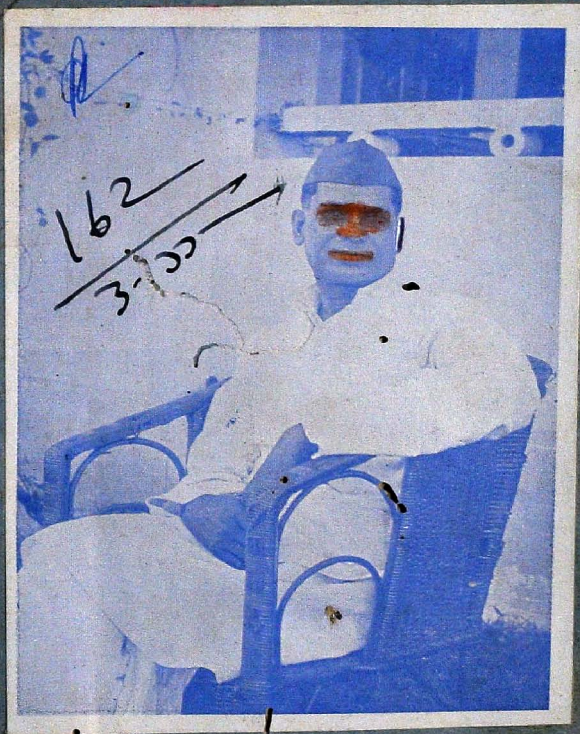


Print

A PICTURE OF SARVODAYA SOCIAL ORDER



By

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(Akhila Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh)

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This presents a collection of some of the articles and speeches of Shri. Jaiprakash Narain which have appeared in our Monthly Digest "Sarvodaya" during the last two years up to Puri Sarvodaya Sammelan in March 1955. The various aspects discussed are given under the following heads which would give a comprehensive picture of the fundamentals of the Bhoodan Yagna and the ideal of the Sarvodaya Social Order.

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A Picture of Sarvodaya Social Order

FIRST of all, we must realise that *Bhoodan* is not a programme of merely collecting and distributing lands. It is rather the first step towards a total revolution—social, political and economic. It stands for a society which would strive for the good of all, and in which everybody would be happy. In such a society there would be no distinction of high and low.

Justice and equality would form its distinguishing features, and exploitation in any form would be completely eliminated. Power and authority would vest with the people in the true sense, and they would regulate and administer their own affairs. Central authority would be sought to be extinguished, and if it continued to exist, the sphere and extent of its operation would be minimised. The village will have all the authority and jurisdiction required.

There will be perfect democracy based upon individual freedom; and the individual will be the architect of his own Government. This arrangement will be extended upwards to district and provincial tiers of administration with progressively diminishing authority.

The central authority, so long as it exists, would be like a danger chain in a railway train. Passengers do not always have their attention fixed on this chain, but they make use of it in times of danger. Similarly the lower units will be self-reliant, and will not always look to the

central authority, but would seek its help and support when required. In fine, there would be complete decentralisation in the field of administration.

The question is, how will such a society be established? That can be done through an economic reconstruction which will ensure the fruit of labour to the worker. And that is possible only when there is decentralisation in the economic field, when the system of production is organised on the basis of village industries: and the large-scale industries that will have to be essentially retained, will be socially owned and managed by workers.

Today, our society abounds with persons who are mad after their own interest. In *Sarvodaya*, however, one has to be solicitous of others' interests. Man's nature will have to be changed. Values of life will have to be re-valued. For, if the individual does not change, even if exploitation is put out once, it will reappear afterwards. This is a high ideal no doubt, but is capable of being attained. That can be done by making a beginning somewhere.

Bhoodan is the process whereby we can reach this goal. The land problem is a problem that affects crores of people. Hence, the *Bhoodan* movement makes a direct appeal to the masses and would inevitably cast its influence on their approach and way of life.

Secondly, through *Bhoodan* Vinobaji can drive home to the people what he wants them to understand. He wants to impress on them the point that all wealth belongs to society and not to individual. It is easy to

inculcate this idea through *Bhoodan Yagna*. When you state the same principle with reference to the industries or plants and factories, the owners are likely to think that they have produced these things by their diligence and ingenuity, then how can they belong to all?

But one may not argue like that in respect of land, for, man has not made it. Land is the gift of God, and says the old adage that all lands belong to Gopal. So, in the divine dispensation land rightly belongs to him who works on it. This is also in keeping with our ancient cultural traditions. In ancient times land belonged to the village community, and the village Panchayat distributed the same to the village people, every 20 or 25 years, in accordance, with the number of members in a family. This was dictated by the principle that nobody should have more land than he required.

This applies equally to other forms of wealth as well. For nobody produces wealth singly by his own effort. Wealth is produced by the collective effort of society. For example, the cloth produced in a textile mill is the result not only of the effort of the mill-owner but also that of various other agents, from the cotton-grower to the mill hand. How then wealth accumulates with an individual? That is just like water, which does not accumulate on plain surface, but gets stored wherever it finds a ditch or sunken space. Likewise there are hollow places in the present social structure where wealth accumulates.

Therefore Vinobaji has now taken up the work of wealth-gift also. He wants sacrifice to be associated

with our way of life. This also implies that we should keep with us no more than what we require. The question is who will adjudge this need? The individual himself, says Vinobaji. And we can do so. The needs of different persons vary, no doubt. But they vary, like the stature of men, within a limited margin. If the difference in the acreage of lands held by different persons varies from 5 to 10 acres it would not matter, and similarly, of wealth. But when the disparity is out of all proportions, it becomes unconscionable and has got to be removed.

Some contend that the face of society will not change by this sort of begging, and that violence is the vehicle of such a change for which the have-nots will have to be organised on class basis, but I assert that violence would doubtless change the present society, but that would not bring the kind of transformation we aim at. Violence will not establish the rule of justice and equality in society. It will be the rule of a select coterie who will perpetuate their iron grip on the people. Violence ensures the victory of the party that is more skilled in its use.

We all know that the Indian masses have neither the skill nor the weapons of violence, and hence, they are bound to lose against those who will be better equipped in this respect. It is also argued that we would arm the people. Lenin had declared 36 years ago that he would arm the people. But it is an open secret where the people of Russia stand today. In fact, it is not possible to arm the people *en masse* in this atomic age, when enormous and rapid improvements are being

effected in the weapons of warfare. Today we have not to choose between two alternatives. There is one and only one way, that is, of non-violence. Violence is definitely a bar against equality.

In Russia, even after 36 years, power is held by a handful of persons. After the death of Stalin power was seized by three persons viz. Malenkov, Molotov and Beria. This followed only a drawing room confabulation. The people of Russia had no say in it. In fact, they came to know of it only after Beria's arrest. There ensued a wrangle for power between Malenkov and Beria. The latter had the support of the police officers. The military officers were, for a time, undecided and the matter was hanging fire. But when they made up their mind to support Malenkov, the issue came to a close, for the military as a rule, is stronger than the police. We will have a similar experience in India if we choose to go the way of violence. *Sarvodaya Samaj* cannot countenance such a contingency. Indeed, *Sarvodaya* does not want to have even political parties. It wants to shape and develop our body politic on a pattern in which the existence of parties will be ruled out.

Violence kills humanity. It has taken lakhs of years for man to rise from the condition of a brute to the present state. Surely, we do not want to relegate mankind again to the same state of the brute creation. In this context, we should also remember that even violence is of two kinds, organised violence and violence

of the individual. Organised violence operates in accordance with certain rules of conduct. But there is no such thing in individual violence. It is totally un-restrained. Man becomes brute. We must understand that violence is opposed to the very grain of our culture which stands for peace. But we cannot also lose sight of the fact that there is violence in our present day social set-up. In fact, it is based on violence, which, in its turn, will induce another element of violence as its own reaction. This has got to be checked by cutting at the very root of the cause.

This movement is based on the principle of change of heart. It is being conducted in the belief that man is amenable to change. That is so, because all of us are essentially one, fragments of the same Almighty Father. When dust spreads over a glass mirror it loses its brightness and assumes a dusty look. But when the dust is removed, its brightness is restored again. Similarly man is overlaid with the dust of passions and habits and ways of life. That dust has got to be removed by constant endeavour. Man is essentially good and not bad. If he were bad, he would pay his respects only to bad men. But we find that he adores and respects only good men. Therefore he will favourably react to noble efforts.

When Ramachandra Reddy donated his land, people remarked that Reddy had given of course, but others would not. Vinobaji said that he had started the work with faith in human nature, and he carried on his mission with rock-like firmness. And it is common

knowledge how he got land in Hyderabad and is getting lakhs of acres today.

Gandhiji's technique of work worked in a four-fold manner, proceeding from one step to another. Gandhiji tried for change of heart and in this he took the help and co-operation of his colleagues and followers. The result of his efforts would depend upon the circumstances of the case which include *inter alia* the standard of the persons to be dealt with, the nature of the issue involved, and above all, the accomplishments of the agent that employed the technique and the manner in which he put it into action. Change of heart is after all a matter of degree. Complete change of heart is an ideal condition and a man progresses towards it by degrees. To what extent the change will come after each step in the operation of the technique is governed by the above facts. But the change does come. Thus Mahatmaji first made an appeal to the individual and tried to wean him away from his wrong path by persuasion. Secondly, he tried to establish in the public mind by propaganda that the evil or the unjust and untenable position, he was trying to fight and put an end to, had no moral basis. Thirdly, he started movements and thereby tried to bring to bear upon the wrong-doer or the mistaken party moral pressure. That explains why Vinobaji accepts land-gifts even from the poor people. It would create a strong and irresistible public opinion in favour of what Vinobaji intends to do. At Jethian, a poor Kisan offered land which I hesitated to accept saying, he himself had not enough to make both ends meet. But he insisted that I must accept

it or he would refuse to take food. This reminded me of the supreme sacrifice of Shibi and Dadhichi and inspired within me the confidence that the *Bhoodan* mission was bound to succeed.

Fourthly, if Gandhiji had felt that such a step was warranted by the situation he would have resorted to non-co-operation—non-co-operation with injustice and inequity; for he believed that injustice was possible only with the co-operation of the wronged party. We have seen how it worked in the case of the British rulers. But after that we have to reconstruct society. We did not know how the technique would apply in this case. But now we can form some idea in the wake of Vinobaji's movement.

Gandhiji taught us that exploitation was possible only with the co-operation of the exploited with the exploiter. If the former withdrew their co-operation, exploitation would disappear. Accordingly, if those who are landless take to heart that they may have to withdraw their co-operation from the big landowners, they would readily do so on Vinobaji's call. Imagine what sort of fight it will be! It will be a moral fight and not a struggle between classes. But I do not mean to say that workers should go to the village and start Satyagraha forthwith. That will injure the cause of *Bhoodan*. We must understand that a man has to qualify himself for Satyagraha by working on right lines. He has no right to launch Satyagraha without that. But I believe that if we work with faith and confidence and in the proper spirit, the need for Satyagraha will not arise.

Some people also talk of legislation, and ask why not make a law to redistribute land quickly, which will also obviate the need for all this work and movement? They ought to know that we want to establish *Sarvodaya Samaj* and change the way of life, but law will not do that. Law cannot come into effect without public opinion. Gandhiji said legislation without conversion is a dead letter. Do we not see the fate of the Sarda Act and the provision in the Constitution about untouchability? We also see ejection going on every day even though there is a provision in the law against such a course. I am afraid, well-to-do persons would make it impossible for weak landless people to take possession of lands even if there be legislation for redistribution of land. That makes it clear why we need not be sitting idle looking forward to legislation.

Some belonging to any political party might often think how to utilise their work for strengthening their party. But they should cast off such considerations and work in a non-partisan spirit. Parties are after all a means to an end. If the object of a party is to establish a good society and the object is being fulfilled, then why should anybody bother about his party? He should rather be happy that others are extending their co-operation in a work that is dear to him. If a worker is not imbued with this spirit he should rather let this work well alone.

There is another point also. Vinobaji is putting forward the conception of a political set-up free from

the operation of party system. Western thought, particularly Socialism, holds that parties are necessary for bringing about a revolution, as parties represent the different interests of society. Vinobaji is, however, making an experiment in the direction of establishing a party-free society. We in India have decided not to fight village elections on party basis. And what is right for a village is also right for the nation.

Mahatmas generally take rest in the rainy season, but Vinobaji trudged along from village to village even during the rains and with an extremely poor health. It is the call of duty that all of us should plunge in heart and soul in this work. Duty is of two kinds viz., our daily duty and the duty in emergency. *Bhoodan* represents the latter type of duty. Vinobaji has asked even the constructive workers to reduce their normal activity and take up *Bhoodan* work. That is because this is the supreme need of the hour. You must realise that the country is caught in a conflagration. You must rise to the occasion and face it with all your energy and attention or the nation will go to ruins.



GANDHIJI'S TECHNIQUE OF SATYAGRAHA

BHOODAN is the Gandhian way to bring about an economic and social revolution. *Bhoodan* is the theory and practice of a new way of life, a new social philosophy. It is the initiation of a new humanity and a new civilisation.

Bhoodan is really a development of the Gandhian concept of satyagraha, or a revolutionary application of truth and non-violence to the present day problems of social and economic injustice and of social transformation. It is regrettable that there is no adequate appreciation yet of the *Bhoodan* movement. Strangely enough the misunderstanding is found to be comparatively greater amongst the educated classes. Our education is yet so removed from the people and their problems, and is, therefore, so superficial that there seems to be as much need of uneducating the educated as of educating the uneducated.

While I am talking about *Bhoodan*, I am not using the term in the restricted sense of the land gift movement, but in its wider and ideological sense which includes all other similar activities such as *Sampattidan*, *Shramdan* and *Buddhidan*. The use of the word *Dan*, is perhaps unfortunate for the reason that it creates the misunderstanding that Vinobaji is merely asking for charity. He, of course, is using the word in its classical sense, as Shankara did i. e., in the sense of *danam samavibhagah* (*Dan* is equal division). But the popular meaning sticks to the word and confounds its revolutionary significance.

Therefore, it is necessary first of all to understand that *Bhoodan* is not a charitable movement, that behind it is Mahatma Gandhi's theory of trusteeship; in other words, the simple yet potent truth that man is not the master of what he possesses but only a trustee of what in reality belongs to society. The natural corollary of this axiom is that a trustee should take from this trust no more than what is necessary to fulfil his needs and give all the rest back to society. Needs may differ from man to man but the difference may not be great in any case. Giving back to society what belonged to it is not charity but elementary honesty, the performance of a simple duty, an act of restitution. Conversely, not to do it, that is, not to return to the owner what belonged to him would be immoral, a kind of theft.

I admit that the instinct of charity is a noble instinct. But the fact that there should arise any need for charity cannot but be a matter of shame and anxiety. Both the giving and receiving of charity imply that there are in society injustice and inequality, which charity can never remove, and which only a radical transformation of the social order can. It is this radical transformation that is the aim of Vinoba's movement.

Satyagraha is the technique of change of heart. It is in essence a process of conversion. There are, no doubt, some among us who refuse to believe that except in rare cases there can be a general change of heart, particularly of those who represent the vested interest of wealth or power. They believe that coercion, whether of the sword or of the law, is the only method to deal with the privileged classes and to change the social order. Those who believe thus should realise that coercion may succeed in

changing the outward forms of society but it cannot change man himself. Force can divest the vested interest, but it cannot change men, it cannot remove greed and selfishness from their hearts. It can take their wealth away but cannot make them work as trustees.

Mahatma Gandhi's technique of conversion is an alternative both to legislation and violence. It is not as if legislation has no place in this technique, but it does not precede but follows conversion. Individual approach and the creation of an appropriate psychological climate for a new social ethic in the place of the old, are the forms that the process of conversion takes.

We see this happening in *Bhoodan*. Millions of land-owners have been individually approached by Vinobaji and his co-workers, and a concrete mass movement of conversion has been set in motion. And prevalent ideas about land-ownership are being replaced by other revolutionary ideas. Man is always influenced by social opinion. We do not thieve merely out of fear of the law, but also because thieving is universally condemned. Likewise when the currently accepted views about land-ownership, or about ownership of property generally, are replaced by ideas of trusteeship and when these become generally accepted, man's actions cannot but be influenced by the new social opinion.

It is important to remember that for the creation of the new social opinion, it is not enough to convert only the wealthy and the bigger land-owners. The process of conversion is an all-embracing process. Current attitudes towards property are found not only among the

wealthier classes, but even among the poorest. The poor land-owner who has only a fraction of an acre, looks upon his possession with the same eyes of possessiveness as the big landlord. Nay, even the poor landless labourer accepts the present claims of proprietorship. Therefore Gandhiji always made it clear that the process of conversion embraces both the haves and the have-nots.

Referring to re-distribution, the land will be distributed in the first instance to those landless people in the villages who are prepared to till the land themselves and who have no other means of livelihood. If after distribution to the landless, there is land left in a village, it will be given to the poor peasants who have not enough land for their families. Distribution is made in accordance with the wishes of village people—both landed and landless.

Bhoodan is not only an agrarian reform movement. It is a new way of life. Our cities and their capitalist economy are not going to be left untouched. *Sampattidan* already is carrying this message to these spheres. The idea behind *Sampattidan* is the same, as also the technique, the first step being contribution of a part of one's income, and the last being trusteeship.

Just as in *Bhoodan*, everyone, rich or poor, has to participate in *Sampattidan*, and for the same reasons. It is the same with *Buddhidan*, *Shramdan* etc. Whatever we have, we must share with others, because they have a right to it. If we have nothing to give let us give our service—*Shramdan*, our love and goodwill—*Premdan*.

THE LOGIC OF SAMPATTIDAN (GIFT OF WEALTH)

SAMPATTIDAN Movement is based on the Gandhian principle of trusteeship. It creates a new psychology that property belongs to society.

In every country, and more so in India, there are social and economic injustices, inequalities and exploitation of various sorts, poverty and misery on the one side and wealth and luxury on the other. Hitherto efforts to reshape things have been made on a basis which promoted a *clash* of interests. There have been in various forms, struggles between the 'haves' and 'have-nots'. These struggles have not led to very happy, uplifting or constructive results. Either they led to naked violence or to serious tensions which have affected deeply both the sides and warped social life.

If social progress is to be achieved only through a mutually destructive struggle between these interests, there seems to be little hope for the future of human society. Progress can be achieved only through the path shown by Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji asked both the sides involved in the struggle to look beyond their selfish or class interests. He asked the people to submerge their individual selfish interest for the welfare of the society as a whole. His solution was based on a new outlook of life. He asked the 'haves', the captains of business and industry, to consider themselves as trustees of the wealth they possessed. He taught them that what they considered as their wealth was in reality

the product of social co-operation and effort. It was wrong if they looked upon it as their personal possession.

Wealth belonged to the society as a whole and the wealthy were merely trustees of that wealth from which they were entitled to take for themselves what was essential for their living and devote the rest to the good of the community. Gandhiji also told the 'have-nots', to look upon themselves not as wageslaves engaged in a perpetual war against the owners for a higher share in the value they produced but in a common endeavour to produce and serve the whole of the society. The workers are also not entitled, therefore, irrespective of what they produced, to more than what is necessary for their wants as long as there are others in society who are more in want.

After Gandhiji's departure, Acharya Vinoba Bhave has been trying to translate these teachings and ideas of Mahatma Gandhi into practice. The *Bhoodan* movement, *Sampattidan* movement, *Buidhidan* movement and similar other movements are attempts to give a practical and concrete shape to the Gandhian way of social revolution and reconstruction.

Sampattidan is a first step towards the realisation of Gandhiji's ideas of trusteeship. It does not mean giving contributions to a fund. It is not to be confused with charity or other ordinary contributions to various charitable funds. *Sampattidan* means the acceptance of a new outlook on life, namely, that every individual, however high or low in the economic scale, has a partial responsibility towards his fellowmen. This

would be the first step in the conversion of capitalism into the non-violent and just society of the future, in which everyone lives for all and all for everyone. That is the Sarvodaya society of Gandhiji's dream.

The whole movement is based on a certain idealism. It expects everyone to contribute a part of his income, normally the sixth part of it, for his fellowmen. The contributions so made are not to be collected in a fund but everyone has to keep the money with himself and spend it in accordance with the advice of Acharya Vinoba Bhave or his representatives. The donor is expected further to keep accounts and submit them annually to Acharya Vinoba Bhave.

When hundreds of thousands of people participate in the *sampattidan* movement a climate will have been created in the country for taking the next step towards the transformation of the existing economic order. The next step is that of 'Full Trusteeship'. Under 'Trusteeship', commercial and industrial enterprises would belong to the society and there would be no employer and employee. The management and labour would have joint responsibility to run them not for themselves but for the good of the society as a whole. Thus *Sampattidan* aims at creating a new psychology where the profit motive would be completely eliminated. It also eliminates violence. It introduces love, persuasion and the power of truth—the great tenets of Gandhism.

JEEVAN DAN OR DEDICATION OF LIFE

THE Bodh Gaya Sarvodaya Sammelan was marked by the beginning of a new movement—*Jeevandan*. Since Vinobaji started *Bhoodan*, offshoots have been stemming out of it, such as *Sadhandan*, *Sampattidan*, *Buddhidan*, *Shramadan*, *Premdan*. All these were logical developments of the original movement. Nay, they were all there from the beginning, implicit and immanent in *Bhoodan*. *Jeevandan* likewise was immanent in it and has sprouted out when the conditions were ripe and called it forth. Indeed, a stage had been reached when without this offering of new life—*Jeevandan*—the movement was not likely to rise higher.

As I had some little part to play in this development, I should like briefly to explain. Comments published indicate that the move has not been adequately understood.

There is not much of a personal explanation to make, nor is there need for it. Suffice it to say that the decision I took was not made on the spur of the moment. I was being slowly driven to it for months past. Nor did the step signify repudiation of the ideals for which I had stood so long. It meant, rather, that I had realised that those ideals could be achieved and preserved better through the *Bhoodan* or the *Gandhian way*.

What then is the full significance of *Jeevandan*? *Jeevandan* in the sense of dedication of one's life to a

cause, is nothing new. Moreover, amongst those who announced their *Jeevandan* at Bodh Gaya, there were many who were already leading dedicated lives. Was there need for them to re-dedicate their lives? And why was it necessary for anyone so dedicating himself to forswear politics? These and similar questions rise to the mind. I shall attempt to answer them.

Jeevandan, in the first place, is not different from dedication of one's life to a cause. But it is a dedication to a particular cause: not just to *Bhoodan*, as it has often been represented, but to all that for which *Bhoodan* stands. Practically all those who had gathered at Bodh Gaya were *Jeevandanis* in one sense or the other; that is, they had already dedicated their lives to politics, khadi, basic education, Harijan uplift, religion or something else. When some of them responded to my call and enlisted themselves as *Jeevandanis*, it did not mean that they were once again vowing to do what they were already doing and in this sense were making an empty or superfluous gesture. It meant, on the contrary, that they had witnessed so clear a vision of the *Bhoodan* movement in all its completeness, as to have been moved to dedicate themselves to it to the exclusion of every other activity, including politics.

What do we see in *Bhoodan* to be so moved? To superficial observers *Bhoodan* is just an agrarian reform movement, which, at best, is preparing the ground for legislation. To those who have looked deep, it is a far more significant movement. It is the beginning of an all-round social and human revolution: human also

because it aims at changing man along with society. It is an application, on a general scale, of Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent technique of revolution. In the words of Pyarelalji, "It is the spearhead of a non-violent revolution whose implications reach far and wide."

As is well-known, Gandhiji's was the technique of conversion. Not only did he want to eschew violence for the construction of a new civilisation, but also he did not wish even to rely on legislation as a primary instrument. He told Pyarelalji at the Agha Khan Palace: "So long as we have not got power, conversion is our weapon *by necessity*. But after we get power I maintain that conversion would have to be our weapon *of choice*. Conversion must *precede* legislation." Persuasion, change of heart and mind, creation of new social values and corresponding climate of opinion, non-co-operation with wrong where persuasion proved inadequate, these were Gandhiji's weapons. They served a two-fold purpose; they changed society and changed the individual. Law can do the first, but not the latter. No heart or mind has been changed by law; nor individual made virtuous by coercion. Gandhiji's technique of conversion was based on faith in the possibility of improving man. This faith itself was grounded in another faith that all men irrespective of outward differences were fundamentally the same and at bottom good. Did they not all come "trailing clouds of glory from God who is our home?"

How Gandhiji would have applied his technique to the reform of present society, who can tell? But as

Pyarelalji has said, "Gandhiji's idea is today reborn and is being pursued with spectacular success by Vinoboji; what we are witnessing today is the beginning of that thorough social awakening of which Bapu prophetically talked..."

Bhoodan is thus a great mass movement of conversion and the creation of a new climate of thought and values of life. It brings about a living and immediate revolution in the minds of men and their mutual relationships. It attacks and corrects here and now the system of exploitation and inequality. It teaches men to share what they have with their fellowmen.

This revolutionary process could have been started in any sphere other than the agrarian. But this field was taken first because (a) land is a primary source of production; (b) the land problem is a most urgent one; (c) it affects the vast majority of our rural country. And above all because it is possible through the medium of land to put across the new economic idea and the social ethic much easier than through the medium of any other kind of property.

What *Bhoodan* says about land is, according to Gandhiji, true to all our possessions, including even knowledge and skill. All wealth is a social product and no earning is possible without social co-operation. Whatever we possess, therefore, belongs to society. We are no more than the trustees of what we have, implicitly charged by society to take good care of our

trust and use it for the benefit not of ourselves but of all our fellowmen. But whereas in the agrarian sphere the idea that land being a gift of nature belongs to the community is easily accepted, in the commercial, industrial or professional field, the corresponding idea would be difficult of general acceptance. But when *Bhoodan* has sown the seeds of the idea in five lakhs of our villages and persuaded lakhs of land-owners to accept it in practice, even if partially, a psychological climate will have been created for the idea to take root and grow in other fields also. *Bhoodan* indeed had made sufficient progress already that the Sarvodaya Sammelan at Bodh Gaya decided to pay equal attention to *Sampattidan*.

In the wake of this economic revolution reconstruction work will have to be undertaken.

There is even now a good deal of constructive work being done such as khadi, village industries, etc. But all these activities are carried on without causing any disturbance to the *status quo*. Khadi work in a village, for instance, might have been going on for a decade or two, but without affecting in the least the structure of village society. Such constructive work is barren or, at best, of a relief nature only. This was not Gandhiji's conception of constructive work. He was above all a revolutionary. He has himself written: "Some have called me the greatest revolutionary of my time. It may be false, but I believe myself to be a revolutionary—a non-violent revolutionary." It is the genius of Vinoba that has discovered that revolutionary way.

To many constructive workers *Bhoodan* is still one of the many activities that might be taken up at leisure or on the side. But for a Gandhian, i. e., a non-violent revolutionary, *Bhoodan* is not just one of the many constructive activities: it is the very ground of their being. In the context of *Bhoodan* construction becomes creative; in its absence it remains a dead activity. *Bhoodan* is like the flowing river, constructive activities the boats. Without the moving water the boats are static objects stuck in the mud. But the river gives them motion and life and then they carry their passengers to their destination.

While many constructive workers, as I have said above, look upon *Bhoodan* as merely one of many possible activities, most politicians look upon it rather condescendingly as a well-intentioned movement that will help them in due course to achieve its objectives by legislation. They promise to give it their unhurried co-operation and what time they can spare from their more important work, self-assured that after all it is they who have the last word, because how can such far-reaching social and economic changes be brought about except by the State? This is the attitude of the politicians in general, whether they are actually in control of the State or only aspiring to it. The *Bhoodan* movement is grateful for what aid the State and the politicians can give it, provided it is aid of the right sort. But it does not rely on the action of the State to achieve its ends. It relies, rather, on the action of the people or *Janashakti* rather than *Dandashakti*. Let us recall what Gandhiji said: "Even after we have power, conversion would

have to be our weapon of choice." That is why Vinobaji has been laying the utmost stress on the action of the people. A revolution, whether violent or non-violent, is wrought by the people and not by Governments. Governments follow the people and put the seal of approval on what they have already done. As Gandhiji said, legislation comes after conversion. This is why Vinobaji is not shouting for legislation, as so many others do. He knows that after the people have acted legislation is bound to follow, no matter which party is in power.



THE POLITICAL THEORY OF BHOODAN

HERE we have an insight into the political theory of the *Bhoodan* movement. It does not aim at capturing the State in order to use it for its ends. As a corollary, it does not wish to create or become a political party in order to capture the State. It aims rather at persuading the people, independently of what the State may or may not want, to carry out a revolution in their own lives, and through that a revolution in society. It aims further at creating those conditions in which the people may manage their affairs directly, without the intermediation of parties and Parliaments. Gandhism, like Anarchism or Communism, visualizes ultimately a Stateless Society.

In the present world the State not only in its totalitarian form but also in its welfare variety is assuming larger and larger powers and responsibilities. The welfare State, in the name of welfare, threatens as much to enslave man to the State as the totalitarian. The people must cry halt to this creeping paralysis. The fact that the welfare State is a creature of the people, in the sense that it is set up by them, does not affect the matter. The device of democratic elections cannot equate 500 representatives with eighteen crores (counting only the adults) of the people. To the extent the eighteen crores look after their affairs directly, to that extent the powers and functions of the State are restricted and real democracy is practised.

The experience of Communist countries shows that if the immediate steps that are taken are not consistent with the ultimate goal, we may arrive at places that are vastly different from the ultimate destination. Placing before them the great ideal of a Stateless society, the Communists set out to do everything through the power of the State. The result was that the State went on acquiring greater and greater powers and in place of the State withering away, there emerged the total State.

It is for this reason that the *Bhoodan* or Sarvodaya movement insists that if our ultimate aim is to do without the State, we must here and now create those conditions in which the people will rely more and more on themselves and less and less on the State. No one can tell whether the State will ever completely

disappear, but if we accept the ideals of a non-violent democracy, we must begin today to work for it.

It need hardly be added that a people who want to do without the State or who wish to lean on it as little as possible would be a self-regulated people—self-disciplined, just and mutually cooperating.

In passing let me add that only when the people of the world become so, and Governments have withered away or have been vastly deflated, that there will be peace in the world. War is not likely to be abolished by Governments. Only the people who have freed themselves from their Governments can do it. But I have digressed.

So much for the attitude of the *Bhoodan* movement towards politics. It remains to be added that in a sense *Bhoodan* is itself an intensely and deeply political movement. A movement that aims so utterly to revolutionise man and society cannot be but political. But it is politics of the kind I have described above—not the politics of parties, elections, parliaments and governments; but politics of the people,—not *raj-niti* but *lok-niti*, as Vinoba says.

It is in the background of this wide sweep of the movement, its revolutionary and creative character, its ethical and humanist approach that our dedication to it is to be understood. I have seen commentaries on *Jeevandan* by persons who were expected to know better, who by equating it with any sort of selfless dedication of life have robbed it of its special significance. The special meaning of *Jeevandan* is that the

Jeevandanis believe that there is no other work of greater importance today than *Bhoodan* (using the term in its all-inclusive sense) and that therefore every other activity must be subordinated to it. The call for *Jeevandan* went forth precisely for the reason that except for a very small number, those who had flocked to the *Bhoodan* fold lacked this conviction and therefore the necessary singleness of purpose.

The experience of the past three years had established beyond doubt the efficacy of Gandhiji's revolutionary philosophy and technique. The all-India target of 25 lakhs of acres by 30th April, 1954 was exceeded by no less than 8 lakhs. This was signal success. But the figure of 33 lakhs could easily have been one crore if there had been enough workers to take the message of Gandhiji and Vinoba to every village and every home, and if the workers who did actually give their time had all been of the right type and worked devotedly and single-mindedly. As it was, most of the *Bhoodan* workers worked by fits and starts; many of them had not themselves understood the basic principles of the movement; many had not even made proper donations themselves of land or other properties; many worked from partisan and selfish motives in the hope of cashing in later for themselves and their parties. In view of this situation, it was little less than a miracle that so much was done in so short a time.

But if non-violence is to conquer violence, it must work faster. Otherwise events will overtake it and violence will overwhelm non-violence. There are urgent problems facing the people; if non-violence does not

solve them soon, history will not stand still for the non-violent worker. The existing social order, with all its greed and selfishness and denial of humanity, su injustice and exploitation and inequality must go. If non-violence does not change it soon, violence will step in. It is another matter that violence will not ultimately solve any problem and one form of injustice and exploitation, greed and selfishness, will be replaced by another. But it will be too late before the people will be able to realize it all. In the meantime forces of darkness will have taken over.

Therefore some of us felt at Bodh Gaya that the time had come to impress on everyone concerned the urgency of the situation and the need to move much faster. Everything was favourable; the time spirit was with us; the people's response, in spite of occasional disappointments, was splendid. What was lacking was an adequate band of devoted and worthy workers pledged to go all the way and to dedicate their lives to this great movement to the exclusion of everything else. Hence the call for *Jeevandan*.

The response at Bodh Gaya and since has been wonderful. But it is not enough. The work to be done is stupendous. Not less than 5 crores of acres of land have to be collected. The donated lands have to be distributed. The landless have to be provided with the means of utilization. In the villages where *Bhoodan* has succeeded a new order has to be created—Gram Rajya in 5 lakhs of villages, *Sampattidan* in the towns and cities, ultimately transformation of capitalism into trusteeship. And many other things.

Man today is heading for self-destruction. The world trembles on the edge of a precipice. If it has to be saved, it is possible only if it is remade by the *Bhoodan* or Sarvodaya way. There is need for international *Bhoodan* in the widest sense of the term.

All this great noble work beckons us. I cannot conceive of anything else worthier of our support or devotion. There are millions of us in this country. Out of this vast number are there not at least a few hundred thousand men and women selfless enough, courageous enough, farseeing enough to throw themselves into this historic movement? Future history, at any rate Indian history, may well depend on the answer to this question.

In the days of British rule, young men of spirit refused to join the Services, in spite of the lure of high salaries and position. Now the Services are the main attraction for our promising youth. There is no harm in this. But the more sensitive and less self-centred among them should realize that routine administrative work, while necessary, is not going to build a new nation. Those who have political ambitions should realize that legislatures and governments too cannot build a nation. They may help, if they function properly; but they may also harm. It is only the people who can make themselves. It is therefore most important to go to the people and live with them and help them to help themselves.

Let the young men search their hearts. Do they want an easy life? Do they want to join the race of

social and economic climbers, who after all climb only on the backs of the people? I do hope there are enough young men and women in the country who are prepared to embrace the hard life and the life of suffering for a noble cause. There is not much time to lose, for the sands are running fast. It may be too late tomorrow.

A few words about the *Jeevandani*. They are not expected to forsake their hearth and home, their wives and children. They are not expected to become Sanyasis or Bhikshus. We wish to better this world while living in it. But a *Jeevandani* is expected to embrace hardship and simplicity. If he has land or any other property or income, he is expected to make his due contribution to *Bhoodan* or *Sampattidan*. If he has no independent means of livelihood, he is naturally not expected to live on air. If the inner voice prompts such a person to take the plunge, he should do so unhesitatingly in the faith that the great society whose full-time servant he becomes will not forget him. The movement, needless to say, will do its best to look after him. But he should be prepared for a hard and simple living. He should also be prepared for manual labour. If a *Jeevandani* belongs to any political party and believes that membership of the party does not conflict with the theory and practice of *Bhoodan*, he may retain his membership. But he will have to resign any office or elective post he may be holding and for life he will not be able to participate in elections. He may however cast his vote as his conscience tells him.

The *Bhoodan* movement, among other things, is making a valuable political experiment. It aims ultimately

to create a non-party democracy. The present is a transitional phase in which various parties exist. The movement therefore invites members of every party to come and work together for Sarvodaya. In this it has two ends in view. First, it does not want parties and party membership to become a barrier to an advance towards Sarvodaya. Secondly, it wishes to teach that it is possible, holding different political views, to work together in spheres where no partisan differences exist. This working together and common experience might help, in the context of the direct revolutionary and creative movement, to evolve a new political system.

Lastly, it should be obvious that the *Jeevandani* who dedicates his life to human and social betterment must begin with bettering himself. The *Jeevandani* is an ordinary mortal with the faults and foibles of his fellow-men. But the fact that he has vowed to devote his life to the remaking of man and society means that he has to begin with remaking himself. *Jeevandan* thus becomes a spiritual pilgrimage. For me at least this is its most valuable significance.



MAN MUST TRANSCEND MATERIALISM

IN days gone by men tried to be good, impelled by some higher moral force in which they believed; and goodness meant such things as truthfulness, honesty, kindness, chastity, unselfishness. Men felt that it was the highest moral duty to try to be good. Whether

they succeeded in their trial, or whether they tried at all, was a different matter. The important point is that society provided every individual with the motive to be good: it was the command of religion, of God; it was necessary for one's highest growth, for self-realisation; it brought peace and supreme happiness; it brought salvation and freedom from births and deaths.

In present society, with the hold of religion gone, faith in God shaken, moral values discarded as dead-weights of the dark ages of history; in short, with materialism enthroned in men's hearts, are there any incentives to goodness left? Indeed, has the question any relevance at all to present facts, problems and ideals of human society?

I hold emphatically that no other question is more relevant to us today.

In spite of what may be broadly described as the materialist climate of present society, men everywhere are engaged, in their different ways, in creating a heaven upon earth—in remaking, refining, perfecting human society. These efforts, even the most idealistic and ambitious, such as Communism of its original conception, seem, however, to be shipwrecking on one obdurate rock—human baseness. It is clearer today than ever that social reconstruction is impossible without human reconstruction. Society cannot be good unless individual men are good, and particularly those men who form the *elite* of society.

Here then is the crux of the modern problem. Men wish to create, if not an ideal, at least a good society.

Modern science and technology make that task far easier than ever before. But men lack the tools with which to make themselves. And the ideals are forgotten, and they begin to fight for power, position, spoils, bringing down the whole edifice of the new society.

Therefore, the problem of human goodness is of supreme moment today. The individual asks today why should he be good. There is no God, no soul, no morality, no life hereafter, no cycle of birth and death. He is merely an organism of matter, fortuitously brought into being, and destined soon to dissolve into the infinite ocean of matter. He sees all around him evil succeed—corruption, profiteering, lying, deception, cruelty, power—politics, violence. He asks naturally why he should be virtuous. Our social norms of today and the materialist philosophy which rules the affairs of men answer back: he need not. The cleverer he is, the more gifted, the more courageously he practises the new amorality; and in the toils of this amorality the dreams and aspirations of human-kind become warped and twisted.

For many years I have worshipped at the shrine of the goddess—Dialectical Materialism—which seemed to me intellectually more satisfying than any other philosophy. But while the main quest of philosophy remains unsatisfied, it has become patent to me that materialism of any sort robs man of the means to become truly human. In a material civilization man has no rational incentive to be good. It may be that in the kingdom of dialectic materialism, fear makes men

conform, and the Party takes the place of God. But when that God himself turns vicious, to be vicious becomes an universal code.

I feel convinced, therefore, that man must go beyond the material to find the incentives to goodness. As a corollary, I feel further that the task of social reconstruction cannot succeed under the inspiration of a materialist philosophy.

It may be asked if any social conditioning is at all necessary for men to acquire goodness. Is not man essentially good? Are not most men in every society decent?

Yes and no.

Man is a socio-organic being: he is partly the product of "nature" and partly that of society. What man is by nature cannot be said with certainty. Indeed, the very concepts of good and bad are supernatural or super-organic. There is nothing good or bad in nature. Human nature, apart from the instincts of self and race preservation, is most likely of a neutral character which acquires moral tones in accordance with social conditioning.

It is true that in every society most men are decent and good. These men go through life without being called upon to make any vital moral judgments. Their routine of life runs within narrow circles, and custom and tradition answer for them the questions concerning right and wrong.

But, firstly, these harmless decent men are apt under social stimuli to turn suddenly wild and vicious.

Secondly, what is vital for the character of society, and for the direction of its growth, is not so much the character of the inert mass as that of the *elite*. It is the philosophy and action of this group of the select that determine the destinies of men. To the extent the *elite* becomes godless or amoral, to that extent evil overtakes the human race.

Let me hasten to remove a possible misunderstanding. I do not mean to suggest that all those who profess a philosophy of materialism are vicious, nor that all non-materialists are good. But what I do assert is that there is no logic in materialism for the individual to endeavour deliberately to acquire and practise goodness. On the other hand, those who go beyond matter will find it difficult to justify non-good.

Non-materialism—I am using this negative phrase because I have no particular school in mind—by rejecting matter as the ultimate reality, immediately elevates the individual to a moral plane, and urges him, without reference to any objective outside of himself, to endeavour to realise his own true nature and fulfil the purpose of his being. This endeavour becomes the powerful motive force that drives him in its natural course to the good and the true. It will be seen as an important corollary of this that only when materialism is transcended does individual man come into his own and become an end in himself.

SARVODAYA ORDER AND THE STATE

I am a new comer to the Sarvodaya Samaj. As such, if I am impudent at some places, I would request you to pardon me. I feel that my sitting here and speaking to you is itself impudence. I would, however, like to present some problems before Sarvodaya thinkers. We all want to change the structure of our society. We would like to build up Sarvodaya Society as soon as possible. The problem is: how are we to build such a Sarvodaya Society in our country? If Gandhiji had been here he would have shown us the way. Under his leadership we all worked and fought for our independence. But ever since we achieved independence, Gandhiji's own disciples have constituted the Government of the country. Ever since then I have been thinking whether it is possible to build up a society of Gandhiji's conception, through law, through political power, through political leadership.

After independence the whole country looked towards Delhi. I do not know how many of you believe that building up of a Sarvodaya Society is possible through the State power. But, so far as I am concerned, I have more and more realised and I am now convinced that the way of looking towards Delhi was not Gandhiji's way. There we find the prevalent practice of Democracy. There is the ruling party, there is the Opposition, there are elections, there is the rule by majority and all the rest of it. But the people have realised that through State power and legal methods we

cannot build Sarvodaya Society. May be the State Power can build up a Socialist society. It certainly cannot make real the conception of Sarvodaya on this earth.

Then the question remains: how is Sarvodaya Society to be built up? Who will constitute the vanguard? What is the way? May be law will trail behind, but then who will be moving in the front?

Till a few years ago we all used to swear by the constructive programme. After independence, constructive work went into the background. Constructive workers thought that they will move behind the Government and will carry on items like spinning, Nai Talim etc. But in his heart of hearts no constructive worker believed that through this method the society would be changed. Instances may be found of villages where spinning and Nai Talim etc., were completely implemented. But that did not mean an iota of change in the social structure of the village. Naturally, therefore, there was confusion and disillusionment and the problem remains unsolved for the constructive workers today as before. The problem stands even today. Not that there have been no attempt to answer these questions. Viewpoints have been put forward. But the ideas are not yet clear. There are people in the administration also who fully subscribe to the Sarvodaya point of view. Even they, apparently, are not able to do much by way of building up Sarvodaya Society.

Thinking over all these questions, I have come to certain conclusions. I seek your permission to place

them before you. I know that a number of friends say that Jaiprakash changes his views very quickly, that he has been doing that all his life, that nobody can say today what Jaiprakash will be tomorrow. I would certainly admit that my views have changed from time to time. But I must also confess that throughout, a fire has been continuously burning in my heart. I have always felt a great urge to change the present society which is based on injustice and exploitation. We will have to build up a new society where there will be equality and fullest freedom.

I was in America 25 years ago. I became a Communist. I returned from there as a full-fledged Communist. But, soon it became clear to me that the dream-world which I had built up in my conception was wrong. I felt that a great experiment launched in a very big country under the able leaders had come to naught. The methods followed in that one sixth part of the Globe — I mean Russia — could not bring freedom and equality. I was not satisfied with what had come out of that experiment. Today the same conditions continue there. Till such time as a real revolution does not take place in Russia, there is no hope for the peoples of that country.

I realise that if along with Socialism we do not have democracy, we cannot achieve our object. I was always convinced and remain so, that there is no advance possible for human society till such time as every one does not have equality of opportunity. We have always desired that changes should come in, in our society as

soon as possible. All these years this conviction was growing deeper within me that our object can be achieved only through Sarvodaya. That feeling was growing. But I was probing for the way, for the path, to reach the goal. And the path became increasingly clearer to me as the *Bhoodan* movement developed. So, finally at Bodh-Gaya I decided to leave politics and devote myself to this work. I feel that all people who believe in Sarvodaya ideals should take a similar course.

The position is very clear. If through State power we cannot build Sarvodaya, if a non-violent revolution in our society is not possible through the administrative machinery, then what other alternative remains before us for building up a new society? Thinking and ever thinking over this question, I have arrived at some conclusions which I will place before you. I feel that the path of changing society in accordance with Mahatmaji's ideals is an entirely new one, which has hitherto not been attempted in the world. And working upon the premises laid down by the Father of the Nation, Vinobaji has successfully reduced it to a science. In his address this morning (25th March '55) Vinobaji has spoken a lot on that aspect.

What can be the method of pushing forward the viewpoint of truth, and what can be the method of mass *Agraha* (insistence)? Vinobaji has placed before us his ideas on *Bhoodan* and *Sampattidan* which are meant only for pushing forward this conception. I feel that there is no path better than this. The basic question is not how much land we got in *Bhoodan*. The important thing is

that this point of view is being more and more accepted that lands belongs to society, that property belongs to no individual. *Bhoodan* and *Sampattidan* have a tremendous revolutionary significance because they non-violently make their way forward and the principles are being increasingly accepted by Indian society. No doubt our views can be propagated through pamphlets and speeches. But, as long as that propaganda is not accompanied by actual movement which affects the lives of the people, till then no movement for social transformation can achieve a mass character.

I am reminded of the Salt Satyagraha. When Gandhiji struck upon this novel method, there were many who pooh-poohed and laughed at it. But that small Salt Satyagraha transformed the entire Nation. Indian people, who were afraid of the mighty British Empire, got courage and became fearless. More or less the same role is being played to-day by the *Bhoodan* movement in transforming the society. As far as the question of transformation of Indian society is concerned, there are a lot of people who think well of the *Bhoodan* movement. I would tell them that if they think that *Bhoodan* is just one of the scores of other work being done in this country, then they have not fully understood its implications.

If you consider that *Bhoodan* is just one of the scores of other activities then nothing is going to materialize. Not that other activities are bad or unimportant. We will have to put all our energy into this *Bhoodan* work. We will have to jump into it with all our energies, just as

in times of revolution. We have to bring about this revolution in the minds and thoughts in every one in all homes and villages of our motherland. We have to make every one realise that an economic revolution has to take place in our society. For the masses of our people economic factors are the most dominant. That is why Vinobaji has taken up the economic issue with a view to change the society, and has been telling us how there exists a non-violent way of solving the economic problems.

Friends, after having given my deepest thought to the subject during the last four years, I gathered the necessary enthusiasm and courage to place these views before you. I would call upon all of you to leave every other activity and function, and jump into this great task of bringing about a non-violent revolution in our society.

This is a non-violent revolution with main emphasis on cottage industries, to be brought about through Bhoodan.

Nobody will dispute that to establish a non-violent society we should believe in non-violence. What is the significance of *Bhoodan*? Why has that been made the centre of all other activities? The question arises because we have realised that the old items of constructive programmes are not effective in bringing about a non-violent revolution. There are villages which have spun on Charkha regularly for the last 25 years but there

has been no transformation in the set up of these villages. Those who spun might have got some cash, but there came no revolution in the village life. Nai Talim also has been implemented in some villages. It has failed to bring about any change in the people. The *Bhoodan* movement has been progressing during the last four years. We have received over 35 lakhs of acres. In Orissa over 100 villages have been fully donated to the *Bhoodan* movement, which means that in these 100 villages at least the land revolution is complete. The inhabitants of these villages have given up their property rights over land.

Experience has shown, and will show, that to the extent the *Bhoodan* movement advances, to that extent all other constructive activities advance and the creative capacities of our masses will develop. Actually speaking, I visualise so many things to be done once *Bhoodan* movement is complete. But we have not enough workers to cope with the task.

The main idea is that we should bring about a revolution in people's thoughts. That is not likely to take place through enactments, through legislatures. We have at last got at a point where we can take a final stand and that is the idea of *Bhoodan* and *Sampattidan*. Here is an opportunity for every one to take some part if he is willing to leave his property rights fully, or if he cannot do that, partly. Thus revolutionary ideas spread through the country.

There is a great difference between violent revolution and non-violent revolution. The latter is entirely depen-

dent upon mobilising the sanction of the enlightened masses.' In a scheme of non-violent revolution, greatest emphasis is upon changing the views of the people and their methods of behaviour in society. In a violent revolution it is the power of the State, with all its vast appendages, which plays a decisive role. In the Soviet Union, after the revolution, big landlords fled away and the peasants occupied all the land left behind. But the values of human society did not change essentially. The question remained one of "my" property and "your" property. So, when the State took up the task of collectivising agriculture, which essentially meant renunciation of property rights by the masses of peasantry, then they had to pay a heavy price for the transformation. Nearly two crores of people had to be uprooted from their ancestral land and sent away to Siberia. What I would like to say is that a society of Sarvodaya conception will not come by sharpening the conflict of interests.

What do we see in Russia? Lenin had said that there would be no differences between the salaries of the officers and labourers. Today, in the Soviet Union the difference between the salary of the worker and that of the officer is 80 times. Lenin had said that after the revolution the State will wither away. But today we find that the State power in Russia has assumed gigantic proportions.

The conclusion is obvious. It is not possible to achieve any success through developing the power of the State. The real method lies in developing the power of the masses, and their moral strength. We have before

us the slogan of Welfare State. I would like the Sarvodaya workers to fully understand the various concepts which seem to be jumbled up in this much talked of Welfare State. It is a slow-moving conception of changing society into a Socialistic one.

But our *Bhoodan* movement is not merely one among the many other numerous activities. It is the *main work* today. Vinobaji first got the inspiration. He has become the means for the change. God has chosen him for this task. Whatever it may be, I must say that revolution cannot be accomplished by work at leisure. If we want revolution we will have to work with quick speed. That is why I say to those who are in the administration, and who in their heart of hearts believe in the Sarvodaya ideals, to leave the administration and join the movement and work actively in it. Similarly, I would call upon the constructive workers to lock up their shops for the present and to leave all other constructive activities and to jump straight into this movement.

(Speech at the Seventh Sarvodaya Sammelan at Puri)



BHOODAN AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

THE village reconstruction is the foundation of Acharya Vinoba's *Bhoodan Yagna*. The stronger the foundation, the better will be the super-structure. Without village reconstruction, even *Bhoodan* will be an impossible affair.

The importance of the cottage industries is an old problem, but now it needs a new line of thought and approach in the present day society. The necessity of giving real shape and place to village reconstruction work has come to the forefront. Efforts in building cottage industries will be successful only in those villages where *Bhoodan* work is done well and where the movement is marching ahead.

We often feel the necessity of taking the help of legislation to build our ideal villages and for this we often agitate and our minds are also diverted towards that direction. Our friends have formed the Government but we are unable to get any support. It is therefore, natural to be disappointed. This angle of vision should be changed. We can get support from the Government, but to wait for such support will be something like placing the cart before the horse, and by this we become weak. Before our voices reach the Government it should reach the people. The village folk should boycott foreign imported goods even before the Government ban them by legislation. This was stressed by us at Sevapuri Sammelan.

If we begin reconstruction work through public opinion we will go ahead towards the Sarvodaya Society and our strength will increase. Outer impediments will vanish as soon as our inner strength increases and this will help to build the society based on self-sufficiency.

The village craftsmen generally sell their products in the market for money. But owing to want of purchasers most of the articles remain unsold. To solve this difficulty it is necessary to produce only such articles which can be sold in the village market itself. For instance, a weaver can make a napkin for a fisherman of the same village and can take in return fish for the same value. Then he need neither go outside his village for his livelihood nor have any fear of his articles remaining unsold. Money would not be required in such cases.

Some people say that this is an old method of barter in goods. Indian economists do not appreciate this method, but European economists have fully realised the need of such a barter system. The American producers are making strenuous efforts to thrust their goods on European markets and to dominate over the European economy. To resist this, many European countries have organised Unions among themselves with a view to exchange and barter of goods produced by them.

Even if one, out of every 5,000 villages, is modelled on complete Sarvodaya ideals it is doubtful if the remaining villages will copy the same of their own accord. Unless strenuous and incessant efforts are made in every

village by the workers, the ideal we aim at, cannot be fully realised. I appeal to all Sarvodaya workers to strive hard in building up the Sarvodaya Order of society free from exploitation of any kind.



VIII

GUIDE FOR JEEVANDAN

A number of questions have been raised regarding *Jeevandan* and some discussion has also taken place here. I wish to say something in that connection.

Jeevandan is one of the valuable achievements of our movement. Our hopes regarding the future of the movement, are based on *Jeevandan* also. The *Jeevandan* movement started at the Bodhgaya Conference, has since progressed well. We have not been able to explain to the people the exact significance of *Jeevandan* and therefore many are in the dark about it. If the meaning and objects of *Jeevandan* are to be explained to the people, we will have thousands of *Jeevandanis* coming forward.

1. '*Jeevandan*' means that one has decided to spend his life working for '*a non-violent revolution based on Bhoodan Yagna and with village industries as its mainstay.*'

2. *Jeevandanis* belonging to political parties can, if they so desire, retain their ordinary membership but

should not take any active part in other programmes especially elections. They can give their vote on political issues.

3. *Jeevandanis* engaged in other constructive work should either free themselves from them and devote all their time to the *Bhoodan* movement or reorientate their programme so as to make it an integral part of the *Bhoodan* revolution.

4. *Jeevandanis* must free themselves from their family responsibilities but, if occasion demands, can devote the minimum time required for such affairs.

5. *Jeevandanis* engaged in productive work in villages, like the peasants and labourers, are not expected to leave that work. They can do *Bhoodan* and connected work while engaged in such productive work.

6. If the *Jeevandanis* own any land or property, they should contribute their share to the movement and consider themselves as trustees of the rest.

7. They should accept only what is absolutely necessary for their living.

8. *Jeevandanis* should as far as possible lead a simple life.

9. They should habitually wear khaddar.

10. They should use as far as possible village products for their food.

11. Their wives and children should be induced to take to khaddar and Nai Talim.

12. They should as far as possible do physical work regularly.

13. *Jeevandanis* should not expect that any institution or individual will undertake the responsibility for their maintenance. *Jeevandan* is not a kind of occupation. Thousands of *Jeevandanis* are required. In every village there should be at least two or three *Jeevandanis*. So no individual or institution can undertake the responsibility for such a large number of people. It is only the community or the nation as a whole that can do so. The *Jeevandanis* should have the faith that when they offer their lives in the service of the community, the community will not forget them. They should expect no other assurance than this.

14. *Bhoodan* will take a revolutionary shape only when the people adopt its philosophy in their lives. For this purpose large number of *Jeevandanis* will be required.

Their organisation should be independent and widespread. Therefore it is desirable that *Bhoodan* ashrams should be opened in each small area, consisting of the local *Jeevandanis* and *Bhoodan* workers. These ashrams should be the centre for all *Bhoodan* activities, like collection and distribution of land, constructive work and other activities connected with Sarvodaya. Full

time workers should make these camps their home. Their children should receive education in these centres. They should be the resting place for *Bhoodan* workers after a period of strenuous work. A family atmosphere should prevail in these camps.

15. The ashrams should have their own land for agricultural activities. Some village industries also should be included. All the inmates should do physical work and establish the Sarvodaya ideal in practice. Each centre should be self-sufficient and dependent upon its own physical labour and the contributions from the local people. For the present this is a preliminary plan. Later when the work progresses, there will be *Jeevandanis* in every village and their house itself will become the centre of all Sarvodaya activities.

(From a speech at Puri Sarvodaya Sammelan)

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NOT FOR LENDING

THE PLEDGE OF JEEVANDAN

**I offer my life for a non-violent revolution
based on Bhoodan Yagna and with village
industries as its mainstay.**

Bodhgaya, }
20-4-1955 }

Vinoba