiji did not mean all this. With the help of his constructive genius he brought into being schools, colleges and even universities in

every province to impart what he called national education. This concept is not new to India. It became, however, an important item of national reconstruction when the anti-Partition agitation in Bengal was started. Ostensibly it meant that India should have educational institutions of its own which should receive no financial aid from the Government, which should be free from Government control and supervision and where such education should be imparted as is Indian in content, suited to the genius of the people of India and steeped in their own traditions of living and culture. To many observers it appeared that these institutions fostered anti-British feeling and trained aggressive nationalists. Gandhiji gave, however, a new orientation to this movement. In the first place it stood for a liberal education. At these institutions the same grounding was given in the humanities as at other schools and colleges. There was, however, one difference. The text-books that were selected for this purpose were such as were more in consonance with the temper, needs and aspirations of the country. The text-books were not, however, the pivot of mental training. More was expected from the living and vivifying words of the teacher than from these dry sources of knowledge. In the second place, it was urged that all instruction should be through the medium of the mother tongue. This was something new but it is remarkable how most of the teachers were able to express adequately the difficult notions and abstruse ideas inherent in some subjects. But curricular and scholastic efficiency was not the main objective. Through these institutions students were to glimpse a new way of life and

to practise it. Simple living and high thinking is a worn-out cliché and has lost its original significance, but Gandhiji, by his own example, changed it with a new kind of significance and made it a practical preposition for these students. He made them cast off all extravagance and shed every kind of show and asked them to curtail their needs to the barest minimum. In order to make them realize the dignity of work he exhorted them to take to spinning. The spinning-wheel became a symbol of India's political, spiritual and economic regeneration and ceased to be an exhibition of India's crude mechanical skill. Above all, he imbued these persons with the ideas of selfless and disinterested service. It has often been urged against Indian students that their sole aim in getting education is to get a job and to attain to material comfort. They are mercenaries and all the ends that they seek are selfish. The outlook of these young men and young women was, however, changed. They were made to realize that national service was the highest good and that they should identify themselves with the poorest of the poor and strive to ameliorate their lot. These institutions were, therefore, seminaries for public servants steeped in the highest ideals of patriotism. Besides such cultural schools and colleges a net-work of technical schools and schools of other kinds was also to be found. These, however, came to languish after some time. When the first wave of enthusiasm had spent its force people lost interest in this kind of education. But even today there are to be seen some splendid remnants of this type of education and in them are to be found some of India's most renowned scholars and thinkers on education.

Even now they are serving the cause of Indian education by formulating new schemes and propagating new ideals. They are producing healthy literature for the people and enriching our thought. They are, at the same time, inculcating in the minds of young students noble ideas of life and service.

V

Gandhiji entered, however, the arena of educational controversy and educational reconstruction by propounding what has been called the Wardha Scheme of Education. In 1937 he wrote several articles in the *Harijan* about giving a national context to education. Then on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Marwari Education Society Mahatma Gandhi convened a conference of nationally-minded educationists who were asked to consider the following statement on the objects of education made by him :—

“1. The present system of education does not meet the requirements of the country in any shape or form. English, having been made the medium of instruction in all the higher branches of learning, has created a permanent bar between the highly educated few and the uneducated many. It has prevented knowledge from percolating to the masses. This excessive importance given to English has cast upon the educated classes a burden which has maimed them mentally for life and made them strangers in their own land. Absence of vocational training has made the educated classes almost unfit for productive work and harmed them physically. Money spent on primary education is waste of expenditure in as much as what little is taught is soon forgotten and has little or no value in terms of the villages or cities. Such advantage as is gained by the existing system of education is not gained by the chief taxpayer, his children getting the least.

2. The course of primary education should be extended at least to seven years and should include the general knowledge gained up to the matriculation standard, less English and plus a substantial vocation.

3. For the all-round development of boys and girls all training should as far as possible be given through a profit-yielding vocation. In other words, vocation should serve a double purpose—to enable the pupil to pay for his tuition through the products of his labour and at the same time to develop the whole man or woman in him or her through the vocation learnt at school.

Lands, buildings and equipment are not intended to be covered by the proceeds of the pupil's labour.

All the processes of cotton, wool and silk manufacture, commencing from gathering, cleaning, ginning (in the case of cotton) carding, spinning, dyeing, sizing, warp-making, double twisting, designing, and weaving, embroidery, tailoring, paper-making, gur-making are undoubted occupations that can easily be learnt and handled without much capital outlay.

This primary education should equip boys and girls to earn their bread by the State guaranteeing employment in the vocations learnt or buying manufactures at prices fixed by the State.

4. Higher education should be left to private enterprise and should be able to meet national requirements whether in the various industries, technical arts, belles lettres or fine arts.

The State universities should be purely examining bodies, self-supporting through the fees charged for examinations.

Universities will look after the whole field of education and will prepare and approve courses of studies in the various departments of education. No private schools should be run without the previous sanction of the respective universities. University charters should be given liberally to any body of persons of proved worth and integrity, it being always understood that the universities will not cost the State anything except the cost of running a central Education Department."

I have quoted this statement of Gandhiji *in extenso* because it contains, in their essence, all his ideas on education. This scheme was subjected to a great deal of searching, frank and outspoken criticism and out of this emerged what is known as the Wardha Scheme of Education. This provided for free and compulsory education for seven years on a nation-wide scale and postulated that the medium of instruction should be the mother-tongue. It further laid down that the

process of education should centre round some form of manual and productive work and that all training should be integrally related to the central handicraft selected with particular reference to the environment of the child. It was also made clear that this system of education should be gradually able to cover the remuneration of teachers. These ideas were worked out in detail in two reports which are known as Zakir Husain Committee reports.

Let us now examine what all this meant. In the first place, Gandhiji, for the first time in the history of India, formulated a free and compulsory system of National Education. That it was an improvement on the present system no one could doubt and that it steered clear of the financial rock on which all schemes of free and compulsory education in India have been wrecked is clear to every one. In the first place, it was free and compulsory, free in the real sense and compulsory without the taint of gradualism. It extended over seven years and not over four or five as the Government-sponsored schemes contemplate. It meant real education, the all-round development of the child. It sought to strike its roots in the soil of India, to relate the education of the child to its home, its environment, its community (in the political sense) and its country. It was indigenous and not an adaptation of any foreign system.

But it was thought to be revolutionary and novel. It was called a fad and it was very vehemently criticized (I was one of the many who thought it to be pernicious on the ground that teachers were to be paid out of the money earned by selling the articles made by children).

It is not possible to summarise that criticism. Mr. C. J. Varkey has done it admirably in his book, *The Wardha Scheme of Education*, published by Oxford University Press. In it he has put together a great deal that has been said for and against this scheme. All that can be urged now is this that this scheme, purged of what people thought to be its obnoxious features, has emerged as the scheme for Basic Education. This scheme does not irritate or shock many people now, but is looked upon as something quite solid, practical and useful. It is true it has not been adopted in every province and state in India, but it is being tried with success in many places.

One of the most curious features of this scheme has been that it has undergone several christenings. Without losing its original identity altogether, it has come to be named differently. The fundamental features of the scheme, except in one important aspect, have, however, been incorporated in the scheme of national education put forward by the Central Advisory Board of Education. This only means that the ideology underlying it has been found to be sound. But it may be said that this is only a scheme. It is not so, for it is being tried in several provinces. As the sixth annual report of Hindustani Talimi Sangh (1938-1944) will show it is being worked in some parts of the C. P. and Berar, in Bihar, in the Bombay Presidency, in the United Provinces and elsewhere. Wherever it has been tried, it has yielded good results.

But the problem is that it should be tried on a nation-wide scale. If this is done, it will change the entire outlook of students because it will

show the correlation of doing, learning and living. It will make doing a pleasurable task, learning a delightful thing and living a noble experience. Its curriculum is not merely bookish, but practical, useful and helpful. It will produce women and citizens of a new type. Here the teacher will not be engaged in routine work or in a soulless and dull occupation, but will be busy in moulding lives and shaping human destiny. He will not be educating merely for a career but for life. He will not be pouring water into a bucket (or perhaps a sieve) but he will be training the human machine, disciplining the human mind and fashioning the human character. He will be imparting education whose fundamental principle is not 'Each one for himself' but an education whose recipients are conscious of social responsibility and who believe in co-operative ventures.

In a word, this basic education is intended to produce better citizens, better homes, better villages and a better India. Those who think that it is merely a scheme of rural education are mistaken. It has a comprehensive aim and can be adapted to the needs of cities as well. Nor should people cavil at it because Gandhiji has not given any scheme for higher education. Let such persons build up, first of all, the first storey of India's educational edifice and then they can think of others. At least Gandhiji has told us how to do it, for with him the masses come first and everyone else afterwards. This scheme of mass education is Gandhiji's lasting contribution.

DR. KATJU'S TRIBUTES

Dr. Kailash Nath Katju, paying his tributes on the occasion, says: "There have been many political leaders in different parts of the world who have been and will in future be claimed as the great architects of the fortunes of their countrymen. But I doubt whether there has ever been a single political leader in the entire recorded history of the human race who has inspired such love and who has been such a powerful moral force in the uplifting and elevation of tens of millions of his followers. Political leaders have fought elsewhere with weapons of all kinds, but Gandhiji has worked armed with nothing but truth and non-violence and non-co-operation as the staffs of his life. He has been an ennobling influence in countless homes and his presence here has been felt by the inmates as a force constantly driving them to strive for purity in life and for purity of action. Verily this man has been a miracle of the age."

"India is fortunate in having a leader, like Mahatma Gandhi. She needs the guidance of such a selfless and independent worker, especially now that India is entering her right for freedom," said Mr. U. Ba Pe., veteran political leader in Burma in the course of a statement to-day on the eve of Mahatma Gandhi's 77th birthday writes A.P.I. special correspondent in Rangoon.

"I pray", Mr. U Ba Pe said, that Mahatmaji's life be spared for many years, so that his pure experience, his dauntless courage and stainless patriotism be a constant beacon to all the sons of India in their endeavour to serve their motherland".

Gandhiji and Hindu-Muslim Unity

BY PROFESSOR ABDUL MAJID KHAN

When there prevails an atmosphere of mutual distrust and feelings are running high, it is not possible for persons swayed by prejudice to arrive at the whole truth. In such an atmosphere even those who are our well-wishers and benefactors are misunderstood and taken as otherwise. It is a matter of extreme regret that some of our misguided countrymen—the leaders of the Pakistan Movement, wise in their own conceit, and the biased communal newspapers (that fail to see eye to eye with Mahatma Gandhi), should doubt the sincerity of purpose of the greatest living son of India whom all dispassionate and keen minds of the twentieth century have acclaimed as one, who possesses the purest heart and the soundest mind among the four hundred millions (400,000,000) of India. Before we begin to question his honesty, we would do well to bear in mind the following indisputable facts :—

(i) In 1920 during the Khilafat agitation the greatest non-Muslim leader to identify himself whole-heartedly with the movement was Mahatma Gandhi. He gave the movement a tremendous momentum and thus rendered invaluable help to the Muslims at that critical time. The fact of the matter is that those Muslim leaders, who to-day are decrying Gandhiji, owe their worldly elevation as well as their political consciousness, chiefly to him.

(ii) Mahatma Gandhi claimed many a time the Ali Brothers as his real brothers. During the Non-co-operation days it was their advice which carried the greatest possible weight with him. "Ali Brothers are pure gold", he once remarked.

(iii) It is only a unique personality of Gandhiji's far-sighted wisdom and transparent sincerity, who could boldly declare in 1924, that the question of Hindu-Muslim unity be referred for final solution to Hakim Ajmal Khan alone, and that Hakim Sahib's decision should be binding on both Hindus and Muslims. It has neither been widely known nor adequately appreciated by the detractors of Gandhiji that as a result of his statement regarding the appointment of Hakim Ajmal Khan as the sole arbitrator, Gandhiji came in for very severe criticism at the hands of the nationalist press of this country. But despite all that, Gandhiji stuck to his word. Is there any other Indian who could have made such an astounding suggestion ?

(iv) Gandhiji also cherished great regard for and had implicit faith in the late Doctor Ansari, whom he preferred to the greatest Hindu member of the Working Committee.

(v) At the time of the second Round Table Conference, Gandhiji unequivocally declared that he was ever prepared and willing to concede all the demands of the Muslims only if the nationalist Muslims would endorse them. It is, however, to the eternal credit of the nationalist Congress Muslims that they did not agree to the utterly unpatriotic and irrational demands of the communalists and resolutely refused to submit to the indirect dictation of Sir Samuel Hoare, to whose tune the separatists were, then, dancing.

(vi) Who does not know that even to-day in all matters of vital political importance which Gandhiji has to decide, it is the advice of Maulana Azad which he usually adopts?

(vii) Institutions like the all-India Spinners Association and the all-India Village Industries' Association (which have sprung up at Gandhiji's instance and whose work is being carried on under his direct and close supervision) have always aimed at ameliorating the hard lot of the poor folk without any distinction of colour, caste or creed. The Muslims who are comparatively poor can naturally benefit more from such nation-building activities.

(viii) During the dark days of 1932-33 when all other representative political organisations of the Muslims had completely disowned the brave Pathans of the N.W.F.P. it is Gandhiji, and none else, who came to their rescue and made the cause of the Pathans his own.

(ix) It is Gandhiji again who urged the Congress Ministries in seven provinces to treat the Muslim minority not only justly but over-generously. Whatever the leaders of the Pakistan might say to the contrary, there is no denying the fact that the Congress Ministries fully safeguarded the rights and protected the interests of the Muslims in a manner which at times even displeased some of the staunch Hindu nationalists.

With regard to the separate electorates, the main cause of Hindu-Muslim friction, Gandhiji holds views which are wholly unexceptionable. He says:—

“The curse of communalism became intensified by the introduction of separate electorates. The cry for partition is

the logical outcome, but it is also the strongest condemnation of separate electorates. When we have learnt wisdom, we shall cease to think in terms of separate electorates and two nations. I believe in the innate goodness of human nature. I, therefore, swear by the constituent assembly." (*Harijan*—June 29, 1940).

"Separate electorates have resulted in the separation of hearts. They presupposed mutual distrust and conflict of interests. They have tended to perpetuate differences and deepen distrust.....I hold it to be utterly wrong thus to divide man from man by reason of religion which is liable to change. What conflict of interest can there be between Hindus and Muslims in the matter of revenue, sanitation, police, justice or the use of public conveyances? The difference can only be in religious usage and observances with which a secular state has no concern." (*Harijan*—January 25, 1942).

"Here in India we have been pretending to work the parliamentary system under separate electorates, which have created artificial incompatibles. We can never bring about living unity out of these artificial entities being brought together on a common platform. Such Legislatures may function, but they can only be platform for wrangling and sharing the crumbs of power that may fall from rulers, whoever they may be.....I hold the emergence of complete independence to be an impossibility out of such a disgrace." (*Constructive Programme*, page 4, December 13, 1941).

"India is the homeland of Indian Muslims. For instance, take the case of my son, Hira Lal. He has embraced Islam. By changing his religion can he disown his nationality and country?.....It is my belief that every creature on this earth is the creation of God. My friends, especially the Muslims, Maulana Bari and Maulana Azad, can testify to this fact, I dine with the Muslims. I dine with all without any consideration to their caste or religion.....Islam never teaches its followers to hate any one. It preaches universal brotherhood and a spirit of mutual tolerance." (Gandhiji's speech of August 8, 1942).

Mahatma Gandhi rightly believes that as long as the third party, the British Government, is in India, Hindu-Muslim unity can never be achieved. He says, "I am firmly of opinion that there is no unity whilst the third party is there to prevent it. It created the artificial division and it

keeps it up. In its presence both Hindus and Muslims and for that matter all seemingly conflicting or disgruntled elements and interests will look to it for support and will get it." (*Harijan*, May 24, 1942).

Undoubtedly, Gandhiji is altogether immune from every type of bias. He is tirelessly asking Congressmen to be large-hearted and broad-minded towards the minorities of India. For instance, under the heading, "Justice towards Minorities," he wrote the following words of imperishable wisdom: "I had a wire from Bihar complaining that Harijans who have hitherto had no complaints against Congressmen had not been put forward as they might have been as Congress nominees during the recent local elections and that those who had come forward had not received fair-play. It seemed that almost the same thing may be said about the Muslims. There were honourable exceptions, no doubt. The complaint is that the Congress has failed to fulfil the expectations raised by it. Congressmen have to go out of their way to justify their claim for being national-minded and impartial. I suggest that even at this juncture if the complaint has foundation, the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee might redress the injustice by withdrawing some members to make room for deserving Muslims and Harijans. It is never too late to be just." (*Harijan*, December 30, 1939).

Gandhiji fervently believes in equal respect for all religions, because religious superiority, like racial superiority, is also a prolific source of discord and mischief.

"I do regard Islam to be a religion of peace in the same sense as Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism are. No doubt, there are differences in degree but the object of these religions is peace." (*Young India*, January 20, 1927).

"Islam has given the world the mystics no less than Hinduism or Christianity. In these days when irreligion masquerades as religion, it is well to remind ourselves of what the best minds of the religions of the world have thought and said. We must not, like the frog in the well, who imagines that the universe ends with the walls surrounding his well, think that our religion alone represents the whole truth, and all the others are false. A reverent study of the other religions of the world would show that they are equally true as our own, though all are necessarily imperfect."—(14th April, 1938, Foreword by Gandhiji to "The Persian Mystics," by Sardar Sir Jogindra Singh).

Again, "These essays of Sophia Wadia show at a glance how much similarity there is between the principal faiths of the earth and the fundamentals of life. All our mutual quarrels centre round non-essentials. Sophia Wadia's labours will be amply rewarded if people belonging to different faiths will study faiths other than their own with the same reverence which she has exhibited in her essays. An understanding knowledge of and respect for the great faiths of the world is the foundation of true theosophy,—wisdom about God. (23rd November, 1938, Gandhiji's Foreword to "The Brotherhood of Religions", by Sophia Wadia).

Gandhiji touched nothing which he did not adorn. There is no phase of human activity on which he has not offered illuminating observations. Even regarding communal cricket matches he has expressed his clear and emphatic views. The following interesting correspondence passed between Mr. Bhave and Mahatma Gandhi. Mr. Bhave wrote to him :

"If I am right you had very clearly and emphatically told the Hindu Gymkhana deputation that you yourself were quite against holding communal tournaments in India. Curiously enough, the people concerned having made no attempt to stop communal cricket matches, are at present thinking of holding the cricket carnivals as usual, on communal lines."

To the above Gandhiji replied, "Your letter : I retain the same opinion as before. *I am utterly opposed to communalism in everything, but much more so in sport.*"—(A.P.I.'s message, 13th October, 1941.

There is no exaggeration in maintaining that Gandhism represents all that is highest in living religions and all that is noblest in the literature of the world. It is the only panacea of the ills and evils with which humanity is stricken at the moment.

Gandhiji and Reconstruction

BY DR. GOPI CHAND

Gandhiji is a great believer in God. He calls the Gita as Mother and says that whenever there was a problem before him, he found a solution in the Gita. He is a "Bhakata" and believes that the best form of Bhakati is "selfless service". He has no attachment with things and whatever he does he does so, as a matter of duty, unmindful of results. He is a votary of Love and Truth. He says Truth is God, and the pursuit of Truth is true bhakati. Without Ahimsa (Love) it is not possible to seek and find Truth. Ahimsa is the means ; Truth is the end. Therefore Gandhiji who is a "Seeker after Truth" tries to solve all problems—private or public, political, social and economic—through non-violent means (Ahimsa). He also believes that "rights follow duty." Every person owes a duty towards the society he lives in. He should perform his duty irrespective of results. Rights shall follow as a result of the performance of one's duty. But we should be unattached with the results. He believes the end does not justify the means. He had placed his method of non-violence before the country to end wars, to achieve freedom, and to form a non-violent society. That method is what is popularly known as the "Constructive Programme". It is a nation-building programme.

Some persons say that it is not a political

programme. But what does a Government do? They maintain Law and Order. They have got their beneficent departments like Medical, Public Health, Sanitation, Education, Agriculture, Industries, Veterinary and Co-operative. Almost all these items are included in the Constructive Programme. Besides, there are the Police and the administration of justice. The basis of all these is the sword behind them. In our programme there are the arbitration and Shanti Sewa Dals. Our basis is Non-Violence.

This Constructive Programme is a programme of self-sufficiency. It is believed that the capitalist method of production and distribution leads to wars. Capitalists need markets to sell their goods. This is possible only if they have political control of those places. India is one of the markets. The history of the rule of the East India Company proves that the political control was taken in the interest of trade for as long as control was not taken over, trade could not flourish. What is the non-violent cure for this? History also shows that wars cannot end wars.

The non-violent method can be that we Indians refuse to become markets for the goods produced by capitalist methods, be they foreign or Indian. If it is done, the capitalistic method would disappear; and if it disappears, wars which are carried on for the sake of markets would end.

When we stop the use of such goods, we will have to produce immediately at least such goods as are the necessities of life. We have to produce them on a non-capitalistic basis. We have a large amount of man-labour. One of our problems is to give employment to our people. Those who live in villages either carry on agricul-

ture or are agricultural labourers, a few are those who are dealers in goods exported out of or imported into the villages. They need work to supplement their incomes. Therefore the non-capitalistic way of production which can suit us is production on the cottage industry scale. This will make villagers independent.

It can well be argued why we should not avail of the latest machinery run by electric power. It will interest people to know that Mahatmaji is not opposed to machinery as such. He writes in "Harijan" dated 29-8-1936:—

"I have been saying that if untouchability stays Hinduism goes; even so would I say that if the village perishes India will perish too. It will be no more India. Her own mission in the world will get lost. The revival of the village is possible only when it is no more exploited. Industrialisation on a mass scale will necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villages as the problems of competition and marketing come in. Therefore we have to concentrate on the village being self-contained, manufacturing mainly for use. Provided this character of the village industry is maintained, there would be no objection to villagers using even the modern machines and tools that they can make and can afford to use. Only they should not be used as a means of the exploitation of others."

The most important article that is required by every person besides food is cloth. It ought to be woven in a village out of hand-spun yarn. Gandhiji expects every family to spin sufficiently for the family. If this is not possible, it may be got spun by others in the village and a living wage be paid for it. Mahatmaji, on account of its importance, calls the spinning wheel a symbol of non-violence and gives it the same place in the programme as the sun has in the solar system. Spinning ought to be intelligent spinning both in technique and theory. The spinner ought to

know why he or she spins.

Next to cloth, are shoes specially in Northern India, the implements used in agriculture and other handicrafts and the utensils, earthen or others. As far as shoes are concerned, those made out of hide and skins of naturally dead animals ought to be used. They can well be prepared in the village. Cattle ought not to be allowed to be slaughtered for skins and hides. An earthen vessel is superior at least as far as its use for cooking purposes is concerned. As for agriculture, one should first grow grain, pulses, vegetables, fodder, cotton and oil seeds sufficient for the villagers and then grow them for the use of town people on spare lands. One can work hard and well if his health is good. To keep healthy one should eat a balanced diet, drink good water and live in a healthy place. He ought to take exercise. Hand or kharas ground flour, hand-pounded unpolished rice, the cow's milk, cold pressed oil, and gur are better and superior articles of diet. Water we drink should be pure and clean. We should look to the sources of our water supply. We should look to personal hygiene, home hygiene and village sanitation. Our exercise is what is called bread labour. All this work can be carried on smoothly if there is co-operation and if inequality altogether disappears. Therefore we want untouchability to go; we want equitable treatment for agricultural labourers and tenants and equal rights for women. We want people to give up the use of intoxicants and settle their disputes by arbitration. We advocate Communal Unity.

All this we can understand and also know about what happens around us if we are literate

and educated. We advocate the Basic System of Education. It is best suited to our conditions. We are in favour of Hindustani as our national language and also in favour of our respective provincial languages. We are in favour of Devnagri and Persian scripts for our national language and also of provincial scripts, if any.

Our country is a predominantly agricultural one and therefore the bullock plays an important role. The cow's milk is an important article of diet. Therefore for the supply of bullocks and milk we need cows of good breed. Hence Gowsewa is one of the items of constructive programme.

More items can be added provided the basis is the same.

From the organisational point of view Mahatmaji is in favour of Kisan, labour and students organisations to solve their special problems by non-violent methods.

The difference between Kisan Sabhas, Labour Unions, Students' Federations which are in existence even now and the ones which Mahatmaji advocates to establish, is this that the former ones are worked as class organisations, based on the class war ideology to establish a class-less society but Mahatmaji does not believe in the class war to establish a class-less society. He believes in non-violent methods to establish a non-violent society.

This is the programme which Mahatmaji places before the country and desires everybody to follow it. This shall bring us independence. Other things shall follow when we have adopted this programme. He thinks that Mass Civil Disobedience shall not be necessary if we

carry this programme out. But individual Civil Disobedience may have to be resorted to by those workers who feel that there is any hindrance in its performance.

FASTING

From a layman's and from a purely physical standpoint I should lay down the following rules for all those who may wish to fast on any account whatsoever:—

1. Conserve your energy, both physical and mental, from the very beginning.

2. You must cease to think of food whilst you are fasting.

3. Drink as much cold water as you can, with or without soda and salt, but in small quantities at a time (water should be boiled, strained and cooled.) Do not be afraid of salt and soda, because most water contains both these salts in a free state.

4. Have a warm sponge bath daily.

5. Take an enema regularly during the fast. You will be surprised at the impurities you will expel daily.

6. Sleep as much as possible in the open air.

7. Bathe in the morning sun. A sun and air bath is at least as great a purifier as a water bath.

8. Think of anything else but the fast.

(see page 134)

What Gandhiji has Done for India

BY K. NATARAJAN

In estimating Gandhiji's service to India, I will take first the religious sphere. He himself has repeatedly declared that he is first and foremost a man of religion. Gandhiji, however, has not made the propagation of religious ideas or the promotion of the spiritual life as his mission in life. He has not founded any religious sect or school of religious philosophy, as did Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Saraswati or Swami Vivekananda. He does not claim to be a religious teacher and his place in Indian history will not be that of one.

In the social field, Gandhiji has given the uplift of the depressed classes the central place in his programme. Social reformers had carried on propaganda for the removal of untouchability. Their appeal was chiefly to Caste Hindus to get rid of this blot on Hindu society. Gandhiji's method is somewhat different. The appeal to Hindus is there all right but he relies mainly on ameliorative work among the depressed classes themselves and through legislation. The Harijan Sevak Sangh is his principal institution for raising the educational and economic condition of the depressed classes. Congress Governments when in office in two provinces, Bombay and Madras, passed laws for the removal of the ban on the depressed classes on entry into Hindu temples. The social reformers' method of removing untouchability by quickening the conscience of

Caste Hindus, made slow progress. But, as in the case of reforms affecting family life, it would have achieved its aim without arousing resentment among the depressed classes. Gandhiji's method, unfortunately, has caused much resentment among these classes. Dr. Ambedkar openly denounces Gandhiji as the enemy of his community. Almost every Harijan beneficiary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh's activities goes to swell the following of Dr. Ambedkar. There is also the continuance of the depressed classes as "Scheduled Castes" remaining permanently a political minority within Hindu society. Gandhiji's work for the depressed classes, nevertheless, must be counted high among his service to India. After him generations will assuredly rate his contribution to this important reform as his highest service to Society. Gandhiji's attitude to the Caste problem with which the problem of the depressed classes is closely bound, has not been uniformly clear. He has sometimes spoken of the fourfold Varnashrama with approval. Latterly he has definitely condemned the Caste system. Evidently he regards the hereditary caste as different from the original caste based on character and behaviour.

The reforms for the emancipation of women from illiteracy and cramping customs, had nearly all been well advanced before Gandhiji came on the scene. By giving women a definite place in his social and political activities, he has materially raised their status in national life. At his call thousands of women in all parts of the country have discarded the purdah. In fact, it may be said that Gandhiji's influence has led to the practical extinction of the seclusion of women in many parts of the country.

Gandhiji's position in the economic and industrial spheres has given rise to some confusion. His passionate devotion to the charkha or spinning wheel, has often been understood to mean that he is opposed to all machinery. This is not against railways and motor cars, the telegraph and the telephone. His opposition is to the supplantation by steam power of the manpower so abundantly available in India. The introduction on a country-wide scale of electricity for domestic and industrial purposes, will abolish the antithesis between town and country, and between man and machine. Gandhiji has not declared himself opposed to electrification schemes.

It is less easy to appraise with any approach to accuracy Gandhiji's work in the political than in other fields. In public service the line between success and failure is faint. Mistakes are often as valuable as successes in accumulating experience. In South Africa, the Indian problem is still acute, perhaps more than in Gandhiji's time. But this itself to a large extent is the result of his work. Both the Indians in South Africa and the Government of the Union have become more sensible of their rights and duties. On the whole the position of Indians there has appreciably improved in relation to the White population. A greater result of Gandhiji's agitation in South Africa is that it has aroused the mother-country to a keen realisation of her duty to her children overseas. The indentured system which was adopted as a substitute for slavery when it was abolished, and which in fact was slavery with a limit of time, has been abolished. Investigations into the conditions of life of Indians abroad have

been made and a special Department of the Government of India has been created to look after their interests. It is accepted policy that so long as Indians in part of the world are not accorded full rights of citizenship, it is incumbent on the Government of India to make special provision to protect their interests. Before Gandhiji's movement in South Africa, the Indian people were almost totally indifferent to the lot of their countrymen abroad. It is to Gandhiji's credit that he has shaken India out of this apathy and made her vigilant in guarding the welfare of her children in distant lands.

Gandhiji's special contribution to Indian politics is non-co-operation with Government under diverse names : civil disobedience, Satyagraha, and Passive Resistance. After exactly twenty-five years, he is today standing for full co-operation and it is Government which is hesitating to accept the professed hand of the Congress, lest it alienate the Muslim League. Congress of which Gandhiji claims only to be Adviser, invariably follows his advice. Thus his position in relation to that movement is virtually that of Dictator. Gandhiji is prepared to go farther than Congress has so far gone to disarm the opposition of the Muslim League. But the more he is prepared to concede, the deeper grows the suspicion with which the League leader regards his overtures, Mr. Jinnah suspects a trap in every move not only of Gandhiji but also of the Government, of which Gandhiji and the Congress approve. Like Dr. Ambedkar, Mr. Jinnah also regards Gandhiji as an invidious enemy of his people. Sudden changes of front even when they are actuated by the most honourable motives are apt to be looked

upon concealing secret designs by people with whom one is dealing. Concession after concession by the Congress has failed to win the confidence of the League. It has, on the contrary, deepened the gulf between the two bodies. Gandhiji's political leadership has not been conspicuously successful. It has awakened the masses to a sense of their rights, and of their power, if well organized, to secure them.

Truth and non-violence have figured in the forefront of all Gandhiji's activities, social, political and religious. Assured by these have always been his own guiding stars in life. He has certainly tried his hardest and with no inconsiderable success to live up to these ideals. Truth, however, can be predicated only of facts, not of opinions. And even of facts, one knows only as much of the Truth of them as one's mind is able to apprehend. Hence, it has often happened that Gandhiji has seemed to critics, even to friendly ones, to be indulging in self-deception. For non-violence, Gandhiji defined it in different ways at different times. He said that to be non-violent because one has not the strength and the hardihood to be violent, is not non-violence but cowardice. And he would rather that men and women were violent than cowards. True non-violence is possible only for a strong man, well-armed, if he desists from beating down an opponent who is weak and without weapons. If one finds oneself hopelessly outmatched, a practitioner of Ahimsa should put up a fight and be vanquished. Ahimsa does not, according to this view, consist in making oneself disposed to violence. All this is very puzzling to the average man, and it is not surprising that Gandhiji's idea

has not been universally or implicitly accepted by all his followers. Congress Governments when they were in power in several provinces did not discard violence in maintaining law and order.

FASTING

(continued from page 128)

9. No matter from what motive you are fasting, during this precious time, think of your Maker, and of your relation to Him and His other creation. You will discoveries you may not have even dreamed of.

Out of the fullness of my own experience and that of fellow-crankers, I say without hesitation, fast (1) if you are constituted, (2) if you are anaemic, (3) if you are feverish, (4) if you have indigestion, (5) if you have a headache, (6) if you are rheumatic, (7) if you are gouty, (8) if you are fretting and fuming, (9) if you are depressed, (10) if you are verjoyed: and you will avoid medical prescriptions and patent medicines.

The Gandhian Economy

BY A. C. BHATIA

What a problem and puzzle Mahatma Gandhi has been to the economic world and economists! In this machine-age, in this age of industrialization his is a voice that stands for something which the Western world discarded in the 17th century. His is a philosophy of living which enthralled many and disappoints many. Shall India march with the times or go back to the primitive stage? Shall Indian economy to-day be based on concepts which have proved useful elsewhere or on those which have been inherited by us from time immemorial? A deep understanding of the Gandhian way and the Gandhian economy, alone, will help us to answer these questions.

Gandhiji defines Economics in his own inimitable way. There will be little disagreement with that. True Economics, according to him, never militates against the highest ethical standard, just as all true ethics must at the same time be good Economics. Like all economists he thinks that an Economics that inculcates Mammon worship, and enables the strong to amass wealth at the expense of the weak, is a false and dismal science. It spells death. True Economics stands for social justice, it promotes the good of all equally including the weakest, and is indispensable for decent life. "Economics and Ethics go together." The Economics that permit

one country to prey upon another are immoral. "It is sinful to eat American wheat and let my neighbour the grain dealer starve for want of custom," he writes.¹

Imitation of English Economics will spell our ruin, he thinks.

He does not agree with those economists who hold that Economic laws are immutable like the laws of Medes and Persians or that they are universal. The Economics of England, he writes, are different from those of Germany.² Germany enriched herself by bounty-fed beet sugar. England enriched herself by exploiting foreign markets. The Economics of a nation are determined by its climatic, geological and temperamental conditions. The Indian conditions are different from the English, he explains, in all these essentials. What is meant for England is in many cases poison for India. Beef tea in the English climate may be good, it is poison for the hot climate of religious India. Fiery whisky in the north of the British Isles may be a necessity, it renders an Indian unfit for work or society. Free trade for a country which has become industrial, whose population can and does live in cities, whose people do not mind preying upon other nations, and, therefore, sustain the biggest navy to protect their unnatural commerce, may be economically sound. Free trade for India has proved a curse for her and held her in bondage.

Few economists will differ from Gandhiji when he propounds this view. Even restricted free trade, through agreements or imperial pre-

¹ *Young India* : October 13, 1921.

² *Ibid.* : December, 1921.

ference, has been a cause of ruin for India's industrial economy or economic progress. Like Gandhiji most of the Indian economists are out and out protectionists. They hold that every country, especially a poor country like India, has every right and is indeed bound to protect its interests, when it is threatened, by all lawful protective measures and to regain by such measures what has been lawfully taken away from it; otherwise there cannot be any economic progress.

Mahatma Gandhi, however, does not think that economic progress means real progress. He condemns economic progress by regarding it as synonymous with material progress. "By economic progress," he writes, "I take it, we mean material advancement without limit and by real progress we mean moral progress." When he says that the test of orderliness in a country is not the number of millionaires it owns, but the absence of starvation among its masses, he is right. He is also right when he says that "in so far as we have made the modern materialistic craze our goal so far are we going down hill in the path of progress." But he goes too far to say that "economic progress is antagonistic to real progress."

Gandhiji, for that reason, wants us to adopt the ancient ideal which advocated limitation of activities promoting wealth. "That you cannot serve God and Mammon is an economic truth of the highest value. We have to make our choice. Western nations are to-day groaning under the heel of the monster of materialism. Their moral growth has become stunted. They measure their

progress in terms of £. S. D. American wealth has become the standard. America is the envy of other nations. I have heard many of our countrymen say that we will gain American wealth but avoid its methods. I venture to suggest that such an attempt, if it were made, is foredoomed to failure.....This land of ours was once, we are told, the abode of gods. It is not possible, to conceive gods inhabiting a land which is made hideous by the smoke and the din of mill chimneys and factories and whose roadways are traversed by rushing engines dragging numerous cars crowded with men who know not for the most part what they are after, who are often absent-minded, and whose tempers do not improve by being uncomfortably packed like sardines in boxes and finding themselves in the midst of utter strangers, who oust them if they could and whom they would, in their turn, oust similarly. I refer to these things because they are held to be symbolical of material progress. But they add not an atom to our happiness."

He quotes Wallace in support of his ancient ideal.

Wallace wrote: "In the earliest records which have come down to us from the past, we find ample indications that general ethical considerations and conceptions, the accepted standard of morality, and the conduct resulting from these were in no degree inferior to those which prevail to-day."

Gandhiji is happy Wallace has shown through his writings that in England "factories have risen on the corpses of men, women and children; the country has rapidly advanced in riches but

has gone down in morality ; there is insanitation, life-destroying trades, adulteration, bribery and gambling ; with the advance of wealth, justice has become immoral ; deaths from alcoholism and suicide have increased ; the average of premature births, and congenital defects have increased and prostitution has become an institution ; the vast burden of armaments taken together with the most pious declaration in favour of peace, must be held to show an almost total absence of morality as a guiding principle among the governing classes."

He, therefore, concludes : "Under the British aegis we have learnt much, but there is little to gain from Britain in intrinsic morality and if we are not careful, we shall introduce all the vices that she has been a prey to owing to the disease of materialism. ..Ours will be a truly spiritual nation only when we shall show more truth than gold, greater fearlessness than pomp of power and wealth, greater charity than love for self. If we will but clean our houses, our palaces and temples of the attributes of wealth and show in them the attributes of morality, we can offer battle to any combinations of hostile forces without having to carry the burden of a heavy militia. Let us seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and the irrevocable promise is that everything will be added unto us. These are real Economics."¹

Mahatma Gandhi, as we have said earlier, mixes up Economics with Ethics and Psychology.

¹ A lecture delivered by Gandhiji at a meeting of the Central College Economics Society, Allahabad on Dec. 22, 1916.

Though the three go together as some economists have recently shown, yet it is not true that economic progress can always be material progress. Economists have shown that the main purpose of Economics is not only production and distribution of wealth but also human welfare. Social immorality and belief in one's God or religion is outside the scope of Economics. To-day Economics has an ideal before it. It envisages human progress with the aid of wealth but it does not subordinate man to wealth. In the Soviet Union, for instance, the economic progress, without the semblance of belief in God, is towards the realisation of good living for all, without exploitation. And Russia is not, in any way, less progressive so far as human well-being is concerned.

MISUSE OF MACHINERY

Gandhiji's faith in the revival of the ancient ideal of "economic growth" has led him to condemn too much use of machinery. "I would not weep over the disappearance of machinery or consider it a calamity." What he objects to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. "The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery." Men go on "saving labour" till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. He wants to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. He wants the concentration of wealth not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. "To-day," he says, "machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save

labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might."

The supreme consideration, for him, is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man.

Ideally he would rule out all machinery ; but machines will remain because they are inevitable in this machine age.

Therefore, he writes : " Machinery has its place, it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace human labour. I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine, but I know that it is criminal to displace hand labour by the introduction of power-driven spindles unless one is, at the same time, ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their houses." What he hopes is that Europe on account of her fine and scientific intellect will realise the obvious and retrace her steps and from other demoralising industrialism, she will find a way out. But it will have to be a re-organization in which village life will predominate, and in which brute and material force will have to be subordinated to the spiritual force.

He does not want industrialization for India. India when it begins to exploit other nations—as it must, if it is industrialized—he argues, will be a curse for other nations, a menace to the world. " And why should I think of industrializing India to exploit other nations?" he asks.

" Don't you see," he says, " that if India becomes industrialized we shall need a Nadirshah to find out other worlds to exploit, that we

shall have to pit ourselves against the naval and military powers of Britain and Japan and America, of Russia and Italy? My head reels to think of these rivalries. No, I am clear that whilst this machine-age aims at converting man into machine, I am aiming at reinstating man turned machine in his original estate."¹

"God forbid," he writes in the *Harijan*, "that India should ever take to industrialization after the manner of the West. The economic imperialism of a single tiny island kingdom (England) is to-day keeping the world in chains. If an entire nation of 400 millions took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts. Unless the capitalists of India help to avert that tragedy by becoming trustees of the welfare of the masses and by devoting their talents not to amassing wealth for themselves but to the service of the masses in an altruistic spirit, they will end either by destroying the masses or being destroyed by them."

Industrialization, he thinks, leads to mass-production. This mania of mass-production is responsible for world crises. Granting for the moment that machinery may supply all the needs of humanity, still, he holds, it would concentrate production in particular areas, so that "you would have to go in a roundabout way to regulate distribution, whereas, if there is production and distribution both in the respective areas where things are required, it is automatically regulated and there is less chance for fraud, none for speculation." When

¹ *Harijan*: Nov. 30, 1935 ; Jan. 28, 1939.

production and consumption both become localized, according to him, the temptation to speed up production, indefinitely and at any price, disappears. "All the endless difficulties and problems that our present-day economic system presents, too," he writes, "would then come to an end. There would be no unnatural accumulation of hoards in the pockets of the few." He envisages mass-production but not based on force. He thinks, after all, the message of the spinning-wheel is that. It is mass-production but mass-production in people's own homes. If you multiply individual production to millions of times, he argues, would it not give you mass-production on a tremendous scale?

Under his system it is labour which is the current coin, not metal. Any person who can use his labour has wealth. He converts his labour into cloth, he converts his labour into grain. If he wants paraffin oil, which he cannot himself produce, he uses his surplus grain for getting the oil. It is exchange of labour on free, fair and equal terms; hence it is no robbery, he says.

One would certainly say that it is reversion to the primitive system of barter. But Gandhiji does not admit it. He advances a counter-argument: "But is not all international trade based on the barter system?"

Mechanization, according to him, is good when hands are too few to finish the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for

the work, as he says, is the case in India. A factory employs a few hundreds and renders thousands unemployed. He calls this destructive energy, whereas production by the labour of millions of hands, in his opinion, is constructive and conducive to the common good. "Mass-production through power-driven machinery, even when State-owned, will be of no avail," he writes. Yet he says: "The heavy machinery for public utility, which cannot be undertaken by human labour, has its inevitable place, but all that would be owned by the State and used entirely for the benefit of the people" He, however, concludes that "machinery is like a snake-hole which may contain from one to a hundred snakes. Where there is machinery, there are large cities; where there are large cities, there are tram-cars and railways. House physicians will tell you that where means of artificial locomotion have increased, the health of the people has suffered."

Therefore, Gandhiji wants us to raise the slogan: "Back to the village."

The problem with us, he thinks, is not how to find leisure for the teeming millions inhabiting our villages. The problem is how to utilise their idle hours, which are equal to the working days of six months in the year. When all these achievements of the machine-age will have disappeared, he holds, our handicrafts will remain; when all exploitations will have ceased, service and honest labour will remain. Dead machinery, he pleads, must not be pitted against the millions of living machines represented by the villagers scattered in the seven hundred thousand villages

of India. Machinery to be well used has to help and ease human effort. The present use of machinery tends more and more to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few in total disregard of millions of men and women whose bread is snatched by it out of their mouths.

"Little do town-dwellers know how the semi-starved masses of India are slowly sinking to lifelessness. Little do they know that miserable comfort represents the brokerage they get for the work they do for the foreign exploiter, that these profits and the brokerage are sucked from the masses. Little do they realize that the Government established by law in British India is carried on for this exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no jugglery in figures can explain away the evidence that the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the town-dwellers of India will have to answer, if there is God above, for this crime against humanity which is perhaps unequalled in history."

India lives in her villages, not in her cities. "When I succeed in ridding the villages of their poverty, I have won Swaraj for you and for the whole of India," he tells us.¹ "If the village perishes India will perish too."

Accordingly the revival of the village is possible only when it is no more exploited. We have to concentrate on the village being self-contained manufacturing mainly for us. Provided this character of the village industry is maintained, there would be no objection to villages using even the modern machines and tools that they can

¹ *Harijan* : Sept. 19, 1936 ; November 11, 1936.

make and can afford to use. Only they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others.

The Gandhian Economy here explains itself. It is the Economics of village industries or cent per cent Swadeshi which the Mahatma has been stressing all these years. True Swadeshi consists, he says, in encouraging and reviving all small-scale or minor or home industries employing hundreds of youths in the country who are in need of employment. Swadeshi is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. Gandhiji's Swadeshi, therefore, chiefly centres round the hand-spun khaddar and extends to everything that can be and is produced in India. A true lover of Swadeshi will pick up all kinds of village crafts and industries, which are about to die and deserve revival, both because of their intrinsic merit and their other useful aspects. And he will have to restrict his purchases to the articles which villages manufacture. Their manufactures may be crude but they are to be induced to improve their workmanship and are not to be dismissed because foreign articles or even articles produced in cities, that is big factories, are superior. In other words the artistic talent of the villager is to be evoked.

"But Khadi," he writes,¹ "is the sun of the village solar system. The planets are the various industries which can support khadi in return for the heat and the sustenance they derive from it. Without it the other industries cannot grow." It is, however, also true, he explains that, "with-

¹ "Cent per Cent Swadeshi," Navajivan Press, Allahabad, pp. 24-25.

out the revival of the other industries, khadi cannot make further progress. For villagers to be able to occupy their spare time profitably, the village life must be touched at all points....."

Hand-spun cloth, hand-made paper, hand-pounded rice, home-made bread and jam, are not uncommon in the West. "With their revival means life," he writes, "their destruction means death, to the villagers. Whatever the machine-age may do it will never give employment to the millions whom the wholesale introduction of power machinery must displace."

Khaddar Economics is wholly different from the ordinary, he says. The latter takes no note of the human factor. The former wholly concerns itself with the human. The latter is frankly selfish, the former necessarily unselfish. Competition and, therefore, prices are eliminated from the conception of Khaddar, he contends.

Without a cottage industry, he says, the Indian peasants of 700,000 villages are doomed. They cannot maintain themselves from the produce of the land. They need a supplementary industry. Spinning is the easiest, the cheapest and the best. It is a universal industry auxiliary to agriculture and is resorted to by agriculturists during those months of the year when agricultural operations are suspended as a matter of course and cultivators have otherwise little to do.

Do you know the daily income per head of our country? He asks. He himself answers: "Our economists say that it is one anna and six pies, though even that is misleading. If someone were to work out the average depth of a river as four feet from the fact that the river was six feet

deep in certain places and two feet in others, and proceeded to ford it, would he not be drowned? That is how statistics mislead. The average income is worked out from the figures of the income of the poor man as also of the Viceroy and the millionaires. The actual income will, therefore, be hardly three pice per head. Now if I supplement that income by even three pice with the help of the charkha, am I not right in calling the charkha my Cow of Plenty?"

Economic India has changed since February 17, 1927, when he wrote these lines. Much progress has been made both by big industries in towns as well as small-scale industries in villages. Improvement in the texture of Khadi and the variety now available, as compared with the first efforts of 18 years ago, is there. "But Khadi cannot, indeed it is not meant to, compete with mill-cloth. It should be purchased and used to the exclusion of all other cloth regardless of its higher cost by those who love the villager and stand for India's freedom," writes Babu Rajendra Prasad.¹

It is true that the revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving and other cottage industries has helped the 80 p. c. of India's population either engaged in or dependent on agriculture. Agriculture is not a perennial source of income. For at least six months the agriculturist remains idle and is to devote himself to a supplementary occupation. Spinning and weaving supply this need and at the same time solve the problem of clothing the villager and also add to his

¹ 'Constructive Programme' by Babu Rajendra Prasad, P. 11.

slender resources. It is pre-eminently a supplementary industry.

A few years ago the minimum wage of a spinner was one anna per day for eight hours' work. Now it is much more than that. The All-India Spinners Association, working under the guidance of Gandhiji, aims at raising it to more than eight annas per day.

It is estimated that a spinner with average skill can spin about 400 yards in an hour which means 12,000 yards a month provided he spins an hour daily. If the average count is taken to be ten or twelve 12,000 yards of yarn will yield 4 square yards of khadi, which these days can easily sell for 4 rupees. This monthly income is quite a good addition to a villager's meagre earnings by tilling the soil or by doing any other labour. If he produces 48 yards in a year he produces cloth for 3 persons as the average consumption of cloth in our country is not more than 16 yards per head.

According to the latest report of the A.I.S.A. 2,75,146 villagers, including 19,645 Harijans and 57,378 Muslims, scattered in our 13,451 villages, received as spinners, weavers, etc. Rs. 14,85,609 in 1940. The spinners were largely women. "Yet the work done was only one-hundredth part of what could be done by all lovers of Indian villages and India's freedom," writes Mahatma Gandhi.

Putting forth his constructive programme before the country sometime back, Gandhiji said: "The Khadi mentality means decentralization of the production and distribution of the necessaries of life. Therefore, the formula so far evolved is

every village to produce and use all its necessaries and, in addition, produce a certain percentage as its contribution to the requirements of the cities. Production of khadi means cotton growing, picking, ginning, cleaning, carding, slivering, spinning, sizing, dyeing, preparing the woof and the warp, weaving, and washing.....Every family with a plot of ground can grow cotton at least for family use." Under the Khadi scheme cotton growing becomes essential to escape the consequences of centralised production." Patriots are asked to buy khadi with their own yarn as to remove the difficulty of the weaver to get yarn-supply.

Other village-industries, Gandhiji explains in the constructive programme, are a handmaid to khadi. Village economy cannot be complete without the essential village industries such as hand-grinding, hand-pounding, soap-making, paper-making, match-making, tanning, paddy-husking, oil-pressing, honey-making, etc.

II

The ideals of ancient Indian economy, as advocated by him, have been transmuted into a plan and it is considered¹ that this plan envisages an economic order which is based on ancient Indian traditions and "if worked out in details, may give to the war-torn world a really sound plan of peace, security and progress rather than of war, exploitation and annihilation." The sponsors of the Plan claim that it is a better alternative to the "Fascist Plan," America's "New Deal," British planning and the "Soviet Plan." It is claimed it affords a solution to the problem of poverty "in simplicity, decentralisa-

¹ The "Gandhian Plan" by Principal S. N. Agarwal.

tion and cottage industrialism." Prof. Cole is quoted as saying that "Gandhi's campaign for the development of the home-made cloth-industry—khaddar—is no mere fad of a romantic eager to revive the past, but a practical attempt to relieve the poverty and uplift the standard of the Indian villager.¹" The fundamentals of the Gandhian Economics are explained as simplicity, non-violence, sanctity of labour, removal of the lure of leisure, change in the standard of values by stressing the importance of moral and human values and mixing up Economics with Ethics. It is advocated that "village communism" must be revived—there should be resuscitation of ancient village communities with their prosperous agriculture, artistic and decentralised industries and small-scale co-operative organisation. Thus there will be village republics as an ideal form of democracy, evils of large-scale mechanisation and unemployment² will disappear and the problem of distribution of national wealth will be solved since "distribution will be equalised when production is localised, in other words, when distribution is simultaneous with production." It is further contended that the centralised

¹ "A Guide to Modern Politics" by G. D. H. Cole,

p. 290.

² The figures of the All-India Spinners Association for 1934-44 show that the total number of spinners and weavers given employment by it was 269, 445 besides nearly 10 million hand-loom weavers spread all over the country. "Although there was a fourfold increase in the number of factories in India during the last 30 years the percentage of workers in industry to the total population has been steadily decreasing: In 1911, 5.5 p.c.; 1921, 4.02 p.c.; 1931, 4.3 p.c.; 1941, 4.2 p.c."

industries provide an easy target for air-bombing and, therefore, village decentralized industries will be of immense value for national defence in the days of war. It is claimed in the words of Gandhiji, that "though yard per yard khadi may be dearer than mill-cloth, in its totality and, in terms of villagers, it is the most economic and practical proposition without a rival." The cost of production will be low in the case of Khadi. But, at the same time, it is felt that "if the village industries are organised by the State on a scientific basis, there is no reason why they should not be able to compete successfully with large-scale production of factories." The testimony of biology¹ (rural surroundings for the growth of men, women and children are considered to be affording processes by which life renews itself and leads to happy human relationships), and agronomy is advanced as an argument. It is thought that the plan of decentralised co-operative industry is advantageous from the point of view of international peace and harmony. Large-scale production leads to scrambles for foreign markets and monopolistic controls and ultimately war. It is asserted that in Japan, China, England, New Zealand, Australia, Germany and even Russia² small-scale

¹ "The Gandhian Plan" by Principal Agarwal, p. 43.

(1) "What is ahead of us" by Prof. Lancelot Hogen (p. 184).

(2) Agro-biology has enabled not only different countries but also their small economic units to be self-sufficient."

² "Owners' Producers' Co-operatives" known as "Incops" have attained marked efficiency; in Japan "dwarf units"; in China "Indusco" movement; in England "self-governing co-operative workshop."

(a) Agarwal: 'The Gandhian Plan,' p. 54.

domestic industries have been given an important place in the country's economy. In conclusion, it is asserted that the "general trend of world economic thought is towards decentralization and cottage communism"—the system which was in existence in India in ancient times must be revived and revived now.

Under the plan a basic standard is envisaged which ensures balanced and health-giving food, sufficient clothing, housing accommodation, free and compulsory basic education, medical facilities, public utility services and recreational facilities. The setting up of Gram Panchayats is advocated. The development of agriculture is a prominent item in the plan. This assumes the planning of crops, the efforts to make the country self-sufficient in food supply and raw materials, disappearance of commercial farming and establishment of experimental farms for research work. There is to be nationalisation of land. The Zamindari system is to go. The method of payment in kind is to be introduced. Radical reforms and changes, in fact, are to be made in the land-tenure system. Consolidation of holdings on a voluntary basis through co-operative societies, co-operative farming, modification of the present system of inheritance, exemption from the payment of rent in the case of uneconomic holdings, liquidation of rural debt, extension of the area of cultivation by reclaiming the "cultivable waste" which is estimated to be 170 million acres in India, extension of the area under irrigation, agricultural efficiency in terms of increased production by means of fertilizers and good manures, improvement of cattle, cow

protection, better implements, better seeds, agricultural insurance and co-operation—these are some of the measures suggested by the Gandhian Plan. Aid and stimulus to the growth of allied industries to agriculture such as animal husbandry,¹ dairy farming,² tanning³ and leather work, vegetable gardening, forest industries (the total area under forests is about 90 million acres) like paper-pulp-making industry, extraction of turpentine, oils, gums, resins and dyeing materials are described as essential. Amongst the cottage industries which are to receive immediate attention and patronage of the people are: Khadi-spinning and weaving, paper-making, oil extraction, paddy-husking, Gur-making, date-palm or palmyra, bee-keeping, soap-making, flour-grinding, poultry-farming, carpentry, smithy, match-industry, pottery, toy-making, cutlery, bamboo and cane work, rope-making, tiles and brick-making, glass-ware and bangles, carpet and duree and shawl-making, etc.

The scope of this Plan is further extended by including the development of a few basic or key industries in a free India, such as defence industries⁴; Power-Hydro and Thermal Electricity; mining metallurgy and forestry-iron, steel, coal, mineral oil and timber, mining of ores; machinery and machine tools, heavy engineering,

¹ The total live-stock population in India in 1935 was 360 millions.

² The annual cash value of dairy products has been estimated at over Rs. 800 crores.

³ It is estimated that 13 million cattle die every year in India.

⁴ Gandhiji is described as having conceded that free India may require an armed defence. (Agarwal, p. 79).

and chemicals. Private or co-operative enterprise will be allowed full scope so far as village industries are concerned. But the basic and key industries will be controlled and managed by the State. Foreign capital will be given no chance to exploit India. In the transition period if it is not possible to buy off private enterprise, it will be run under the strict control of the Government. At least no more private enterprise for profitable industries will be allowed. The National Government will gradually purchase all foreign business establishments.

The large-scale consumers' goods industries will be under the strict discipline of the State. Adequate attention will be paid by the Government to the Public Utility services, such as transport and communications, public health and sanitation, education, banking and insurance, collection of statistics and research. "It will be the aim of the planned economy to do away with every avoidable act of exchange of commodities or services, in order to economise national energy²." Labour welfare will be the chief concern of the state.

III

Whereas the Gandhian Plan rules out centralised socialistic state and "round-about method of distribution under it," Pt. Nehru¹ definitely stands for socialistic planning. He says that there is no conflict between large-scale industrialization and cottage industries if

¹ "Principles of Planning" by K. T. Shah, p. 89.

² Pt. Nehru gave his views about economic development of free India to a company of Indian and foreign journalists at Bombay on Sept. 27, 1945.

the wealth of India is to be increased. Large-scale industrialization is necessary, but there will be sufficient scope for the full development of India's cottage industries. State-control of the textile industry will be necessary in the interests of the handloom industry, as will be the abolition of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal and the Zamindari System elsewhere; there will be co-operative farming,¹ state-ownership of key industries and state control of other important industries. Any solution to the complex economic problems must involve the Centre, he says.

The advocates of the Gandhian Plan do not see much new in Pt. Nehru's Blue-Print. For instance, Prof. J. C. Kumarappa, Secretary A.-I. V. I. A., Wardha considers that already an economic plan is in action and that is Gandhiji's constructive programme. It is claimed to be comprehensive with far-reaching consequences and "socialistic to the core," which can function without a Government to support it or rather, in spite of a powerful Government to oppose it, for its sanctions are rooted in the good-will and character of the people. "Socialization of large-scale industries is, it is asserted, always welcomed. But all the same it is said that there is no virtue in heaping up material goods of indulgence for people. We have to so plan that every one gets all that is necessary to lead a full life and develop his personality."

A question was asked: "If you also resort

¹ Pandit Nehru explained that such farms would be established by means of persuasion and not compulsion as in Russia

to having centralized industries, wherein lies the difference between the economy you, Gandhites, advocate and those of the others?"

Prof. Kumarappa replied: "We look upon putting the people into gainful occupations which will supply their own wants as also ours, and centralized industries devoid of profit urge are to help in this programme. Centralized industries are subsidiary or complementary. The others resort to centralized industries not to aid the production of masses but to increase the sum total of material production and goods for their own sake. Having obtained them, the Communists try to distribute them also by regimentation. This leads to a great deal of violence having to be used in production, in distribution and in consumption. The Gandhian methods aim at following a natural order. People produce for themselves, of their own labour, and things they stand in need of. Hence production, distribution and consumption are self-regulating and do not call for outside violence to adjust them. Thus there is a fundamental difference both in the approach and in the working. Centralized industries with us are means of helping the people. We use centralized industries as physicians use poisons. The others hope to use centralized industries like staple food. The centralized methods are to be used with proper safeguards."

It is often asked: "Does not the Indian industry give us something on which we shall build our industrial life hereafter?" Mr. J.B. Kripalani, Secretary, All-India Congress Committee, does not think so. He is of the opinion that as Russia could industrialize the country after the capture

of power so can India. Antiquated and effete industry will not be of any use. The Swadeshi movement and the boycott of foreign goods—Gandhiji's chief planks—assure immediate advantage to lakhs of people, he says. "If we are not to put ourselves helpless in the hands of an unpatriotic and short-sighted capitalism, we must have other sources to fall back upon. These have been created by Gandhi in his Khadi and village industries movements."

He asks: "If you dislike Khadi, will you recommend mill-cloth?" "But that would be," he says, "directly helping those who daily exploit labour while labour has not the necessary political power to check upon their rapacity and avarice. Foreign cloth, for political reasons, is already ruled out."

One thing, however, is very clear. No one can deny that the existing Indian industry has a very haphazard growth under the heels of a foreign Government which is exploiting the country for the sake of Britain. Indian industry is never allowed to go beyond certain narrow limits and has not grown in proportion to the increase in population. The result is that many have to fall back upon land. So long as this Government exists we shall have to have recourse to village industries some of which have a special place in Indian economy, to feed the villager and save him from utter ruin. He is to remain engaged in his leisure hours (six months) and earn a living.

It does not follow from this, however, that no industrial policy suits India or that if by chance

certain industries have been established they should not receive any protection or the backing of the people or that no new industries should be established because cottage or village industries alone are to be encouraged. The isolation of village and village life is already a thing of the past. The development of means of communication and transportation closely linking it up with the town has destroyed it. It is difficult to have the full growth of village economic life unless influences fast infiltrating from cities into villages are taken into consideration. The nearness of the city market has added to villager's income and increased his purchasing power. Unless we take villages as isolated units having nothing to do with cities we cannot view village economy from a narrow vision.

Many will not agree that the Gandhian plan is a plan of economic development in the true sense of the term. It does not envisage planning for plenty. It only recognises the need for a strict and limited improvement of our present standard of living. The conception of material progress or well-being is distorted and confused with increased productivity. It is little realised that the total wealth of a country to be distributed amongst the people must increase to raise the general standard of living of the people. If industries are not encouraged, people will fall back upon land and pressure on land will increase reducing the purchasing power of the peasantry still further. The wealth of the country will decrease and people will have mere subsistence, without having anything for improvement.

An unbiassed study of the situation seems to

show that the consequences or evils of industrialism are sometimes exaggerated by those who accept Mahatmaji's economic teaching in its entirety. Unemployment, limitless greed, exploitation, unhealthy atmosphere of factory life—all are the results of capitalist organization and not of large-scale production. The socialisation of production under the ægis of a National Government will eliminate from society the evils of a disorganised economic life. The Government of people, by the people, for the people uses machinery to increase their productive power. And machinery removed from private ownership and held collectively is never bad. Why should not the productive technique in the country be improved upon?

Employment in cottage industries or village industries can only be increased if mills are closed or foreign cloth is not allowed to enter Indian market. The demand of the plan that foreign import should be stopped is all right. But the general programme of decentralized, demechanized small-scale production will not convince anybody that India is going on the road to progress and keeping pace with the rapidly advancing industrialized countries of the West.

Even if, under the Gandhian economy, defence industry is to be maintained, it will require the aid of a highly developed industrial base.

In a free India we cannot follow the ideals of the Gandhian economy exclusively. They are admirably suited for the well-being of a dependent country where a foreign Government is fully

entrenched and does not allow industrialization so that Britain may not starve or the British Empire may not be liquidated. But when India gets freedom and has its own Government and there is full socialisation of the means of production there will be no fear of exploitation by capitalists. The whole industrial life will then be planned to regulate economic activity both in cities and villages. It will have, however, to be inspired by the high idealism and the moral backbone of Mahatmaji's philosophy of economics.

To-day the village economy has a very haphazard growth. The work of the peasant is without a plan. He is at the mercy of certain forces which, in a free country, can certainly be rooted out of the soil—illiteracy, primitive equipment, money-lender's grip, gamble in the rain, low productivity, indebtedness, rack-renting, fury of officials.

The development of cottage industries may have a political significance for dependent India but for the economic progress of free India there are other methods which will have to be utilised to have India's economic regeneration. Prof. Brij Narain quotes the Agricultural Commission¹ to show that we need something more than mere village industries: "But even with the aid of new ideas and assistance in training and marketing," the Commission said, "the contribution which rural industries can make in reducing the heavy pressure on the land is infinitesimal, and in the nature of things they cannot, as a rule, hope for ever to survive the increasing competition of organized machinery. To put it

¹ "Indian Economic Problems": Part I, pp. 67-68.

briefly, the possibilities of improving the conditions of the rural population by the establishment of rural industries are extremely limited."

The scope of cottage industries is very limited; in most cases pitted against big factories cottage industries are doomed. This has been their fate in other countries and a similar fate is in store for them in India unless by state action and judicious selection certain cottage industries can be saved from factory competition or unless in some cases cottage industries can be developed as an auxiliary to a particular industry (on the model of watch industry in Switzerland).

India, if it is to be properly industrialized to be a power in the comity of nations, must have development of heavy industries (fuel, metal, etc.), the building up of means of production and of engineering industry as in the Soviet Union.¹

The question of overtaking and surpassing the advanced capitalist countries *technically* and *economically* was, for the Russians, neither a new nor an unexpected question. Will it be a new or an unexpected question for free India? Will India's freedom be maintained by means of village industries? This is the crucial question. *Politically* we may overtake and surpass the advanced capitalist countries by establishing and encouraging small-scale industries, but we shall have to use the dictatorship of the proletariat, our socialised industry, transport,

¹Stalin in the "The Soviet Comes of Age", p. 44.

credit system, etc., our co-operatives, our collective farms, etc., in order to overtake and surpass the advanced capitalist countries also *economically*. Our capitalists' encirclement then would not be as dangerous as it is at present; the question of the economic independence of our country would naturally retire into the background.

India should not remain satisfied with the primitive methods of agricultural production, predominance in the country of small commodity producers using equipment which requires improvement. We should supply agriculture with the maximum amount of implements and means of production necessary for hastening its reconstruction. The fulfilment of this task will undoubtedly demand a rapid rate of development of our industry. It is impossible to base the Indian economic system on the foundation of very fragmentary and extremely backward small commodity peasant production. If Indian economy is to be rebuilt, we must place our agriculture on a new technical basis and raise it to the level of socialised industry. If we have fully developed agriculture we need have no fear of non-utilisation of the peasant's spare or leisure hours. There will be automatic adjustment to the new environments and in planned production he will have very little time to waste or be immoral.

Will Indian villages lose if they are electrified? With new light they will have means of production which will always help them to keep away pestilence and famine. But electrification of the country presumes the existence of heavy

industries. If we do not get electrification and thus the advantage of new, profitable means of production, the return to capitalism is in any case inevitable. Lenin said: "As long as we live in a small-peasant country there is a more solid economic basis for capitalism than for socialism." Either electrification, *i.e.*, the transformation of the economic life of the country, including agriculture, on a new technical basis, the technical basis of modern large-scale production, or, return to capitalism. That is the principal way of extricating the peasant from poverty.

And it is impossible to have better means of transportation and communication and public works, and of removing unemployment in the cities unless there is a rapid rate of industrial development under planned socialised economy.

The country is beholden to Gandhiji's message of economic rehabilitation. His contribution to the growth of our political-*cum*-economic life is indeed great. But the conditions of development of our economic life in the context of world forces have been undergoing a profound change and a new situation has been created which requires new methods. A new technical intelligentsia is to grow. Labour is to be mechanized. We cannot tolerate the instability of labour in our key and other industries and depersonalisation in industry. To increase the present tempo and scale of production we must take recourse to new means. The world is fast changing without waiting for the backward countries to march. Shall we have the primitive communal system which arises from the primitive undeveloped nature of the

instruments of labour, from the very great weakness of the individual man for whom a close, indissoluble tie with the village is the only refuge from extinction, or shall we have socialisation of highly developed means of production assuring for the people of the land an enormous power over nature and full flowering in the conditions of a fraternal collective?

Gandhi's Contribution to India

BY B. L. RALLIA RAM

I

Carlyle's statement that "there is properly no history, only biography," is substantially true, particularly when applied to the march of events, subsequent to the birth of the National Movement in India. This Movement infused fresh vigour and vitality in the Indian life; it originated with the beginnings of Modern Education. Its first manifestations were the religious and social movements which owed their origin and growth to such distinguished Indians as Raja Ram Mohan Rai, Pundit Vidyasagar, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Swami Dyanand Saraswati. In the history of a country, at the hour of its need, there often emerge one or more strong persons, who, in a peculiar way, embody in themselves the patent likewise the dormant aspirations and cravings of the generation to which they belong.

Simultaneously with the growth of these movements, democratic impulses began to surge in the Indian hearts, and desire for a definite share in the Government of the country became articulate. It was in the year 1885 that the Indian National Congress met for the first time, marking an epoch momentous in the history of our country. From 1885 to 1907, the Political Movement was steadily gaining strength, but its programme mainly consisted of passing resolutions making representations and arranging deputations. Even such a milk-and-water programme, at that

time, required great courage on the part of its promoters; and, indeed, Dadabhoy Naoroji, W. C. Bonnerji and later Gopal Krishna Gokhale were true and noble men who were prompted by deep sense of patriotism and spirit of service and sacrifice.

The "Partition of Bengal" in 1907 gave a new orientation to the Indian political thought. The older methods yielded place to new; the press and the platform were much more extensively used; India had learnt the art of agitation. Before long, three forceful personalities appeared on the scene, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bepin Chander Pal and Lajpat Rai (Bal-Pal-Lal). They became the spearheads of a more aggressive movement, the methods of constitutional agitation and protests, hitherto used, were no longer considered efficacious. During all these years the influence of the Indian National Congress had been growing; it had become a visible symbol of our national entity, of our common heritage, of our common grievances, of our aspirations, hopes and ideals, of our great common goal.

Self-government within the Empire was the goal of the Congress, and it was to be achieved by purely constitutional means. A new fire, however, was smouldering, under the surface. It suddenly burst forth. Unfortunately one of its manifestations was an outburst of terrorism, and our political progress was much retarded by ugly acts of murder and violence. The Government embarked upon the policy of repression, regarding, by a grievous mistake, terrorism as the natural sequence of the temper of the new political life.

II

When Gokhale died in 1915, a void was left in the leadership of the country; there was nobody to replace him. For a time, Pandit Madan Mohan Malavya stepped into the breach, but his ultimate great work lay in another direction. Before long, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, under the inspiration of the dynamic personality of his son, Pandit Jawahar Lal, assumed leadership. Meanwhile, the present era in Indian life was fast approaching, the Gandhian era, the period of direct action; it coincided with the close of World War I. Mahatma Gandhi returned to India in 1924 from South Africa. Gokhale had, at one time, wished that Gandhiji should succeed him in the leadership of the Servants of India Society. But this was not to be, as much bigger task awaited the Mahatma. Providence was preparing him for giving India a new lead; he gave a new direction to her aspirations and desires. The yearnings of her heart found a new expression. There had been a continual growth of political thought; India had, after all, caught a glimpse of her ultimate destiny.

The Mahatma's influence was on the side of moderation. At the Amritsar Congress in 1919, he pleaded that Minto-Morley Reforms should be accepted and worked as a definite step towards further progress; it was Mohammad Ali Jinnah who advocated a more refractory policy. The Extremists of today are often the Moderates of tomorrow.

Before long Gandhi became the national leader. India was coming under the sway of new world forces, her heart beats were quickened,

*Founding and nurturing the Benares Hindu University.

she entered into a critical period of her history. She was no longer satisfied with the role of a "Dependency". She had been lying lifeless in a state of prostration; she now rose like a phoenix from its ashes; she lifted up her head. This, her new attitude, was apt to be misunderstood by the Government. An intense struggle ensued; mistakes were made on both sides. It, however, became clear that India was becoming determined to become the master of her own household. From the old political creed of the Congress, India had passed on to the ideal of complete Independence, namely, of the right of choosing her own destiny for herself. This ideal does not exclude the conception of India remaining a free and equal partner of the British Commonwealth of Nations, provided that she can be assured of an honourable and equitable place therein.

A new hope had arisen in her breast, a new vision had appeared before her eyes, and new determination was seen in her face. This new ideal thrilled India, and the pace of her progress was much accelerated. She burst forth into a new song, she began to dance to a new tune.

The Bharat Mata became real to her children; they bowed before her with a new veneration. But when they closely watched her, they began to perceive how her lovely face has been spoilt by poverty and exploitation !

In Mahatma Gandhi's personality, these sentiments and aspirations found a new embodiment. He was the voice of the new India, his laughter was the laughter of his motherland, his cry was her cry. It was not always possible to

understand his methods nor his line of arguments ; but nobody can deny that, in India's recent history, no man has had so large a following; even most of those people who do not see eye to eye with him venerate and respect him. The reason for this universal recognition is apparent: he had touched a dormant chord, and India's whole being began to vibrate.

The essence of Mahatma Gandhi's message was by no means confined to political life, independence was not only to be political independence, its range, likewise, included the economic and the social.

While Gandhi was the chief influence in moulding India's new outlook, Jawahar Lal Nehru also played an indispensably important part. There were also other leaders, such as Dr. Ansari, *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Rajagopalachari and Rajender Parshad, who represented the same new spirit, and who gave most valuable help in leading India to the understanding of the main message of the Mahtama. There must remain a difference of opinion with regard to some of the activities in which Gandhiji or the Indian National Congress engaged themselves in the promotion of their plan of action; some serious mistakes were made. But even such miscalculations did not make Gandhi less representative of the prevalent temper of this time.

He happened to reach the path of Indian political progress at a time of crisis and, and he became an instrument of the Providence to save India from following the ruinous policy of violent action.

*The names of Ali Brothers and Mr. Jinnah himself can be well included in this list. (B.L.R.R.)

III

His first and chief contribution to the Indian life was to direct the energies of Indian patriots to constructive channels, from the barren and fruitless way of terrorism and violence. With the growth of national consciousness, there had grown a party of unbalanced and wilful youth who preached that India could only win her freedom by murder, arson or terrorism. For some time there were successive attempts, at intervals, of bomb throwing and other similar acts of political devilry. The Government tried to put down such outrages by a heavy hand, and believing that these tragic events were the logical outcome of the work of the political leaders who were, at that time, known as the Extremists, it pursued a policy of repression and got all such leaders out of the way.

If the situation thus created had been allowed to drift, and if the providential man, Gandhi, had not entered the arena at the crucial time, India might have gone a long way upon the road leading to wanton suicide. The doctrine of Ahimsa (Non-Violence) not only saved India from much misery, but it actually accelerated its political progress, for the spirit of self-reliance and of self-respect were thus fostered. Even for the actual political struggle, Gandhi forged new weapons, consistent with his Ahimsic philosophy. It was not easy for the country either to understand the significance of this doctrine or put it into practical effect. The common instruments through which the people can express their resentment are the press and platform. In self-governing democratic countries, public opinion expressed through vote at the time of the elections, also provide a powerful weapon in the

hands of the people. India, however, has had a bureaucratic government so long that the press and the platform have been the only means at the people's disposal. But even there, from time to time, the liberty of the Press and the Platform have been seriously restricted. As a psychological sequence, Indians had acquired the habit of using intemperate and excessive language in expressing their pent-up sentiments: such an atmosphere provides a congenial soil in which violence and terrorism easily germinate.

The earlier attempts of the Mahatma to give practical shape to his philosophy of non-violence on a large scale, therefore, proved to be failures. At the very eve of his decision to launch a non-payment of taxes campaign, at Bardoli, the disastrous and tragic riot at Chauri Chaura took place. He had to retrace his steps, and he published his remarkable confession.

"God has been abundantly kind to me. He has warned me the third time that there is not as yet in India that truthful and non-violent atmosphere which, and which alone, can justify mass disobedience which can be at all described as civil which means gentle, truthful, humble, knowing, wilful yet loving, never criminal and hateful."

"The bitterest humiliation is to-day."

"In Civil Disobedience there should be no excitement, Civil Disobedience is a preparation for mute suffering".

"I would advise those who are guilty and repentant, to hand themselves voluntarily to the Government for punishment, and make a clean confession, for they have injured the very cause they intended to serve."

In 1942, again a storm of sabotage and wanton destruction burst forth, soon after the arrest of Gandhiji and the Congress leaders. For this the Government has blamed the Indian National Congress. The Congress leaders, however, aver that the Congress stood fast to its

guiding principle of non-violence. It is beyond the scope of this book to express any definite opinion on the subject, but the events of 1942 did again prove that when people's passions are aroused, it is not easy to restrain them from acts of violence. Had Gandhiji been free, his influence would certainly have been on the refraining side and perhaps those tragic events might have been avoided. Those who participated in dastardly crimes brought shame and ignominy not only upon their own heads, but also disgraced the country and the organisation to which they had paid their lip-service. Apart from these hours of defeat, India has been slowly and steadily learning the value of Ahimsa as applied to the larger life of the country. The leaders, of India, such as the Mahatma, Jawahar Lal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad have been generally dignified in the use of their language against the British Government, and under Gandhiji's influence the country is learning to be more sober and responsible in the utterances of her leaders.

Time is not far distant when full responsibility for government shall be transferred to Indian hands. All the bad habits which have been learnt during the alien rule, and in consequence of it, shall persist for a time. Exercise of such habits will considerably retard our progress; indeed ample proof in support of this can be found in the history of the years. Gandhiji, therefore, has made his contribution, in this regard, at the point of the greatest need of our country.

IV

The second, and equally important, contribu-

tion which Gandhiji has made to India is that he has placed before the country a complete and comprehensive conception of *Purna Swaraj* (Complete Independence.)

Political emancipation is not the goal, it is only a means.

"Swaraj does consist in the change of Government and its real control by the people, but that would be merely the form. The substance that I am hankering after is a definite acceptance of the means and, therefore, a real change of heart on the part of the people. I am certain that it does not require ages for Hindus to discard the error of untouchability, for Hindus and Muslamans to shed enmity and accept heart friendship as an eternal factor of a natural life, for all to adopt the *charkha* as the only universal means of attaining India's economic salvation and finally for all to believe that India's freedom lies only through non-violence and no other method. Definite, intelligent and free adoption by the nation of this programme, I hold as the attainment of the substance. The symbol, the transfer of power, is sure to follow, even as the seed truly laid must develop into a tree."

Thus more than any other leaders, he recognised that pure assumption of power by the Indian people was not the *summum bonum* (the greatest good) nor was it the *raison d'etra* (reason for existence) of the Indian National Movement. The programme of Swaraj must include the inculcations of such virtues in the life of the country as discipline, self-denial, self-sacrifice, organising ability, confidence and courage. As a nation we had become disqualified, by our slave mentality and slavish habits, to sustain a system of self-government for our motherland.

Prior to the advent of Gandhiji, the Congress was very largely a talking machine, a resolution-making body; delegates from all over India met together, made strong speeches and dispersed. To say this does not detract from the great

service which the early Congress leaders rendered to the country, nor is it to belittle the Congress itself for the results which it achieved under the circumstances of those days. Congress, in spite of all its mistakes, and sins of commission and omission, has been a progressive organisation, its policy has been changing as the events have enfolded themselves. Gandhiji not only gave a new ideology to the country, but he also gave a new orientation to the programme of the Congress. Swaraj was not political freedom, such freedom being only the first and the necessary step for the gradual realisation of *Purna Swaraj* in the life of the nation. India could not be free, in a true sense, unless it could also break the chains of bondage that made India captive in social and economic spheres as well.

Gandhiji, therefore, used his influence to make the Congress a more practical organisation, the Congress adopted a new constitution, even a four-anna membership, some other stringent conditions being also prescribed. It was not possible for all the members of the Congress either fully to understand the underlying spiritual significance of this new development or to act upon those injunctions fearlessly and wholeheartedly. To the extent that the Congress had attracted to itself persons who were not fully prepared to act up to the full implications of the new Congress ideology, the Congress was greatly handicapped in achieving its purpose. It should also be recorded that some honest patriotic Indians did not find themselves in agreement with all the methods employed by the Congress for implementing its programme, and, therefore, they had no other alternative but to serve their motherland in some

other way. For the active pursuance of his full programme, Gandhiji organised several independent organisations ; this policy had dual advantage, namely, (1) the economic and the social programme was not wholly submerged in the political sea of Congress activities ; (2) even non-Congressmen and non-political workers could be harnessed to the titanic task of national reconstruction. Four important organisations may specially be mentioned, namely, the All-India Harijan Sevak Sangh, All-India Spinners' Association, All-India Village Industries Association, and All-India T'alimi Sangh.

These Associations represent the fourfold aspects of national policy. Opinions must differ with regard to the actual methods and policies. Gandhiji have had the first hand knowledge of the Western Civilisation, by his long stay in England, and then in South Africa he had seen its evils. Like the other Eastern seers such as Tagore and the poet Mohd. Iqbal, he considered his duty to warn the country against its attractive glamour. In his zeal to protect the country from the ravages of aggressive methods of the West, he may have overshot the mark in certain aspects. Future India will have to use its own discriminatory judgment in following Gandhi's complete programme. The world forces shall be inescapable, India can no longer live in isolation. She will have to adapt herself for meeting the new situations as they arise. But she will not go far wrong, if India holds fast to the main principles and essence of the Gandhian teaching ; his contribution to the Indian life is great indeed.

More able and competent writers have examined Gandhian programme in greater deal

