



## GANDHI MEMORIAL SOCIETY, INC.

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### **Introduction**

*Gandhiji believed that India was in her villages. Along with Agriculture which was very much dependent on the climatic conditions, Indian peasants needed a supplementary industry. The most natural therefore was the introduction of the spinning wheel into the homes. The handloom cannot be included or introduced in every home, whereas the farmer could use it easily.*

*He identified the following as the 'triple malady' which held our villages fast in its grip:*

- ◆ *want of corporate sanitation*
- ◆ *deficient diet*
- ◆ *inertia*

*Villagers are not interested in their own welfare. They don't appreciate modern sanitary methods. They don't want to exert themselves beyond scratching their farms or doing such labour as they are used to. These difficulties are real and serious. But they must not baffle us...*

*Gandhiji advised that that people must have an unquenchable faith in their mission. And have patience with the people. Patience and perseverance, if we have them, overcome mountains of difficulties. We are like nurses who may not leave their patients because they are reported to have an incurable disease. Villages have suffered long from neglect by those who have had the benefit of education. They have chosen the city life.*

*His village movement was an attempt to establish healthy contact with the villages by inducing those who are fired with the spirit of service to settle in them and find self-expression in the service of villagers....*

*Only those, therefore, who have faith in themselves and in their mission will serve the villagers and influence their lives.*

### **Economics**

#### **Economics and Ethics**

*I must confess that I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics. Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and, therefore, sinful. Thus the economics that permit one country to prey upon another are immoral. It is sinful to buy and use articles made by sweated labour. (Young India, 13-10-1921, p. 325)*

*The economics that disregard moral and sentimental considerations are like wax works that, being life-like, still lack the life of the living flesh. At every crucial moment thus anew-fangled economic laws have broken down in practice. And nations or individuals who accept them as guiding maxims must perish. (Young India, 27-10-1921, p. 344)*

#### **Ideal Economy**

*True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard, just as all true ethics to be worth its name must at the same time be also good economics. An economics that inculcates Mammon worship, and enables the strong to amass wealth at the expense of the weak, is a false and dismal science. It spells death. True economics, on the other hand, stands for social justice, it promotes the good of all equally including the weakest, and is indispensable for decent life. (Harijan, 9-10-1937, p.292)*



*If we will but cleanse our houses, our palaces and temples of the attributes of wealth and show in them the attributes of morality, we can offer battle to any combinations of hostile forces without having to carry the burden of a heavy militia. Let us seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and the irrevocable promise is that everything will be added unto us. These are real economics. May you and I treasure them and enforce them in our life! (Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, p. 355)*

### **Education**

*To Students,*

*Character cannot be built with mortar and stone. It cannot be built by hands other than your own. The Principal and the professor cannot give you character from the pages of the books. Character building comes from their very lives and really speaking, it must come within you.*

*Put all your knowledge, learning & scholarship in one scale and truth and purity in the other and the latter will far outweigh the other. The miasma of moral impurity has today spread among our school going children and like a hidden epidemic is working havoc among them. All your scholarship, all your study of the scriptures will be in vain if you fail to translate their teachings into your daily life.....*

*If teachers impart all the knowledge in the world to their students but inculcate not truth and purity among them, they will have betrayed them and instead of raising them set them on the downward road to perdition. Knowledge without character is a power for evil only, as seen in the instances of so many talented thieves and gentlemen rascals in the world.*

*As to use of the vacation by students, if will they approach the work with zeal, they can undoubtedly do many things. I enumerate a few of them:*

- 1. Conduct night & day schools with just a short course, well conceived, to last the period of the vacation.*
- 2. Visit Harijan quarters and clean them, taking the assistance of Harijan if they would give it.*
- 3. Taking Harijan children for excursions, showing them sights near the villages and teaching them how to study nature, and generally interesting them in their surroundings giving them by the way a working knowledge of geography & history.*
- 4. Reading to them simple stories from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.*
- 5. Teaching them simple Bhajans.*
- 6. Cleaning the Harijan boys of all the dirt that they would find about their persons and giving both the grown ups and the children simple lessons in hygiene.*
- 7. Taking a detailed census in selected areas of the conditions of the Harijans.*
- 8. Taking medical aid to the ailing Harijans. This is but a sample of what is possible to do among the Harijans.*

*It is a list hurriedly made, but a thoughtful student will, I have no doubt, add many other items.*

*You are at the hope of the future. You will be called upon, when you are discharged from your colleges and schools, to enter upon public life to lead the poor people of this country. I would, therefore like you students to have a sense of your responsibility and show it in a much tangible manner. It is a remarkable fact, and a regrettable fact, that in the case of the vast majority of the students, whilst*



*they entertain noble impulses during their student days, these disappear when they finish their studies. The vast majority of them look out for loaves and fishes. Surely there is something wrong in this. There is one reason which is obvious. Every educational system is faulty. It does not respond to the requirements of the country, certainly not to the requirements of pauper India. There is no correspondence between the education that is given and the home life and the village life.*

*These are not necessities of life. There are some who manage to take ten cups of coffee a day. Is it necessary for their healthy development and for keeping them awake, let them not drink coffee or tea but go to sleep. We must not become slaves to these things. But the majority of the people who drink coffee or tea are slaves to them. Cigars and Cigarettes, wealth foreign or indigenous must be avoided. Cigarette smoking is like an opiate and the cigars that you smoke have a touch of opium about them. They get to your nerves and you cannot leave them afterwards. How can a single student foul his mouth in converting it into a chimney? If you give up these habits of smoking cigars and cigarettes and drinking coffee and tea you will find out for yourselves how much you are able to save.*

*A drunkard in Tolstoy's story is hesitating to execute his design of murder so long as he has not smoked his cigar. But he puffs it, and then gets up smiling and saying, "What a coward am I!" takes the dagger and does the deed. Tolstoy spoke from experience of it. And he is much more against cigars and cigarettes than against drinks. But do not make the mistake that between drink and tobacco, drink is a lesser evil. No. If cigarette is Beelzebub than drink is Satan.*

*The students should be above all humble, and correct.... The greatest to remain great has to be the lowliest by choice. If I can speak from my knowledge of Hindu belief, the life of the student is to correspond to the life of the sanyasi up to the time his studies end. He is to be under the strictest discipline. He cannot marry, nor indulge in dissipation. He cannot indulge in drinks and the like. His behaviour is to be a pattern of exemplary self-resistant.*

*This article is taken from the book "The Selected Works Of Gandhi"  
Vol. 6 The Voice of Truth*