

THE
COLLECTED
WORKS
OF
MAHATMA
GANDHI

VOLUME TWENTY-FOUR



THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

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self-restraint like Lakshman¹ had seen only Sita's toes, for he used to salute her feet. Hence, when sisters come to bless me, I never feel embarrassed in their presence because of my loin-cloth. I only pray for their goodwill. I need much help from them. I get some, but it is still too little. When Hindu and Muslim sisters have adopted the spinning-wheel and come to look upon khadi as their adornment, I shall feel that I have got all I wanted. I shall then certainly please my correspondent by wearing a dhoti and a long shirt with a collar, for I believe that, when the women have fallen in love with khadi, swaraj will have been won. Meanwhile, the correspondent should be kind to me and to those like me who wear a loin-cloth and, even if he regards the loin-cloth as indecent, should look upon people who wear it as his brethren, overlooking their indecency.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 27-7-1924

245. INVIOABLE PLEDGE

These words were used for the first time at the time of the mill-hands' strike of 1917². The workers used to parade the streets with a flag bearing these words; they got exhausted and were on the point of giving in. But God saved their honour. A compromise was reached. I have not, however, taken up the pen to write a history of that strike.

I only wish to remind Gujarat of its pledge, and cite the mill-workers' pledge merely as an example. So far, the steps we planned to take for securing swaraj were of the nature of collective action and, therefore, no one was fully conscious of his own responsibility. One could say that one had done one's duty towards the Congress by paying one's subscription of four annas. Now the circumstances have changed, and everyone is required to give half an hour every day for the sake of swaraj. Let no one think that the Congress resolution applies only to elected office-bearers. For them, of course, it is in the nature of an injunction, but every thoughtful person who has the good of the country at heart should follow it. It is the duty of every man, woman and child to give half an hour to spinning for the sake of the country. This is the earnest appeal of the Congress and everyone should take a firm pledge to respond to it.

¹ Younger brother of Rama, the hero of *Ramayana*

² The Ahmedabad mill-hands' strike took place in 1918; *vide* Vol. XIV.

Any sort of yarn will not do; it must be good, well-twisted and uniform. Its quality should improve day by day.

It was a simple matter when one paid some money and had to do nothing else. It was even easier to make speeches. To enrol others was also, comparatively speaking, easy. But to put in regularly, daily without fail, half an hour's honest labour for the sake of the people may seem difficult. If we but think about the matter, however, this is the easiest thing to do, for there is no waste of time in it and no cause whatever for disappointment. There is no need to flatter anyone. Everyone who loves the country should feel that giving half an hour for the country is no sacrifice at all.

But a friend feels that some will, for the first one or two months, give yarn spun by themselves, as required by the rule, but will by and by tire of doing so. I hope this fear will prove groundless. I do hope that everyone who has taken the pledge will keep it.

I am told that there is keen competition in Gujarat. There is no one who thinks of giving a mere three thousand yards. All are keen on spinning more. This is commendable spirit if only it will last.

If this pledge is honoured, those who at present ridicule spinning will themselves take to it.

If the pledge is fully acted upon, I have no doubt that such expressions of despair as "It will not be possible to produce fine yarn in Gujarat" and "Spinning will not pay in Gujarat" will be heard no more and we shall start spinning fine yarn in Gujarat. Not only that, but khadi will cease being dear and become cheap. The people who have, at present, no confidence in their power will come to have it.

Gujarat took the lead in non-co-operation. It can lead in the final step to success. We have to save ourselves from one danger. Among the charges against non-co-operation, one is that of arrogance. It is assumed that non-co-operators have got a licence to use harsh language about co-operationists; the latter have got the impression that non-co-operators believe that being non-co-operators has placed them above the others. We should prove that this charge is unjustified. Those who spin should not criticize others who do not spin, but should win them over through humility. They should not invite only those who are connected with the Congress, but should appeal even to co-operationists to spin. If one appeals to lawyers in the right manner, they will probably give half an hour of their time to spinning. Others also would do as much. Even those who do not believe in khadi will not be obstinate and refuse to spin for

half an hour. Everyone, probably, will believe that at any rate spinning will not harm the country.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 27-7-1924

246. A DENIAL

A report about some *Vania* having attacked an *Antyaja* on Petlad Railway Station had appeared in the *Navajivan* some time ago. A *Vaishnava* gentleman writes to say that it was found on inquiry that the report was without foundation. I publish this refutation not because I believe that the incident may not have occurred. Personally I do not accept the denial. So long as we do not get the name and other particulars of the victim and have not seen him, how can anyone decide that the attack never took place? Even though all the people in Petlad may assert, and truthfully, that they did not see the attack, it may have taken place all the same. In my humble view, it is our duty to build up public opinion against such attacks; we should do this instead of denying that the incident occurred, for we know that similar incidents do occur and we should, therefore, believe that this one also is likely to have occurred.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 27-7-1924

247. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SABARMATI,
July 27, 1924

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

In my opinion, you should enter into correspondence with the Government and ascertain the reason for the prohibition and say that, if anything can be pointed out to the committee as really objectionable, your committee would be prepared to delete the passages. If the Government return an unsatisfactory reply, you should intimate to them that the words will not be withdrawn from circulation.

The Government are not likely to bother the children and, even if they do, the only thing they can do is to remove the books from the children. The latter may be advised then not to mind and hand over the books to the police. I do not think there is any other