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GANDHI NEWS

গান্ধী সংবাদ

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GANDHI NEWS

গান্ধী সংবাদ

জুলাই-সেপ্টেম্বর, ২০২৩

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The Chipko Movement

Mahatma Gandhi said, “I have not conceived my mission to be that of a knight-errant wandering everywhere to deliver people from difficult situations. My humble occupation has been to show people how they can solve their own difficulties.” India has witnessed some voluntary movements with Gandhian approach. The Chipko movement is one of such voluntary movements.

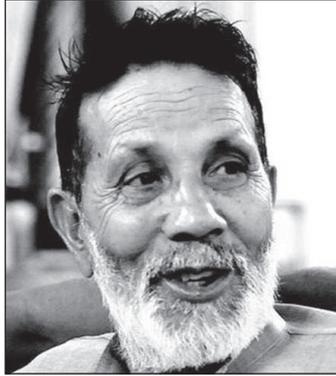
Chipko is a Hindi word. It means ‘to embrace’ or ‘to cling’. The village women of some sub-Himalayan districts of north India clung to the trees, when some men came to cut the trees with axes. These women were poor, and illiterate, but daring and brave. Mr. Wilson, an Englishman was the first person who started the feeling of trees in the Bhagirathi and then floated the logs down the river to Hardwar. For laying down of railway tracks and building coaches, the Railway authorities turned to the Himalayan forests to procure woods. Thus the exploitation of the forest wealth of the Himalayas started. This exploitation caused a serious disturbance of the

mountain ecology. Timber was required for furniture in the plains.

The mountain people and the tribals enjoyed the traditional and the customary rights over the forests and what they produced. The forests gave them fruit, fodder, fertiliser, fire and fuel. The rivers and springs of the Himalayas never dried. The trees protected the soil and purified the air.

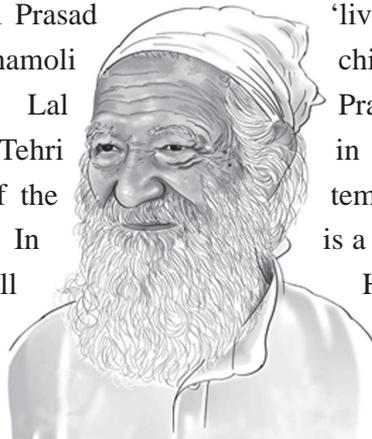


D. K. Oza in his book *Voluntary Action and Gandhian Approach* informs us that it was Mirabehn, the English disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, who established her *ashram* at Rishikesh in the foothills was first to realise as early as 1945 that devastating floods were the results of deforestation.



Chandi Prasad Bhatt,
*founder of the
Chipko Movement*

It was Sarlabehn, another English disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, who established an *ashram* in Kausani to train hill girls as social activists and constructive workers. Her *ashram* became the centre of *Sarvodaya* movement in the hills. She established a Brotherhood of Sarvodaya Activists. This organisation, which first took up the problem of liquor. The liquor shops were closed in five hill districts as a mass movement which was led by women, Shri Chandi Prasad Bhatt who lived in Chamoli district and Sundar Lal Bahuguna, who lived in Tehri district were in forefront of the Chipko Movement. In December 1972, the hill people organised a movement against the exploitation of forest by timber merchants. The first



Sundar Lal Bahuguna

Chipko demonstration in Mandel village district took place in April 1973 when the people declared that they would cling to trees if the trees were felled by a sports goods company.

The Uttarkhand area consists of two regions with total eight districts. This area consists of two regions.

Pithoragarh Nainital and Almora are collectively called Kumaun. Tehri, Pauri, Chamoli, Uttarkashi and Dehradun are referred to as Garhmal region. Both Bhatt and Bahuguna toured Uttarakhand on foot creating awareness and mobilising public response. This happened in late sixties of the last century.

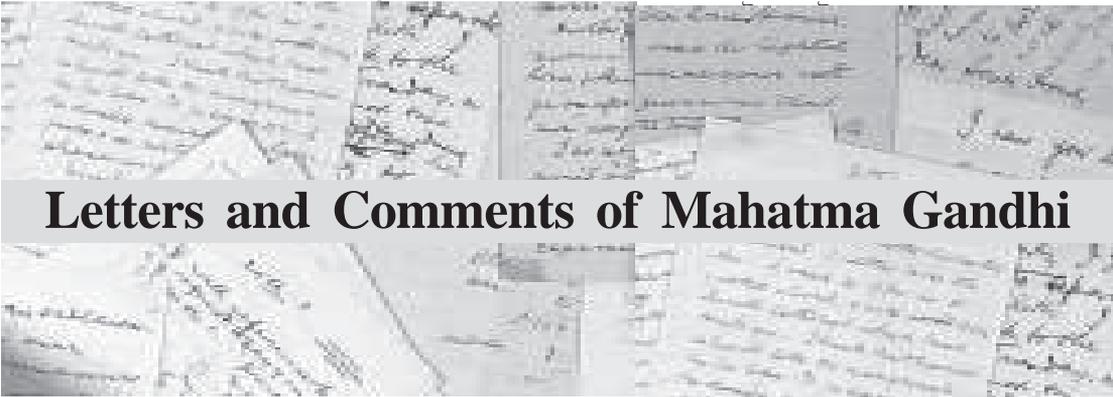
Ramchandra Guha in his monumental work *The Last Liberal and other Essays* pays tribute to Chandi Prasad Bhatt as a 'living deity' and 'founder of the chipko movement'. Chandi Prasad was born on 23 June 1934 in a family of priests of the temple of Rudranath. Rudranath is a part of 'Panch Kedar', the five Himalayan temples dedicated to Lord Shiva. His father died when he was a baby. To support his mother he joined Garhwal Motor

Owner's Union as a booking clerk. His transformation started in 1956. He attended a public meeting in that year in Badrinath, where main speakers were Jayaprakash Narayan and local Sarvodaya leader Man Singh Rawat. Between 1956 and 1960 Chandi Prasad learnt about Sarvodaya from Man Singh and his wife. In 1960 Bhatt made his *jeevan daan* to the Sarvodaya movement.

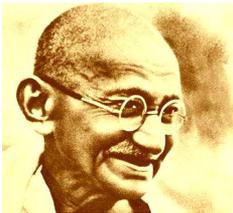
Bhatt with the help of a few friends, first started a labour co-operative that helped repair houses and build roads, members sharing work and wages. In 1964 he established Dashauli Gram Sava Sangha (DGSS). It was the mother organization of

the Chipko Movement. The DGSS was committed to employment generation through promotion of weavings bee-keeping, herb collection, cottage industries which would require forest produce. In 1968 J. P. and his wife Prabhavati visited Gopeswar. They appreciated the works of Bhatt and his fellows. They were reminded of the spirit of sacrifice and heroism that marked all gandhian movements.

Ramchandra Guha eloquently expressed his appreciation. “Chandi Prasad Bhatt is a great pioneering environmentalist, actor and thinker of remarkable range and achievement He has no trumpet, nor any trumpeteers.”



Letters and Comments of Mahatma Gandhi



THE HINDU WIFE

“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 following is a summary of a long letter of a brother, describing the miseries of his married sister :

“Some time ago, my sister was married to a man whose character was hidden from us. This man has been discovered to be a rake, and no amount of dissipation and debauchery can satiate him. He has no sense of honour. My unfortunate sister found soon after her marriage that her ‘lord’ was sinking down more and more deeply day by day. She remonstrated. The man could not brook this, and in order to teach her a lesson, indulged in his excesses in front of her. He would also whip her, make her stand, starve her etc. She was tied to a post to compel her to witness his debaucheries. My sister is heartbroken. Her lamentations make us feel wretched. We are helpless. What would you advise her and us to do ? This is one of the most shameful aspects of Hinduism, where woman is left entirely at the mercy of man, and has no rights and privileges. If a man chooses to be cruel and heartless, there is no remedy left to the unfortunate woman. The man may go on making random alliances, and not a little finger can be raised against him; but a woman, once married, is at the utter mercy of her lord. Thousands of such women are groaning and weeping. As long as Hinduism is not purged of these and such like evils, can there be any hope of progress?”

The writer is an educated man. His is a much more graphic description than the summary is of his sister’s distress. The correspondent has sent me his full name and address. His condemnation of Hinduism, though pardonable under intense irritation, is based on a hysterical generalisation from an isolated instance. For, millions of Hindu wives

live in perfect peace and are queens in their own homes. They exercise an authority over their husbands which any woman would envy. It is an authority which love gives. The case of cruelty brought to light by the correspondent is an illustration, not of the evil in Hinduism, but of the evil in human nature, which has been known to express itself under all climes and among people professing different faiths of the world. The facility for divorce has proved no protection against a brutal husband for a pliant wife incapable of asserting, and at times even unwilling to assert herself. It is, therefore, in the interest of reform for reformers to avoid hysterics and exaggerations.

Nevertheless, the occurrence, to which this article draws attention, is not an altogether uncommon occurrence in Hindu society. 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 as distinguished from unmarried girls, and through cultivating public opinion against unmanly conduct on the part of husbands. In the case in point, the remedy is incredibly simple. Instead of the brother and other relatives feeling helpless and weeping with the distressed girl, they should clothe her with protection, educate her to believe that it is no part of her duty to placate a sinful husband, or to seek his company. It is quite evident that the husband himself does not care for the wife. She may, therefore, without breaking the legal tie, live apart from her husband's roof and feel as if she had never been married.

Of course, there are two legal remedies open even to a Hindu wife, for whom a divorce is unobtainable, and that is to have the husband punished for common assault and to insist upon his supporting the wife. Experience tells me that this remedy is, in most cases, if not in all, worse than useless, and it never brings any comfort to a virtuous woman, and makes the question of husband's reform more difficult, if not impossible, which after all should be the aim of society, more so of every wife. In the present instance, the girl's parents are well able to support her; but where it is not possible, the number of institutions that would give shelter to such ill-treated women is growing in the country.

There still remains the question of the satisfaction of the sexual appetite on the part of young women thus leaving the inhospitable roofs of the husbands, or being actually deserted by them when the relief given by divorce is unobtainable. But this is really not a serious grievance in point of numbers, for, in a society in which custom has discountenanced divorce for ages, a woman whose marriage proves unhappy does not want to be remarried. When public opinion in any social group requires that particular form of relief, I have no doubt that it will be forthcoming. So far as I understand the correspondent's letter, the grievance is not that the wife cannot satisfy her sexual appetite. The grievance

is the gross and defiant immorality on the part of the husband. For this, as I have said, the remedy lies in a revision of the mental attitude. The feeling of helplessness is imaginary, as most of our ills are. A fresh outlook, a little original thinking is enough to dispel the grief brought about by defective imagination. Nor should friends and relatives, in such cases, be satisfied with the mere negative result of isolating the victim from the zone of tyranny. She should be induced to qualify herself for public service. This kind of training would be more than enough compensation for the doubtful privilege of a husband's bed.

Young India, October 3, 1929

A FAIR FRIEND'S QUESTIONS

“My ideal of a wife is Sita, and of a husband Rama. But Sita was no slave of Rama. Or, each was slave of the other...The wife has a perfect right to take her own course, and meekly brave the consequences when she knows herself to be in the right, and when her resistance is for a nobler purpose.”

A fair friend, who has some faith in my wisdom and sincerity, asks some knotty questions which I would fain avoid for fear of raising an indignant controversy on the part of some husbands jealous for their rights. But jealous husbands would spare me, for they know that I happen to be one myself, having led a fairly happy married life for the past forty years, in spite of occasional jars.

The first question is apposite and timely. The original is in Marathi. I have given a free rendering.

“Can a man or woman attain self-realisation by mere recitation of *Ramanama*, and without taking part in national service? I ask this question because some of my sisters say that they do not need to do anything beyond attending to family requirements, and occasionally showing kindness to the poor.”

This question has puzzled not only women, but many men, and has taxed me to the utmost. I know that there is a school of philosophy which teaches complete inaction and futility of all effort. I have not been able to appreciate that teaching, unless, in order to secure verbal agreement, I were to put my own interpretation on it. In my humble opinion, effort is necessary for one's own growth. It has to be irrespective of results. *Ramanama* or some equivalent is necessary, not for the sake of repetition, but for the sake of purification, as an aid to effort, for direct guidance from above. It is, therefore, never a substitute for effort. It is meant for intensifying and guiding it in proper channel. If all effort is vain, why family cares or an occasional help to the poor? In this very effort is contained the germ of national service. And national service, to me, means service of humanity, even as disinterested service of the family means the same thing. Disinterested service of the family, necessarily, leads one to national service. *Ramanama* gives one detachment and

ballast, and never throws one off one's balance at critical moments. Self-realisation I hold to be impossible without service of, and identification with, the poorest.

The second question is :

“In Hinduism, devotion of wife to her husband and her complete merger in him is the highest aim, never mind whether the husband is a fiend or an embodiment of love. If this be the correct conduct for a wife, may she, in the teeth of opposition by her husband, undertake national service? Or, must she only go as far as the husband will permit her to go?”

My ideal of a wife is Sita, and of a husband Rama. But Sita was no slave of Rama. Or, each was slave of the other. Rama is ever considerate to Sita. Where there is true love, the question asked does not occur. Where there is no true love the bond has never existed. But the Hindu household of today is a conundrum. Husbands and wives, when they are married, know nothing of one another. Religious sanction, fortified by custom, and the even flow of the lives of the married people, keep the peace in the vast majority of Hindu households. But 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. I think there is a way out. Mirabai has shown the way. The wife has a perfect right to take her own course, and meekly brave the consequences when she knows herself to be in the right, and when her resistance is for a nobler purpose.

The third question is :

“If a husband is, say, a meat-eater, and the wife considers meat-eating an evil, may she follow her own bent? May she even try, by all loving ways, to wean her husband from meat-eating or the like? Or, is she bound to cook meat for her husband, or worse still, is she bound to eat it, if the husband requires her? If you say that the wife may take her own course, how can a joint household be run when the one compels and the other rebels?”

This question is partly answered in the answer to the second. A wife is not bound to be an accomplice in her husband's crimes. And when she holds anything to be wrong, she must dare to do the right. But seeing that the wife's function is to manage the household and thus to cook, as the husband's is to earn for the family, she is bound to cook meat for the family if both have been meat-eaters before. If on the other hand, in a vegetarian family, the husband becomes a meat-eater and seeks to compel the wife to cook for him, the wife is in no way bound to cook what offends her sense of right. The peace of the household is a most desirable thing. But it cannot be an end in itself. For me, the married state is as much a state of discipline as any other. Life is duty, a probation. Married life is intended

to promote mutual good, both here and hereafter. It is meant also to serve humanity. When one partner breaks the law of discipline, the right accrues to the other of breaking the bond. The breach here is moral and not physical. It precludes divorce. The wife or the husband separates but to serve the end for which they had united. Hinduism regards each as absolute equal of the other. No doubt a different practice has grown up, no one knows since when. But so have many other evils crept into it. This, however, I do not know that Hinduism leaves the individual absolutely free to do what he or she likes for the sake of self-realisation, for which and which alone he or she is born.

Young India, October 21, 1926

POSITION OF WOMEN

“I am uncompromising in the matter of woman’s rights. In my opinion, she should labour under no legal disability not suffered by man. I should treat the daughters and sons on a footing of perfect equality.”

A fair friend, who has hitherto successfully resisted the matrimonial temptation, writes :

“There was a Women’s Conference yesterday at the Malabari Hall, (Bombay), at which many sound speeches were made, and many resolutions passed. The question of the evening was the Sarda Bill. We are so glad you uphold the age of 18 for girls. Another important resolution dealt with the laws of inheritance. What a help it would be if you wrote a strong article on this subject in *Navajivan* and *Young India*? Why should women have either to beg or to fight in order to win back their birthright? It is strange—and also tragically comic—to hear man born of woman talk loftily of ‘the weaker sex’, and nobly promising to give us our due! What is this nonsense about ‘giving’? Where is the ‘nobility’ and ‘chivalry’ in restoring to people that which has been unlawfully wrested from them by those having brute power in their hands? Wherein are women less important than men? Why should their share of inheritance be less than that of men? Why should it not be equal? We were discussing this very heatedly with some people a couple of days ago. A lady said : ‘We don’t need any change in the law. We are quite content. After all, it is but fair that the son, who carries on the name and family traditions, should have the greater share. He is the mainstay of the family...’ We said : ‘And what about the girl?’ ‘Oh’, intervened a strapping young man who was there, ‘the other fellow will look after her!’ There you are. The ‘other fellow’! Always the other fellow! This other fellow is an absolute nuisance! Why should there be another fellow? Why should it be taken for granted

that there will be another fellow? They talk as though a girl were a bale of goods, to be tolerated in the parental house until ‘the other fellow’ comes round, and then coolly handed over to him with a sigh of relief.... Really, wouldn’t you be wild if you were a girl?”

I do not need to be a girl to be wild over man’s atrocities towards woman. I count the law of inheritance among the least in the list. The Sarda Bill deals with an evil far greater than the one which the law of inheritance connotes. But I am uncompromising in the matter of woman’s rights. In my opinion, she should labour under no legal disability not suffered by man. I should treat the daughters and sons on a footing of perfect equality. As women begin to realise their strength, as they must in proportion to the education they receive, they will naturally resent the glaring inequalities to which they are subjected.

But to remove legal inequalities will be a mere palliative. The root of the evil lies much deeper than most people realise. It lies in man’s greed of power and fame, and, deeper still, in mutual lust. Man has always desired power. Ownership of property gives this power. Man hankers also after posthumous fame based on power. This cannot be had, if property is progressively cut up in pieces, as it must be if all the posterity become equal co-sharers. Hence, the descent of property for the most part on the eldest male issue. Most women are married. And they are co-sharers, in spite of the law being against them, in their husbands’ power and privileges. They delight in being ladies this and what not, simply for the fact of being the wives of particular lords. Though, therefore, they may vote for radical reform in academic discussions over inequalities, when it comes to acting up to their vote, they will be found to be unwilling to part with the privileges.

Whilst, therefore, I would always advocate the repeal of all legal disqualifications, I should have the enlightened women of India to deal with the root cause. Woman is the embodiment of sacrifice and suffering, and her advent to public life should, therefore, result in purifying it, in restraining unbridled ambition and accumulation of property. Let them know that millions of men have no property to transmit to posterity. Let us learn from them that it is better for the few to have no ancestral property at all. The real property, that a parent can transmit to all equally, is his or her character and educational facilities. Parents should seek to make their sons and daughters self-reliant, well able to earn an honest livelihood by the sweat of the brow. The up-bringing of minor children will, then, naturally devolve upon the major descendants. Much of the present imbecility of the children of the wealthy will go, if the latter could but substitute the worthy ambition of educating their children to become independent for the unworthy ambition of making them slaves of ancestral property, which kills enterprise and feeds the passions which accompany idleness and luxury. The privilege of the awakened women should be to spot and eradicate age-long evils.

That mutual lust, too, has played an important part in bringing about the disqualifications of the fair sex hardly needs any demonstration. Woman has circumvented man in a variety of ways in her unconsciously subtle ways, as man has vainly and equally unconsciously struggled to thwart woman in gaining ascendancy over him. The result is a stalemate. Thus viewed, it is a serious problem the enlightened daughters of *Bharat Mata* are called upon to solve. They may not ape the manner of the West, which may be suited to its environment. They must apply methods suited to the Indian genius and Indian environment. Theirs must be the strong, controlling, purifying, steadying hand, conserving what is best in our culture, and unhesitatingly rejecting what is base and degrading. This is the work of Sitas, Draupadis, Savitris and Damayantis, not of amazons and prudes.

TREATMENT OF WOMEN

“I will far rather see the race of man extinct than that we should become less than beasts by making the noblest of God’s, creation the object of our lust”

Shrimati Sarladevi of Cuttack writes :

“Don’t you admit that the treatment of women is as bad a disease as untouchability itself? The attitude of the young ‘nationalists’ I have come in contact with, is beastly in ninety cases out of a hundred. How many of the non-co-operators in India do not regard women as objects of enjoyment? Is that essential condition of success—self-purification—possible without a change of attitude towards women?”

I am unable to subscribe that the treatment of women is a ‘disease as bad as untouchability?’ Shrimati Saraladevi has grossly exaggerated the evil. Nor can the charge levelled against the non-co-operators of mere gratification of lust be sustained. A cause can only lose by exaggeration. At the same time, I have no difficulty about subscribing to the proposition, that in order to fit ourselves for true *Swaraj*, men must cultivate much greater respect than they have for woman and her purity. Mr. Andrews has struck a much truer note than this lady, when he tells us in burning language that we dare not gloat over the shame of our fallen sisters. That any non-co-operator could have been found willing to relate with gusto that there were some of these erring sisters who reserved themselves for non-co-operators, is a degrading thought. There can be no distinction between co-operators and non-co-operators in this matter of vital importance for our moral well-being. All of us men must hang our heads in shame, so long as there is a single woman whom we dedicate to our lust. I will far rather see the race of man extinct, than that we should become less than beasts by making the noblest of God’s creation the object of our lust. But this is not a problem merely for India. It is a world problem. And if I preach against the modern

artificial life of sensual enjoyment, and ask men and women to go back to the simple life epitomised in the *Charkha*, I do so because I know that, without an intelligent return to simplicity, there is no escape from our descent to a state lower than brutality. I passionately desire the utmost freedom for our women. I detest child-mariages. I shudder to see a child-widow, and shiver with rage when a husband just widowed with brutal indifference contracts another marriage. I deplore the criminal indifference of parents who keep their daughters utterly ignorant and illiterate, and bring them up only for the purpose of marrying them off to some young man of means. Notwithstanding all this grief and rage, I realise the difficulty of the problem. Women must have votes and an equal legal status. But the problem does not end there. It only commences at the point where women begin to affect the political deliberations of the nation.

To illustrate what I mean, let me relate the enchanting description a valued Mussalman friend gave me of a talk he had with a noted feminist in London. He was attending a meeting of feminists. A lady friend was surprised to find a Mussalman at such a meeting! She inquired how he found himself there. The friend said he had two major and two minor reasons for so doing. His father died when he was an infant. He owed all he was in life to his mother. Then, he was married to a woman who was a real partner in life. And he had no sons but four daughters, all minors, in whom as a father he was deeply interested. Was it any wonder that he was a feminist? He went on. Mussalmans were accused of indifference to women. There never was a grosser libel uttered. The law of Islam gave equal rights to women. He thought that man for his lust had degraded woman. Instead of adoring the soul within her, he had set about adoring her body, and he had succeeded so well in his design, that woman today did not know that she had begun to hug her bodily adornment which was almost a sign of her slavery. He added, with his voice almost choked, if it was not so, how could it be that the fallen sisters delighted most in the embellishment of the body? Had we (men) not crushed the very soul out of them? No, he said, regaining self-possession, he wanted not only the mechanical freedom for women, he wanted also to break down the shackles that bound her of her own will. And so he had intended to bring up his daughters to an independent calling.

I need not pursue the ennobling conversation any further. I want my fair correspondent to ponder over the central idea of the Mussalman friend's discourse and tackle the problem. Woman must cease to consider herself the object of man's lust. The remedy is more in her hands than man's. She must refuse to adorn herself for men, including her husband, if she will be an equal partner with man. I cannot imagine Sita ever wasting a single moment on pleasing Rama by physical charms.

Young India, October 17, 1929



REGENERATION OF WOMEN

“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.”

In the course of his speech at the Morarji Gokuldas Hall, Bombay, at the annual gathering of the Bombay Bhagini Samaj, Gandhiji said :

It is necessary to understand what we mean when we talk of the regeneration of women. It presupposes degeneration, and, if that is so, we should further consider what led to it and how. It is our primary duty to have some very hard thinking on these points. In travelling all over India, I have come to realise that all the existing agitation is confined to an infinitesimal section of our people, who are really a mere speck in the vast firmament. Crores of people of both the sexes live in absolute ignorance of this agitation. Full eighty-five per cent, of the people of this country pass their innocent days in a state of total detachment from what is going on around them. These men and women, ignorant as they are, do their bit in life well and properly. Both have the same education or rather “the absence of education. Both are helping each other, as they ought to do. If their lives are in any sense incomplete, the cause can be traced to the incompleteness of the lives of the remaining fifteen per cent. If my sisters of the Bhagini Samaj will make a close study of the lives of these 85 per cent, of our people, it will provide them ample material for an excellent programme of work for the Samaj.

In the observations that I am going to make, I confine myself to the 15 per cent, above mentioned, and even then it would be out of place to discuss the disabilities that are common both to men and women. The point for us to consider is the regeneration of our women relatively to our men. Legislation has been mostly the handiwork of men; and man has not always been fair and discriminate in performing that self-appointed task. The largest part of our effort, in promoting the regeneration of women, should be directed towards removing those blemishes which are represented in our *Shastras* as the necessary and ingrained characteristics of women. Who will attempt this and how? In my humble opinion, in order to make the attempt, we will have to produce women pure, firm and self-controlled as Sita, Damayanti and Draupadi. If we do produce them, such modern sisters will receive the same homage from Hindu society as is being paid to the prototypes of yore. Their words will have the same authority as the *Shastras*. We will feel ashamed of the stray reflections on them in our *Smritis*, and will soon forget them. Such revolutions have occurred in Hinduism in the past, and will still take place in the future, leading to the stability of our faith. I pray to God that this Association might soon produce such women as I have described above.

We have now discussed the root-cause of degeneration of our women, and have considered the ideals by the realisation of which the present conditions of our women can be improved. The number of women who can realise those ideals will be necessarily very few, and, therefore, we will now consider what ordinary women can accomplish if they would try. Their first attempt should be directed towards awakening in the minds of as many women as possible a proper sense of their present condition. I am not among those who believe that such an effort can be made through literary education only. To work on that basis would be to postpone indefinitely the accomplishment of our aims; I have experienced at every step that it is not at all necessary to wait so long. We can bring home to our women the sad realities of their present condition without, in the first instance, giving them any literary education. 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; our lot is like that of the penny-wise and pound-foolish trader who does not employ enough capital in his business.

But although much good and useful work can be done without a knowledge of reading and writing, yet it is my firm belief that you cannot always do without a knowledge thereof. It develops and sharpens one's intellect, and it stimulates our power of doing good. I have never placed an unnecessarily high value on the knowledge of reading and writing. I am only attempting to assign its proper place to it. I have pointed out from time to time that there is no justification for men to deprive women or to deny to them equal rights on the ground of the illiteracy; but education is essential for enabling women to uphold these natural rights, to improve them and to spread them; again, the true knowledge of self is unattainable by the millions who are without such education. Many a book is full of innocent pleasure, and this will be denied to us without education. It is no exaggeration to say that a human being without education is not far removed from an animal. Education, therefore, is necessary for women as it is for men. Not that the methods of education should be identical in both cases. In the first place, our State system of education is full of error, and productive of harm in many respects. It should be eschewed by men and women alike. Even if it were free from its present blemishes, I would not regard it as proper for women from all points of view. 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. In framing any scheme of women's education, this cardinal truth must be constantly kept in mind. Man is supreme in the outward activities of a married pair, and, therefore, it is in the fitness of things that he should have a greater knowledge thereof. On the other hand, home life is entirely the sphere of woman, and, therefore, in domestic affairs, in the upbringing and education of children, women ought to have more knowledge. Not that knowledge should be divided into water-tight compartments, or that some branches of knowledge should be closed to anyone; but unless courses of instruction are based on a discriminating appreciation of these basic principles, the fullest life of man and woman cannot be developed.

I should say a word or two as to whether English education is or is not necessary for our women. I have come to the conclusion that, in the ordinary course of our lives, neither our men nor our women need necessarily have any, knowledge of English. True, English is necessary for making a living, and for active association in our political movements. I do not believe in women working for a living, or undertaking commercial enterprises. The few women, who may require or desire to have English education, can very easily have their way by joining the schools for men. To introduce English education in schools meant for women could only lead to prolong our helplessness. I have often read and heard people saying, that the rich treasures of English literature should be opened alike to men and women. I submit, in all humility, that there is some misapprehension in assuming such an attitude. No one intends to close these treasures against women, while keeping them open for men. There is none on earth able to prevent you from studying the literature of the whole world, if you are fond of literary tastes. But when courses of education have been framed with the needs of a particular society in view, you cannot supply the requirements of the few who have cultivated a literary taste. In asking our men and women to spend less time in the study of English than they are doing now, my object is not to deprive them of the pleasure which they are likely to derive from it, but I hold that the same pleasure can be obtained at less cost and trouble if we follow a more, natural method. The world is full of many a gem of priceless beauty; but, then, these gems are not all of English setting. Other languages can well boast of productions of similar excellence; all these should be made available for our common people, and that can only be done if our own learned men will undertake to translate them for us in our own languages.

Merely to have outlined a scheme of education as above, is not to have removed the bane of child marriage from our society, or to have conferred on our women an equality of rights. Let us now consider the case of our girls who disappear, so to say, from view after marriage. They are not likely to return to our schools. Conscious of the unspeakable and

unthinkable sin of the child marriage of their daughters, their mothers cannot think of educating them or of otherwise making their dry life a cheerful one. The man who marries a young girl, does not do so out of any altruistic motives, but through sheer lust. Who is to rescue these girls? A proper answer to this question will also be a solution of the woman's problem. The answer is albeit, difficult, but it is only one. There is, of course, none to champion her wise but her husband. It is useless to expect a child wife to be able to bring round the man who has married her. The difficult work must, therefore, for the present at least be left to man. If I could, I would take a census of child wives and will find the friends as well as through moral and polite exhortations, I will attempt to bring home to them the enormity of their crime in linking their fortunes with child wives, and will warn them that there is no expiation for that sin unless and until they have by education made their wives fit, not only to bear children, but also to bring them up properly, and unless in the meantime they live a life of absolute celibacy.

Thus, there are many fruitful fields of activity before the members of the Bhagini Samaj for devoting their energies to. The field for work is so vast that, if resolute application is brought to bear thereon, the wider movements for reform may for the present be left to themselves, and great service can be done to the cause of Home Rule without so much as even a verbal reference to it. When printing presses were non-existent, and scope for speech-making very limited, when one could hardly travel twenty-four miles in the course of a day instead of a thousand miles as now, we had only one agency for propagating our ideals, and that was our '*acts*'; and *acts* had immense potency. We are now rushing to and fro with the velocity of air, delivering speeches, writing newspaper articles, and yet we fall short of our accomplishments and the cry of despair fills the air. I, for one, am of opinion that, as in old days our *acts* will have a more powerful influence on the public than any number of speeches and writings. It is my earnest prayer to your Association that its members should give prominence to quiet and unobtrusive work in whatever it does.

February 20, 1918

The Evolution of the Indian National Flag

Chinmohan Sehanavis

As far as we know, India never had a real National Flag of her own either in ancient times or during the middle ages. Though the Maurya, Gupta and Mughal Empires extended over the major part of our Indian territory, there is no evidence of the use of a flag as a symbol of our national unity. The Garuda banner associated with the Guptas was more a dynastic coat-of-arms than a national flag. The saffron banner associated with Shivaji and Guru Ramdas, too, was a symbol of Maratha pride.

The reason for this is not for a seek : no objective, historical basis at the time, for the creation of a national flag nor even for the emergence of an Indian nation which that flag was to symbolise. Happenings in the country even today often drive home the fact that the process of nation-building is a long process which is yet to be completed.

The elements making for the building of our nation began to crystallise only after rise of British power in India. Nationalism was even then only an emerging force, slowly gripping the minds of our people. Our national consciousness was, therefor still not powerful enough to shape itself into an urge



1906



1907



1917



1921



1931



1947

for a national flag of our own. Our sense of the times, however manifested itself circuitously rather than directly. In January, 1831 Raja Rammohan Roy, sailing to England, limped his way from his own ship to a French ship at Capetown harbour, to greet the French tri-colour with a cry of 'Glory', Glory to French! (Collet, Raja Rammohan Roy, p. 308). A few days earlier, on Christmas morning in 1830, the French tricolour had adorned the steeple of the Ochterlony Monument in Calcutta alongside, of course, the Union Jack Dr. Bimanbihari Majumdar ascribes this act to the 'Young Bengal' group of our Hindu College or to some 'Anglo-Indian enthusiast' (History of Political Thought from Rammohan to Dayananda, volume I, p. 84). It has to be remembered that to the progressive of the entire world, the French

tricolour was at that time not merely the national flag of a particular country, but the symbol of the battle-cry of the Revolution—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

People, however, cannot indefinitely remain satisfied with some one else's flag however glorious the values it might stand for They; naturally, seek a national flag of their own. Was there such a flag at the time of 1857 uprising? We do not know for certain. But a popular song of that period known as the 'Flag song of 1857' ends up with these lines :

Hindu, Mussalman, Sikh hamara
Bhai bhai, pyara.
Ich hai Jhanda Azadika.
Use salam hamara.

However as yet we have no idea of the design of the flag to which this song is supposed to be dedicated. Dr Bhupendranath Dutt gives an account of a later initiative in this direction thus : 'Dr. Phanindranath Bose, M.A., Ph.D., reports in his Life an organisation called the Indian National Society to establish amity between the Hindus and Muslims. Members of this organization moved in a procession through the city streets, with a national flag in hands, and singing a national song' (Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinata Sangram, pp. 231-2)

Sris Chandra Bose was associated with the well-known Panini Publishers of Allahabad, and was the elder Brother of Major Bamandas Bose, author of such well known titles as 'The Rise of Christian Power in India'. Ruin of Indian Trades and Industries etc. We have no information as to

the design of the national flag as he had conceived it or even the words of the national song that his followers used to sing on the streets of Lahere in 1883. However, our political aspiration, at that time, had not yet gone beyond the stage of asking for a moderate dose of self-government. Hence this flag could not have been designed as the flag of an independent India.

Dr. Dutta writes : Rajnarain Bose, in his Briddha Hindur Asha (The Hopes of an Old Hindu), held that the lotus is the national symbol of India. He suggested a design for a national flag, quoting from the newspaper Liberal, in circa 1888. (op. cit., p. 232). We do not, however, know anything more about the design, and the design is not likely to have found a concrete shape ever. We shall have occasion however to show how Bose's ideas came to influence later initiatives in the regard.

The quest for a national flag assumed a greater urgency with the Swadeshi movement, described by Rajani Palme Dutt, India Today, as the 'First Great Wave of our National Struggle'. Indeed, it is the tricolour flag that emerged at that time, that has, by and large, gradually evolved into the national flag of independent India, after undergoing, of course, many changes during the four intervening decades. Yet it is not difficult to trace a continuity from this phase onwards.

Surendranath Ghosh's biography of Sachindra Prasad Bose gives an account of the origin of the national flag during the Swadeshi days. Sachindra Prasad Bose was

the son-in-law of the moderate Brahmo leader—Krishna Kumar Mitra, and was himself one of the pioneers of the students' movement in India. The account reads : 'Sachindra Prasad Bose was a close follower of Sir Surendranath Banerjee. In 1906, on the advice of a friend, he pleaded with Sir Surendranath for a national flag of our own. Sir Surendranath accepted the proposal from his disciple. He said, 'Desing a national flag and show it to me'. Bose and his friend went back elated to desing a flag. The flag they designed, was in three colours— green, yellow and red. Sri Surendranath called a meeting for consultations. It was attended by Sir Ashutosh Chowdhury, Sir Abdul Halim Ghaznavi and others (according to Krishna Kumar's son, Sukumar Mitra, the meeting held at the Indian Association Hall, was attended by leaders from all the districts— C.S.). They decided to add seven lotuses symbolising the seven Indian provinces of the map on a base of the three colours, placed according to the positions of the provinces on the map. Sir Surendranath went in looking at the flag with great interest and affection, and steered the proposal to a unanimous approval.

This flag was hoisted for the first time at Greer Park, on August 7, 1906, which was being observed as 'Boycott Day'. Narendranath Sen ceremonially prayed for the flag, Bhupendranath Bose handed it over to Sir Surendranath Bose handed it over to Sir Surendranath, who hoisted it to the bursting of a hundred and one crackers. The

flag was also hoisted on the rostrum of the 1906 Session of the National Congress held in Calcutta, under the presidency of Dadabhai Naroji. The delegates badges, too, had the same tri-colour design. This tricolour was the first flag of the Congress. With changing sentiments, the flag has come to assume its present design (pp. 32-3).

The friend who had advised Sachindra Prasad Bose to raise the question of a national flag with Sir Surendranath, and who had later assisted him in designing the flag has now been identified as Sukumar Mitra, son of Krishna Kumar Mitra. Sukumar Mitra told Dr. Bhupendranath Dutt, "... This flag was borne in demonstrations in the streets of Calcutta till 1911. It w'nt out of use after the annulment of the Partition of Bengal" (op. cit., p. 226).

Sukumar Mitra, the designer of this flag, died year before last at the age of eighty-nine. When I met him a few months before his death he still had a clear memory. He told me that while designing the Indian flag they had been inspired by the flag of the French Revolution and that is why they had made it tri-colour. The flag that he had made with his own hands had seven lotuses indicating the seven Indian provinces on the red strip, the yellow strip in the middle had 'Bande Mataram' inscribed on it in Devanagari, and a moon, as symbols of the Hindu and the Muslim communities.

Further evidence in the matter is available in a reported interview between Sudhir Chandra Banerjee (of the Haldar family of Kalighat, a member of the

Brahmo Samaj and a Congressman), also associated with designing the flag, and Dr. Bhupendranath Dutt : “When the author asked him whether the flag was derived from the tricolor of the French Revolution, he said, “Yes, we had ourselves accepted the values associated with the French tricolour, but in public we explained our adoption of the design as symbolising the multinational character of India” (Dutt, Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinata Sangram; p. 229).

Dutt tells us, “The organs of the Extremists of the day and all those who opposed Sir Surendranath ridiculed the ceremony connected with the adoption of the new flag. We alone supported it in our Yugantar. We said, We accept it as the flag of the national revolution.” According to Sukumar Mitra, only Sanjibani and Bande Mataram in English reported the ceremony objectively. He admits that Yugantar was the only newspaper to greet the new flag (op. cit., p. 226).

Dr. Dutt, who edited the Yugantar, writes elsewhere : “When the newspapers opposed to Surendranath Banerjee ridiculed the ceremony of the flag on August 7, the present author greeted the flag as a symbol of equality, fraternity and liberty. Those were, indeed, days of all days : (op. cit, p. 229-30).

While a section of the people of the country ridiculed the move for a national flag, veteran moderates like Surendranath Banerjee, Ghaznavi, and Ashu Chowdhury, accepted the flag as a symbol of the country’s aspiration for home rule while

young revolutionaries, like Sukumar Mitra, Bhupendranath Dutt and Sudhir Banerjee read into it a dream of an Indian revolution inspired by the French Revolution and leading to the independence of India. But even while recognizing the revolutionary implications of the new flag at heart, the younger ones made public avowals of their support to the more communal interpretation of the design put up by the elder leaders.

There is, here, a slight confusion over a number. The account in the Sanjivani which, according to Sukumar Mitra is the accurate one gives the number of the lotuses as eight, not seven. This is probably correct. The suggestion for the lotus can be traced back to Rajnarain Bose’s earlier proposal in his Briddha Hindur Asha’. For sister Nivedita’s suggestion in the Modern Review, for a flag with the lightning and the lotus as symbols of the soul of India, is of a much later date.

Meanwhile, there had also been some significant developments abroad. Bhikaji Rustam Cama, the well known Indian revolutionary leader, had raised a national flag at the Stuttgart Congress of the Socialist International in August, 1907. Our Flag, published by the Publication Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, says : Madam Cama and her revolutionary compatriots raised the flag in Paris in 1907 (according to some, in 1905). It has almost identical with the first flag; only the top patch had a lotus and seven stars symbolizing the seven rishis (a footnote comments : ‘This is controversial, for there is no definite information about the lotus in

the design'). The flag was unfurled at a Socialist Conference in Barlin'. (p. 1).

This pamphlet published by the Government of India contains a number of inaccuracies. For Madam Cama raised the flag for the first time, definitely, at the Seventh Congress of the Second International, held in August, 1907 (not in 1905). Stuttgart, and not at any Socialist conference held either in Paris or in Berlin. Raising the flag at Stuttgart Madam Cama saluted it and then moved the following resolution : 'That the continuance of British rule in India is positively disastrous and extremely injurious to the beet interest of India, and lovers of freedom all over the world ought to co-operate in freeing from slavery the fifth of the whole human race inhabiting that oppressed country, since the perfect social state demands that no people should be subject to any despotic or tyrannical form of government : (Dr. Abinas Chandra Bhattacharya, Europe—Bharatiya Biplaber Sadhana, p. 63).

The Stuttgart Congress was attended by, among others Lenin, Litvinoff, Lunacharsky, Karl Liebknecht Rosa Luxemburg, Bebel, Kautsky, Jaures and other leaders who were instrumental in getting the Congress accept the main point of the resolution despite bitter resistance from opportunist labour leaders like Ramsay Macdonald. Previous to that they had also been instrumental in making it possible for Madam Cama and her fellow Indian delegate—Sardar Singh Raoji Rana, to attend the Congress all inspite of opposition from men like Macdonald Karl

Kautsky later recalled the occasion and told Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta : 'I remember an Indian lady moving a flag' (Dutta, Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinata Sangram, p. 227).

The words of the resolution moved by Madam Cama, the ideas underlying it, the personality of Madam Cama herself and her political views are enough to establish the fact that to Madam Cama and the Indian revolutionaries abroad the flag was a definite symbol of independent India. Another revolutionary from Bengal, Hem Chandra Kaoyngo who was, at that time, in Paris describes the flag in his Bangla-ey Biplab Prachesta : "... Red, saffron, and blue, the three colours came in that order. The red at the top with eight half-open white lotuses, the saffron at the centre with 'Bande Mataram' in Devanagri inscribed upon it, the blue at the bottom, with a sun on one side, and a half-moon and a star on the other". (p. 205)

Dr. Abinas Chandra Bhattacharya writes in his book, referred to earlier, "Madam Cama hoisted the flag that she had designed much earlier and had made with her own hand." (op. cit, p. 63). Dr. Bhattacharya's book has been for me a source of many fresh interesting and accurate pieces of information, but this particular information is not correct. Madam Came might have had the idea of a national flag as a symbol of independent India. But the design of the flag was not her own; the flag hoisted at the Stuttgart Congress was not made with her own hands either. Before his return to the country, Dr. Dutta, too probably shared at

least partially. Dr. Bhattacharya's idea in this regard. But when he asked Hem Chandra Kanungo about this on his return to India, Kanungo wrote to him in a letter. In my book (i.e. *Bangla-ey Biplab Pracheshta*) I have not claimed credit as the designer of the national flag, though I had made it, entirely by myself (*Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinata Sangram*, p. 222). Kanungo tells us in his book that he had made the flag in Paris for Madam Cama, when she was going to attend the Stuttgart Congress.

Mahabhandhu Kanungo, son of Hem Chandra, writes to me in a letter, "My father had made the First Indian National flag on the advice of Madam Cama, Shyamji Karishnavarma and others." Kanungo was a competent artist and photographer, and it is only too likely that he assignment of making the flag had been entrusted to him. But did the design originate with Madam Cama, though she herself might not have made this first flag with her own hands?

Hemchandra Kanungo had written to Dr. Dutta : "When Savarkar gave his interpretation of the flower (the lotus), the sun, the moon, etc. on the flag, for a newspaper in Bombay; he denied the moon was a Muslim symbol. He also claimed that he had himself designed the flag The design of the flag, was not mine; in fact, I opposed it; in particular, I had strong objections to the inscription of 'Bande



Matararn' at the centre", (*Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinata Sangram*, p. 222).

Kanungo here does not clearly support or reject Savarkar's claim that he had designed the flag—all that he affirms is that he himself had not designed it. What appears, however, to be the case, is that the flag had been designed neither by Savarkar nor by Madam Cama at Stuttgart and the flag used in Calcutta during the Swadeshi upsurge the year before, are strikingly similar. They are both tri-colour, both have red at the top with the eight lotuses; the Calcutta flag had 'Vande Mataram' in Devanagiri on a yellow ground while the Paris flag had it on saffron base. While the Calcutta flag had the sun and the moon on a green panel at the bottom, the Paris flag had the same symbols (with a star added) on a blue background.

Such close similarity cannot be just a coincidence. And since the flag had been hoisted in Calcutta on August 7, 1906 and the other flag at Stuttgart a year later (August 1907), it is quite likely that a specimen of the Calcutta flag had reached the Indian revolutionaries abroad in the meantime, and that Hem Chandra Kanungo had designed the second flag on the basis of that flag on the eve of the Stuttgart Congress. The slight difference in the colour scheme—the substitution of yellow by saffron—may have been just a matter of confusion.

Sukumar Mitra told me that one of the

young revolutionaries travelling abroad at the time must have taken a specimen of the Calcutta flag with him. He even mentioned Heramba Lal Gupta's name in this connection, though he was not absolutely certain about it. I do not know when Gupta left the country, so it is difficult to say whether he had been responsible for the transmission of the design to the Indian revolutionaries abroad.

Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta however refers very definitely to another revolutionary in this connection. Khansi Rao, brother of Madho Rao, a General of Baroda State Army, had gone to Switzerland for military training, and had met there the Bangali revolutionary—Hem Chandra Kanungo, Dr. Dutta writes : “He (that is, Khansi Rao) had carried with him a small specimen of the tricolour national flag adopted by the Bengal Congress in 1907. (Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinata Sangram, p. 155). This, at last, gives us definitely clue as to the transmission of the Calcutta flag to Paris that is, via Khansi Rao via Hem Chandra.

Madam Cama used to have a picture of the flag on the cover of her journal—the Talwar. When she spoke at the ‘Indian House’ in London or elsewhere, she used to refer to this flag thus; ‘This is the flag for which Khudiram and Prafulla Chaki died’. Dr. Dutta writes : ‘This is the reason why the author was never in doubt that the flag adopted by the Bengal Congress had become the flag of the revolutionaries in Paris’ (op. cit, p. 227).

There was a later phase in the relation between the Indian revolutionaries abroad and this flag or a variant of it later. The Indian Independence committee, set up by Indian revolutionaries in Barlin, soon after the outbreak of the World war I (usually known as the ‘Berlin Committee’) adopted the same flag, with some modifications of course. Dr. Dutta writes : “The author reached Berlin on the eve of summer 1915, after travelling through many countries in disguise, and saw the flag in the office of the ‘Berlin Committee’, it was a plain tricolour with the same colour composition. When the author asked Virendranath Chattopadhyay said, ‘Those were Madam Cama’s creations, we have dropped them’. (op. cit., pp. 227-8).

Dr. Dutta writes that this was the flag that he had pointed out to his German colleague, Vincent Krafft and had said : ‘Many have given their lives for this flag’ to which Krafft replied : ‘And many more will do so yet’. Dr. Dutta comments : “The author said these words under the impression that the Berlin flag was only a variant of the flag hoisted in Calcutta on August 7.”

According to Dr. Dutta, the flag was not used widely in public at the time, but when the ‘Barlin Committee’ set-up a volunteer force in Mesopotamia with deserters and prisoner from the British Indian army along with some Ghadar revolutionaries, this force came to use the flag. Kartarmji, a former member of the ‘Berlin Committee’, told a journalist in Jamshedpur in 1948 that he had ‘Berlin Committee’ flag with him still. He is

no longer alive, but the flag may still be lying with his son”. (op. cit., pp. 228-9).

It is also interesting to note here that the wellknown Ghadar party, too, used to hoist a flag with the same colour composition—red on top, yellow in the middle and green below with a pair of crossed swords in the middle. This, too, is a variant of the flag used during the Swadeshi days.

While the Indian revolutionaries abroad were thus using the tri-colour flag, Annie Besant had set up in India in 1916 the Home Rule League and was trying to introduce, in this connection, another national flag. It had five red and four green strips arranged diagonally. It had seven stars like those on the Great Bear, and a Union Jack on the top left corner towards the flagstaff. It had a white half-moon and a star at the other corner. (our flag, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, pp. 1-2). The makar of this flag had obviously Dominion status or Home Rule in her mind and not complete Independence. However a flag with Union Jack on it at one corner naturally did not find a place in the heart of our people fast moving towards a more radical political stand.

At the Vijayawada session of the All India Congress Committee, in April, 1921 a young man from Andhra placed a proposal for a flag before Gandhiji. It was a bicolour flag with red for the Hindus, and green for the Muslims. Gandhiji suggested in addition a white strip for all the other religious communities in India and a Charkha at the centre. This tricolour, though not officially

adopted by the Congress, came to be used on various occasions, thanks to Gandhiji’s support.

Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee writes that in December, 1924, on the eve of the Belgaon session of the Congress, Dwijendra Nath Tagore, C. F. Andrews and a few others had written a letter to Gandhiji from Santiniketan, asking him to add saffron to the national flag as a symbol of the ideal of vairagya, (‘The National Flag’, Modern Review, June 1931, p. 684).

In the meantime the white, green and red tricolour, with the charkha, had become quite popular, especially in the Congress circles. This was the flag that was hoisted at midnight on December 31, 1929, at the Lahore session of the Congress, on adoption of the resolution for independence, and all over the country on January 26, 1930 on our first Independence Day. The flag was in use during the historic Dandi March, at the Salt campaign at Dharsana, and during the Civil Disobedience Movement in Peshawar, Sholapur, Chittagong, Bombay and other places.

But the communal interpretation of the flag created new problems. The Sikhs said that they were not prepared to accept the white strip as a symbol for all the other communities, while the red and the white were reserved for the Hindus and the Muslims. In that case they, two, wanted a separate colour for themselves. They could accept the flag as it was—only if the colours were, regarded as symbols of national ideals rather than of particular communities.

A National Flag Committee was, therefore, set up to resolve the controversies in April 1931, at the Karachi session of the Congress. The Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Pattabi Sitaramayya circulated a questionnaire to Congress at various levels to different organization and the people in general. Many individuals and organizations sent replies. Dr. Sunil Kumar Chatterjee and Dr. Kalidas Nag were abroad at the time. They discussed the issue between themselves and Dr. Chatterjee wrote the article, referred to earlier, for the Modern Review, on the basis of these discussions. The article protested against the communal interpretation of the colours of the flag, and asked the Congress authorities to consider if the tricolour could be made into a fourcolour flag.

The National Flag Committee took into account all these opinions and recommended a new flag with a reddish almond charkha on a light green base. But the All India Congress Committee did not accept their recommended and decided at the session of August 6.8.1931 that the National Flag shall be three-coloured horizontally arranged as before, but the colours shall be saffron, white and green, in the order stated here from top to bottom, with the spinning wheel in dark blue in the centre of the white strips, the colours standing for qualities, not communities. The saffron shall represent courage and sacrifice, white peace and truth, and green shall represent faith and chivalry and the spinning wheel the hope of the masses. The proportions of the flag should

be as three to two', ('The History of the Congress'—Dr. Pattabhi Sittaramayya, Vol. 1, 1935, pp. 811-12).

Matangini Hazra and many martyrs all over the country. It is for the honour of this flag, adopted by the Congress that laid down their lives during the 'Quit India' movement of 1942. Subhas Chandra Bose's Azad Hind Government and the Indian National Army also adopted the same design minus the Charkha. The Indian Constituent Assembly, too, adopted the same flag as the national flag of Independent India on July 22, 1947, with a minor change—the Charkha giving way to the Ashokan Dharmachakra with twenty-four spokes. On August 15, 1947 this flag was hoisted in Delhi and all over the country. While this is the flag now officially used as the National Flag and hoisted ceremonially on August 15 and January 26 every year, the old saffron-white-green tricolour with the Charkha on it has now become the flag of the Indian National Congress.

The history of the Indian National flag thus shows a thread of continuity in spite of many changes and developments. And it also bears the impress of the Moderates, the Extremists, the Revolutionaries and the Gandhijes—those within the country as also those abroad at various stages of our national movement. Our national flag is thus the product of our national mind evolving through a tempestuous history, and hears a sanctity from all its past rich associations.

(From '*Russ Biplav O Pravasi Bharatiya Biplavi*'—Chinmohan Sehanavis, Manisha Granthalaya, Calcutta, pp. 279-92).

চারণের মর্মবাণী

বিজয়লাল চট্টোপাধ্যায়

কালের বক্ষ থেকে নিশ্চিহ্ন হয়ে গেছে সেই জগত যেখানে অন্নের প্রাচুর্য ছিল ঘরে ঘরে। বারো মাসে অনুষ্ঠিত হতো তেরো পার্বণ, গোষ্ঠে বইতো দুধের বান, গ্রামগুলি মুখরিত হয়ে থাকতো মাকু চালানোর ঠকাঠক শব্দে, গৃহস্থের আঙিনা হাসতো সোনার ধানে, বাংলার শিল্পদ্রব্যে বোবাই হয়ে বাঙালি সদাগরের জাহাজ চলতো সমুদ্রবক্ষ অতিক্রম করে দেশদেশান্তরে।

ধনেধান্যে ভরা সেই দেশকে লেলিহান রসনা দিয়ে মুছে নিলো ছিয়াত্তুরে মঘস্বরের দুর্ভিক্ষ-রাক্ষসী। হাজার হাজার মানুষ না খেতে পেয়ে মরে গেল। যারা মরলো না তারা দুর্ভিক্ষের হাত থেকে নিষ্কৃতি পেয়ে পড়লো কোম্পানির কবলে। ওয়ারেন হেস্টিংস কর্মচারীদিগকে হুকুম দিলেন, কোম্পানির খাজনা পড়ে থাকলে চলবে না; যেমন করে পারো আদায় কর। খাজনা আদায় হলো বটে কিন্তু বাংলার চাষির সর্বস্ব গেল। বাঙালি কৃষকের হালের গরু-বেচা টাকায় ইংরেজ দুটো কাজ করলো—বিলাতে কাপড়ের কল বানানা আর নেপোলিয়নের সঙ্গে যুদ্ধ চালানো। সেই থেকে বাংলার পল্লীজীবনের মেরুদণ্ড গেল চিরদিনের জন্য ভেঙে। যেন ভুলে না যাই, ম্যাগ্গেস্টারের জয়ধ্বজা উড়ছে বাংলার সর্বস্বান্ত গ্রামগুলির চিতাভস্মের উপরে।

আজ একটা নতুন জগতে আমরা এসে পড়েছি। এই নতুন জগতে আমরা দেখতে পাচ্ছি—একদিকে মুষ্টিমেয় মানুষের ঐশ্বর্যের আড়ম্বর, আর একদিকে লক্ষ লক্ষ জীবন্ত নর-কঙ্কালের দুঃসহ দারিদ্র্য। এই নতুন জগতের জন্য প্রয়োজন নতুন ধরনের রাজনৈতিক চিন্তাধারার। আত্মা-অনাওয়ার বিচার



করবার আমাদের অবসর নেই আজ। সাংখ্যের প্রকৃতি-পুরুষের ভেদ নিয়ে আলোচনা করবারই বা সময় কোথায়? পরকাল আছে কি নেই—কালিদাসের জন্মস্থান বাংলাদেশে না বাংলার বাহিরে—এসব প্রশ্নেরও সমাধান করবার দিন আজ নয়। আমাদের সামনে এখন একটি মাত্র কর্তব্য রয়েছে আর সেই কর্তব্য হচ্ছে, কোটি কোটি জীবন্ত নর-কঙ্কালকে জীবনের প্রাচুর্যের মধ্যে বাঁচিয়ে তোলা। যে দেশে কয়েদীদের মধ্যে শতকরা পঁচানব্বুই জন জেলখানায় আসে উপবাসী স্ত্রী-কন্যার জন্য চুরি করতে বাধ্য হয়ে—সে দেশে রাসলীলার ব্যাখ্যা করবার আর নীতির বড়ো বড়ো কথা আওড়ানোর কোনো মানে হয় না।

Ninety-five percent of criminals are men who have committed offences because they have wanted food for themselves, their wives and children.

এই কথাই সেদিন বললেন ম্যাজিস্ট্রেট জে. কে. বিশ্বাস রৌটারি ক্লাবের বক্তৃতায়। ঠাকুর বলেছেন, খালি পেটে ধর্ম হয় না এ কথা খুব খাঁটি কথা। যে দেশে হাজার হাজার মানুষ একবেলাও পেট পুরে খেতে পায় না সে দেশে শাস্ত্রের কথা আউড়িয়ে মানুষকে ধার্মিক করবার চেষ্টা কত বড়ো একটা প্রহসন—ঋষি বন্ধিম সে কথা বুঝেই কমলাকান্তে মাজ্জারীর মুখ দিয়ে বলিয়েছেন,

“চোরকে ফাঁসি দাও, তাহাতে আমার আপত্তি নেই কিন্তু তাহার সঙ্গে আর একটি নিয়ম কর। যে বিচারক চোরকে সাজা দিবেন তিনি আগে তিন দিন উপবাস করিবেন। তাহাতে যদি তাঁহার চুরি করিয়া খাইতে ইচ্ছা না করে তবে তিনি চোরকে স্বচ্ছন্দে ফাঁসি দিবেন।”

তাই তো আমরা চারণের দল এই নিরন্ন দেশের কোটি কোটি সর্বহারাদের লক্ষ্য করে বলছি, তোমরা সর্বাগ্রে বাঁচো, যেমন করে পারো সর্বাগ্রে দেহের সঙ্গে প্রাণকে যুক্ত রাখবার জন্য সচেতন হও। ধর্মের সমস্যা, সাহিত্যের সমস্যা, দর্শনের সমস্যা, নীতির সমস্যা—সব সমস্যার স্থান হচ্ছে বাঁচার সমস্যার পরে।

কিন্তু কোটি কোটি মানুষের বাঁচার সমস্যার সমাধানের পথ কোথায়? দেশের যারা ভালো ছেলে তারা কবিতা লিখুক, ছবি আঁকুক, মন্দিরে বসে জপ করুক, পাণ্ডিত্যপূর্ণ থিসিস লিখে হাততালি পাক। আমরা যারা চারণ—আমাদের জীবনের আকাশে ধ্রুবতারা হয়ে জ্বলছে একটিমাত্র সংকল্প আর সেই সংকল্প হচ্ছে, জগতের যারা সর্বহারা—দৈন্যের অভিশাপ থেকে তাদের মুক্তি। দুধের অভাবে যতক্ষণ একজন শিশুও মাতৃকোলে কাঁদবে ততক্ষণ আমাদের চারণদের স্বর্গ নেই, মুক্তি নেই, আনন্দ নেই। অবশ্য এটা ঠিকই যে মানুষের তৃপ্তি কেবল রুটিতে নয়। শুধুই বেঁচে থাকার সমস্যা হচ্ছে পশুর সমস্যা। কেমন করে বাঁচবো—এই প্রশ্ন জেগেছে মানুষেরই মনে। সুতরাং আমরা চারণেরা সমাজের প্রত্যেকটি মানুষকে কেবল যে অন্নের অধিকারী করতে চাই, তা নয়—তাকে আমরা সংস্কৃতিরও অধিকারী করতে চাই। আমরা বিশ্বাস করি মানুষের যেমন দেহ আছে তেমনি আত্মাও

আছে। এই আত্মার অস্তিত্ব সম্পর্কে আমরা তাকে উদাসীন রাখতে চাই নে। পরিপূর্ণ মানুষ বলতে আমরা বুঝি সেই মানুষ যার দেহে আছে স্বাস্থ্যের প্রাচুর্য, মগজে আছে জ্ঞানের শিখা, আত্মায় আছে প্রেমের বিশালতা। সেই সমাজকেই আমরা আদর্শ-সমাজ বলে বিশ্বাস করি যে সমাজে প্রত্যেকটি মানুষ মুক্ত এবং পরিপূর্ণ। আমরা চারণেরা পৃথিবীতে যে Classless Society-কে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করবার জন্য সহস্র মরণকে বরণ করতে প্রস্তুত হয়েছি—সেই শ্রেণীহীন সমাজ হলো এই আদর্শ-সমাজ। I want every individual to become a full-blooded and fully developed member of society—এই স্বপ্ন কেবল গান্ধীর স্বপ্ন নয়—প্রত্যেকটি চিন্তাশীল মহামানবের স্বপ্ন। কিন্তু ভবিষ্যতের শুধু স্বপ্ন দেখে আমাদের তৃপ্তি নেই। স্বপ্নকে বাস্তবে কেমন করে রূপ দেওয়া যায় তার কথা আমরা দিনের পর দিন এবং রাতের পর রাত ভেবেছি। ভেবে ভেবে দেখেছি, আদর্শ-সমাজ সৃষ্টির প্রথম সোপান হচ্ছে গৃহে গৃহে অন্ন-বস্ত্রের প্রাচুর্যের ব্যবস্থা করা। যে মানুষ নিরন্ন তার কাছে র্যাফেলের ম্যাডোনার চাইতে ডাল-ভাতের প্রয়োজন অনেক বেশি।

কেমন করে গৃহে গৃহে অন্ন-বস্ত্রের প্রাচুর্যের ব্যবস্থা করা যায় তার সন্ধানও আমরা চারণেরা পেয়েছি। ব্যক্তিগত সম্পত্তির উচ্ছেদ ব্যতীত কোটি কোটি সর্বহারাকে দৈন্যের শৃঙ্খল থেকে মুক্ত করা যে অসম্ভব—এই মহাতত্বকে আমরা ধ্রুব সত্য বলে জেনেছি। এদেশ থেকে ইংরেজ চলে গেলেই আমাদের দুঃখ-নিশার অবসান হবে—এমন বিশ্বাস আমরা মনের মধ্যে পোষণ করিনে। একদল শ্বেতকায় ধনীর আসনে একদল কৃষ্ণকায় ধনী উপবেশন করে যদি রাষ্ট্রশক্তিকে ব্যবহার করবার সুযোগ পায় নিজেদের স্বার্থকে সুরক্ষিত রাখবার জন্য তবে ভারতবর্ষের লক্ষ লক্ষ সর্বহারা যে তিমিরে ছিলো সেই তিমিরেই থেকে যাবে। জন্মভূমির বুক থেকে বিদেশি-শাসনের জগদল পাথরকে সকলের আগে অপসারিত করতেই হবে। এবিষয়ে কোনো সন্দেহেরই স্থান নেই। আমরা শুধু বলতে চাই, সেই পাথরকে অপসারিত করলেই

আমাদের কাজ ফুরিয়ে যাবে না। জাতি কর্তৃক জাতির শোষণকে বন্ধ করা যেমন প্রয়োজনীয়, শ্রেণী কর্তৃক শ্রেণীর শোষণকে বন্ধ করাও তেমনি প্রয়োজনীয়। Imperialism-কে আঘাত করবার যতখানি দরকার আছে, Capitalism-কে আঘাত করবারও ততখানি দরকার আছে। বিদেশি ধনীদেব লোহার শৃঙ্খল আর স্বদেশী ধনীদেব সোনার শৃঙ্খল—সর্বহারাদের কাছে এই দুই শৃঙ্খলের মধ্যে খুব বেশি তফাৎ নেই। রাজনৈতিক স্বাধীনতা পেয়ে আমরা বিশেষ লাভবান হবো না যদি সে স্বাধীনতা অর্থনৈতিক মুক্তিকে বহন করে না আসে সর্বহারাদের দ্বারা দ্বারা। এই অর্থনৈতিক মুক্তি জনসাধারণের জীবনে ততদিন কায়াহীন ছায়া হয়ে থাকবে যতদিন জমি, খনি আর বড়ো বড়ো কলকারখানার মালিক হয়ে রইবে মুষ্টিমেয় ধনকুবেরের দল। পয়সার জোরে রাষ্ট্রশক্তিকে মুঠোর মধ্যে রেখে তারা জনসাধারণের জীবন নিয়ে ছিনিমিনি খেলবে যেমন আমেরিকায় কৃষক-মজুরদের ভাগ্য নিয়ে ছিনিমিনি খেলছে রকফেলার আর কার্নেগীর দল। রাজতন্ত্রের অবসান ঘটাবার জন্য যেমন নেপোলিয়নের প্রয়োজন ছিল, আজ জগৎ জুড়ে ধনকুবেরদের যে রাজত্ব চলেছে তারও অবসান ঘটাবার জন্য তেমনি নূতন একজন নেপোলিয়নের প্রয়োজন এসেছে। রেডিও আর এরোপ্লেনের কষ্টিপাথরে আমরা আজ সভ্যতার মূল্য নিরূপণ করতে যাবো না—আমরা সেক্সপীয়ারের কাব্য, র্যাফেলের ছবি আর তাজমহলের সৌন্দর্যের মাপকাঠি দিয়েও সভ্যতার বিচার করবো না। আমাদের কাছে বর্তমান সভ্যতাকে বিচার করবার মাপকাঠি শুধু একটি আর এই মাপকাঠিটি হলো সর্বসাধারণের মঙ্গল। আমাদের এই সভ্যতা কি কোটি কোটি কৃষকের ও শ্রমিকের জীবনে আনন্দ আনতে পেরেছে? তা যদি না পেরে থাকে তবে এ সভ্যতাকে বর্বর-সভ্যতা বলতে আমাদের বিন্দুমাত্র কুণ্ঠা থাকা উচিত নয়।

কিন্তু রাষ্ট্রীয় স্বাধীনতা না পেলে আমরা তো ব্যক্তিগত সম্পত্তির অবসান ঘটাতে পারবো না। রাষ্ট্রের সশস্ত্র পুলিশবাহিনী ধনীদেব সম্পত্তিকে সতত রক্ষা করছে। জমিদারের প্রত্যেকটি গোমস্তার পিছনে রয়েছে

একজন করে লাল-পাগড়ি-পরা কনস্টেবল। খাজনা দেবো না বললেই মাল ক্রেণক অনিবার্য। সুতরাং গান্ধীর ভাষায়—

The entire strength of the country must be used for ousting the third and usurping party.

আমাদের মধ্যে রাজনৈতিক অথবা অর্থনৈতিক আদর্শ ও কর্মপন্থা নিয়ে কোনো প্রকারের আত্মকলহ এখন সর্বনেশে হবে। দেশের সমস্ত শক্তিকে এখন সংঘবদ্ধ করতে হবে একটি মাত্র সংকল্পকে কার্যে পরিণত করবার জন্য আর এই সংকল্প হলো সাম্রাজ্যবাদের উচ্ছেদ। আমরা বিশ্বাস করি, কংগ্রেস হলো সেই প্রতিষ্ঠান যার পতাকাতলে মিলিত হয়ে সাম্রাজ্যবাদের বিরুদ্ধে লড়াই চালানো হবে সব চেয়ে বুদ্ধিমানের কাজ। আমরা চারণেরা, তাই, প্রাণপণে চেষ্টা করবো কংগ্রেসকে উত্তরোত্তর শক্তিশালী করে তুলতে। আমরা কাজের দ্বারা, কথার দ্বারা অথবা লেখার দ্বারা এমন কিছু করবো না যার জন্য কংগ্রেসের অথবা কংগ্রেসের জননায়কগণের মর্যাদার কোনরূপ লাঘব হবার আশঙ্কা থাকতে পারে।

কংগ্রেসকে ভিত্তি করে জনসাধারণকে স্বাধীনতা লাভের জন্য উদ্বুদ্ধ করে তোলাই হচ্ছে এখন আমাদের সকলের বড়ো কাজ। কংগ্রেসকে করে তুলতে হবে দেশের লক্ষ লক্ষ চাষি-মজুরের প্রতিষ্ঠান। তারা যেদিন কংগ্রেসের মধ্যে এসে সমবেত কণ্ঠে বলবে, বিদেশি-শাসনের অন্যান্যকে জীবন গেলেও সহ্য করবো না—সেদিন সাম্রাজ্যবাদের লৌহদুর্গ তাসের ঘরের মত ধূলায় লুটিয়ে পড়বে। এই মহাসত্যের দিকে লক্ষ্য রেখে গান্ধী তাই বলছেন,

Let them everywhere knit themselves together and have a consciousness of their strength.

আমাদের চারণদের সামনে এখন একমাত্র কাজ, জনসাধারণকে সংঘবদ্ধ করে আত্মশক্তির প্রাচুর্যে তাদের বিশ্বাসবান করে তোলা।

আমাদের অভিবাদনের কায়দা, ইউনিফর্ম এবং নিয়মাবলী দেখে কারও কারও মনে হতে পারে



কুটীর-শিল্প আর কল-কারখানা—উভয়ের একত্র অবস্থান

আমরা ফ্যাসিস্ট, নাৎসী বা ঐ জাতীয় কোনো দল সৃষ্টি করতে চাই। একথা তাই অকুণ্ঠভাষায় ঘোষণা করা আমরা প্রয়োজন মনে করি—ফ্যাসিস্ট অথবা নাৎসী আদর্শ ও কর্মপন্থাকে বিশ্বের মঙ্গলের পথে আমরা ঘোর অন্তরায় বলে মনে করি। আমরা বিশ্বাস করি—সবার উপরে মানুষ সত্য, তাহার উপরে নাই। মানুষের জন্যই রাষ্ট্র, রাষ্ট্রের জন্য মানুষ নয়। আমরা পৃথিবীর সকল জাতির সঙ্গে আত্মীয়তার সূত্রে আবদ্ধ হয়ে শান্তিতে বাস করতে চাই। জীবনের কোনো ক্ষেত্রে—বিশেষত রাজনৈতিক ক্ষেত্রে—হিংসা ও কোন প্রকার মিথ্যাচারকে প্রশ্রয় দিতে আমরা একেবারেই প্রস্তুত নই। আমরা বিশ্বাস করি, কোনো উচ্চ নিষ্কলঙ্ক আদর্শে পৌঁছাতে গেলে পন্থাও নিষ্কলঙ্ক হওয়া প্রয়োজনীয়। সত্যগ্রহকে আমরা স্বাধীনতালাভের প্রকৃষ্ট পন্থা বলে সর্বান্তঃকরণে বিশ্বাস করি।

ভগবানকে যাঁরা একমাত্র আশ্রয় মনে করে জীবনে আনন্দ, শক্তি ও সান্ত্বনা পান—তাঁদের বিশ্বাসকে আমরা অশ্রদ্ধা করি নে। আবার ভগবদ্ভক্ত না হয়েও লেনিনের অথবা বুদ্ধের মতো একটা বিরাট আদর্শের জন্য বাঁচতে পারা যায়—এ কথা মানতেও আমাদের কোনো বাধা নেই। মানুষের জীবনে অর্থের কামনা আর সব কামনাকে ছাড়িয়ে আছে—একথা আমরা মানি। অর্থকে মানুষ চায় বটে—কিন্তু খ্যাতির কামনাও কি তার অন্তরে একটা প্রকাণ্ড স্থান অধিকার করে নেই? আর অনেক সময়ে অর্থের কামনা কি খ্যাতির জন্যই নয়? বড়ো বড়ো কল-কারখানার

বিরোধী নই আমরা, আমাদের দেশে তাদের প্রয়োজন আছে নিশ্চয়ই। কুটীরশিল্পের প্রসারকেও আমরা সমান প্রয়োজনীয় বলে মনে করি। আমরা বিশ্বাস করি, কুটীর-শিল্প আর কল-কারখানা—উভয়ের একত্র অবস্থান খুবই সম্ভব।

এমন একটা স্বতন্ত্রদল গড়বার সার্থকতা কি—এরকম প্রশ্ন কোনো কোনো মনে জেগেছে। এর উত্তর দিতে গিয়ে বলতে চাই, প্রাচীনের সঙ্গে নবীনের এই নিদারুণ সংঘর্ষের দিনে আমরা উভয়ের সমন্বয়ে বিশ্বাস করি। মার্কসবাদের মধ্যে যে অর্থনৈতিক সত্য রয়েছে তার সঙ্গে ভারতীয় সভ্যতার চিরন্তন সত্যের মিলনের উপরেই চারণ-আন্দোলনের ভিত্তি। প্রাচ্যের ও পাশ্চাত্যের আদর্শের মধ্যে এই সমন্বয়-সাধনের আজ একান্তই প্রয়োজন আছে।

চারণ-আন্দোলনের আর একটা সার্থকতা রয়েছে সঙ্গীতের মধ্য দিয়ে যুগ-সত্যগুলিকে জন-সাধারণের কাছে প্রচার করবার মধ্যে। রাজপুতানার চারণেরা একদিন গান দিয়ে যে শৌর্যের আঙুন জ্বালিয়েছিলো অন্তরে অন্তরে, সেই শৌর্যের আঙুন আমরাও জ্বালাতে চাই অবসন্ন দেশের শিরায় শিরায়। গান না হলে প্রাণ জাগে না। গানকে আশ্রয় করে আমরা স্বাদেশিকতার ও শ্রেণীহীন সমাজের আদর্শকে ছড়িয়ে দেবো দিগ্দিগন্তরে। গ্রামে গ্রামে সঙ্গীতের সাহায্যে সোস্যালিজমের আদর্শকে প্রচার করবার এই কাজে আর কোনো রাজনৈতিক দল ব্রতী হয়েছে বলে আমাদের জানা নেই। তারপর ‘মিলিশিয়া’ গঠনের ব্যাপারেও চারণদল আপনার অস্তিত্বের সার্থকতাকে

প্রতিপন্ন করেছে। আমাদের ইউনিফর্ম, আমাদের অভিবাদনের কায়দা—সবকিছুই একটা সুশৃঙ্খল স্বেচ্ছাসেবকবাহিনী গঠন করবার সংকল্প নিয়ে। এই সংকল্প ইতিমধ্যেই সাধনার মধ্য দিয়ে জাতীয় জীবনে রূপ নিতে আরম্ভ করেছে। আমাদের সমসাময়িক রাজনৈতিক দলগুলির মধ্যে আর কোন্ দল এই ‘মিলিশিয়া’ গঠনের কাজে হস্তক্ষেপ করেছে? তারপর সোস্যালিজমের আদর্শ এবং কর্মপন্থাকে এমন অল্প কথার মধ্যে গুছিয়ে সুস্পষ্টভাষায় প্রকাশ করবার যে প্রতীক চারণদল গ্রহণ করেছে—তার মধ্যেও কি নূতনত্ব নেই? আমাদের বিশ্বাস চারণদলের অস্তিত্বের একটা বিশেষ প্রয়োজন আছে আদর্শের সঙ্গে আদর্শের এই ঘাত-প্রতিঘাতের দিনে। আমাদের এই স্বাতন্ত্র্য যেন উদ্ধত স্বাতন্ত্র্য হয়ে অন্যকে আঘাত না করে।

পরিশেষে চারণ-আন্দোলনের বৈশিষ্ট্য হচ্ছে দেশের তরুণ সম্প্রদায়কে সংঘবদ্ধ করার মধ্যে। জনসাধারণ তো শূকনো বারুদ হয়ে আছে। কোথায় সেই অগ্নিস্ফুলিঙ্গ যার ছোঁয়া লেগে বারুদের স্তূপ সহস্র শিখায় জ্বলে উঠবে? তরুণের সবুজ প্রাণই হচ্ছে সেই স্ফুলিঙ্গ। তাই দেশের যুবক যারা—তাদের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিমার মধ্যে পরিবর্তন আনা হচ্ছে সকলের আগের কাজ। লক্ষ্য আমাদের কি হওয়া উচিত এবং সেই লক্ষ্যে পৌঁছাতে গেলে আমাদের কি কি করতে হবে—তার কথা যুবকদের পরিষ্কার করে জানা চাই। চিন্তা যেখানে এলোমেলো, উচ্ছ্বাসের যেখানে প্রাচুর্য কিন্তু জ্ঞানের যেখানে দৈন্য, সেখানে আকাশকে চীৎকারে চীৎকারে আমরা যতই মুখরিত করে তুলিনা কেন, লক্ষ্য থেকে যাবে সুদূরে। চারণদল তাই তো যুবকদের উন্মাদনাকে দাঁড় করাতে চায় একটা বৈজ্ঞানিক সত্য-দৃষ্টির উপরে। এইদিক দিয়ে দেখতে গেলে চারণ-আন্দোলন হচ্ছে বিশেষ করে যুব-আন্দোলন—যদিও যুব-সমাজের মধ্যেই তার অস্তিত্ব একান্তভাবে সীমাবদ্ধ নয়। যা সত্য—তারই সঙ্গে যুবকদের পরিচয় করিয়ে দিয়ে চারণ-আন্দোলন তাদের টেনে আনতে চায় খামারে, খনিতে আর কারখানায় গণ-ঐরাবৎকে চালাবার জন্য। তরুণেরা যেখানে নিদ্রিত—সর্বহারাদের মুক্তি সেখানে অসম্ভব। রাজনীতির ক্ষেত্রে নেতৃত্ব হাতে নেবার জন্য

দলাদলির মধ্যে জড়িয়ে পড়ার চেয়ে দেশের তরুণদের মনে সাম্যবাদ সম্পর্কে একটা সুস্পষ্ট ধারণা জন্মিয়ে দেওয়াকে আমরা, তাই, অধিকতর মূল্যবান কাজ বলে মনে করি।

আসুন, সকলে দলে দলে যোগ দিয়ে এই আন্দোলনকে শক্তিশালী করি। রাজনৈতিক আকাশে ঝড় উঠেছে আজ। ফেডারেশনের বিরুদ্ধে লড়াই করবার দিন এসেছে। দেশীয় রাজ্যগুলিতে শুরু হয়েছে গণ-আন্দোলনের ভূমিকম্প। ভারতবর্ষ আজ দ্রুতবেগে জন্ম নিতে চলেছে একটা বিরাট ঐক্যের মধ্যে। এই মাহেন্দ্রক্ষণে যৌবন-জল-তরঙ্গে আমরা জয় মা বলে ভাসিয়ে দিলাম আমাদের নব-আন্দোলনের তরণীখানিকে। জয় হোক।

চারণের প্রতিজ্ঞা-পত্র :

- ১। অদ্য হইতে পৃথিবীতে শ্রেণীহীন-সমাজ-প্রতিষ্ঠাই (Classless Society) আমার জীবনের সর্বপ্রধান লক্ষ্য হইল।
- ২। আমি বিশ্বাস করি, ব্যক্তিগত সম্পত্তির উচ্ছেদ-সাধনই (Expropriation) এই মহান আদর্শে উপনীত হইবার অপরিহার্য পন্থা।
- ৩। আমি বিশ্বাস করি, ব্যক্তিগত সম্পত্তির উচ্ছেদ-সাধনের জন্য ধনতান্ত্রিক রাষ্ট্রের অবসান (Overthrow of the Capitalist State) সর্বাগ্রে করণীয়।
- ৪। আমি বিশ্বাস করি, জনসাধারণ কর্তৃক অহিংস-আইন-অমান্য-আন্দোলনের আশ্রয়-গ্রহণই (Civil Disobedience) ধনতান্ত্রিক রাষ্ট্রের উচ্ছেদ-সাধনের প্রকৃষ্ট উপায়।
- ৫। আমি বিশ্বাস করি, গণ-সংগঠনই (Organised Labour) এইরূপ আন্দোলন সৃষ্টির একমাত্র সোপান।

চারণের করণীয় :

- ১। আপনার দেহকে সুগঠিত এবং সবল করিয়া গড়িবার জন্য প্রতিদিন নিয়মিতভাবে ব্যায়াম করিব।

- ২। সর্বদার জন্য মাথা উঁচু করিয়া চলিব, মেরুদণ্ড খাড়া রাখিয়া বসিব।
- ৩। কথা বলিবার সময় অপরের চোখের দিকে তাকাইয়া কথা বলিব।
- ৪। বাক্যে সংযমী হইব। যে কথার মূল্য আছে, মাত্র তাহাই বলিব।
- ৫। ব্রহ্মচার্য পালন করিব।
- ৬। সামাজিক ব্যবস্থার দোষে যাহারা আজও নিরক্ষর, দরিদ্র অথবা অস্পৃশ্য হইয়া আছে—তাহাদের সঙ্গে সম-আসনে বসিব এবং উচ্চবর্ণের শিক্ষিত ব্যক্তির প্রতি যেমন শিষ্টাচার প্রদর্শন করিব, তাহাদের প্রতিও তদ্রূপ করিব।
- ৭। সময়ানুবর্তী হইব। জীবনের প্রাত্যহিক কাজগুলি যাহাতে নির্দিষ্ট সময়ে সম্পন্ন হয়—তাহার প্রতি দৃষ্টি রাখিব।
- ৮। কোন চারণের আচরণের ত্রুটি দেখিলে সেই ত্রুটির প্রতিকূল সমালোচনা তাহার অসাম্প্রদায়িক না করিয়া সোজাসুজি তাহাকেই বলিব। প্রয়োজন হইলে সর্দারকে জানাইব।
- ৯। নিজেকে, নিজের বাসস্থানকে, নিজের গ্রামকে এবং নিজের আবেষ্টনীকে পরিষ্কার-পরিচ্ছন্ন রাখিবার জন্য সর্বদা সচেতন থাকিব।
- ১০। চারণের বিপদের কথা শুনিলে অনতিবিলম্বে তাহার পার্শ্বে গিয়া দাঁড়াইব। তাহার সুখকে নিজের সুখ এবং তাহার বেদনাকে নিজের বেদনা বলিয়া জ্ঞান করিব।
- ১১। জীবনের কোন আচরণে কোনপ্রকার মিথ্যাচারকে প্রশ্রয় দিব না।
- ১২। সকলের সঙ্গে সর্বদার জন্য মৈত্রীভাব পোষণ করিব।
- ১৩। শ্রেণীহীন-সমাজ-প্রতিষ্ঠার সাধনাকে জয়যুক্ত করিবার জন্য জীবন ও সর্বস্ব বিসর্জন দিতে প্রস্তুত থাকিব।

DIRECTOR-SECRETARY'S REPORT

on
the Programmes and Activities at
Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore
from April to September, 2023

■ In House Activities :

1. Day-long Programme for the Participants of the Value Added Course on 'Alternative Social Reconstruction : Studies on Tagore and Gandhi' (27.05.2023) :

As a part of the Value Added Course the department of Political Science, Serampore College organized a special course on 'Alternative Social Reconstruction: Studies on Tagore and Gandhi'. The Participants along with



their respective Professors visited Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore on May 27, 2023. The Sangrahalaya provided a guided tour in its different galleries to the students first. They had been also shown

two special exhibitions on 'Gandhiji's Constructive Programme for Social Redevelopment' and 'A Biographical Sketch on Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore', which were exhibited specially for their visit.



After completion of their visit the Director-Secretary of the Sangrahalaya delivered a Special Lecture on ‘Nature and Environment— In Light of Mahatma Gandhi’. An



Audio-Visual Spot Quiz Programme on ‘Life and Activities of Mahatma Gandhi’ was also conducted by the Director-Secretary of the Sangrahalaya for the participants of the Course. At the end of the programme the Sangrahalaya provided the Certificates and awarded the winners of the Spot Quiz Programme.

2. Celebration of World Environment Day by 5 Naval Det Barrackpore of Indian Navy at the premises of Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore (5.6.2023) :

5 Naval Det Barrackpore of Indian Navy celebrated the World Environment Day by organizing various activities at the premises of Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore on June 5, 2023. As part of the Activities of World Environment Day



the unit carried out several activities like cleaning of the premises of the Sangrahalaya by the Unit Personnel of both the Navy and DSC and nurturing of saplings, plantation of both flowers and fruit bearing trees by the

Officer Commanding, Commanders, both the Staff Members of Sangrahalaya and 5 Naval Det of Indian Navy and by the group of Women. They also organized the awareness programme by organizing the Drawing on Environment for the children. At



the end of the event the exchange of Mementos was undertaken by both of the Sangrahalaya and the 5 Naval Det of Indian Navy to each other.

3. Celebration of 77th Independence Day (15.08.2023) :

The 77th Independence Day was celebrated at the premises of Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya on August 15, 2023. In presence of all the Staff-members of the Sangrahalaya and other dignitaries, the Director-Secretary of the Sangrahalaya hoisted the National Flag in the morning.

A 'Sit and Draw Competition' on several themes related to Indian Independence for children was organized by the Sangrahalaya. The group division for the competition was divided into two categories, viz., Group A for 7 to 11 years children and Group B for 11 years above to 17 years children. The total number of 90 children participated in this Sit & Draw Competition. After ending of the drawing competition a culture programme on the composition of several patriotic songs, poems, dances and group performances



through Mimes, was performed by various Artists of the department of Information and Culture, Barrackpore, Government of West Bengal. Shri Purnendu Basu, Chairperson, West Bengal State Council of Technical Education and Training & Skill



Development, Government of West Bengal, was present as the Chief Guest at the Prize Distribution Ceremony. Dr. Mamta Kansay, Chief Executive Officer of Barrackpore Cantonment Board and Shri Malay Kumar Ghose, Chairman of North Barrackpore Municipality were also present in the programme as Special Guests. The winners of

Sit & Draw competition and all other participants were awarded prizes and certificates in presence of the dignitaries at the end of the programme. The day-long celebration was ended by the singing of our



National Anthem by all the dignitaries, staff members of the Sangrahalaya and the audience.





■ Mobile Exhibition :

1. Three Days' Mobile Exhibition and Programmes at Deshbandhu Mahavidyalaya, Chittaranjan in West Burdwan district (01.09.2023-03.09.2023) :

As part of the programme of Golden Jubilee celebration of Deshbandhu Mahavidyalaya, Chittaranjan in West Burdwan district, the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore was invited by the authority of the college to organize some programmes from September 1-3, 2023 at their premises. On the first day of the programme the Sangrahalaya set up a temporary exhibition on various themes related to Mahatma Gandhi, like, 'Life & Activities of Mahatma Gandhi', 'Various Satyagraha Movements, led by Gandhiji in India'



and ‘Mahatma Gandhi—The Millennium Man in Stamps’. The Replicas of the used articles of Mahatma Gandhi, various kinds of Models and some specimen copies of archival materials like Gandhiji’s own Bengali hand writing, his letters, written by using his both hands, were also displayed in the exhibition.



A documentary film show on Indian Freedom Movement was also shown in the exhibition room. The exhibition was inaugurated by Professor Debashis Bandopadhyay, Hon’ble

Vice-Chancellor of Kazi Nazrul University in presence of the Principal of Deshbandhu Mahavidyalaya and other dignitaries. The exhibition was held at the college’s premises upto September 3, 2023.



On the second day a presentation on Gandhiji’s constructive programme was presented and the documentary film show on Indian Freedom

Movement was also shown to the students. An audio-visual Spot Quiz programme on life and activities of Mahatma Gandhi was also organised by the Sangrahalaya on last day of 3 days’ programme. At the end the medals were provided by the Sangrahalaya to the winners of the Spot Quiz programme.

Shri Debi Prasad Dash, General Manager of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) and Dr. Avanjali Sathpathy, President of Womens’ Welfare Organization, CLW, were graced the occasion on 3rd Day programme as the Chief Guests.



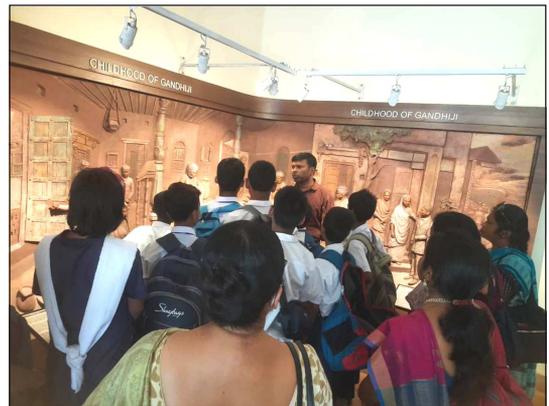
■ **Group Visit :**

A. Several group of students from various educational institutes of West Bengal visited the Sangrahalaya from April to September, 2023 for their educational purposes. The Sangrahalaya provided the guided tours in its different galleries during their visit and the documentary film show was also shown to each group of students. The students from the following institutions had come to visit the Sangrahalaya along with their teachers during the above mentioned times :

1. Date of Visit— 11.04.2023; Name of the Institution— Barrackpore Senate Public School (H.S.); Number of Students— 81.



2. Date of Visit— 25.04.2023; Name of the Institution— Suryagarh, Matabagan Netaji High School, Palta; Number of Students— 22.



3. Date of Visit— 28.04.2023; Name of the Institution— Barrackpore A.B. Model High School (H.S.); Number of Students— 19.



4. Date of Visit— 02.05.2023; Name of the Institution— Telinipara High School, Sewli; Number of Students— 25.



5. Date of Visit— 04.05.2023; Name of the Institution— Talpukur Girls's High School, Barrackpore; Number of Students— 30.



6. Date of Visit— 05.05.2023; Name of the Institution— Barrackpore Wesley Hindustani High School, Barrackpore; Number of Students— 21.



7. Date of Visit— 05.05.2023; Name of the Institution— Sweli Hossainia High Madrashah (H.S.), Sewli, Telinipara; Number of Students— 53.



8. Date of Visit— 16.05.2023; Name of the Institution— Quazipara Hazrat Ekdil Shah High School, Kazipara, Barasat; Number of Students— 339.



9. Date of Visit— 12.06.2023; Name of the Institution— Rathtala Rajlakshmi Balika Vidya Mandir (H.S.), Kakinara, Bhatpara; Number of Students— 68.



10. Date of Visit— 15.07.2023; Name of the Institution— Douglas Memorial Higher Secondary School, Barrackpore; Number of Students— 125.



11. Date of Visit— 17.07.2023; Name of the Institution— Debnarayan Shiksha Sansthan B.Ed. College, Sonarpur; Number of Students— 13.



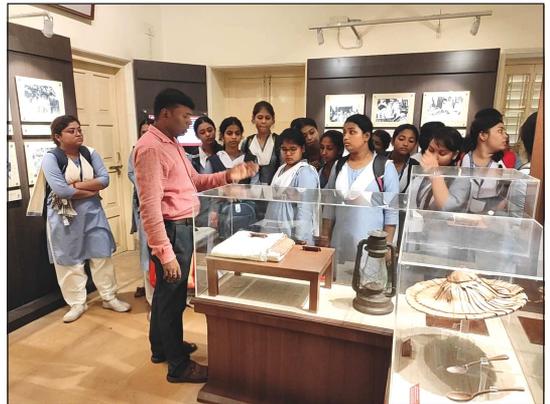
12. Date of Visit— 20.07.2023 & 21.07.2023; Name of the Institution— Modern English Academy, Barrackpore; Number of Students— 226.



13. Date of Visit— 28.07.2023; Name of the Institution— Assembly of Angels Secondary School, Barrackpore; Number of Students— 130.



14. Date of Visit—18.08.2023; Name of the Institution— Rathtala Rajlakshmi Balika Vidya Mandir (H.S.), Kakinara, Bhatpara; Number of Students— 65.



15. Date of Visit— 19.08.2023; Name of the Institution— Silver Point School, Kasba, Kolkata; Number of Students— 40.



B. Knit India & Bangladesh, Babu & Bangbandhu For Peace & Harmony : India-Bangladesh Goodwill Cycle Rally-2023 (15.09.2023) :



Snehalaya, India and Gandhi Ashram Trust (GAT) Noakhali, Bangladesh have organised the Second “India-Bangladesh Sadhbhavana Cycle Rally” and youth camp for Knitting India & Bangladesh breeding peace and harmony and spreading the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Snehalaya selected 50 youths

from all parts of our country for this bicycle rally. The Bicycle Rally started from Beliaghata Gandhi Bhawan (previously known as Hyderi Manzil), Kolkata today and Rally will end at Noakhali (in Bangladesh) on September 28, 2023. The aim of the event is to spread the message of Gandhiji and Bangabandhu for Peace, Harmony and Goodwill among the citizens of India and Bangladesh.





They reached at Barrackpore to visit the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya. The Director-Secretary of the Sangrahalaya welcome them and provided a guided tour in all the galleries of the Sangrahalaya. At the end of their visit the staff members of Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya appreciate their

great effort and also congratulate each and every participant of the cycle rally for spreading the message of two great Peace Makers of India and Bangladesh among the citizens of both the countries.



■ Special Visit :

1. Shri Anil Nauriya, Advocate, Supreme Court, New Delhi and Executive Member of National Gandhi Museum, New Delhi, came to visit the Sangrahalaya on May 6, 2023.



2. Sri Bharatarshabha Dasa, National President of Akshaya Patra Foundation (The Akshaya Patra Foundation is a non-profit trust of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), headquartered in Bengaluru) along with Sri Sankar Kumar Sanyal, All India President of Harijan Sevak Sangh came to visit the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya , Barrackpore on May 20, 2023.



Sri Bharatarshabha Dasa joined ISKCON movement in 1992 while studying B.Tech in Computer Science from REC Calicut. Since then, he has dedicated his life in the service of society through various initiatives. Akshaya Patra has immensely benefitted



from his many contributions to address classroom hunger across the country. In this direction, he has been handling multiple areas related to public affairs, strategic outreach, policy planning and implementation, programme management and emergency food relief activities. He also served as the Regional President for Akshaya Patra's feeding initiatives in Delhi NCR, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand . He

has been instrumental in the commencement of the organization's feeding operations in various parts of India, such as Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and NCR region.

The Director-Secretary of Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya explained the Special Guests about all the exhibits of the museum and after visiting the museum Sri Dasa commented that "The museum has elegantly captured many very incidents of Gandhiji's life. It was time then history for me".



■ **Participatory Programme :**

1. **Inauguration of Exhibition, entitled ‘Partition of India’ to mark the occasion of ‘Partition Horrors Remembers Day’, organized by the Head Post Office of Barrackpore (11.09.2023) :**

The Head Post Office of Barrackpore organized an Exhibition on ‘Partition of India’ at their premises on September 11, 2023 to celebrate the ‘Partition Horrors Remembers Day’. The authority of Barrackpore Head Post Office invited the Director-Secretary of Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya to inaugurate this Special Exhibition.



The exhibition was organized to remember the tragedy and agony of the partition of our country and it was held from August 11-14, 2023 at the building of the Head Post Office of Barrackpore. Dr. Pratik Ghosh, Director-Secretary of Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya delivered the inaugural speech in presence of all the staff members of the Post Office.

2. **Participation in the Inaugural Ceremony of ‘Gandhi Vatika’ at Jaipur, organized by the Government of Rajasthan (21.09.2023-23.09.2023) :**

To celebrate the inaugural ceremony of ‘Gandhi Vatika’— a unified Museum in memory of our Father of the Nation— Mahatma Gandhi, the Government of Rajasthan invited the representatives of



various Gandhian Institutions of the country. It was indeed a privilege for Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore to be present on the occasion of inauguration of this museum at Jaipur in Rajasthan. The Government of Rajasthan organized a 3 days' programme to mark the occasion from September 21 to September 23, 2024.



Shri Mallikarjun Kharge, President of Indian National Congress, inaugurated the Gandhi Vatika along with Shri Ashok Gehlot, Honorable Chief Minister of Rajasthan and Shri Rahul Gandhi, Honorable Member of Parliament, Government of India. The initiative is aimed at spreading of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy among the people.



To mark the occasion of this inaugural ceremony the Government of Rajasthan also organized a Seminar on 'The Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi in Today's World' and the representatives of various Gandhian institutes, who came to attend the programme from different parts of our country, were participated. A theatre, entitled 'Mohan Ka Masala' was presented by Shri Pratik Gandhi, a renowned Actor of our country through the solo acting of him and The Cultural Programmes, composed of various classical songs were also performed by signing performances of several renowned Singers.



The museum is set up at the Central Park, Jaipur by the Government of Rajasthan in a building of three floors where one floor is in the basement. The three floors have different sections to highlight different aspects of the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi.



PRAYER
Lord of humility!

Dwelling in the little pariah hut
Help us to search for Thee throughout
that fair land Watered by Ganges,
Brahmaputra and Jamuna.

Give us receptiveness.

Give us open heartedness.

Give us Thy humility.

Give us the ability and willingness.

To identify ourselves
with the masses of India.

O God!

who does help only when man
feels utterly humble. Grant that we
may not be isolated from the people.
We would serve as servants and friends.
Let us be embodiments of self sacrifices,
embodiments of godliness,
humility personified, that we may know
the land better and love it more.

—M. K. Gandhi

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