



**Gandhiji on
ENVIRONMENT**

Selected and Compiled with an Introduction by

Divya Joshi

MANI BHAVAN GANDHI SANGRAHALAYA, MUMBAI

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Preface

Gandhiji's life, ideas and work are of crucial importance to all those who want a better life for humankind. The political map of the world has changed dramatically since his time, the economic scenario has witnessed unleashing of some disturbing forces, and the social set-up has undergone a tremendous change. The importance of moral and ethical issues raised by him, however, remain central to the future of individuals and nations. Today we need him, more than before.

Mani Bhavan Gandhi Sangrahalaya has been spreading information about Gandhiji's life and work. A series of booklets presenting Gandhiji's views on some important topics is planned to disseminate information as well as to stimulate questions among students, scholars, social activists and concerned citizens. We thank Government of India, Ministry of Tourism & Culture, Department of Culture, for their support.

Aloo Dastur

President

Mani Bhavan Gandhi Sangrahalaya

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Hon. Secretary

Mani Bhavan Gandhi Sangrahalaya

6th April 2002

Introduction

Divya Joshi

The rapidly deteriorating global environment has attracted attention of the concerned citizens. The sheer range as well as pace of the global environmental changes are unprecedented in human history. It has posed challenge for the healthy survival of all the species on this planet.

The advent of globalization and liberalization has enabled MNCs (Multi-National Companies) to get footholds in most countries in the world. This has had adverse effects on small industries and local domestic markets of indigenous products. Due to urbanization and industrialization village and cottage industries have suffered badly. They have lost the market to growing clout of MNCs. Of course, tremendous progress in the fields of science and technology has revolutionized the standards of living and quality of life. But it is to be remembered that heavy price is being paid in turn. Big companies do not follow the safety norms in the developing countries like India which they have to follow in developed countries, and cause pollutions of all kinds.

Exploitation and damage to environment by developed countries through their profligate lifestyle and wasteful patterns of consumption have been the key topics of the global environmental negotiations today.

Despite knowing about the adverse consequences of environmental problems the unrestricted use of natural resources continues unabated. Water, land, forests and minerals are limited and some of them such as mineral oil, copper, iron ore are non-renewable natural wealth.

Apart from natural calamities, human activities like agriculture with excessive use of pesticides and fertilizers, combustion of fuels, industries, mining activities, transport systems, urbanization are responsible for causing different kinds of pollution.

It is in this context that Gandhiji's views on environment are of immense value to us today. Though, he did not talk directly on environment, because his thinking was formed according to the social situation of those days and also the problem of environment was not so grave and acute at that time, as it is today. All the same he was well aware regarding the upcoming danger of environmental degradation when he said, "Nature has provided it (air) to such extent that we can have it at no cost. But modern civilization has put a price even on air. In these times, one has to go off to distant place to take the air and this costs money."¹ And that is why he opposed and criticized huge machinery with full force.²

Actually, he discussed numerous subjects such as sanitation, cleanliness of surroundings, hygiene, purity of air and water, importance of sunlight etc. which were directly connected to the preservation of environment. He bestowed supreme priority on sanitation and cleanliness. In fact, he was deeply disturbed and pained by the unhygienic and polluting habits of our people. He said, "Such recklessness leads to pollution of air and water."³ Today, we see that the situation is no different, rather worse. Sanitation occupied the highest preference in Gandhiji's constructive programmes.

Gandhiji was a lover of natural living. He enjoyed sleeping under an open sky and preferred to arrange all activities in harmony with nature. He was quite vigilant of the importance and value of the natural wealth and made very economical use of the same. Once Gandhiji's colleague Mohan Pandya asked him as to why he insisted on using only one *loti* (metal vessel) of water when the whole Sabarmati river was flowing right next to his ashram? Then, Gandhiji explained to him that the river water was not just for him but it was for all animals, birds, insects and men. As it was a collective property, he had no right to use more than he needed.⁴ It is well known that he used received post for writing answers by turning the envelope. He would not waste even a single piece of paper or pencil. It would not be an exaggeration to say that his life and actions were in tune with nature. His views expressed on a variety of

subjects reveal his inclination towards nature conservation and his economic thinking was closely related to environmental thinking. This is reflected in his extensive and lifelong missions on Khadi and Village reconstruction programmes.^{5,6}

In a way, Gandhiji was a farsighted environmentalist. Today, when we have moved away from nature, Gandhiji's suggestion to live in proximity to the basic elements is worth emulating. Being a firm believer in natural living, Gandhiji stressed the importance of the five elements of nature, i.e, air, water, earth, light and sky, which are essential for life.

He always recommended the use of organic manure in place of chemical fertilizers. He also warned against industrialization of agriculture. He suggested recycling of waste which will serve the double purpose of cleanliness and providing fertilizers without involving any expense. He also explained the method of turning night-soil into manure.

Gandhiji derived his faith in the concept of bread-labour from Tolstoy and Ruskin and implemented it in the ashrams which he founded with the same objectives. He laid stress immensely on dignity of labour which occupied a prominent place in his Nai Talim. It was his strong belief that one should earn his living only through bread-labour. In fact, he was not opposed to machinery but to its indiscriminate use. He believed that human labour should be used as substitute for machinery.

Apart from machinery, nature cure, sanitation, cleanliness, manual labour, vegetarianism and organic manure, Gandhiji also talked about a variety of other subjects such as cow protection and cow slaughter, cruelty to animals, allopathy and ayurveda, ahimsa and sacrifice, ahimsa and animal food, and ahimsa and humility. All these were related, in one way or other, to the issue of environmental conservation.

His love and concern towards conservation of nature is reflected throughout in his thinking. At the same time it makes us cautious of centrality of healthy environment

for our existence. The alternative offered by him is a natural and happy life centred around the small and self-reliant unit of a village, rather than a life dependent on machinery.⁷

Now, it is left to us to make a choice keeping his words in mind: "One becomes guilty of theft even by using differently anything which one has received in trust for use in a particular way, as well as by using a thing longer than the period for which it has been lent. It is also theft if one receives anything which one does not really need. The fine truth at the bottom of this principle is that Nature provides just enough, and no more, for our daily need."⁸

In fact, Gandhiji pointed out, "Nature is lenient. It often does not punish us for our sins immediately."⁹ Again he said, "Nature has provided us with sufficient reserve of vitality. But for that, man would have long ago disappeared from the face of the earth because of his own mistake..."¹⁰ The time has ripened to take the lesson from the past. What remains to be seen now is whether we succeed in tying a bond with nature.

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Modern Civilization

In his letter to S.L. Polak on 14-10-1909 from London, Gandhiji strongly criticized modern civilization.

"There is no impassable barrier between East and West.

"There is no such thing as Western or European civilization, but there is a modern civilization, which is purely material. . .

"It is not the British people who are ruling India, but it is modern civilization, through its railways, telegraphs, telephones, and almost every invention which has been claimed to be a triumph of civilization.

"If British rule was replaced tomorrow by Indian rule based on modern methods, India would be no better, except that she would be able then to retain some of the money that is drained away to England; but, then, Indians would only become a second or fifth edition of Europe or America. . .

"Increase of material comforts, it may be generally laid down, does not in any way whatsoever conduce to moral growth.

"Medical science is the concentrated essence of Black Magic. Quackery is infinitely preferable to what passes for high medical skill.

"Hospitals are the instruments that the Devil has been using for his own purpose, in order to keep his hold on his kingdom. They perpetuate vice, misery and degradation, and real slavery.

"I was entirely off the track when I considered I should receive a medical training. It would be sinful for me in any way whatsoever to take part in the abominations that go on in the hospitals. If there were no hospitals for venereal diseases, or V even for consumptives, we should have less consumption, and less sexual vice amongst us.

"India's salvation consists in unlearning what she has learnt during the past fifty years.

"The railways, telegraphs, hospitals, lawyers, doctors, and such like have all to go, and the so-called upper classes have to learn to live conscientiously and religiously and deliberately the simple peasant life knowing it to be a life giving true happiness.

"Indians should wear no machine-made clothing, whether it comes out of European mills or Indian mills...

"There was true wisdom in the sages of old having so regulated society as to limit the material condition of the people: the rude plough of perhaps five thousand years ago is the plough of the husbandman today. Therein lies salvation. People live long, under such conditions, in comparative peace much greater than Europe has enjoyed after having taken up modern activity, and I feel that every enlightened man, certainly every Englishman, may, if he chooses, learn this truth and act according to it. . . . I am unconcerned whether such a gigantic reformation shall I call it, can be brought about among people who derive their satisfaction from the present mad rush. If I realize the truth of it, I should rejoice in following it, and, therefore, I could not wait until the whole body of people had commenced. All of us who think likewise have to take the necessary step; and the rest, if we are in the right, must follow. The theory is there: our practice will have to approach it as much as possible. Living in the midst of the rush, we may not be able to shake ourselves free from all taint. Every time I get into a railway, car, use a motor-bus, I know that I am doing violence to my sense of what is right. I do not fear the logical result on that basis. The visiting of England is bad, and any communication between South Africa and India by means of Ocean's greyhounds is also bad, and so on. You and I can, and may, outgrow those things in our present bodies, but the chief thing is to put our theory right. You will be seeing there all sorts and conditions of men. I, therefore, feel that I should no longer withhold from you what I call the progressive step I have taken mentally. If you agree with me, it will be your duty to tell the revolutionaries and everybody else that the freedom they want, or they think they want, is not to be obtained by killing people or doing violence, but by setting themselves right, and by

becoming and remaining truly Indian. Then the British rulers will be servants and not masters. They will be trustees and not tyrants, and they will live in perfect peace with the whole of the inhabitants of India. The future, therefore, lies not with the British race but with the Indians themselves, and if they have sufficient self - abnegation and abstemiousness, they can make themselves free this very moment and when we have arrived in India at the simplicity which is still ours largely and which was ours entirely until a few years ago, it will still be possible for the best Indians and the best Europeans to see one another throughout the length and breadth of India and act as the leaven. When there was no rapid locomotion, trailers and preachers went on foot, from one end of the country to the other, braving all the dangers not for pleasure, not for recreating their health, (though all that followed from their tramps,) but for the sake of humanity. Then were Benares and other places of pilgrimage holy cities, whereas today they are an abomination." (9:480-81)

* * *

In a letter to Lord Ampthill on 30-10-1909 from London, Gandhiji fearlessly wrote:

"... The true remedy lies, in my humble opinion, in England discarding modern civilization which is ensouled by this spirit of selfishness and materialism, is vain and purposeless and is a negation of the spirit of Christianity. But this is large order. It may then be just possible that the British rulers in India may at least do as the Indians do and not impose upon them the modern civilization. Railways, machinery and corresponding increase of indulgent habits are the true badges of slavery of the Indian people as they are of Europeans.

"... To me the rise of the cities like Calcutta and Bombay is a matter for sorrow rather than congratulation. India has lost in having broken up a part of her village system. Holding these views, I share the national spirit But I totally dissent from the methods whether of the extremists or of the moderates. For either party relies ultimately on violence. Violent methods must mean acceptance of modern civilization and

therefore of the same ruinous competition we notice here and consequent destruction of true morality." (9:509)

* * *

Appealing to students to play a decisive role Gandhiji wrote in *Navajivan* on 29-2-1920.

"... Today two cultures are competing for the students attention —the ancient and the modern. Self-restraint was the keynote of the former. Ancient culture tells us that a man advances in the measure that he deliberately and with full knowledge reduces his wants. Modern civilization teaches us that man progresses by increasing his wants. The difference between self-restraint and self-indulgence is the difference between dharma and adhrama. The ideal of self-restraint attaches less importance to the outward life than to the inner. There is a danger that in place of the ancient culture based on self restraint, the modern civilization of self-indulgence will be accepted. Students can play a decisive part in averting this danger." (17:57)

* * *

Gandhiji wrote to Sir Danial Hamilton in a letter on 15-2-1922 from Bardoli:

"India does not need to be industrialized in the modern sense of the term. It has 7,50,000 villages scattered over a vast area 1,900 miles long, 1,500 broad. The people are rooted to the soil, and the vast majority are living a hand-to-mouth life. Whatever may be said to the contrary, having travelled throughout the length and breadth of the land with eyes open and having mixed with millions, there can be no doubt that pauperism is growing. There is no doubt also that the millions are living in enforced idleness for at least 4 months in the year. Agriculture / does not need revolutionary changes. The Indian peasant requires a supplementary industry. The most natural is the introduction of the spinning wheel, not the handloom. The latter cannot be introduced in every home, whereas the former can, and it used to be so even a century ago. It was driven out not by economic pressure, but by force

deliberately used as can be proved from authentic records. The restoration therefore, of the spinning-wheel solves the economic problem of India at a stroke... It is the most effective force for introducing successful co-operative societies. Without honest co-operation of the millions, the enterprise can never be successful, and as it is already proving a means of weaning thousands of women from a life of shame, it is as moral an instrument as it is economic. . . I hope you will not allow yourself to be prejudiced by anything you might have heard about my strange views about machinery. I have nothing to say against the development of any other industry in India by means of machinery , but I do say that to supply India with cloth manufactured either outside or inside through gigantic mills is an economic blunder of the first magnitude, just as it would be to supply cheap bread through huge bakeries established in the chief centres in India and to destroy the family stove." (22:401-2)

* * *

Gandhiji suggested to adopt khaddar and to make only legitimate use of machinery in *Young India* on 24-7-1924:

"I am personally opposed to great trusts and concentration of industries by means of elaborate machinery. But at the present moment I am concerned with destroying the huge system of exploitation which is ruining India. If India takes to khaddar and all it means, I do not lose the hope of India taking only as much of the modern machinery system as may be considered necessary for the amenities of life and for life-saving purposes." (24:433)

* * *

Clarifying his views on the use of machinery in *Navajivan* on 22-5-1927, Gandhiji wrote:

. . The general principle is that we should produce or make whatever we can in the villages themselves, and while we can do with indigenous razor, should not bother to

introduce the German Krupp razor because it is regarded as superior. If, however, we cannot make the sewing needle in the village, we should not set our face against the easily available and cheap needle from Austria. I see nothing wrong in accepting from any quarter whatever is good and is worth accepting and which we can assimilate." (33:352)

* * *

In *Young India* dated 25-7-1929, Gandhiji expressed his opinion that a highly populated country like India should not imitate Western culture blindly:

"... There is a growing body of enlightened opinion in the West which distrusts this civilization which has insatiable material ambition at one end and consequent war at the other.

"But whether good or bad, why must India become industrial in the Western sense? The Western civilization is urban. Small countries like England or Italy may afford to urbanize their systems. A big country like America with a very sparse population, perhaps, cannot do otherwise. But one would think that a big country, with a teeming population, with an ancient rural tradition which has hitherto answered its purpose, need not, must not, copy the Western model. What is good for one nation situated in one condition is not necessarily good enough for another differently situated. One man's food is often another man's poison. O Physical geography of a country has a predominant share in determining its culture. A fur coat may be a necessity for the dweller in the polar regions, it will smother those living in equatorial regions." (41:220)

* * *

Clarifying his views on objection to machinery Gandhiji wrote in a letter dated 4-10-1929 to Giri Raj from Gorakhpore camp:

". . . The main consideration about machinery is that it should not displace the labour of those who cannot otherwise be employed. You will find that this one argument answers all objections. We do not want to displace hand processes. We want to cultivate hand processes to perfection but where it is found to be absolutely necessary let us not hesitate to introduce machinery. Do you know that some of the most delicate life-saving appliances would have been impossible without the aid of some machinery? , After all the simple charkha is also a machine. What we must dread is huge machinery run not by hand but by non-human power such as steam, electricity, etc. But even this need not be tabooed." (41:511-12)

* * *

Discarding the possibility of adopting urban civilization Gandhiji firmly expressed his views, in *Young India* on 7-11-1929:

". . . In my opinion the two questions are intertwined and both can be solved, if the youth can be persuaded to make village life their goal rather than city life. We are inheritors of a rural civilization. The vastness of our country, the vastness of the population, the situation and the climate of the country have, in my opinion, destined it for a rural civilization. Its defects are well known but not one of them is irremediable. To uproot it and substitute for it an urban civilization seems to me an impossibility, unless we are prepared by some drastic means to reduce the population from three hundred million to three or say even thirty. I can therefore suggest remedies on the assumption that we must perpetuate the present rural civilization and endeavour to rid it of its acknowledged defects. This can only be done if the youth of the country will settle down to village life. . ." (42:108)

* * *

In an interview to Shaw Desmond at London on or before 9-10-1931, Gandhiji explained:

". . . And my fundamental objection to machinery rests on the fact that it is machinery that has enabled these nations to exploit others. In itself it is a wooden thing and can be turned to good purpose or bad. But it is easily turned to a bad purpose as we know." (48:129)

* * *

In his speech at the students' meeting in London on 15-10- 1931, Gandhiji appealed to the Englishmen to change their culture and life style based on increase of wants:

"To Englishmen who are conferring with me on this issue, I say: break up the highly organized industrialization. Go back to the villages. You have to revolutionize your conception of life. Your standard of life is artificial, incapable of sustaining for long. The modern civilization is a toy. You are increasing your t/ standard of life. The more a man wants the more he becomes debased and breaks under. Well, an Englishman in Lancashire said, 'I do not mind starvation but I have lost in my own estimation.' I know of a man who was noble and patriotic, but because of his greed when he earned a million rupees, I did not congratulate him, but I sent him condolences. But later in life, he lost all, could not see anyone and ultimately drank a bowl of poison. Alas! such a noble good friend is lost today due to the ever increasing wants. In order to adopt my method, you have to revise your mode of life, particularly you of the English race." (48:159)

* * *

In an interview to Callender at London on 16-10-1931, Gandhiji ruled out the use of highly complicated machinery and emphasized on physical labour:

"... But I quite understand that your 'mass production' is a technical term for production by the fewest possible number through the aid of highly complicated machinery, I have said to myself that that is wrong. My machinery must be of the most elementary type which I can put in the homes of the millions. Under my system, again, it is labour which is the current coin, not metal. Any person who can use his

labour has that coin, has wealth. He converts his labour into cloth, he converts his labour into grain. If he wants paraffin oil, which he cannot himself produce, he uses his surplus grain for getting the oil. It is exchange of labour on free, fair and equal terms—hence it is no robbery." (48:166)

* * *

During his speech at Indian Majlis at Oxford, on 24-10-1931, when Gandhiji was asked 'what is your view about the industrialization of India' he replied:

"Industrialism is, I am afraid, going to be a curse for mankind. Exploitation of one nation by another cannot go on for all time. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you, and on the absence of competitors. It is because these factors are getting less and less everyday for England that its number of unemployed is mounting up daily. The Indian boycott was but a flea-bite. And if that is the state of England, a vast country like India cannot expect to benefit by industrialization. In fact, India, when it begins to exploit other nations—as it must if it becomes industrialized—will be a curse for other nations, a menace to the world. And why should I think of industrializing India to exploit other nations? Don't you see the tragedy of the situation, viz. that we can find work for our 300 million unemployed, but England can find none for its three millions and is faced with a problem that baffles the greatest intellects of England? The future of industrialism is dark. England has got successful competitors in America, Japan, France, Germany. It has competitors in the handful of mills in India, and as there has been an awakening in India, even so there will be an awakening in South Africa with its vastly richer resources— natural, mineral and human. The mighty English look quite pygmies before the mighty races of Africa. They are noble savages after all, you will say. They are certainly noble, but no savages and in the course of a few years the Western nations may cease to find in Africa a dumping ground for their wares. And if the future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker still for India?" (48:224-25)

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In an interview to Charles Petrasch and others at London on 29-10-1931, when he was asked, "What do you mean by machine? Do you think it is the manner of using machines which makes them an instrument of exploitation?" Gandhiji said:

"The charkha and similar instruments are clearly machines, and from this you can gather my definition of machines. I am willing to admit that it is largely the abuse of machine system which is responsible for the exploitation of the working class in the world." (48:245)

* * *

Gandhiji expressed his views in *Harijan* on 7-9-1934 regarding urbanization of India:

". . . It is a process of double drain from the villages. Urbanization in India is slow but sure death for her villages and 7 villagers. Urbanization can never support ninety per cent of India's population, which is living in her 7,00,000 villages. To remove from these villages tanning and such other industries is to remove what little opportunity there still is for making skilled use of the V hand and head. And when the village handicrafts disappear, the villagers working only with their cattle on the field, with idleness for six or four months in the year, must, in the words of Madhusudan Das, be reduced to the level of the beast and be without proper nourishment, either of the mind or the body, and, therefore, without joy and without hope.

"Here is work for the cent-per-cent swadeshi-lover and scope for the harnessing of technical skill to the solution of a great problem. The work fells three apples with one throw. It serves the Harijans, it serves the villagers and it means honourable employment for the middle-class intelligentsia who are in search of employment. Add to this the fact that the intelligentsia have a proper opportunity of coming in direct touch with the villagers." (58:418-19)

* * *

In a speech at Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Indore on 20-4-1935. Gandhiji pointed out the reason of increasing unemployment:

"... When there were no machines in India, a single work was done by a hundred hands and all of them remained employed, but today growth of machinery has left 98 people out of 100 unemployed. Look at America, where sweeping engines are lying useless on roads. In the Western world unemployment means not getting even salt and rice." (60:455)

* * *

During the discussion with G.D. Birla before 30-11-1935, Gandhiji proclaimed his faith in perpetuity of handicrafts and labour:

"... I have no such fear, because I have the conviction within me that when all these achievements of the machine age will have disappeared these our handicrafts will remain; when all exploitation will have ceased, service and honest labour will remain. . . I am clear that whilst this machine age aims at converting men into machines, I am aiming at reinstating man-turned-machine to his original estate." (62:145)

* * *

In a discussion with Maurice Frydman on or before 1-1-1939, Gandhiji expressed his concern:

". . . As I look at Russia where the apotheosis of industrialization has been reached, the life there does not appeal to me. To use the language of the Bible, What shall it avail a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?' In modern terms, it is beneath human dignity to lose one's individuality and become a mere cog in the machine. I want every individual to become full-blooded, fully developed member of society. The villages must become self-sufficient... You will not find such a thing in the West. You try to engage a European peasant in conversation and you will find that he is uninterested in things spiritual. In the case of the Indian villager an age-old

culture is hidden under an encrustment of crudeness. Take away the encrustation, remove his chronic poverty and his illiteracy and you have the finest specimen of what a cultured cultivated, free citizen should be." (68:266)

* * *

In a speech at Khadi and Village Industries exhibition at Malikanda on 20-2-1940, Gandhiji strongly reflected his faith in a superior machine that is Man:

"... These days man takes pride in inert and lifeless machines. It is, however, my conviction that man is the most exquisite machine. Is there any machine in the world more miraculous and more minutely made than man? God is its Maker. Man-made machines are lifeless. I do not understand why people should take pride in such machines. Man, the machine, is unique because it throbs with life. The ten fingers and two hands of man, with the brain he possesses, can work wonders beyond the ken of machines. I want every man and woman from every part of India to realize what art and skill are hidden in their heads and hands." (71:232)

* * *

When a questioner asked, how is it possible for India to make mass production without modern machines, Gandhiji replied in *Harijan* on 18-8-1946:

". . . But for the sake of dismissing the plea on behalf of modern machines as against human labour of which there is plenty in a land like India, I would say that if all the able bodied millions work with one mind and with zeal, they could compete on their own terms with any nation, however well-equipped it may be with modern machines. The questioner should not forget that modern machines have up till now gone side by side with the exploitation of the machineless nations, dubbed weak. I use the participle 'dubbed' because they will refuse to be weak immediately they realize the fact that they are even at the present moment stronger than the nations equipped with the most modern weapons and machinery" (85:133-34)

* * *

In a talk with Ra;endra Prasad at New Delhi, on 27-6-1947, Gandhiji made him aware of the possible consequences of introducing machinery in villages:

". . . Have you given thought to the possible consequences of using tractors and pumping machines to water the fields and trucks instead of carts for transport of goods? How many farmers will become unemployed, how many bullocks will become idle? Moreover I feel that in the long run the land will lose its fertility if it is ploughed with machines and tractors. People will stop keeping cattle and we shall have to import fertilizers. Even the small children get work if a peasant has a plough in his own house and tills his lands himself. For example one person can work on the *kos*, another channels the water to the fields, one can plough while another does the weeding. In this way each will live on the labour of each. How natural and happy village life is while life dependent on machinery is unhappy and brings unemployment. Yes, machinery has a place but it has been y' misused." (88:221)

Physical Labour

Gandhiji wrote in Indian Opinion on 15-1-1910, that intellectuals should contribute to upliftment of their fellow labourers by earning a living through physical labour:

"Last but not least, it seems to us that, after all, nature has intended man to earn his bread by manual labour—'by the sweat of his brow' —and intended him to dedicate his intellect not towards multiplying his material wants and surrounding himself with enervating and soul-destroying luxuries, but towards uplifting his moral being— towards knowing the will of the Creator— towards serving humanity and thus truly serving himself. If so, the profession of hawking, or, better still, simple agriculture or such other calling, must be the highest method of earning one's livelihood. And do not the millions do so ? No doubt many follow nature unconsciously. It remains for those who are endowed with more than the ordinary measure of intellect to copy the millions consciously and use their intellect for uplifting their fellow labourers. No longer will it then be possible for the intellectuals in their conceit to look down upon the 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'. For, of such is the world made." (10:130)

* * *

In his speech on 'Ashram Vows' at Y.M.C.A., Madras, on 16-2-1916, Gandhiji emphasized on the dignity of labour:

"You may ask: 'Why should *we* use our hands?' and say 'the manual work has got to be done by those who are illiterate.

I can only occupy myself with reading literature and political essays.' I think that we have to realise the dignity of labour. If a barber or a shoemaker attends a college, he ought not to abandon the profession of barber or a shoemaker. I consider that a barber's profession is just as good as the profession of medicine." (13:234)

* * *

In reply to the question, in *Navajivan* on 22-6-1924, 'Is it not contrary to principles of economy that even one who can earn much more through his brain should make a living by spinning and weaving?' Gandhiji said:

". . . It is through the misuse of the intellect that there is so much of inequality in the world. Tens of millions go about begging while a hundred or two become millionaires. The true economics is that by which every man and woman gets a living by physical labour." (24:282)

* * *

In his speech at 'Kaliparaj' Conference, Vedchhi, on 18-1-1925, Gandhiji said:

"... A man who does not produce anything has no place in society. When we lose ourselves and make room for money instead, we go astray. . . You are labourers and therefore worthy of reverence. A country where labourers are not respected but despised falls into decay. . ." (26:19)

* * *

While giving speech at labourers' meeting at Madras on 22-3-1925, Gandhiji made a fervent appeal to continue to be labourer:

"... I call myself a labourer because I take pride in calling myself a spinner, weaver, farmer, and scavenger. I have thrown in my lot with you so far as a man like me could do, and I have done so because I feel that India's salvation lies through you. I have done so also because I feel that India's salvation lies in labour, in manual labour, which is not to be had by reading books or mental gymnastics. I have realized and I am realizing it day after day that man is born to labour with his own body for his bodily sustenance. In mixing with a spinner, weaver and other labourers, I insistently tell them never to cease to be labourers but to add to their bodily labour mental education." (26:379-80)

* * *

Stressing the importance of bodily labour in *Young India* dated 15-10-1925, Gandhiji wrote the following:

. . The rains come not through intellectual feats, but through sheer bodily labour. It is a well-established scientific fact that where forests are denuded of trees rains cease, where trees are planted rains are attracted and the volume of water received increases with the increase of vegetation. Laws of nature are still unexplored. We have but scratched the surface. Who knows all the ill effects, moral and physical, of the cessation of bodily labour? Let me not be misunderstood. I do not discount the value of intellectual labour, but no amount of it is any compensation for bodily labour which everyone of us is born to give for the common good of all. It may be, often is, infinitely superior to body labour, but it never is or can be a substitute for it, even as intellectual food, though far superior to the grains we eat, never can be a substitute for them. Indeed without the products of the earth those of the intellect would be an impossibility." (28:338-39)

* * *

Delivering the speech on birth centenary of Tolstoy on 10-9-1928, Gandhiji pointed out the main cause of poverty and inequality:

"... It's simple meaning is that he has no right to eat who does not bend his body and work. If every one of us did bodily labour to earn his food, we would not see the poverty which we find in the world. One idler is the cause of two persons starving for his work has to be done by someone else... The cause of the inequalities we see in the world, of the contrasts of wealth and poverty, lies in the fact that we have forgotten the law of life.

That law is the law of 'bread labour'." (37:265)

* * *

Responding to the question 'What is the moral significance of manual work?', Gandhiji said in his speech at international sanatorium in Geneva on 9-12-1931:

". . . He who does not do manual work steals food. He is not entitled to eat his portion of food, unless he has done sufficient manual work and I have not the slightest shadow of a doubt that when a man shirks manual work he stunts his moral growth. I have no doubt that, if we recognize the significance of manual work, many of the monstrosities would die a natural death. The law of bread labour was that that man was entitled to bread who worked for it. . ." (48:415)

* * *

In a letter to Moolchand Agrawal dated 10-3-1933, Gandhiji asked to maintain the balance between physical and mental work:

"... It does not mean that brain work has no utility. It only means that ideas of those alone will bear fruit who appreciate the significance of manual labour and themselves undertake it. Both types of work should proceed side by side and the best principle is to earn one's bread from manual labour and to employ the intellect for service only. That will secure a perfect balance. You may take it that the Ashram was founded with the same objective. You have to grasp this fact if you wish to benefit from a stay in the Ashram." (54:44)

* * *

In his speech at Dayaram Jethamal Sind College at Karachi on 10-7-1934, giving utmost importance to bodily labour Gandhiji said:

"... Man should not use his intelligence and spiritual power to earn his livelihood and sustain himself. For that purpose God has provided him with hands and legs, and with these he should do some common labour and earn his bread." (58:164)

* * *

When he was asked 'When you insist on pure and simple physical work all day long, don't you run the risk of making them intellectually dull? How many hours of physical work you think are necessary he replied in *Harijan*, on 8-3-1935:

"Everything depends on the spirit in which work is done, and an eight hours' day of honest, clean labour leaves one enough time for intellectual pursuits. My object is to put an end to inertia and lethargy, and I would be immensely satisfied when I tell the world that every villager of India is earning Rs.20 a month by the sweat of his brow."
(60:267)

* * *

He expressed his views in *Harijan* dated 29-6-1935, that if bread labour is accepted as a duty, it will eliminate all distinctions:

"... If all labourer for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. Then there would be no cry of < ^population, no disease, and no such misery as we see around. Such labour will be the highest form of a sacrifice. Men will no doubt do many other things either through their bodies or through their minds, but all this will be labour of love, for the common good. There will then be no rich and no poor, none high and none low, no touchable and no untouchable. . . . Obedience to the law of bread labour will bring about a silent revolution in the structure of society." (61:211-12)

* * *

In a speech at Gandhi Seva Sangh meeting on 1-3-1936 at Savli, Gandhiji replied to the query of Rajendra Prasad as to why he laid so much stress on physical labour:

. . . Every human being should maintain himself only through physical labour. I consider it a divine law. That is the reason why I have fixed that ideal. Now, the question is about intellectual development. Yes, it is a relevant question. But, If I

could have power over the world, I would make physical labour compulsory for everybody." (62:219)

While Gandhiji was having a discussion with a friend before 1-8-1936, he indicated that physical labour helps mental growth and development:

". . . But I tell you even taking my case that I am sure our minds would have been infinitely better if we laboured with our hands for eight hours. We would not have a single idle thought and I may tell you that my mind is not entirely free from idle thoughts. Even now I am what I am because I realized the value of physical labour at a very early stage of my life. . . Today's village culture, if culture it can be called, is an awful culture. The villagers live as worse than animals. Nature compels animals to work and live naturally. We have so debased our working classes that they cannot work and live naturally. If our people had laboured intelligently and with joy, we should have been quite different today. . . They tried to do it in ancient Rome and failed miserably. Culture without labour, or culture which is not the fruit of labour, would be 'Vomitoria' as Roman Catholic writer says. The Romans made indulgence a habit and were ruined. Man cannot develop his mind by simply writing and reading or making speeches all day long. All my reading I tell you was done in the leisure hours I got in jails, and I have benefited by it because all of it was done not desultorily but for some purpose. And though I have worked physically for days and months for eight hours on end I don't think I suffered from mental decay. I have often walked as much as 40 miles a day and yet never felt dull." (63:190-91)

* * *

In a speech at Industries Ministers' conference at poona on 31-7-1946, he said:

"It is my belief that the machine has not added to man's stature and it won't serve the world but disrupt it, unless it is put in its proper place. Then, I read Ruskin's *Unto This Last* during a train journey to Durban and it gripped me immediately. I saw clearly that if mankind was to progress and to realize the ideal of equality and

brotherhood, it must adopt and act on the principle of *Unto This Last*, it must take along with it even the dumb, the halt and the lame. . . That requires that we must utilize all available human labour before we entertain the idea of employing mechanical power. . . We stand today in danger of forgetting the use of our hands. To forget how to dig the earth and tend the soil is to forget ourselves. To think that your occupation of the Ministerial chair will be vindicated if you serve the cities only, would be to forget that India really resides in her 700,000 village units. What would it profit a man if he gained the world but lost his soul in bargain? . . . The growth of big cities is only a symptom of that malady. Being a nature-curst, I am naturally in favour of nature's way of cure by a general purification of the system. If the hearts of the city dwellers remain rooted in the villages, if they become truly village-minded, all other things will automatically follow and the boil will quickly heal." (85:96-98)

* * *

Addressing the trainees of basic teachers' camp at Sevagram on 23-8-1946, Gandhiji said:

". . . Useful manual labour, intelligently performed is the means *par excellence* for developing the intellect. One may develop a sharp intellect otherwise too. But then it will not be a balanced growth but an unbalanced distorted abortion. It might easily make of one a rogue and a rascal. A balanced intellect presupposes a harmonious growth of body, mind and soul. That is why we give to manual labour the central place in our curriculum of training here. . (85:200)

* * *

Gandhiji advised the students at Patna on 28-4-1947 to take up manual work:

. . . If we want to banish exploitation and violence from our society, we ought to do body-labour and manual work. And naturally it ought to be undertaken by all. Unemployment is rampant in our villages which were (once) regarded as happy and

self-sufficient units; this is because of our subjugation and feelings of high and low as also caste distinctions." (87:379)

Five Elements of Nature— Air, Water, Earth, Sky and Sunlight

". . . Such then is the living of a well-to-do shepherd. His, in many respects, is an ideal mode of life. He is perforce regular in his habits, is out of doors during the greater part of his time, while out he breathes the purest air, has his due amount of exercise, has good and nourishing food and last but not least, is free from many cares which are frequently productive of weak constitutions."

(The Vegetarian, 7-3-1891; 1:35)

* * *

Gandhiji drew attention to the pitiable condition of the labourers working in factories, in *Indian Opinion* on 5-5-1906:

"Nowadays, there is an increasing appreciation among enlightened men of the need for open air. Where large cities have come into being, labourers have to work cooped up in factories the whole day. As the price of urban land is high, factory buildings are not spacious enough, and the tenements of labourers are also very small. This invariably results in a steady deterioration of their health. Dr. Newman of Hinsborough in London has shown that the death rate per thousand is 38 in areas where too many people live huddled together in one room, but where the same number live in two rooms, the death rate is 22; where the same number of people share three rooms, it is 11 and where they have the use of four rooms, the death rate is only 5. There is nothing surprising in this. A man can do without food for several days and live a day altogether without water, but it is impossible to carry on without air even for a minute. If a thing that is so very vital to life is not pure, the result cannot but be deleterious. It was for these considerations that large manufacturers like Cadbury Brothers and Lever Brothers, who have always been very mindful of the welfare of their workers, have shifted their factories to open places outside cities. They have built very good quarters for their workers with all the attendant amenities, such as gardens and libraries; although they have spent all this money, they have

flourished in their business. A similar movement has spread all over England in the wake of this example.

"This matter deserves consideration by Indian leaders. We suffer much because we do not realise the value of pure air; and this again is a strong reason why diseases like plague spread among us." (5:304)

* * *

Stressing the importance of fresh air he wrote in *Indian Opinion* on 5-8-1911:

"... Those who are afraid of catching cold if they breathed the fresh but cold air of the fields rather than the hot but contaminated and carbon-loaded atmosphere of a stuffy room are not to be easily persuaded that their salvation—freedom from consumption—lies in breathing pure and invigorating fresh air even as we drink pure and health-giving water rather than poisoned water vomited by others. . ." (11:137)

* * *

Gandhiji pointed out in *Indian Opinion* dated 1-2-1913, the irony of the situation that one has to pay a price even to get pure air:

"We have seen something of the structure of the body and have learnt that it requires three kinds of nourishment: air, water and food. Of these, air is the most essential. Consequently, Nature has provided it to such extent that we can have it at no cost. But modern civilization has put a price even on air. In these times, \J one has to go off to distant places to take the air, and this costs money. It is at Matheran that residents of Bombay can get fresh air and only then does their health improve. In Bombay itself, if one can" live on Malabar Hill, the air is much better. But one must have money to do this. If Durbanites want fresh air, they have to go to live in Berea. That again means expense. It would not, therefore, be quite true to say in modern times that "air is free¹.

"Whether air is free or has to be paid for, we cannot carry on without it for a moment." (11:453)

* * *

In *Indian Opinion* dated 15-2-1913, Gandhiji brought out the close relationship between human health and availability of fresh air and ample light:

"It is imperative that we inhale pure air for as long as possible especially while sleeping. Everyone who can manage to do so should accordingly sleep in an open veranda or on the terrace outside the house or on the balcony. Those who do not have the good fortune to be able to do this should keep as many doors and windows open as possible. There is no need to fight shy of air which is our staple diet twenty-four hours of the day.

"... Where there is no light, the air is always unwholesome. When we enter a dark room, we are bound to become aware of the smell. We cannot use our eyes in the dark; and this proves that we are born to live in the light. The darkness that Nature has thought necessary for us, she has given us by creating the comfort giving night. Many people have got into the habit of sitting or sleeping on the hottest of days, in cellar-like rooms, having shut out light and air. Those who live without air and light look weak and lustreless.

"... It has been conclusively proved that, where people get insufficient air and light, they are unwell all the time. City-dwellers are more delicate than village folk because they get less light and air. Among our people in Durban, diseases such as tuberculosis are prevalent and the Medical Officer ascribes it to the fact that we live in such conditions that we either cannot get or do not take in fresh air. The subject of air and light has so close a relation to good health that one should pay great attention to understanding it." (11:464-66)

* * *

In a speech at Ahmedabad meeting on 1-1-1918, Gandhiji explained the importance of purity of air, water and food:

"Air, water and grains are the three chief kinds of food. Air is free to all, but, if it is polluted, it harms our health. Doctors say that bad air is more harmful than bad water. Inhalation of bad air is harmful by itself and this is the reason we [sometimes] need change of air. Next comes water. We are generally very careless about it. If we were to be sufficiently careful about air, water and food, the plague would never make its appearance among us." (14:143)

* * *

He said in *Navajivan* on 2-11-1919:

"Peasants are very careless about water. The well or pond from which drinking and cooking water is taken must be kept clean. It should contain no leaves. No one may bathe there, nor should cattle or clothes be washed in it." (16:272)

* * *

Giving a speech at labourers' meeting at Madras on 22- 3-1925, Gandhiji spoke to them about cleanliness, light, and air:

". . . you should decline positively to live in dirty houses where there is no sunshine and where there is no air. You must keep your houses and yards absolutely clean of all dirt, of insanitation. You must keep your own bodies clean by washing them properly every day, and as your bodies and surroundings must be absolutely clean so should your life be chaste..." (26:381)

* * *

In a speech on 1-3-1927 at Ratnagiri, Gandhiji indicated his concern over the life of poor people in Bombay:

"... You say that poor people from your parts go to Bombay and earn a living there. Do you know the price that they have to pay for that living? They live in hovels without light and air, a few feet by a few feet, where several men and women are huddled together without regard for their bodily cleanliness or decency. Are you ready to send your mothers and sisters to live under such conditions? . . ." (33:133)

* * *

"I have seen thousands of men and women dirtying the banks of the Ganga at Hardwar. Pilgrims defecate at the very spot where people sit, wash their faces, etc., in the Ganga and then again fill their pots at the very same spot. I have come across pilgrims defiling lakes in the same manner at places of pilgrimage. In doing this we destroy the dharma of compassion and disregard our duty to society.

"Such recklessness leads to pollution of air and water. Is surprising then that cholera, typhoid and other infectious disease follow as a result of this?" (*Shikshan ane Sahitya*, 22-9-19 41:445)

* * *

In his speech at public meeting on 29-6-1934 in Ahmedabad, Gandhiji suggested the need for well-ventilated houses for Harijans:

.. There are so many mills in Ahmedabad and the chawls I am speaking of belong to these mills. Money spent in it would be rewarded. We must resolve that the Harijans by whose labour we are able to maintain cleanliness in the houses and palaces leading a life of luxury should have at least for them not slums but well-ventilated and well-lit houses which are conducive to health." (58:126)

* * *

In a letter dated 14-8-1934 to Hiralal Sharma, Gandhiji described the duty of a naturopath:

"The naturopath recognizes physical, mental, and spiritual ills and treats them mainly by developing inner powers. He takes the help of earth, water, ether, fire and air. It should be an impossibility for him to be instrumental in spiritual degeneration."
(58:304)

* * *

Gandhiji emphasized the importance of pure air and pointed out the gifts bestowed by nature to mankind on 31-8-1942:

"The atmospheric air around us is not always pure, neither is it the same in every country. The choice of the country does not always lie in our hands but the choice of a suitable house in a suitable locality does rest with us to some extent. The general rule should be to live in locality which is not too congested and insist upon the house being well-lighted and well-ventilated. . . Nature has provided us with sufficient reserve of vitality. But for man would have long ago disappeared from the face of the because of his own mistakes and transgressions of the rules of health.

"We must see that the air that we breathe in is fresh. It is good to cultivate the habit of sleeping in the open under the stars." (77:4-5)

* * *

Gandhiji emphasized the need for purity of drinking water on 1-9-1942:

"Next to air, water is a necessity of life. .. Drinking water must be pure. In many places it is difficult to get pure water. River water also is frequently not fit for drinking, particularly where the river is used for navigation or where it passes by a big city and receives its drainage and sewage water... Wherever we are doubtful about the purity of water, it should be boiled before drinking." (77:5)

* * *

Putting the emphasis on sunlight, Gandhiji wrote on 18-12-1942:

"...Unfortunately we do not make full use of sunlight and consequently we are unable to enjoy perfect health. Sun-bath is as useful as ordinary water-bath though the two cannot replace one another. In cases of debility and slow circulation, exposure of the uncovered body to the morning sun acts as an all-round general tonic and accelerates the metabolism. The morning sun has the largest amount of ultra-violet rays which are a most effective component of the sun's rays. . . Generally, wherever our people go, they make devices to keep out the sun and the air and thus jeopardize their health. If one cultivates the habit of living in the open in the midst of plenty of fresh air, right from childhood, the body will become hardened and one will never suffer from cold in the head and the like ailments." (77:37-38)

* * *

In a speech at prayer meeting on 24-3-1946 at Uruli Kanchan, Gandhiji suggested to sleep in the open to get fresh air:

"The most essential of these is air. Man can live without food for several weeks, without water for some time, but without air he cannot live for more than a few minutes. God has, therefore made air universally available. Shortages of food or water there may be at times but of air never. In spite of it we foolishly deprive ourselves of God's blessings of fresh and pure air by sleeping within doors with doors and windows shut. One may shut the doors and windows, if he is afraid of thieves at night. But why should one shut oneself up?

"To get fresh air, one must sleep in the open. But it is no good sleeping in the open only to breathe dust and dirt-laden air. The place where you sleep must be free from both.

"Anyone who fouls the air by spitting about carelessly, throwing refuse and rubbish or otherwise dirtying the ground, sins against man and nature." (83:315-16)

* * *

At a prayer meeting on 21-4-1946, Gandhiji told how impure water is harmful to our health:

"Will any of you care to bathe or wash your clothes in gutter water? Yet many of the small tanks where people bathe and wash and even drink from are no cleaner than the gutter. Nature is lenient. It often does not punish us for our sins immediately. Thus we can go on breathing impure air and drinking impure water over long periods without any dramatic ill effects. But there is not the slightest doubt that such a thing lowers the vitality and makes one fall an easy prey to disease." (84:43)

* * *

In a letter to a foreign naturopath on 28-5-1947, Gandhiji affirmed his strong faith in nature cure, that is healing by air, water, earth and light:

"You will be pleased to know that I became a confirmed convert to nature cure when I read Kuhne's *New Science of Healing* and Just's *Return to Nature* over forty years ago. I must confess that I have not been able fully to follow the meaning of 'return to nature' not because of want of will but because of my ignorance. I am now trying to evolve a system of nature cure suited to the millions of India's poor. I try to confine myself to the propagation of such cure as is derivable from the use of earth, water, light, air and the great void. This naturally leads man to know that the sovereign cure of all ills is the recitation from the heart of the name of God whom some millions here know by the name of Rama and the other millions by the name of Allah. Such recitation from the heart carries with it the obligation to recognize and follow the laws which nature has ordained for man. This train of reasoning leads one to the conclusion that prevention better than cure. Therefore, one is irresistibly driven to inculcating the laws of hygiene, i.e., of cleanliness of the mind, of the body and of one's surroundings." (88:23)

* * *

Gandhiji recommended the use of nature's elements for even incurable diseases on 4-11-1947:

"I am convinced that nature cure of my conception is bound to bring great relief to crores of poor villagers... Why should it not benefit from the limitless grace of the sun-god who rises his village every morning? Add to this an intelligent use of air, water, diet, earth, and so on accompanied by the recitation of the name of one's family deity. I have no doubt that if all these things are carried on with perseverance even an incurable disease will disappear without a penny having been spent." (89:470)

* * *

In a speech at a prayer meeting on 29-12-1947 at New Delhi Gandhiji expressed the desire to have meetings in the open air away from the dust and noise of the cities:

"I mentioned earlier that it would be good to have our meetings in the open air under the canopy of the sky. If the habit grows we will have to make suitable arrangements for the site etc. accordingly. In towns big and small we will have to have open space for the purpose. We will have to change our habits . . . In such an order of things the dirt and noise we find in the busiest areas of Delhi will no longer be there and however large the crowds there will be no pushing and jostling and no confusion. We must not think that we can never reach that goal. Some group or other will have to take the initiative and work for this sincerely. Just think how much saving it will mean in energy and expenditure." (90:317-18)

Nature Cure and Holistic Treatment

In a letter to H.S.L. Polak on 8-9-1909 from London, Gandhiji explained why he did not want to go for medical studies:

"What are the medical students for the Vegetarian Examination? I am rather interested in this, because I have been told here that medical study is practically impossible without having to destroy life. Mr. Gool tells me that, in the course of his studies, he must have killed about fifty frogs. An examination in physiology without this, he tells me, is not possible. If this is so, I have absolutely no desire to go in for medical studies. I would neither kill a frog, nor use one for dissecting, if it has been specially killed for the purpose of dissection." (9:395)

* * *

Gandhiji explained the spontaneous working system of Nature in *Indian Opinion* dated 11-1-1913:

". . .Nature has provided within the body itself the means of cleansing it, so that when illness occurs, we should realize that there exists impure matter in the body and that she has commenced her cleansing process." (11:434)

* * *

In a letter written to N.M Samarth on 20-8-1918, Gandhiji talked about the main cause of the diseases:

. . .I believe also in nature cure and fasting. Nature cure is hydropathy and enema. The only food I am taking is fruit juices, principally orange juice. I am free to confess that nature cure means to that extent want of faith in the purely religious cure. I have not the courage to keep myself exclusively to the latter when I know that the disease is due to a breach of nature's laws." (15:29)

* * *

In a letter written to Mohamed Ali from Ashram on 18-11-1918, Gandhiji said:

". . . Just now a medical friend has appeared on the scene who has undertaken to give me physical strength by massage, ice application, deep breathing... His treatment is rational and natural. What is more, I have confidence in it and with proper dietetic changes I do hope that the friend's prophecy will be fulfilled..." (15:63)

* * *

In his speech at Ashtanga Ayurveda Vidyalaya in Calcutta on 6-5-1925, Gandhiji said:

"... I belong to that noble, growing, but the still small school of thought which believes more in prevention than in cure, which believes in Nature doing things for herself even for suffering humanity if we would but let Nature take her course. I believe in that school of thought which considers that the less interference there is on the part of doctors, on the part of physicians and surgeons, the better it is for humanity and its morals. . . I found that our Ayurvedic and Unani Physicians lack sanity. They lack the humility. Instead of that I found in them an arrogance that they knew everything (laughter), that there was no disease which they could not cure." (27:44,45)

* * *

Expressing his views on Ayurvedic system he wrote in *Young India* on 11-6-1925:

"... I understand the founder, himself a Kaviraj, had devoted a princely sum, will contribute to the alleviation of real suffering and make-discoveries and researches in Ayurveda that will enable the poorest in the land to know and use the simple indigenous drugs and teach people to learn the laws of preventing disease rather than curing them.

"... My quarrel with the professors of Ayurvedic system is that many of them, if not indeed a vast majority of them, are mere quacks pretending to know much more than

they actually do, arrogating to themselves an infallibility and ability to cure all diseases." (27:222)

* * *

Gandhiji wrote about his experiments and expertise in nature cure treatment in *Satyagraha in South Africa*:

"... I have been fond for about the last thirty-five years of making experiments in dietetics from the religious, economic and hygienic standpoints. This predilection for food reform still persists. People around me would naturally be influenced by my experiments. Side by side with dietetics, I made experiments in treating diseases with natural curative agents only such as earth and water and without recourse to drugs. When I practised as a barrister, cordial relations were established with my clients so that we looked upon one another almost as members of the same family. The clients therefore made me a partner in their joys and sorrows. Some of them sought my advice being familiar with my experiments in nature-cure... I made many such experiments on the Farm, and I do not remember to have failed in even a single case." (29:204-5)

* * *

In a letter to Sunder Lai Mathur from Bangalore on 24-7-1927, Gandhiji advised:

"... For dyspepsia, a complete fast with copious draughts of water is a fine thing even while earth bandages continue." (34:230)

* * *

In a letter written to a friend on 19-8-1927 from Sabarmati Ashram, he suggested the treatment of water:

"If you have discharges either in night or in the day time you must immediately have a cold-hip-bath. On no account must you practise self-abuse. On the approach of the

least sensation, you must get up and walk briskly keeping your fist closed so tight as if you were about to hit anybody. . (34:374)

* * *

In a letter dated 10-5-1929 from Kavali, Gandhiji suggested to Jawaharlal Nehru to try nature cure:

"... Andhra Desha is noted for nature cure men and some of them are really brave fellows, brave in the sense that they relentlessly pursue the search without counting the cost. This remedy has in many cases answered where everything else has failed. And it has the merit of simplicity combined with perfect harmlessness even where it may not result in a cure. I wish you would turn your attention to these cures. Of course in this strict dieting plays a most important part. . ." (40:367)

* * *

In a letter to G.D.Birla before 9-1-1930 Gandhiji wrote:

. . My treatment is quite well known—fasting or fruit juice, sun-baths, sleeping at night in a well-ventilated room and enema in case of constipation. . (42:371)

* * *

In a letter to Narandas Gandhi on 14/16-9-1930 from Yeravda Mandir, Gandhiji wrote:

"The child is, as it were, included in the mother. If nature's laws were not violated, the old would not be disabled and there would be no disease." (44:150)

* * *

In a letter dated 18-6-1932 to Dr. Hiralal Sharma, Gandhiji wrote:

"As I have not much faith in drugs and as I believe in the great healing power of the sun, naturally I would love to find that the methods you are advocating are sound

and can bear investigation. If under the restrictions in which I am living I can make any experiments, I shall do so." (50:67).

* * *

In a letter to Jamanalal Bajaj on 8-11-1932, Gandhiji suggested the treatment of pure air and sunlight:

"... If you can get permission to live all the twenty-four hours of the day in open air, it would be worthwhile to secure it. It would help you if you can slowly do breathing exercises in open air. .. It is essential that the lungs should be supplied with the purest air the whole day and night. You should expose your body to the sun in the morning for as long as you can bear." (51:382-83)

* * *

In a letter to Sharda C. Shah on 24-4-1937, Gandhiji wrote:

"... It is my opinion that nature-cure, if intelligently taken up, is bound to benefit." (65:152)

* * *

In a letter dated 31-8-1941 to Vallabhbhai Patel, Gandhiji suggested:

"... I believe that your intestines can be soothed by remedies like mud-packs and changes in diet. I have not much faith in ayurveda. The vaidas do not master their subject. Some of the remedies are effective, but I have not observed what the vaidas know, how they work and so on. This is only my guesswork." (74:281)

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Gandhiji wrote a letter to Anand T. Hingorani on 9-1-1945 from Sevagram:

"I have no objection but why should we avoid fasting? Nature-cure treatment means going towards Nature, towards God." (79:17)

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In his note to Dinshaw K. Mehta on 3-10-1945, Gandhiji suggested:

"The dirt which is there in the clinic all the time should be completely removed. There should not be any leakage. Cleanliness should have the first place in nature cure."
(81:311)

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In *Harijan* dated 3-3-1946, Gandhiji recommended sticking to five elements of nature affordable to all:

"Man should seek out and be content to confine the means of cure to the five elements of which body is composed, i.e., earth, water, *akash*, sun and air. Of course Ramanama must be the invariable accompaniment... If we accept the above reasoning, it will automatically limit the means permissible under nature cure. And man is thereby saved from all the paraphernalia of big hospitals and eminent doctors, etc. The large majority of persons in the world can never afford these. Why then should the few desire what the many cannot have?" (83:176)

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In his speech at prayer meeting in Bombay on 15-3-1946, Gandhiji said:

"If once we decide that what cannot be shared by the millions should be taboo for us, we are driven to nature as the only cure —all for the rich and the poor alike."
(83:263)

* * *

Gandhiji emphasized his faith in nature cure in *Harijan* on 31-3-1946:

"The still small voice within me whispers: 'Why bother about what others say? I have given you a colleague like Dr. Dinshaw who understands you, and whom you understand. You have confidence in your capacity, having followed nature cure as a

hobby for over half a century. If you hide this talent and do not make use of it, you will be as a thief. It will ill become you. Remember the teaching of the first verse of *Ishopanishad* and surrender all you have to me. There is nothing that really belongs to you. Only you fancied that something was yours. It is all Mine. Give it also to my creatures like the rest." (83:318)

* * *

"The treatment is to be limited to sun-bath, hip-bath, friction-bath, Kuhne-baths, mud-poultice, massage, fomentation with hot water. . . Hip-baths should be readily available to all. The tub should be washed with water and hot ashes after every use. A clean brush should be used for scrubbing with the ashes.

"All kitchen work and cleaning should be done by the inmates themselves, and not with the help of the servants. The food should be the simplest possible." (D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma—Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, Vol.7, pp. 96- 97; 83:336-37)

In a speech at prayer meeting on 27-4-1946, Gandhiji advised to surrender to nature: "... If we are attuned to Him, illness will not touch us. And if perchance we do fall ill, we shall be content to seek cure only through His grace by the application of the simplest means provided by nature and not run about hither and thither to find ways and means to prolong our lives." (84:74)

* * *

In a letter to Vinod on 6-5-1946, from Simla Gandhiji wrote:

"Ayurveda has not been making progress. No doubt, much of the therapy that it offers is sound, and it certainly is cheap.. . The sovereign [therapy] is of course nature cure, since it includes Ramanama, the unfailing remedy." (84:111-112)

* * *

Gandhiji's exclusive faith in Ramanama for all cure is reflected in *Harijan* dated 19-5-1946:

"I have no doubt whatsoever that the repetition of Ramanama and pure living are the best and cheapest preventives of disease. The tragedy is that doctors, hakims, and vaidyas do not make use of Ramanama as the sovereign of cures. There is no place given to it in current Ayurvedic literature except in the shape of a charm which will drive people further into the well of superstition. Ramanama has in fact no connection with superstition. It is nature's supreme law. Whoever observes it is free from disease and *vice-versa*. The same law which keeps one free from disease applies also to its cure... All I want to say is that anything more than Ramanama is really contrary to true nature cure. The more one recedes from this central principle the farther away one goes from nature cure. Following this line of thought I limit nature cure to the use of the five elements." (84:125-26)

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Gandhiji vehemently entreated for Ramanama to cure illness of all kinds in *Harijan* on 2-6-1946:

"... Ramanama is the very foundation of nature cure of my conception. Nor should it be necessary to go across the seas in order to learn the use of earth, water, ether, sun and air. This is self-evident. Whatever other knowledge is required in this direction can be had in our villages. For instance, if herbs are used, they must be village herbs. . ." (84:197)

* * *

Gandhiji pointed out the selfish ways and greed of physicians and recommended faith in God as supreme remedy in *Harijan* on 2-6-1946:

"But the doctors, vaidyas and hakims all slave for money. They do not take to the profession purely from a spirit of service. That some of them have that spirit does not

contradict my statement. Nature cure is the only thing which has come into existence purely from the point of view of selfless service. Today even that has become a means of making money. Thus money has taken the place of God. The doctors examine me, but I depend on none but God. He is the Master of every breath I take. If He wills it, He will keep me up to 125 years. If not, He might carry me off any moment, leaving the medical friends staring as helpless spectators." (84:212)

* * *

Gandhiji declared in *Harijan* on 11-8-1946, his ultimate faith in nature cure and criticized western medicine as it involves violence:

"My love of nature cure and of indigenous systems does not blind me to the advance that Western medicine has made in spite of the fact that I have stigmatized it as black magic. I have used the harsh term and I do not withdraw it, because of the fact that it has countenanced vivisection and all the awfulness it means and because it will stop at no practice. . . I cling to nature cure inspite of its great limitations and inspite of the lazy pretensions of nature-curists. Above all, in nature cure, everybody can be his or her own doctor, not so in the various systems of medicine." (85:123-24)

* * *

In a letter written to Dinshaw Mehta from Uruli Kanchan on 4-8-1946, Gandhiji proposed his intention to spread nature cure in villages:

"My idea of developing nature cure in Uruli Kanchan and the villages of India is fast expanding. It means teaching the hygiene of the body, mind and soul of the individual and society. Thus the workers in Uruli Kanchan have, besides cleaning the streets of the village, and attending to their bodily ailments through the judicious use of earth, sun, ether, light and water, to attend to the pauperism of the criminal tribes called the Garudis—described in law as one of the criminal tribes of India." (85:125)

* * *

"The equipment for the hospital should also be very simple. It would of course, be best if you got it made in the village itself. For tubs, you can even use large containers made of baked earth. Or you can get them made of tin. For beds you may arrange bricks to form the four legs and place a plank over them." *CMahatma*, Vol. VII, pp. 448-449; 87:268)

* * *

In a letter to Dinshaw Mehta on 16-5-1947, Gandhiji clarified that there is no place for violence in nature cure:

"... I am passing through a process of change, am trying to perfect myself. I have to be constantly on the move. I am striving to perfect my non-violence. I cannot divert my attention from it and take up other things. For me nature cure too comes under non-violence." (87:447)

* * * *

Criticizing the mad rush for medical training abroad, Gandhiji wrote a letter to a naturopath on 28-5-1947:

"... They are too easily satisfied with half-baked knowledge and exploit their diplomas to fill their pockets. There is a craze today for rushing to the West for specialization as if it were the sole repository of knowledge. I would entreat all doctors and would-be doctors of medicine to think in terms of the seven hundred thousand villages of India. They would then see how great the need is in India of a medical cadre trained not in the Western style but in the system of rural medicine. They would then adopt many indigenous practices and prescriptions that have proved successful in India, and not become mere dispensers of foreign imported drugs when our fields are teeming with natural, medicinal herbs. The true function of the medical profession, as I conceive it, is not to prescribe cures, whether foreign or indigenous, but to prevent illness by teaching the people to observe the rules of health." (88:24)

* * * *

In a letter to Sankaran from New Delhi, on 21-7-1947, Gandhiji wrote:

"... But the beauty is that nature cure flourishes in spite of the pretensions, the reason being that it is the natural thing." (88:386)

Vegetarianism

"Then the shepherds in India afford a good example of how strong an Indian Vegetarian can be where other opposite agencies are not at work. An Indian shepherd is a finely built man of herculean constitution. He, with his thick, strong cudgel, would be a match for any ordinary European with his sword. Cases are recorded of shepherds having killed or driven away tigers and lions with their cudgels. 'But', said a friend one day, 'this is an example of men living in the rude and natural state. In the present highly artificial state of society you require something more than mere cabbage and peas. Your shepherd lacks intelligence, he reads no books, etc. etc.' The one and only answer to this was, and is that the Vegetarian shepherd would be equal to, if not more than a match for, a meat-eating shepherd. Thus there is a comparison between a Vegetarian of one class and a meat-eater of the same class. It is a comparison between strength and strength, and not between strength and strength plus intelligence, for my attempt for the moment is simply to disprove that Indian Vegetarians are physically weak on account of their Vegetarianism. . . . And granting the argument that a substitute is required for vegetables in the present state of society, is it conclusively proved that flesh or meat is that substitute?

"... From the above facts it is easy to see that Vegetarianism not only not injurious, but on the contrary is conducive to bodily strength and that attributing the Hindu weakness to Vegetarianism is simply based on a fallacy. "(The *Vegetarian*, 28-2-1891 ;1: 32-33)

* * *

". . .The Vegetarian shepherd is physically strong. He is also long-lived. I know a shepherdess who was more than one hundred years old in 1888. When I last saw her eyesight was very good. Her memory was fresh. She could recollect things that

she had seen in her childhood. She could walk with a stick to support her. I hope she is still living.

"Besides, the shepherd's figure is symmetrical. It is very rare to see any deformity in him. Without being fierce like a tiger, he is yet strong and brave and as docile as a lamb. Without being awe-inspiring, his stature is commanding. Altogether, the Indian shepherd is a very fine specimen of a Vegetarian, and will compare very favourably with any meat-eater so far as bodily strength goes." (*The Vegetarian*, 14-3-1891; 1:37)"

* * *

"The vital food will not, cannot, as such, minister ants of the soul. And if the highest aim, indeed, the only aim of this life, be to know the soul, then, it is humbly submitted, anything that takes away from our opportunities of knowing the soul, and, therefore, also playing with the vital food and other such experiments, is playing away to that extent, the only desirable aim in life.

"If we are to eat that we may live to the glory of Him, of whom we are, then, is it not sufficient that we eat nothing that, to the Nature, is repulsive, that requires the unnecessary spilling of the blood?" (*The Vegetarian*, 24-3-1894; 1:85-86)

* * *

In a letter dated 4-8-1926, from Sabarmati Ashram, Gandhiji wrote to D. B. Kalelkar regarding how fruit diet is beneficial:

"... Moreover, as vegetarian food is spiritually beneficial, compared with flesh food, so fruit diet will be still more beneficial. Trees, again, make rainfall more regular and are also more independent of rains than grain fields. Thus fruit diet has numerous economic, political and spiritual benefits." (31:256)

* * *

In a letter in *Young India* on 7-7-1927, he wrote:

"... Human physiology as well as the experience of the wise shows that the right food for us is the fruit ripened on the tree and suchlike. The pure seeker will not use even fire. We may not reach this ideal state, yet it is our duty to strive for it as far as we can, and in this our endeavour meat-eating can have no place. [Feeding on] plant life should be the limit for us.

"I can say from my own experience and that of others that there is absolutely no danger of tuberculosis and such other diseases resulting from vegetarian diet even in countries like England. Today thousands of Englishmen are vegetarians, [though] usually they do take eggs.

"Vegetarian restaurants make use of egg and milk; they neither serve nor cook meat. They place eggs and milk in the same category and agree that it would be better to give up both as neither is a vegetable. This is my opinion too." (34:120)

* * *

In a speech at the meeting of London Vegetarian Society on 20-11-1931, talking about Mr. Salt's book Gandhiji said:

"It was Mr. Salt's book, *A Plea for Vegetarianism*, which showed me why, apart from a hereditary habit, and apart from my adherence to a vow administered to me by my mother, it was right to be a vegetarian. He showed me why it is a moral duty incumbent on vegetarians not to live upon fellow animals. . . vegetarians should have that moral basis—that a man was not born a carnivorous animal, but born to live on the fruits and herbs that the earth grows.. . But the basis of my vegetarianism is not physical, but moral, If anybody said that I should die if I did not take beef-tea or mutton, even under medical advice, I would prefer death. That is the basis of my vegetarianism. I would love to think that all of us who called ourselves vegetarians should have that basis. There were thousands of meat-eaters who did not stay meat-eaters. There must be a definite reason for our making that change in our lives, for

our adopting habits and customs different from society, even though sometimes that change may offend those nearest and dearest to us. Not for the world should you sacrifice a moral principle. Therefore the only basis for having a vegetarian society and proclaiming a vegetarian principle is, and must be, a moral one. I am not to tell you, as I see and wander about the world, that vegetarians, on the whole, enjoy much better health than meat-eaters. I belong to a country which is predominantly vegetarian." (48:326,328)

Sanitation and Hygiene

Gandhiji underlined the importance of sanitation and general knowledge on health in *Indian Opinion*, on 8-2-1913:

"Latrines, open spaces, narrow lanes [dirtied through misuse] and urinals, where these are separate, are the principal agencies for defilement of air. Few are aware of the harm that can be caused by the filth from latrines. When a cat or dog defecates, it generally paws a hole and, having defecated into it, it covers the faces over with earth. Where modern water-closets do not exist, this method ought to be followed.

"... We urinate any and everywhere and this fouls the air; it is a habit that must be wholly given up. Where no special place is available for urination, we should go far from where people live; having made water on dry ground, we should sprinkle the spot with earth. There are forceful reasons, however, why excreta should not be buried too deep. One is that the heat of the sun cannot then do its work and the second that it may affect the neighbouring springs.

"We spit on the carpet, on the floor, in the courtyard and wheresoever we can. Spittle is often poisonous. The sputum of a tubercular patient is extremely dangerous. Germs rising from it get into the air inhaled by others and do great harm. Over and above that, the house is dirtied, but that is another matter. In this regard our duty is not to spit any and everywhere inside the house, but to keep a spittoon. Outdoors, one should spit, if one has to, on dry ground where there is plenty of dust. The sputum will mix with the dry earth and the damage will be less. Some doctors are of the opinion that tubercular patients should spit only into receptacles containing germicide. Even, if a patient spits onto the dust on dry ground, the germs in his sputum are not destroyed. This dust carrying the germs rises into the atmosphere and infects others. Whether this opinion is right or wrong, we can at least learn this much from it: spitting any and everywhere is a dirty and injurious habit.

". . . Some people are in the habit of throwing food, refuse and peelings, etc., all over. If this garbage was buried in the ground near the surface, it would not foul the air; also it would in due course make useful manure. One should never throw out perishables. It has been found from experience that these suggestions are easily put into practice, once they are understood. We have seen how air is fouled through our bad habits and how this can be stopped." (11:458-59)

* * *

In his speech at the opening ceremony of the Benaras Hindu University on 4-2-1916, Gandhiji pointed out our negligence of cleanliness:

"... We do not know the elementary laws of cleanliness. We spit anywhere on the carriage floor, irrespective of the thought that it is often used as sleeping space. We do not trouble ourselves as to how we use it; the result is indescribable filth in the compartment." (13:213)

* * *

In a speech at the Gujarat Political Conference in Godhra on 3-11-1917, he stressed the need to improve our dirty and insanitary habits:

"Unless we alter the conditions in our cities, rid ourselves of our dirty habits and have improved latrines, swaraj can have no value for us.

. . . In the name of religion, we ourselves would not clean the places for fear of pollution and so, despite our reputation for personal cleanliness, a portion of our houses remains the dirtiest in the world, with the result that we grow up in an air which is laden with disease germs. We were safe so long as we kept to our villages. But in the cities we are ever committing suicide by reason of our insanitary habits.

"Not far from here is the holy centre of pilgrimage, Dakor. I have visited it. Its unholiness is limitless. I consider myself a devout Vaishnava. I claim, therefore, a special privilege of criticising the condition of Dakorji. The insanitation of that place is

so great that one used to hygienic conditions can hardly bear to pass even twenty-four hours there. The pilgrims pollute the tank and the streets as they choose. . ." (14:57)

* * *

Gandhiji offered detailed comments in Navajivan dated 2-11-1919 on cleanliness and good habits and indicated its close relationship with good health:

"... If anyone wants to evacuate in the open, it must be at a distance of a mile from the village. There must be no habitation in its vicinity, nor any human traffic nearby. The person must dig a hole and after using it must cover the faces with earth.

"... No one should spit or clean his nose on the streets. In some cases the sputum is so harmful that the germs are carried from it and they infect others with tuberculosis. In some places spitting on the road is a criminal offence. Those who spit after chewing betel leaves and tobacco have no consideration for the feelings of others. Spittle, mucus from the nose, etc, should also be covered with earth.

"Near the village or dwellings, there should be no ditches in which water can collect. Mosquitoes do not breed where water does not stagnate. Where there are no mosquitoes, the incidence of malaria is low. At one time, water used to collect around Delhi. After the hollows were filled, mosquitoes were greatly reduced and so also was malaria." (16:272-73)

* * *

Giving a speech at Ayurvedic Pharmacy in Madras on 24-3-1925, Gandhiji opposed the indiscriminate use of drugs:

". . . It is a result not of a day's thought or a hurried thought; but it is the result of nearly 40 years of observation and also experiments in hygiene and sanitation. As a result of these things, I have come to the deliberate conclusion that the best physician is one who administers the least number of drugs.

"... I trust that our physicians understand the secret that nature is the sweetest, the quickest and the best restorer of health, whereas what I find is that all kinds of experiments are being made, arousing the basest passions of humanity. The advertisements that I see of medicines make me sick. I feel that physicians are rendering no service to humanity whatsoever but the greatest disservice by claiming every medicine as the panacea for all ills of life. I plead for humility, simplicity and truth." (26:389)

* * *

Pointing out our unhygienic habits Gandhiji strongly emphasized observing cleanliness in lavatories, and wrote in *Navajivan* on 24-5-1925:

"I shall have to defend myself on one point, namely, sanitary conveniences. I learnt 35 years ago that a lavatory must be as clean as a drawing-room. I learnt this in the West. I believe that many rules about cleanliness in lavatories are observed more scrupulously in the West than in the East. There are some defects in their rules in this matter, which can be easily remedied. The cause of many of our diseases is the condition of our lavatories and our bad habit of disposing of excreta anywhere and everywhere. I, therefore, believe in the absolute necessity of a clean place for answering the call of nature and clean articles for use at the time, have accustomed myself to them and wish that all others should do the same. The habit has become so firm in me that even if I wished to change it I would not be able to do so. Nor do I wish to change it." (27:153-54)

* * *

Under the title 'Our Dirty Ways' in *Navajivan* on 13-9-1925, Gandhiji wrote the following:

"1. Both excretory functions should be performed only at fixed places.

"2. To pass urine anywhere in a street, at any place not meant for the purpose should be regarded an offence.

"3. After passing urine at any selected place, one should cover up the spot well with dry earth.

"4. Lavatories should be kept very clean. Even the part through which the water flows should be kept clean. Our lavatories bring our civilization into discredit, they violate the rules of hygiene.

"5. All the night-soil should be removed to fields.

"... If my suggestion is followed, no one would need to remove night-soil, the air would not become polluted and villages would remain very clean." (28:176)

* * *

"... But this I know that the home treatment of diseases and the simplicity of our life on Tolstoy Farm were responsible for a saving of at least two to three lakhs of public money. . . The dietetic experiments thus far detailed were made from a hygienic standpoint..." (*Satyagraha in South Africa*, Chap.xxxv; 29:206)

* * *

In one of his speeches at Dhulia on 13-2-1927, Gandhiji said:

"... The capacity to look after the village and town sanitation is included in our capacity for swaraj and when we demonstrate it, nothing on earth can stand between us and Swaraj." (33:76)

* * *

In a speech at Mayavaram on 13-9-1927, Gandhiji underlined the necessity of sanitation and pure air:

"... I reckon sanitation also as one of the important things which a humanitarian or a reformer must tackle.

"... The first condition of any municipal life is decent sanitation and an unfailing supply of pure water. Do not for a moment consider that either of these two things require any great outlay of money. Both these things are capable of being secured without your having to spend any money at all, if only you have the will to secure them to citizens... I am a determined opponent of this British administration but we have yet got to learn much from the Britisher in the matter of sanitation. . ." (34:527-29)

* * *

In his speech at public meeting in Virudhunagar on 2-10-1927, Gandhiji said:

". . . In my opinion the beginning, the centre and the end of all municipal service consists in conserving the sanitation of the people entrusted to the charge of the municipality. And if I had the powers of an autocrat and was minded to utilize those powers I would immediately disband that municipality which did not receive cent per cent marks in an examination in connection with its conservancy work." (35:71)

* * *

In his talk to khadi workers at Cuttack on 20-12-1927, asking them to go to villages, Gandhiji said:

"... I ask you to go to the villages and bury yourselves there, not as their masters or benefactors, but as their humble servants. Let them know what to do and how to change their modes of living from your daily conduct and way of living. Only feeling will be of no use just like steam which by itself is of no account unless it is kept under proper control when it becomes a mighty force. I ask you to go forth as messengers of God carrying balm for the wounded soul of India.

"Go then to the villages and become villagers. The story that the school master revealed at Charbatia was an eye-opener. It was a typical village. What a field of operation he has! You can take charge of the village school, make the children flesh

of your flesh and bone of your bone and work amongst the villagers through the children. You will enter into their sorrows, ask them why they send their men to those pestilential hovels in Calcutta instead of working for their bread in their own homes. Go and get into their homes, handle their wheels, their carding-bows, show them their defects, see how they live, teach them the elementary principles of sanitation."
(35:401-2)

* * *

"In the upper class quarters we came across a latrine which I cannot help describing in some detail. Every room had its gutter, which was used both for water and urine, which meant that the whole house would stink. But one of the houses had a storeyed bedroom with a gutter which was being used both as a urinal and a latrine. The gutter had a pipe descending to the ground floor. It was not possible to stand the foul smell in this room. How the occupants could sleep there I leave the readers to imagine.

"The committee also visited the Vaishnava Haveli. The priest in charge of the Haveli was very friendly with my family. So he agreed to let us inspect everything and suggest whatever improvements we liked. There was a part of the Haveli premises that he himself had never seen. It was the place where refuse and leaves used as dinner-plates used to be thrown over the wall. It was the haunt of crows and kites. The latrines were of course dirty. I was not long enough in Rajkot to see how many of our suggestions the priest carried out.

"It pained me to see so much uncleanness about a place of worship. One would expect a careful observance of the rules of sanitation and hygiene in a place which is regarded as holy. The authors of the *smritis*, as I knew even then, have laid the greatest emphasis on cleanliness both inward and outward."(An *Autobiography*, Part 11, Chap.xxvi; 39:140)

* * *

Describing insanitary state of latrines in the State railways, in *Young India* on 14-2-1929, Gandhiji said:

"To mention one glaring instance, the latrines on the other systems that I know are somewhat tolerable; but the latrines in the Jodhpur State Railway are, in my opinion, absolutely intolerable, insanitary and unfit for human use. They are little black holes without ventilation, without light, without latches to close the doors from inside. A bulky man like say Maulana Shaukat Ali would not perhaps be able to enter the latrines or having entered would certainly not be able to use it. Lean man like me cannot use them without the clothes touching the walls. The whole construction was evidently conceived without reference to- the primary human want. It is upto the railway management to alter this disgraceful state of things without a moment's delay. The State railways should really be a model to the British system; whereas the actual state of things is the other way. The construction of the State railways that I know is any day inferior to the construction of the carriages in British India." (39:438)

* * *

Commenting on our attitude and unhygienic habits, in *Young India* on 25-4-1929, Gandhiji wrote:

"Any Municipality tackling the evil of insanitation will have tough work before it, not by way of finding money for carrying out the reform but in the way of fighting colossal national prejudices and habits that have become second nature.

". . . We purchase that cleanliness at the expense of our neighbours. Hence our villages are a dungheap and streets not walkable inspite of the fact that millions go barefoot. We do believe in removing dirt from our rooms but we also believe in throwing it in the street without regard to the well-being of society. We are clean as individuals but not as members of the society or the nation of which the individual is but a tiny part.

"... We had to cross the great Krishna river. The scene I have often painfully witnessed from the trains in the South now met my gaze at closer quarters. The car practically passed by hundreds of men and women evacuating themselves not many yards from the river bank. It is the stream in which people bathe and from which they drink. Here there was a breach of the code of decency and a criminal disregard of the most elementary laws of health. Add to this the economic waste of the precious manure, which they would be if these evacuations were made in a field and buried in the living surface of the earth and well mixed with loosened soil, instead of being filth and a danger to the health of the citizens, as they are when deposited on the river banks." (40:283-84)

* * *

He wrote in *Harijan* on 8-2-1935:

"Village tanks are promiscuously used for bathing, washing clothes and drinking and cooking purposes. Many village tanks are also used by cattle. Buffaloes are often to be seen wallowing in them. The wonder is that, in spite of this sinful misuse of village tanks, villages have not been destroyed by epidemics. It is the universal medical evidence that this neglect to ensure purity of the water supply of villages is responsible for many of the diseases suffered by the villagers." (60:191)

* * *

Addressing the questions of a villager living in Shantiniketan, Gandhiji explained how to take up sanitation work in *Harijan* on 9-1-1937:

". . . There are in our villages inexhaustible resources not for commercial purposes in every case but certainly for local purposes in almost every case. The greatest tragedy is the hopeless unwillingness of the villagers to better their lot.

"The very first problem the village worker will solve is its sanitation. It is the most neglected of all the problems that baffle workers and that undermine physical well-

being and breed disease. If the worker became a voluntary Bhangi, he would begin by collecting night-soil and turning it into manure and sweeping village streets. He will tell people how and where they should perform daily functions and speak to them on the value of sanitation and the great injury caused by the neglect. The worker will continue to do the work whether the villagers listen to him or no.

"The spinning-wheel should be the central theme of all such village exhibitions and the industries suited to the particular locality should revolve round it. An exhibition thus arranged would naturally become an object-lesson for the villagers and an educational treat when it is accompanied by demonstrations, lectures and leaflets."
(64:218)

* * *

Emphasizing the importance of rural sanitation in *Harijan* dated 18-8-1940, Gandhiji wrote:

"If rural reconstruction were not to include rural sanitation, our villages would remain the muck-heaps that they are today. Village sanitation is a vital part of village life and is as difficult as it is important. It needs a heroic effort to eradicate age-long insanitation. The village worker who is ignorant of the science of village sanitation, who is not a successful scavenger, cannot fit himself for village service.

"... It is impossible for an unhealthy people to win Swaraj. Therefore we should no longer be guilty of the neglect of the health of our people. Every village worker must have a knowledge of the general principles of health." (72:380)

* * *

"Having given a place to village sanitation, the question may be asked why give a separate place to education in health and hygiene? It might have been bracketed with sanitation, but I did not wish to interfere with the items. Mention of mere sanitation is not enough to include health and hygiene. The art of keeping one's

health and the knowledge of hygiene is by itself a separate subject of study and corresponding practice. In a well- ordered society the citizens know and observe the laws of health and hygiene. It is established beyond doubt that ignorance and neglect of the laws of health and hygiene are responsible for the majority of diseases to which mankind is heir. The very high death-rate among us is no doubt due largely to our gnawing poverty, but it could be mitigated if the people were properly educated about health and hygiene." (Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place; 75:156)

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Gandhiji wrote on 17-12-1942, how simplicity helped healthy living:

". . . Many households are so packed with all sorts of unnecessary decorations and furniture which one can very well do without, that a simple living man will feel suffocated in those surroundings. They are nothing but means of harbouring dust, bacteria and insects. . . I meant to say is that my desire to be in tune with the infinite has saved me from many complications in life. It led not merely to simplicity of household and dress but all round simplicity in the mode of my life. In a nutshell, and in the language of the subject under discussion, I have gone on creating more and more contact with akash. With the increase in the contact went improvement in health. I had more contentment and peace of mind and the desire for belongings almost disappeared. He who will establish contact with the infinite possesses nothing and yet possesses everything. In the ultimate analysis, man owns that of which he can make legitimate use and which he can assimilate. If everybody followed this rule, there would be room enough for all and there would be neither want nor overcrowding." (77:36)

* * *

In the discussion with Shrikrishnadas Jaju on 8-10-1944, Gandhiji emphasized on primitive method of *hand-chakki*, instead of mills, on the ground of health:

"Next to oil and hand-made paper we must revive the hand-*chakki* (grinding stone)—a vital thing in every village. Otherwise flour- mills which have been a source of anxiety to me for several years will be our fate. . . We must get our people in the villages to take to hand-pounding of rice or hand-*chakkis* for husking paddy, for it is a well-established fact that the white polished rice put out by mills and white sugar are harmful to health." (78:162)

* * *

In his speech at a prayer meeting on 3-9-1946 in New Delhi, Gandhiji emphasized that servants' quarters should be as clean as ministers' bungalows:

"There is no gainsaying that we have not learnt the art of external sanitation to the degree that the English have. What is so distressing is that the living quarters of the menials and sweepers employed in the Viceroy's House are extremely dirty. This is a state of affairs the ministers of our new Government will not tolerate. Although they will occupy the same well-kept bungalows, they will see to it that the lodgings of their servants are kept as clean as their own. They will also have to pay attention to the cleanliness of the wives and children of the staff. Jawaharlal and Sardar have no objection to cleaning their own lavatories. How can they have any in having the living quarters of their attendants cleaned? A one-time Harijan servant of Jawaharlal is now a member of the U.P. Assembly. I shall be satisfied only when the lodgings of the ministers' staff are as neat and tidy as their own." (85:255)

* * *

In a prayer meeting at Patna on 13-3-1947, he reminded people of their duty and responsibility to beautify the village:

". . . Why are these villagers still wearing a forlorn look? You will say this is a job which the Government ought to do. I am asking you, why should the Government do this job? Did you seek the Government's permission while ruining the villages? It is your responsibility to rebuild the villages. You must remove the debris and clean the

villages. The Government will be thankful to you and will send you experts who can guide the work of sanitation. This is a job wherein even women and children can participate. You should help the Government and the Government will help you.

"The village I visited today was more unclean than the one I visited yesterday. Rains will make it even worse. Someone has recorded that India is strewn with excrement. One cannot contradict him if one visits the villages. Every corner in the village we visited was dirty. The lanes were very filthy and the roads were in a shabby state. I would call upon you to clean up these villages so that they reflect the cleanliness of your hearts. Besides contributing money you should be prepared for the work of sanitation. If you do not clean up the villages, how can I ask the Muslims to return to their homes ? It is your duty to start the cleanliness drive from today. If your hearts are clean, the Muslims will surely return. I myself wish to undertake sanitation work. I have done this work in my time; but now I do not have the physical strength to do it. You must make your villages clean and beautiful. You should grow flowers and maintain a garden where women and children can walk about. The lanes should be spotlessly clean. The roads even if they are narrow, should be so well maintained that even a blind man should be able to walk on them. This alone can turn the villages of India into heaven on earth." (87:79-80)

* * *

In a speech at Inter-Asian Relations Conference on 2-4-1947, Gandhiji said that real India lives in its villages:

"You, friends, have not seen the real India and you are not meeting in Conference in the midst of real India. Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Lahore—all these are big cities and are, therefore, influenced by the West. . . If some of you see the villages, you will not be fascinated by the sight. You will have to scratch below the dung heap. I do not say that they ever were heavenly places. Today they are really dung-heaps. They were not like that before. What I say is not from history but from what I have

seen myself. I have travelled from one end of India to the other and have seen the miserable specimen of humanity with lustreless eyes. They are India. In these humble cottages, in the midst of these dung-heaps, are to be found the humble Bhangis in whom you find the concentrated essence of wisdom." (87:191-92)

* * *

In a speech at prayer meeting at Sambhal on 27-12-1947 Gandhiji said:

"... You must keep yourself clean externally and internally. Your village should be free of dirt and dung in every way. And it should be free from foul smells. You should follow the rules of sanitation." (90:307)

* * *

"... I have done the work of scavenging quite often myself, my sons have done it and so has your Ravjibhai. No stigma attaches to the work at all. It is, on the contrary, a sacred work. The man who removes dirt performs a sacred duty." (Mahadev Desai, *Day-to-Day with Gandhi*, Vol-5, p. 137)

* * *

"A model town does not become so from its school, library or other institutions, but only from the ideal citizens living therein, and such ideal citizens never fail to strictly observe hygienic rules. If you want to make Bhadrans an ideal town, you should not depend upon your *mahal* or your *panchayat* or the State Government. But every citizen-man or woman-must regard it his personal business to make it so. The town would attain that state when dust and refuse never meet the eye, when latrines are as clean as public libraries. If you want to assess the cultural value of any nation, you should inspect its latrines and gutters, or rather get them inspected by technical experts in sanitation. I am such a specialist in cleanliness and I am giving you today a few tips from my scrutiny. I observed that many of those present were coughing when they came here. Immediately I concluded that there must be a large quantity of

dust on the roads. A dusty road is bad in many respects. Not only does it harm our lungs, but it means great hardship to the beasts of burden. The first law of cleanliness is, therefore, good and solidly-built roads. The town boasts of a cistern with water-taps but it cannot adorn the town without well-paved streets." (Mahadev Desai, *Day-to-Day with Gandhi*, Vol-5, p.279-80)

* * *

"Indian villages suffer from horrible insanitation. We must keep our water supply pure. Not attending to sanitation makes our bodies diseased and impure. Mental sanitation too is necessary and in order to keep our minds pure, we must keep them engaged in some healthy activity." (Mahadev Desai, *Day-to-Day with Gandhi*, Vol-9; p.73-4)

* * *

"The President of Municipality reminded me that this was my third visit to Gaya. Gayaji is a very holy town of the Hindus and the address of the Hindu Mahasabha reminds us that it was at Gaya that Lord Buddha attained perfect knowledge. For these reasons I chose the route via Gaya. But when I went to see the Library, I was pained at the thought that the roads of that town which was regarded so holy were more dirty than of many places I have seen. Though I have referred to it at the Municipality, I repeat it before you, as the responsibility for such uncleanliness lies with you also. If people who live here do not do their duty, do not keep their houses clean, what can the Municipality do ? Wherever citizens are alert, the city-father is also alert, and if he is not, we may not elect him a second time. I would not feel any inhibition in telling you, 'All of you please take up brooms and buckets of water and clean the streets. Don't think that that is the work of Bhangi alone. It is specially your business to begin the cleaning'." (Mahadev Desai, *Day-to-Day with Gandhi*, Vol. 9 p. 102-3)

Organic Manure

Gandhiji suggested the method of making organic manure out of waste and refuse in *Navajivan* on 2-11-1919:

". . . Earth very deep down does not contain enough germs to turn filth into manure. Consequently, filth which has been buried very deep produces foul gases and pollutes the air. The bucket may be of iron or earth coated with paint. This also requires not money but industry. Urine too should not be passed in any and every place. It should be regarded a sin to pass urine in the street. There should be ditches for the purpose and, if there is plenty of earth in them, no bad smell will be produced, there will be no splashing and the earth will turn into manure. This, then, is the second rule. If every peasant follows it, not only will his health improve but he will also profit materially thereby as, without labour, he will obtain valuable manure.

. . . It is scarcely necessary to enlarge upon the rule that dirt must not be thrown on the street. Disposal of refuse is also a science. Glass, iron, etc., should be buried deep. Twigs and sticks used for cleaning teeth should be washed, dried and used for fuel. Rags may be sold. Leftover food, peelings, etc., should be buried and turned into manure. I have seen a many a heap of manure prepared in this way. Paper can be made from rags. It should not be necessary to employ anyone to remove refuse in a village, because there is very little of it and most of it can be converted into manure." (16:272-73)

* * *

"Where to dump the excreta is an important question. It is a question both of cleanliness and of economics. If permitted to lie around, the thing emits a foul smell. Flies which sit on it and then sit on our bodies or our food spread infectious diseases all round. We would give up eating many sweets and other items of food if we examined them with the help of a microscope.

"To the cultivator the dirt is gold. If put in the fields, it becomes fine manure and increases the yield. The Chinese are experts in this matter and it is said that they save crores of rupees by preserving excreta like gold and, at the same time, avoid the incidence of many diseases.

"... Garbage is of two types. The first is that which is suitable material for manure—such as peels and skins of vegetables, grain, grass etc. The other type includes bits of wood, stones and sheets of iron or tin, etc. Of these the first type should be kept in fields or at places where manure from it can be collected, and the second should be carried and buried at places where potholes, etc., need to be filled in. As a result of this, the village will remain clean and people who walk bare footed will be able to do so fearlessly. After a few days' labour, the people will surely realize the value of it. And once this realization dawns on them, they will start helping and finally start doing things on their own. Every farmer will utilize in his own fields the excreta of his own family, so that no one will find anyone else being a burden to him and everyone will go on enriching his own crop.

"... When I speak of burying excreta we should understand that there should be a large square or rectangular pit for it. For, no further excreta is to be put on that already buried and the pit is also not to be opened up soon. Hence the following day there would be ready another small square pit near where the excreta was buried the previous day. The earth removed from it would have been kept on one side. All that would have to be done the next day would be to bury the excreta, cover it up with the earth, level it properly and go away. Garbage consisting of peels of vegetables etc., should be turned into manure on a spot near the above. This is so because human excreta and peels of vegetables, etc., cannot be turned into manure by burying them together. Worms do not operate on the two in the same manner. It must now have been clear to volunteers that the place at which they bury excreta will always remain clean, will have an even surface, and look like a newly ploughed field.

"Now remains the heap that is not fit for making manure. The rubbish accumulated in it should be buried in a deep hole at a single spot or wherever holes have to be filled up around the village. It too must be buried every day, should be pressed down from above and kept clean.

"If this activity is carried on for a month, villages will cease to be dunghills and become instead clean and beautiful. The reader must have realized that no expense is involved in this. This neither requires any help from the Government nor any great scientific power. All that is required is a volunteer with zeal.

"It is not necessary to add that what applies to human excreta also applies to the excreta of animals." (*Shikshan ane Sahitya*, 22-9-1929; 41:446-47)

* * *

In *Harijan* dated 8-2-1935, Gandhiji provided detailed and scientific explanation of turning rubbish and excreta into valuable manure:

"Lanes and streets have to be cleansed of all the rubbish, which should be classified. There are portions which can be turned into manure, portions which have simply to be buried and portions which can be directly turned into wealth. Every bone picked up is valuable raw material from which useful articles can be made or which can be crushed into rich manure. Rags and waste paper can be turned into paper, and excreta picked up are golden manure for the village fields. The way to treat the excreta is to mix them, liquid as well as solid, with superficial earth in soil dug no deeper than one foot at the most. In his book on rural hygiene, Dr. Poore says that excreta should be buried in earth no deeper than nine ' to twelve inches (I am quoting from memory). The author contends that the superficial earth is charged with minute life, which, together with light and air which easily penetrate it, turn the excreta into good, soft, sweet-smelling soil within a week. Any villager can test this for himself. The way to do it is either to have fixed latrines, with earthen or iron buckets, and empty the contents in properly prepared places from day to day, or to

perform the functions directly on to the ground dug up in squares. The excreta can either be buried in a village common or in individual fields. This can only be done by the co-operation of villagers. At the worst, an enterprising villager can collect the excreta and turn them into wealth for himself. At present, this rich manure, valued at lakhs of rupees, runs to waste every day, fouls the air and brings disease into the bargain." (60:191)

* * *

In *Harijan* dated 1-3-1935, he explained the quick process of turning excreta into manure:

". . . The cost of digging is lessened and that of removal avoided altogether or certainly lessened. Add to this the fact that the excreta are turned into manure in almost a week's time, for the reason that the bacteria, which live Within six or nine inches of the surface of the earth, and the air and the rays of the sun act upon the excreta and turn them into sweet manure much more quickly than when the refuse is buried deep." (60:269)

* * *

In a talk with members of Talimi Sangh on 16-2-1946 at Sevagram he put forward the idea of converting night soil into manure on a nation-wide scale to get a colossal result:

"... A thin top layer of loam or compost can enable us to grow many a useful vegetable and pot herb. A beginning can be made at once by converting night soil into manure by the shallow trenching system. The conversion does not need more than a fortnight. Every pint of water whether from bathing and ablutions "or from the kitchen should be turned into the backyard vegetable beds. Not a drop of water should be allowed to be wasted. Greens can be grown in earthen pots and even discarded old tins. No opportunity should be neglected, however trifling. The

cumulative result, then, if the practice is on a nationwide scale, will be colossal."
(83:143)

* * *

In a letter dated 12-11-1947 to Jehangir Patel, Gandhiji indicated:

"Lack of fertilizers has nothing to do with the poverty of our soil. There is great divergence of opinion on inorganic manure. We waste a tremendous quantity of organic manure. It is all a question of the education of the growers, whether owners or not." (90:11)

* * *

In *Harijanbandhu* dated 18-1-1948, Gandhiji advised to educate the farmers:

"If we use farmyard manure or compost it is not necessary to keep the fields fallow. This manure keeps the soil ever fresh. It also does not have to be carried from place to place. After a little experience, such manure can be produced in every village. But these things cannot be done mechanically. Let us glean what knowledge we can find in writings such as above and provide right education to the farmers by carrying on original experiments, and thus benefit them." (90:400)

* * *

He wrote in *Harijan* dated 1-2-1948:

"That tractors and chemical fertilizers will spell our ruin, I have not a shadow of a doubt." (90:480)

Cruelty to Animals

In a speech on 4-1-1916 at Mota Varachha, Gandhiji revealed his pain on cruelty inflicted on animals:

"... I felt that it was cruel to strike bullocks with a goad. In England, this is a punishable offence, but here no action is taken in the matter. The scriptures of both the religions lay down that we should not inflict cruelty on even the meanest of creatures. I also will have to answer for this in the court of the Almighty. When I come here again, it will make me happy to see that the sticks are no longer spiked. If I do not find that you have done so, I shall prefer going on foot rather than in the bullock cart. We should not strike animals which happen to be weak." (13:199)

* * *

Gandhiji appealed to prevent slaughter and torture of cows at the Gujarat Political Conference in Godhra on 3-11-1917:

"... Protection of its cows is incumbent upon a country 90 per cent of whose population lives upon agriculture and need bullocks for it. In such a country, even meat-eaters should abstain from beef eating. These natural causes should be enough justification for not killing cows. But here we have to face a peculiar situation. The chief meaning of cow-protection seems to be to prevent cows from falling into the hands of our Muslim brethren and being used as food. The rulers need beef. On their account thousands of cows are slaughtered daily. We do nothing to prevent this slaughter. We hardly make any attempt to prevent the cruel torture of cows by certain Hindus of Calcutta, who subject them to a practice known as "blowing" and make them yield the last drop of milk. In Gujarat, Hindu cart-drivers use sharp goads to drive bullocks. We say nothing about this. The condition of bullocks in our cities is pitiable." (14:58-59)

* * *

Expressing his anguish on animal slaughter he wrote in *Navajivan* on 29-12-1920:

"... I had an occasion years ago to decide whether I would go and stay in Bandra and I deliberately decided not to go. The Bombay slaughterhouse is in Bandra. I feel a stab in the heart whenever I pass it. There may be any number of beautiful spots in that place but to me they all seem dyed with the blood of innocent creatures and, therefore, it hurts my soul to have to go there. Another place where I find it painful to stay is Calcutta. There countless goats are killed in the name of Hinduism and I find this unbearable." (19:181)

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In a letter to C.F.Andrews on 29-1-1921 from Calcutta, Gandhiji gave way to his feelings and agony regarding the sacrifice of animals in the name of religion:

". . . Whenever I am in Calcutta the thought of the goats being sacrificed haunts me and makes me uneasy. I asked Harilal not to settle in Culcutta on that account. The pariah can voice his own grief. He can petition. He can even rise against Hindus. But the poor dumb goats? I sometimes writhe in agony when I think of it. But I do not speak or write about it. All the same I am qualifying myself for the service of these fellow creatures of mine who are slaughtered in the name of my faith. I may not finish the work in this incarnation. I shall be born again to finish that work or someone who has realized my agony will finish it." (19:290)

* * *

Answering Mr. Nariman's doubt on cow-slaughter in *Navajivan* dated 24-4-1921, Gandhiji wrote:

"... It has touched me to the quick. How can Mr. Nariman imagine what deep pain is caused by cow-slaughter to an orthodox Hindu like myself? While the slaughter of cows continues, I feel that I am myself being slaughtered. I make ceaseless efforts to rescue the cow. If I have at present staked my life to save Islam, it is in order to save

the cow. I do not wish to bargain with the Muslims and so I do not raise the issue of cow-slaughter." (20:34)

* * *

He wrote in *Young India* on 6-10-1921:

"A Mussalman friend sent me some time ago a book detailing the inhumanities practised by us on the cow and her progeny. How we bleed her to take the last drop of milk from her, how we starve her to emaciation, how we ill-treat the calves, how we deprive them of their portion of milk, how cruelly we treat the oxen, how we castrate them, how we beat them, how we overload them. If they had speech, they would bear witness to our crimes against them which would stagger the world. By every act of cruelty to our cattle, we disown God and Hinduism. I do not know that the condition of the cattle in any other part of the world is so bad as in unhappy India." (21:248)

* * *

He wrote in *Young India* on 29-5-1924:

"... In no part of the world, perhaps, are cattle worse treated than in India. I have wept to see the Hindu drivers goading their jaded oxen with the iron point of their cruel sticks. The half-starved condition of the majority of our cattle is a disgrace to us. The cows find their neck under the butcher's knife because Hindus sell them. The only effective and honourable way is to befriend the Mussalmans and leave it to their honour to save the cow. Cow-protection societies must turn their attention to the feeding of cattle, prevention of cruelty, preservation of the fast disappearing pasture land, improving the breed of cattle, buying from poor shepherds and turning *pinjrapoles* into model self-supporting dairies. Hindus do sin against God and man when they omit to do any of the things I have described above." (24:151)

* * *

Gandhiji wrote in *Navajivan* on 19-4-1925:

"... The aims of this movement can be realized only if a large number of voluntary workers take up the cause of cow- protection. One universal feature of Hinduism is its concern for cow-protection. But cow protection cannot be ensured merely by wishing it; it can be ensured only by applying our mind to the problem and taking suitable measures. There should be, therefore, a public body which will give thought to the problem and plan necessary measures. This meeting is being held with the object of bringing such a body into existence. I hope it will be attended by a large number of voluntary workers in the cause of cow- protection." (26:533)

* * *

Gandhiji appealed to the municipality and humanitarian groups to take up the work of preventing cruelties to animals in *Young India* on 21-5-1925:

"I have often walked through the streets of Calcutta. What the writer says about cruelty to the draught cattle and horses is only too true. The writer's indictment of owners is not an exaggeration, though my own opinion is that the owners are more indifferent than calculatedly cruel. They too are amenable to reason as are the carriers and drivers. How to reach them is the question. To look after the condition of animals used within municipal jurisdiction is the function of the municipality concerned. Private philanthropic bodies can, however, write to or wait on the owners concerned and call upon them to remove all cause of complaint wherever it may exist. I feel sure that much can be done by constant watch and a judicious appeal to the parties concerned.

"... Much of the cruelty practised by men on dumb creation can be dealt with by proper mobilization of the humane forces." (27:139)

* * *

In *Young India* on 11-6-1925 he opposed torture of animals in the name of science:

"... Let them (our physicians) shun the irreligion of the Western scientists, which, in order to heal the body and in the name of science, subjects the lower animal kingdom to the hideous tortures which pass muster under the name of vivisection."
(27:222-23)

* * *

A correspondent had asked Gandhiji to appeal to the people in Bengal to desist from cruelty to animals. His response in *Navajivan* on 14-6-1925 was:

"... I intensely yearn to serve the animal world. Man can explain his suffering, and can even try to free himself from it. Animals cannot do this. Knowing, therefore, that we have a twofold duty towards them and wishing that I had the strength to serve them, I feel ashamed that I do not have such strength; but I blame God for my weakness. Why did He not give me this strength? I constantly wrestle with Him; entreat Him. But God's will is His; He pays attention to no one's wishes, why should he to mine? It may be that He will fulfill my wishes more readily than others. I assure the reader that when He grants me the requisite strength, I will not wait to be reminded of my duty by this correspondent. Meanwhile, my *tapascharya* will continue. May it not be that as I go on with the work to which I have devoted myself, I shall by and by get the strength to serve the animal world? I am sure I am not a miser. I have surrendered all my powers to Lord Krishna. If, therefore, I ever acquire the strength to stop violence to animals, I will not let it remain unused.

". . . Just as service to one's country inspired by the spirit of religion is also service to humanity, so my service of human beings includes service to the animal-world. My reason for this belief is that my service to human beings is not incompatible with the welfare of the animal-world." (27:237-38)

* * *

Gandhiji expressed his views in *Young India* on 1-10-1925:

"... For the indifferent or the very busy reader I collect a few startling facts. During the twelve months ending 31st March 1924,90,314 cattle were slaughtered in Calcutta, 58,154 in Bandra (Bombay), 14,128 in Ahmedabad, 29,565 in Delhi. This is all a terrific economic waste. The slaughter is preventable not by any sentimental appeal to the Mussalmans or Christians or any others. It is preventable by an intelligent application of the funds that are being today wasted throughout the length and breadth of India in the name of cow-protection by men who have hearts full of love for all life but who do not know how to save it. I am convinced that the establishment of dairies and tanneries not for profit but for saving cattle life is the only solution for preventing the wanton destruction of precious life. Religious sentiment that takes no note of hard economic facts or that is built up on prejudice is .worse than useless. Religious sentiment allied to reason and practical knowledge becomes irresistible. Cattle life, if it is to be saved, must be too expensive to take. No religious sentiment will save it so long as it remains profitable to kill it, as it is in India at the present moment." (28:271-72)

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In *Young India* on 22-10-1925, Gandhiji wrote:

"... An ideal *goshala* would supply the city of its domicile with cheap and wholesome milk from cattle of its own keeping and cheap and lasting footwear not out of slaughtered hide but out of the hide of dead cattle." (28:369)

* * *

Pointing out the failure in protecting cows from slaughter in his message to 'Hindustani' on 12-3-1926, Gandhiji said:

"The work of cow protection has now become humdrum; the reason is that though we collect lacs of rupees under this pretext we have not been able in actual fact to save a single cow. On the contrary, cow-slaughter is on the increase since their

prices have gone down owing to the lack of scientific knowledge of cow-protection."
(30:105)

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In a letter to A.T. Gidwani on 15-7-1926 from Sabarmati Ashram, Gandhiji said that there is no place for animal food in Ahimsa:

". . . For, even it could be proved that there is no physiological evil effect from taking animal food, it will still be banned on the principle of ahimsa." (31:146)

* * *

Giving a speech at Dhulia on 13-2-1927, Gandhiji implored the merchants and traders to take up the work of khadi and cow:

". . . If we were true to our calling why should a scrap of foreign cloth come to our country, why should a cow be sold to a butcher? why should nine crore rupees worth of hides be sent out abroad? What is it that has so deadened our sense to our obvious duty? We think we must trade in foreign cloth, we refuse to listen if someone asks us to keep our dead cattle and treat their hides ourselves. We turn away in disgust when we are asked to convert our dairies into good milk-producing centres and tanneries. I cannot tell you the deep agony of my soul. Do you think I am mistaken ? Do you think I am in my dotage? I tell you I shall pocket all my pride and fall at the feet of anyone who proves to me that I am wrong. Win me over to you, if you dare, otherwise follow me and take up the cause of khadi and the cow." (33:77)

* * *

In his speech at Ratnagiri on 1-3-1927, Gandhiji assured his audience that destruction of cattle and villages can only be stopped through charkha:

"Our cattle are destroyed because we do not know true cow protection and our villages are ruined because we do not know true economics and sociology. The charkha can stop that ruinous process." (33:134)

* * *

In *Young India* dated 31-3-1927, Gandhiji said:

"Urine and dung in many *goshalas* are thrown away. This I regard as criminal waste.

"All *goshalas* should be managed under scientific supervision and guidance.

"Properly managed, every *goshala* should be and can be made self-supporting, donations being used for its extension. The idea is never to make these institutions profit-making concerns, all profits being utilized towards buying maimed and disabled cattle and buying in the open market *all* cattle destined for the slaughter house."
(33:198)

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In *Young India* on 19-5-1927, Gandhiji wrote:

"These are appropriate questions. My article was not intended to throw the buffalo by the board it suggested the stopping of buffalo-breeding in her own interest. In other words it meant freedom of the buffalo from its bondage. We have domesticated the cow for our own uses and therefore it has become part of our religion to protect her. It was my object to show that in trying to breed the buffalo, as we do the cow, we might lose both." (33:293)

* * *

In *Young India* on 19-5-1927, Gandhiji wrote:

"... In thinking solely of the narrow interest of the self or of the moment, we have ruined ourselves, i.e., our country and our religion. We can be a nation, only when we try to think in terms of the wider interests of the country. If we cannot even think

in those terms, it is no use talking of religion. From the national point of view, the good of the country is the supreme consideration. From the religious point of view the good of all living beings from the cow down to the ant is the supreme consideration.

". . . The Konkan friend is not right when he says that the dairy and the tannery are useful only in and for the city, and have no place in the villages. The cow has become a costly proposition even in the villages. It is as essential to keep proper accounts of her yield and to improve her stock and her milk in villages as in cities. And the skinning of dead cattle and the prompt and skilled treatment of the hides is more essential in villages than in cities, and that is the work to be done in tanneries.

"It is a painful fact that in our present condition we have to cultivate the science of tanning in the cities and then take it to the villages. For one thing it is impossible to conduct big experiments in the villages, and cattle that are slaughtered in the cities come from the villages. If we can therefore conduct experiments in dairying and tanning from the religious and national point of view in the cities, we can easily give the benefit of them to the villages, and the cattle wealth of India which is at the present day being destroyed because of our ignorance will be saved, and man and animal will both be less unhappy than now." (33:294-95)

* * *

In *Navajivan* dated 22-5-1927, Gandhiji wrote:

"... When we domesticate an animal, we deprive it of its freedom, however good our intention in domesticating it may be.

"... It was not my intention to suggest that there should be separate dairies and tanneries for villages, but the fact is that in the existing circumstances, it is only after making experiments in the cities that we can take to villages the science of cattle rearing, of extracting maximum quantity of milk from the cow without torturing her, and that of tanning her hide and so on. Such is our pitiable condition at present. In

these days, when villages pasture lands have disappeared and oilcake, hay, etc., have become dear, the villagers maintain their cattle with great difficulty. We rest content with whatever use the illiterate tanner can make of the hide. The bones, etc., are wasted. As a consequence this living wealth perishes and, if the cattle do not die, they live on as skeletons, often become a burden to the owner and in the end, land in slaughterhouses in Bombay and other cities." (33:350-51)

* * *

When an English lady, distressed by the torture of bullocks, wrote to Gandhiji 'Can you do nothing through your paper *Young India* on behalf of these creatures?' Gandhiji responded in *Young India* on 30-8-1928 as bellow:

". . . Every act of injury to a living creature and every endorsement of such act by refraining from non-violent effort wherever possible to prevent it is a breach of ahimsa. Here there is work of religious organizations that would be faithful to their convictions to conduct a crusade against cruelties to lower animals practised in the cities. The change from the yoke to the harness is undoubtedly desirable." (37:219)

* * *

". . . Hindus do not utilize the bones, etc., of dead cows ; they do not care what becomes of cattle when they are dead.

Instead of looking upon the occupation of a tanner as sacred, they think it unclean. Emaciated cattle are exported to and slaughtered in Australia where their bones are converted into manure, their flesh into meat extract and their hides into boots and shoes. The meat extract, the manure and the shoes are then re-exported to India and used without any compunction.

"This stupidity makes for the destruction of the cow, and puts the country to huge economic losses. .. The cow will cease to be a burden to the country only if dead cattle are fully utilized." (*History of the Satyagraha Ashram*; 50:231)

* * *

Gandhiji wrote in *Harijan* on 1-12-1933:

"... And beef-eating should be given up because that is a *sine qua non* for a Hindu. The cow is the giver of plenty, and by killing her we kill ourselves." (56:270)

* * *

Gandhiji wrote in *Harijan* on 7-9-1934:

". . . The cow must die at the hands of the butcher, unless we learn the art of increasing her capacity of milk-giving unless we improve her stock and make her male progeny more useful for the field and carrying burdens, unless we make scientific use of all her excreta as manure and unless, when she and hers die, we are prepared to make the wisest use of her hide, bone, flesh, entrails, etc." (58:418)

* * *

In a letter to S.V. Kowjalgi on 6-11-1935, Gandhiji clarified his views on animal food and Ahimsa:

". . . Eating of animal food as a matter of habit is not inconsistent with the observance of ahimsa, even as eating milk and vegetable which have also life is not inconsistent with the practice of ahimsa. I have elsewhere argued that practice of absolute ahimsa by embodied life is an utter impossibility." (62:99)

* * *

During a discussion with B.G.Kher and others on 15- 8-1940, when he was asked whether meat-eating and egg- eating were consistent with non-violence, Gandhiji's reply was:

"They are. Otherwise we should have to exclude Mussalmans and Christians and a vast number of Hindus as possible co-workers in ahimsa. I have known many meat-eaters to be far more nonviolent than vegetarians." (72:387)

* * *

In a speech at Goseva Sangh meeting at Malwadi on 30-9-1941, defining cow-protection as realization of duty and dhama he said:

"... We can realize our duty towards the animal world and discharge it by wisely pursuing our dharma of service to the cow. At the root of cow-protection is the realization of our dharma towards the sub-human species." (74:363)

* * *

During a discussion with Shrikrishnadas Jaju on 8-10-1944, Gandhiji said in an affirmative manner:

". . . Our workers will have to keep a careful eye on the cattle wealth of his village. If we cannot use this wealth properly India is doomed to disaster and we also shall perish. For these animals will then, as in the West, become an economic burden to us and we shall have no option before us save killing them." (78:162)

* * *

In *Harijan* dated 15-9-1946, Gandhiji answered the question if it may be possible to use cow in a field. In the second answer he clarified his position on cow-slaughter:

. . -If the cows referred to were used for purposes of ploughing the land, it would not hurt them. On the contrary, it would make them strong and increase their yield of milk. But this benefit could only come about provided the cow was treated as a friend and not cruelly as cattle in our land so often are. This friendly treatment should of course be insisted on for animals from whom we take service. Every living being has to work within his or its limitations. Such work uplifts, never lowers either man or beast.

"The second question also has long since been answered by me. Cow-slaughter can never be stopped by law. Knowledge, education, and the spirit of kindness towards

her alone can put an end to it. It will not be possible to save those animals that are a burden on the land or perhaps even man if he is a burden." (85:256)

* * *

In his speech at prayer meeting on 25-4-1947 at Patna, Gandhiji condemned the way in which mute animals are being treated:

". . . We treat the cow very harshly. Look at it from my point of view and think of the hardwork we extract from the bullocks. It is a mute animal and cannot complain. But we yoke the bullocks to the cart and load it so heavily that we do not even bother to think that the cart might give way. And, when the bullocks cannot move we beat them mercilessly. We give no thought to the health of the bullocks. When I see their bones sticking out, I wonder how they manage to walk at all. The bullocks' condition is similar to the poor people's. Just as a poor man does not get ghee, milk, and so on, the cattle too do not get proper fodder. Experts say that either the animal world will destroy us or it will be our duty to kill them in order to survive. If that happens people will ridicule us that we, the cow worshippers, have taken to cow-slaughter."
(87:357)

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