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## The Relationship of Bhoodan Yajna and Sarvodaya Vinoba Bhave's Land-Gift in India and its Relationship to the Gandhian Ideal of Non-violent Social Order

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THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ASIAN STUDIES

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2030 Broadway, San Francisco, 15, California, U.S.A.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF BHODAN YAJNA AND SARVODAYA

Vinoba Bhave's Land-Gift Movement in India and its  
Relationship to the Gandhian Ideal of Non-violent Social Order

Dissertation

for the degree of Master of Arts

submitted by

Urmila Agarwal

June 1956.

Committee-in-charge

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## THE RELATIONSHIP OF BHOODAN YAJNA AND SARVODAYA

### Vinoba Bhаве's Land-Gift Movement in India and its Relationship to the Gandhian Ideal of Non-violent Social Order

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to study the relationship between the Bhoodan Yajna (Land-Gift) movement of Vinoba Bhave and the Gandhian ideal of non-violent social order for India, viz., Sarvodaya.

The plan of the paper is briefly as follows.

The first chapter gives the background information about Vinoba Bhave and the Bhoodan Yajna movement. It is indicated how this movement, beginning on April 18, 1951 in Hyderabad (Deccan), steadily developed into a comprehensive all-India program during the last about five years.

The second chapter explains the meaning of Sarvodaya (literally, uplift of all) and also gives the details of the social, economic and political order in a Sarvodaya society.

The third chapter analyses in detail the various components of the Bhoodan Yajna movement. This chapter further examines <sup>what</sup> significance the words 'Yajna' and 'Dan' traditionally had in India and what revolutionary interpretation to their meaning has been given by Gandhi and Vinoba. Gandhi's views on India's land problem and a non-violent solution thereof are examined, and it is seen that the principles underlying Bhoodan Yajna are also the same. The reaction of India's major political parties to Bhoodan Yajna is analysed with particular reference to the role of the Praja-Socialist leader Jayaprakash Narayan. Finally, the vital difference between the non-violent revolution represented

by Bhoodan Yajna and the revolution inspired by the Communist ideology is pointed out.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the study of the relationship between Bhoodan Yajna and Sarvodaya. The particular significance of the popular synonym of Sarvodaya, viz. Ramraj is studied as also Vinoba Bhave's ideology of Samya-yoga (yoga or way of equality). The latest development of the Bhoodan Yajna movement, viz. Gram-dan (gift of the whole village) and its importance for the establishment of Gram-raj as an intermediary stage for Ramraj is also examined.

The results of the study are summarised in the concluding chapter (No. 5).

There are five appendices which, among other things, give information regarding legislation in Indian States concerning Bhoodan Yajna, procedure followed for distribution of Bhoodan land, and figures of land collected upto August 1955.

Since a large number of Sanskrit and other Indian terms are used throughout the paper, a glossary of these with their English equivalents is given, following the appendices.

Finally, a bibliography of books, magazines and papers used in the preparation of this paper is given.

I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my warmest thanks to Professors Alan W. Watts and Haridas Chaudhuri for their constant help and guidance in my studies at the Academy, and to Dr. Joan V. Bendurant for her advice and help in the preparation of this paper. Thanks are also due Mr. William Swartly

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## CHAPTER 1

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### (a) Vinoba Bhave's Role in India's Independence Struggle

Vinoba Bhave, the originator of the Bhoodan Yajna (Land-Gift) movement was not much known to the world till only five years ago. He was by nature more devoted to silent constructive work on Gandhian lines and he did not like any publicity whatsoever. Of course, amongst the close associates of Gandhi who ran his Ashrams, Vinoba Bhave had a very high place, and now and then in that capacity people saw glimpses of this great personality.

Vinoba Bhave's real name is Vinayak Bhave. The name Vinoba was given by Gandhi when the former became an intimate member of his (i.e. Gandhi's) Ashram.

Vinoba was born in the village of Gagode in the Pen Tehsil (sub-division) of Kolaba district of Bombay Presidency on September 11, 1895. His mother, Rukmini Devi, was a very pious woman. His father, Narhar (Shambhurao)<sup>1</sup> Bhave, was a textile technologist serving in Baroda State.

Vinoba had his early education in the natural surroundings of Gagode. The Marathi newspaper "Kesari" of B.G.Tilak was one of his favorites and had a good deal of influence on him. More

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1. Shambhurao is Vinoba's grand-father's name. A Maharashtrian's middle name is his or her father's name. Thus Vinoba's full name as a Maharashtrian would be Vinayak Narhar Bhave.



than anyone else, however, Vinoba's pious mother contributed to his development. From her he developed his wonderful asceticism and taste for dedication and self-effacement.

Vinoba passed the matriculation (High School) examination from Baroda in 1913. He then joined the college, but the type of life that an average college student led in his days did not satisfy him. From an early age he wished to be a sanyasin who would give up everything to do something higher. He spent a good deal of his time studying the religious literature in the Marathi language. He also took a vow of life-long Brahmacharya (chastity). Walking for several hours every day was his favorite hobby, even in those days.

The year 1916, when Vinoba was about 21, was a highly significant year in Vinoba's life. It was during this year that the entire course of his life was determined.

Early in 1916, when he was supposed to go to Bombay to appear in the Intermediate examination<sup>2</sup>, Vinoba took the train for Banaras instead. He had already burnt his school and college certificates. To study Sanskrit and to take part in the anti-British terrorists' movement were uppermost in his mind. However, he was very soon disillusioned with the latter. Just at this point in his life, he came into contact with Gandhi.<sup>3</sup>

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2. The examination held at the end of two years of college.

3. For a detailed account of Vinoba's early life, reference may be made to books by Hallam Tennyson and Suresh Ramabhai included in the bibliography at the end of this paper.

On Feb. 4, 1916 Gandhi gave his historic speech before a prominent audience in the newly founded Banaras Hindu University. He said:

Let us not forget that the India of today in her impatience has produced an army of anarchists. I am myself an anarchist, but of another type. Their anarchism...is a sign of fear. If we trust and fear God, we shall have to fear no one.... No amount of speeches will ever make us fit for self-government. It is only our conduct that will fit us for it.<sup>4</sup>

Vinoba got a report of this speech from the newspapers and was very much attracted by its contents. Immediately he began to correspond with Gandhi about the points which the latter had mentioned in his speech. Gandhi advised him that to discuss those issues fully, he (Vinoba) should come to the Sabarmati Ashram, then recently started by Gandhi. On Wednesday June 7, 1916, Vinoba had his epoch-making meeting with Gandhi.

Vinoba joined the Ashram of Gandhi and very soon, by his sincerity and calmness, won the admiration and love of all. Gandhi wrote about Vinoba to the latter's father in the following terms, "Your son Vinoba is with me. Young as he is, he has reached spiritual heights which have taken me years of patient labor to attain."<sup>5</sup>

Shortly after this, Vinoba took one year's leave from the Ashram to continue his Sanskrit studies and to walk around the countryside to talk to common people. He returned punctually

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4. Louis Fischer: The Life of Mahatma Gandhi, 1950.pp.135-6

5. Hallam Tennyson: India's Walking Saint, 1955. p.204.



in a year and besides participating in the usual activities of the Ashram, also taught in the Rashtriyashala (National School) and the Gujarat Vidya Pith. When Vinoba asked Gandhi to adopt him as his spiritual son, the latter replied:

Your love and character overwhelm me and I accept the role. A truthful father should produce a more truthful son than himself. In your case, through no effort of mine, I see that this has already happened.<sup>6</sup>

In 1918 Vinoba suffered a deep loss in the form of the death of his dear and revered mother. Vinoba expressed a desire that the funeral hymns should be chanted by him and not by the professional priest; and since this could not be agreed to, due to orthodox customs, he did not participate in the funeral ceremony and spent the day reciting the Gita and the Upanishads at home.

In 1921 Vinoba was sent from Sabarmati to Maganvadi (near Wardha) to take charge of the Satyagraha Ashram started by Seth Jamnalal Bajaj. After sometime this Ashram was shifted to the new and permanent spot, now called Mahila Ashram. During this period Vinoba brought out a Marathi Monthly "Maharashtra Dharma".

Vinoba's part in the independence struggle of the country was mostly unpublicised because it was through silent constructive work. Only four times was he included in large-scale popular movements. The first of these was in 1923 when he took part in

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6. Ibid. p. 205.

the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha along with Jammalal Bajaj, Bhagvan Din and others. Vinoba was arrested and sentenced to imprisonment. In 1924 Vinoba was sent to Vaikom (Travancore) to guide and supervise the Harijan Temple-entry Satyagraha. He was imprisoned again during the 1932 Civil Disobedience Movement. However, it was in 1940 that Vinoba's name appeared on the front page of newspapers all over the country as India's first Satyagrahi of the second World War. We shall return to this below.

As a Gandhian constructive worker, Vinoba mastered the art of spinning and went deep into the various aspects of Khadi craft. For sometime in 1932-33 he resolved to support himself by spinning work alone and spun for hours on end. His health did not keep pace with his work and he was advised to go to some hill station for rest. The hill station chosen by Vinoba was a desolate hillock-like piece of land by the side of Paunar River, about five miles from Wardha. Vinoba shifted to this place in 1937 and gave it the name of "Paramadham Ashram" which became his headquarters from then on.

Vinoba's devotion to silent constructive work had a profound influence in the chain of Ashrams around Wardha. He spread a network of gram-seva (village service) centers in this area, allotting different villages to his students and co-workers. Vinoba was connected with this program in many capacities--as a farmer, spinner, weaver, teacher and even scavenger.

As mentioned above, Vinoba was chosen by Gandhi to be the first Satyagrahi in 1940 when the Indian National Congress launched a campaign of individual Satyagraha. Through this Satyagraha, Gandhi sought to protest against the decrees forbidding

political assemblies of more than three persons and restricting freedom of speech, decrees which had been introduced when Britain declared war on behalf of an unwilling and dependent India. Introducing Vinoba to the country, Gandhi wrote the following about him in "Harijan":

(Vinoba Bhave)...is a Sanskrit Scholar....He has taken part in every menial activity of the Ashram from scavenging to cooking....He has been of the utmost assistance to Asha Devi in her development of the scheme of education through handicrafts.... He believes in communal unity with the same passion that I have....He believes that the Charkha is the most suitable outward symbol of non-violence which has become an integral part of his life. He has taken an active part in the previous satyagraha campaigns. He has never been in the limelight on the political platform. With many co-workers he believes that silent constructive work with civil disobedience in the background is far more effective than the already heavily crowded political platform. And he thoroughly believes that non-violent resistance is impossible without a heart belief in and practice of constructive work....This will perhaps be the last civil disobedience struggle which I shall have conducted. Naturally, I would want it to be as flawless as it can be. Moreover, the Congress has declared that it will avoid all avoidable embarrassments to the Government consistently with its own existence. For that reason too, I had to strive to produce the highest quality, irrespective of quantity.

It may be mentioned that Jawaharlal Nehru was chosen as the second Satyagrahi for the campaign of 1940.

Vinoba was again imprisoned in the historic "Quit India" movement of August 1942. He was finally released on 9th July, 1945.

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7. P.D.Tandon (ed.): Vinoba Bhave, The Man and His Mission, pp. 3-5.

India won her political independence on August 15, 1947. However, the country was partitioned and communal strife prevailed in the Punjab and Bengal. Mahatma Gandhi was trying to pacify the situation by his non-violent methods. On January 30, 1948 a Hindu fanatic assassinated Gandhi in New Delhi. The sudden removal, from the scene, of India's architect of freedom, unity and strength came as a severe shock to the whole nation. The country needed the services of all his followers not only for the establishment of communal fellow-feeling and order but also for the building-up of the country on sound lines. Vinoba Bhave who had so far mostly confined himself to silent constructive work near Wardha now felt called upon to undertake higher and more serious responsibilities. As he said in an appeal to the people in April 1952:

If Gandhi were alive today, I would never have appeared before the public as I do today, but would have concentrated all my attention on scavenging village streets and on conducting my experiments of Kanchan-mukti (elimination of money economy) through agriculture. Circumstances have compelled me to come out and be audacious enough to be an initiator of this great Yajna.<sup>8</sup>

(b) The Origin of the Bhoodan Yajna Movement

In March 1948, about two months after Gandhi's death, most of the constructive workers of India assembled at Sevagram to devise ways and means to carry on the work that he had started. Among other things, they decided to start, at Vinoba's initiative, a "Sarvodaya Samaj"<sup>1--</sup> a 'samaj' (brotherhood) for the 'udaya' (uplift) of 'sarva' (all). It was also arranged that a conference or sammelan of the Sarvodaya Samaj should be held annually.

The story of the origin of the Bhoodan Yajna movement is connected with the third annual session of the Sarvodaya Samaj that was held at Shivarampalli, about four miles from Hyderabad City (Deccan), on April 8-11, 1951. Although reluctant in the beginning, Vinoba was persuaded to agree to attend this session. He decided to cover the distance of 315 miles, from Sevagram to Shivarampalli, on foot. He started walking on March 8, 1951 in the early hours of the morning. He passed through a large number of villages and saw first-hand their conditions. He finally reached Shivarampalli on April 7, 1951 and attended the Sarvodaya Sammelan.

After the Sammelan was over, Vinoba resumed his walk, this time through the heart of the Telangana part of Hyderabad State where the communists had been very active for some time.

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1. For details about the Sarvodaya Samaj see Appendix A.

Telangana is the name given to the south-eastern, eastern and north-eastern part of Hyderabad State which includes the districts of Mahbubnagar, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Nalgonda and Warangal and where Telugu is the common language of the people. The general public of Telangana are among the poorest and the most afflicted in India. The gulf between the rich and the poor is devastating. No attempts were made by the feudal administration of the State to remedy the situation. A few years ago, however, some youths inspired by communism became active in this area. They dealt with the land-owners very severely, even resorted to murder at times and recklessly divested them of their land.

When the situation created by the communists became very serious, the central as well as the State Government began to take action. The police forced the residents of Telangana, on the point of arms, to give information about the whereabouts of the communists. Enraged at this, the communists began to torture these people at night. Thus frightened by the police in the day and by the communists at night, the inhabitants of Telangana underwent terrible suffering.

It was towards these unfortunate people that Vinoba set his face when he started walking from Shivarampalli on April 15, 1951.

The real problem of Telangana, as Vinoba understood it, was that a handful of people possessed thousands of acres of land while the large majority did not own any. For example, in the village of Balapalle the total cultivable land of three thousand



acres was owned by only ninety families, while 600 families were landless. Vinoba realised immediately that the police would not be very helpful in fighting the communist menace; the only way to root it out was to remove the unequal distribution of land in a peaceful way.

Now Vinoba struck upon the idea of Bhoodan Yajna is a fascinating story. On April 18, 1951 he was in the village of Pochampalli, in the Nalgonda district. He went round the village to learn of the people's difficulties and troubles. He began with the Harijan area. He entered their huts, affectionately took their children in his arms and spoke words of encouragement and cheer to men and women. This attracted a large number of people around him. They narrated to him their tales of oppression and sorrow. Vinoba listened to these with patience and requested them to see him in the afternoon.

By about 1 p.m. a large number of Harijans assembled at Vinoba's place. Out of curiosity some non-Harijans also came. Vinoba asked the Harijans what in their opinion would help them most in the removal of their sufferings. The latter replied that if they got land for cultivation they would be able to face many of their problems themselves. Vinoba asked how much land was required. After some consultation they told him that eighty acres would be sufficient. With eyes bent, Vinoba assured them that he would try to obtain land for them. For a minute there was utter calmness. Vinoba seemed engrossed in deep meditation. Shortly after, he raised his head and asked whether some land-

holders were present in that gathering. He was told that they were. As if thinking aloud, he said, "If land is not provided by the Government or if it takes time, cannot something be done by the village-people themselves? Will some land-holder donate a part of his land for the Harijans?"

For a moment there was complete silence. Then a land-holder got up and said, "I will make a gift of 100 acres from my land."

This was Shri V.R.Reddy, the first donor in the Bhoodan Yajna. His declaration came to all as a pleasant surprise. At Vinoba's request he repeated his offer to convince all the people that he meant what he said.

Vinoba thought that he must talk about the offer with the donor privately. So he said to others, "Let us disperse now for a few hours. I hope all of you will attend the prayer-meeting in the evening." The donor assured Vinoba that he really was willing to give land. Vinoba requested him to come to the prayer-meeting too.

The atmosphere in the prayer-meeting that day was charged with serene emotion. After the prayer, Vinoba presented Shri V. R. Reddy to the gathering and told the people that since Shri V. R. Reddy had confirmed the offer both in private and in public, he was sure he would stand by it.

Vinoba passed a sleepless night. He thought over the day's incident again and again. He prayed and prayed. He felt convinced that there was God's hand behind all this and that He



wanted to use him as His instrument in that work.

Next morning when Vinoba was leaving for the next village he saw Shri V. R. Reddy again. Shri Reddy gave him a written declaration of his offer.

Thus the first Bhoodan (land-gift) was offered by Shri V. R. Reddy of Pochampalli (Hyderabad Deccan) on April 18, 1951. Vinoba called it a Yajna, a true vision of Ahimsa:

" I saw there (i.e. in Telangana) the vision of Ahimsa--Non-violence in the form of Bhoodan Yajna.<sup>2</sup>

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2. Harijan, 17 May, 1952.

(c) The Progress of the Bhoodan Yajna Movement,  
and its Development into Sampattidan, Gramdan  
and other Dans.

The first Bhoodan, as mentioned above, was offered on April 18, 1951 by Shri V. R. Reddy at Pochampalli in the Nalgonda District of the Telangana part of Hyderabad. In the village where Vinoba went next, he spoke about what he had received in Pochampalli and exhorted the people to donate their land like Shri V. R. Reddy. As Providence would have it, a donor came forward and offered a land-gift. Encouraged by this, Vinoba went round the districts of Nalgonda and Warangal and spoke of his new message. He impressed upon the people the divinity in giving away their possessions for the sake of those who did not have anything. He created a stir in the air, and for a while it was hard to believe what was actually taking place in Telangana.

Vinoba concluded his Telangana tour in June, 1951.

During this historic tour of about two months Vinoba encamped at about 50 villages and passed through about 200 more. He received 12,201 acres of land for distribution among the landless. About two lakhs of people attended the meetings and heard his message. His endeavor was, as he said in a mass meeting at Warangal, to

bring about a silent ideological revolution in our social outlook by asking the rich to donate lands to the poor. This Bhoodan Yajna is an application of non-violence, an experiment in transformation of life itself. I am only an instrument in the hands

of Him who is the Lord of all Ages, like even those who will receive the gifts. It is a phenomenon inspired by God."<sup>1</sup>

Many persons attributed Vinoba's success in Telangana to the fact that it was a Communist-ridden and terror-stricken area. They said that his appeal could not have any general response. Why should the haves of non-terrorised areas part with their land simply on Vinoba's asking, they murmured. Vinoba quietly listened to this type of criticism, but gave no reply.

Happily, the opportunity to experiment with his new message came to Vinoba within a few months. One day, on August 10, 1951, Shri R. K. Patil, his old friend and a member of the National Planning Commission, called on him to gather his impressions on the Draft Report of the First Five Year Plan. Vinoba was deeply hurt by what he had seen in Telangana. The fast deteriorating social and economic condition of the country as a whole pained him. But what pained him most was the fact that, in his opinion, the First Five Year Plan had evaded some of the basic problems of the country. He criticised in particular the provision in the plan for an import of three million tons of food-grains every year. He also felt very unhappy at the disregard shown by the Planning Commission towards khadi and other village industries.

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1. Harijan, 29 September, 1951.

Shri R. K. Patil conveyed Vinoba's impressions to Jawaharlal Nehru, Chairman of the National Planning Commission and Prime Minister of India. Never before had the Draft Report been more severely and more sincerely criticised. Pandit Nehru thereupon wrote to Vinoba that he wanted to see him in order to discuss the Plan.

The invitation from Nehru worked as an incentive for Vinoba. He resolved to start for Delhi on foot on Sept. 12, 1951. Addressing a large gathering at Paunar in his post-prayer meeting on the previous evening (i.e., Sept. 11, 1951--his birthday) he said:

If it is regarded that land could be obtained in Telangana because it was a communist-infected area, we must abandon all hope of a non-violent revolution in India....If we grasp the fundamental idea behind this Yajna, I hope the rich will honor the poor and donate lands to me. In case this hope is realised it will lend a mighty support to the non-violent revolution.<sup>2</sup>

Then and there he was presented with 75 acres of land. Next morning he commenced his march to Delhi.

Vinoba covered about twelve to sixteen miles every day. His party included a dozen companions, men, women, and youngsters, as also a bullock-cart. His first halt was at Seldoh at the Pannai Ashram of Dr. J. C. Kumarappa, the well-known Gandhian economist and authority on village industries. Reaching Nagpur

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2. Suresh Ramabhai: Vinoba and His Mission (1954) p. 49.

on September 15, Vinoba put his life-mission in these few words:

Till God keeps strength in me I shall tour the country and beg for land for the landless.<sup>3</sup>

At a meeting of constructive workers at Nagpur, he said that he wanted to create an atmosphere to bring about a change in the structure of the present society through a non-violent revolution. Without such a revolution, they could not solve the grave problems facing them. He appealed to all who had land to voluntarily part with some of it. According to him, land like air and water was the common property of the people and there should be an equitable distribution of it. What he wanted was to generate the power of the people and make them develop their own strength and capacity to solve the problem without waiting for the Government to do it.

During the seven days from September 11 to September 17, Vinoba walked 111 miles and obtained about 2,000 acres of land, an average of a little less than 300 acres per day. The daily average in Telangana being about 200 acres, it showed that for its fulfillment Bhoodan Yajna movement did not require the background of loot and terror.

Vinoba asked for land as a right of the people; in fact he wanted to restore it to its real owner. He asked for it from all, the rich as well as the poor. It was the latter who responded more easily and quickly. The response in unsophisticated

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3. Ibid. p. 49.

villages was far more than that in towns or cities. In villages too, the comparatively poor people surpassed their richer brethren in the act of donation. Of course, in due course of time, the rich also were moved by the moral force generated by the movement, and they came forward with their generous contribution.

Vinoba's last halt in Madhya Pradesh was on October 7, 1951, at Malthaun. The total land donated in a trip of 25 days amounted to 6,700 acres from 562 donors of whom 541 donated less than 25 acres each, nine between 25 and 50 acres each and thirteen above 100 acres each.

On October 8, Vinoba entered the Jhansi District of Uttar Pradesh. Before reaching Delhi he paid short visits to the neighboring States of Vindhya Pradesh, Madhya Bharat and Rajasthan also. Many famous Hindi writers, poets and journalists, e.g., Shri Maithili Sharan Gupta, Shri Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, Shrimati Mahadevi Varma, Shri Banarsi Das Chaturvedi, etc., offered Vinoba their whole-hearted co-operation. Vinoba took their help in finalising a Hindi version of the last eighteen verses<sup>4</sup> of the second discourse of the Gita which formed part of Bapu's evening prayer. It is significant that in his prayer-meetings in Telangana Vinoba was reciting the Telugu version of these verses--a

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4. Verses 55-72 of the second discourse of the Bhagwad-Gita describe the characteristics of a Sthitaprajna or a man of secure understanding.



practice which endeared him all the more to the people there. In Madhya Pradesh he carried on the Marathi version from his <sup>5</sup> Gitai. For the Hindi-speaking areas of Northern India, Shri Siyaram Sharan Gupta's Hindi version, as finalised at this time, constituted a regular part of Vinoba's evening prayer-meetings.

At Jhansi the city of the famous Rani Lakshmbai, Vinoba appealed to the people to donate land in the name of the brave woman-warrior. At Gwalior, Vinoba addressed a meeting of Jagirdars also in which he appealed to them to ponder over the absurdity of individual ownership of land which has been called as Mother <sup>by</sup> of the Vedas. He was, he said, as much their friend as also of the poor. The Jagirdars, moved by Vinoba's appeal, assured him of their help.

Vinoba passed through the districts of Agra and Mathura before arriving in Aligarh City where he addressed the students of the Aligarh Muslim University. From there he walked on to Delhi through the districts of Bulandshahar and Meerut. He entered Delhi on November 13, 1951 after having covered a distance of 792 miles from his Paunar Ashram in sixty-two days' march.

Vinoba stayed in Delhi in a little thatched hut at Rajghat near Gandhiji's Samadhi. All sorts of people, from the President and Prime Minister of India to common scavengers,

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5. Gitai is Vinoba's translation in Marathi couplets of the Bhagwad-Gita.

called upon him--a touching s<sup>6</sup>light illustrating the power of soul-force.

Vinoba introduced himself to Delhi's populace as the Puranic Vaman<sup>6</sup> and explained his three steps in the following manner:

What I want the people to do is, first, to part with some of their land. Secondly, they should engage themselves in the services of others. Finally, in their service they should give up all and voluntarily sacrifice everything. This is the path into which I want to initiate the people.<sup>7</sup>

It may be mentioned that Vinoba discussed the Draft Report of the Five Year Plan with the Planning Commission and also its chairman, the Prime Minister. The two major differences in their approaches remained unresolved. The first was about food imports. Vinoba wanted no food imports, while according to the Planning Commission's Report there were to be food imports for an indefinite period. The second major difference was about employment. Vinoba wanted a policy of full employment for all. The Planning Commission agreed that it was their duty, but they said that they could not, under the existing circumstances, undertake it.

After having spent eleven days in Delhi, Vinoba resumed his walking tour of Uttar Pradesh in the early hours of the morning of November 24, 1951. Since he demanded about one-

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6. The Puranas describe how the incarnation of God in the form of Vaman i.e., Dwarf covered the whole earth in three steps.

7. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 15 Nov., 1951.



fifth or one-sixth of the entire cultivable land in the country, he wanted one crore (i.e. ten million) acres of land from Uttar Pradesh. As a first instalment, however, the constructive workers of this State, meeting at Mathura on November 1 and during Vinoba's presence (when he was on his way to Delhi), resolved to collect five lakhs (i.e. 500,000) of acres within one year. This decision marks a turning point in the history of the Bhoodan Yajna movement, for it was the first occasion when workers of any part of the country decided to work for this movement with a definite target before them.

The main burden of Bhoodan work in Uttar Pradesh was shouldered by Baba Raghav Das and Shri Karan Bhai. The movement gathered momentum day by day. There were several touching scenes when some poor and unsophisticated people came to Vinoba at late hours of night to offer their contributions. Vinoba walked through 35 districts of the State before entering the ancient city of Kashi (Banaras). On April 12, he reached the village

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8. At the village of Chaudalpur in Moradabad district, a blind man, Ram Charan by name, accompanied by a friend, reached Vinoba's camp after midnight at 1 a.m. All were asleep. Perchance one worker in the camp got up and inquired of the blind man what brought him there. He said, "I am told that here is a Baba who accepts land-gifts for the poor. I have got but twelve bighas of land which I want to donate to him." The gift-deed (Dan Patra) was filled in by the worker and Ram Charan's finger-print taken on it. Thereafter, the great donor walked back to his village six miles off. Vinoba came to know of it next morning. Referring to this incident in his evening address he remarked:

"They say that Ram Charan was blind. But in fact it is we who are blind. We should know that in Ram Charan's form, the feet (Charan) of God (Ram) himself had come to bless the Bhoodan Yajna."

colony of Sevapuri, some fourteen miles from Banaras City and also the headquarters of the U. P. Provincial Bhoodan Yajna Committee.

At Sevapuri, on April 13-16, 1952, was held the fourth annual Sammelan (or session) of Sarvodaya Samaj. Total land collected in the country by that time amounted to 102,361 acres obtained from 4,936 donors. Shri Shankar Rao Dev, secretary of Sarvodaya Samaj and Sarva Seva Sangh, placed a resolution before the Sammelan, calling for a collection of twenty-five lakhs of acres of land for Bhoodan Yajna within two years as a first instalment to fulfil Vinoba's demand of five crores, in order to establish a classless and exploitation free society on the basis of truth and non-violence. This resolution as well as the addresses of Vinoba, Acharya J. B. Kripalani, Shri Purushottam Das Tandon and others, filled the large gathering of constructive workers that came from different parts of the country with a new message and hope.

The Sevapuri Sammelan registered a landmark in the growth and development of the Bhoodan movement. It assumed an all-India character, and Bhoodan message thereafter began to be conveyed to every nook and corner of the country.

As mentioned above, Vinoba had already covered 35 districts of Uttar Pradesh. He now started for the remaining 15. Leaving Sevapuri on April 20, 1952 and passing through the districts of Jaunpur, Faizabad, Lucknow and Unnao, he reached Kanpur on May 13, 1952. Kanpur was the first place where the full quota

of land fixed for the district was donated on the very first day of Vinoba's arrival. Vinoba then raised the Kanpur quota to one lakh acres. In fact, from now on he raised the quota of all the other U. P. districts which fell on his way. At Pukhrayan in Kanpur district, on May 17, 1952, Vinoba distributed land to the landless--the first event of its kind in U. P.

A notable event during Vinoba's march in the districts that he covered next was at Mangroth in Hamirpur District. Vinoba was on his way to Italia (District Hamirpur) when on May 23, 1952, at breakfast hour, he was presented with 101 acres of land by the residents of Mangroth that lay two miles away from the spot. Accepting the gift and saying that "Sabai Bhumi Gopal Ki" (all land belongs to Gopal), Vinoba marched on. These words seized the hearts of residents of Mangroth. One of them, viz., Diwan Shatrughan Singh, suggested that all the 64 landowning families of the village should offer their entire land in Bhoodan Yajna so that they and the forty landless families may live together and own land like one big joint family. Diwanji's efforts were successful and on May 24, 1952 the entire land of the village of Mangroth was offered to Vinoba who was at that time at Rath nearby. This was the first Gramdan (the gift of whole village) which was later to become so popular in Orissa.

Another noteworthy event of Vinoba's tour in the Bundelkhand area of U.P. took place in the district of Banda. On May 30, 1952, at Banda town, Chri Jayaprakash Narayan, the well-known Socialist leader, fresh from the Pachmarhi convention of the

Socialist Party of India, saw Vinoba. In Vinoba's prayer meeting Jayaprakash Narayan declared:

After 30th January, 1948, one felt that the inspiration which enthused us to sacrifice and suffering had gone for good. But it is again being now felt that we can solve our problems by non-violence. I trust that through this instrument of Bhoodan Yajna, the two currents of Gandhism and Socialism would meet like Ganga and Jamuna and contribute to India's prosperity and betterment.<sup>9</sup>

This was a prelude to the conversion which was to follow a few months later, culminating in Shri Jayaprakash's turning into a gallant and eloquent champion of Vinoba's mission.

Towards the end of June 1952, the city and the district of Allahabad gave Vinoba a rousing reception. The land donations in Allahabad district totalled 27,561 acres, the highest given by any district in Vinoba's tour so far.

The ten weeks of heavy rain, from early July to Sept. 12, 1952, Vinoba spent at Kashi Vidyapith in Banaras City. The amount of land donated to him in his tour after the Sevapuri Sammelan was far above the previous figures. An idea of the growing pace of the movement can be had from the following table which shows the daily average of gifts obtained by Vinoba in the course of his travels through Telangana and then on to Kashi Vidyapith.

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9. Suresh Ramabhai: Vinoba and His Missions -- (1954) pp86.

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No.	Region		Days taken	Land Obtained (in Acres)	Daily Ave- rage (in Acres)
1	Telangana	..	60	12,201	203
2	On to Delhi	..	64	19,436	303
3	Meerut to Sitapur	..	91	28,308	311
4	Bahraich to Sevapuri	..	49	46,088	490
5	Sevapuri to Vidyapith	..	76	1,68,643	2,219

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September 11, 1952, the 57th birthday of Vinoba was his last day at Kashi Vidyapith. About 500 Bhoodan workers from all over the State assembled there to receive Vinoba's message on the eve of his departure for Bihar. It was on this day that Vinoba made the resolve not to go back to his Paramdham Ashram until the land problem of the country was solved. He appealed to the workers to intensify the Tapas so that the Yajna and the Dan may be fulfilled. He said,

Yajna and Dan are expected from the people, but it is for us to intensify the Tapas....the three together constitute one indivisible whole.<sup>10</sup>

During his ten-month-stay in U. P., Vinoba went round every district except Almora. In all, he encamped at 257 places

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10. Harijan. 8 Nov., 1952.



in U. P., covered 3,750 miles and obtained 295,028 acres. Besides, he was given 231 wells, one tube-well, 34 pairs of bullocks, six houses, one bungalow, one dharamshala, eleven ploughs, a thousand-rupee-worth of agricultural tools, four Persian wheels, 130,000 bricks, 15 bags of cement, four ponds, 531 trees as also trees worth Rs. 15,500 and several maunds of seeds. In addition, he was given Shramdan (gift of labor) also.

The Bhoodan Movement entered another decisive stage during Vinoba's long stay in Bihar. Bihar is a land of the poor. There are 17 districts in the State with a population of about 40 million. Vinoba passed through the districts of Shahabad, Patna and Baran before arriving in Patna City on 23 October, 1952. The response that Bihar gave to Bhoodan during these five or six weeks was not very encouraging. However, as evident from his utterances ever since he entered Bihar, Vinoba was earnestly thinking of tackling Bihar's land problem on a permanent basis. The idea was constantly coming to his mind that if he merely continued to tour the country the way he was doing, he would get at most one to two million acres in a period of five or six years. Times were moving fast and if the problem was not solved within a specified period, the hopes of ushering in a non-violent social order would remain unfulfilled.

Thinking along these lines, Vinoba made the great resolve not to leave Bihar until its land problem was solved. He declared this in Patna City on October 23, 1952.

Next day, i.e. on Oct. 24, 1952, Vinoba placed before the people the idea of Sampattidan Yajna (gift of wealth). As evident from the Sampattidan Yajna pledge<sup>11</sup>, the characteristics of this yajna are:

- (I) The donor has to donate a certain percentage of his income or expenditure throughout his life, or at least for five years to begin with;
- (II) Money would remain with the donor himself;
- (III) He would spend it in such a manner as Vinoba may desire him to do;
- (IV) He would maintain an account of the money spent and submit the same regularly to Vinoba or his nominee.

On Oct. 25, 1952, the Bihar State Congress Committee unanimously adopted a resolution supporting the Bhoodan Yajna movement and taking definite steps for its success. Such support from the State Congress was the first of its kind in the country. A similar resolution was adopted the same day by the Sarvodaya workers of Bihar--a group which included the leaders of the Bihar Praja Socialist Party, the Congress and the other parties.

Vinoba next thought of concentrating his efforts in one particular district of Bihar. The district of Gaya, with the eternal memories of the Buddha, was selected for this intensive work. Vinoba's secretary Shri Damodar Das Mundada was sent to speed up the work there. In the meantime, Vinoba walked on to

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11. See Appendix E.

Chandwa (District Palamau) which is inhabited by aboriginals. There on November 22, 1952, Vinoba received no less than 400 Dan-patras (gift-deeds), the highest number on any single day thus far. On December 10, 1952, when Vinoba was in Singhbhum District, he fell ill. He grew so weak that he could not walk. But he insisted on maintaining his program. So he took to the bullock-cart. However, by the time he arrived in Chandil (District Manbhum), his condition became so bad that there was no question of going anywhere, on foot or bullock-cart or otherwise. He therefore stayed on at Chandil until the 5th session of Sarvodaya Samaj that was later held there on March 7-9, 1953.

A very important event in the history of Bhoodan Yajna was Shri Jayaprakash Narayan's declaration, towards the end of the year 1952, to devote his time and energy to this movement.

The Chandil Sarvodaya Conference marked another decisive stage for the Bhoodan Yajna movement. Two of the three resolutions passed by the Conference were in connection with Bhoodan and Gramdan, the third one being about prohibition. Not only did the Conference reiterate their decision taken the previous year at Sevapuri, viz., to collect 25 lakhs acres of land by April 1954, but it also resolved the establishment of an exploitation-free and equality-full society by the aquisition of five crores of acres before 1957.

The addresses of Vinoba and Jayaprakash Narayan at the Chandil Sammelan were very inspiring. Vinoba put forth a four-fold program:



- (I) Integration of constructive work institutions into one homogeneous unit,
- (II) collection of five crore acres of land in Bhoodan Yajna by 1957;
- (III) Sampattidan Yajna; and
- (IV) yarn offering.

This meant that the constructive workers were "to wind up as many of their present activities as possible and to plunge themselves in the Bhoodan work. The Bhoodan work does not mean just one more addition to their activities but something which comprehends all of them and which is, therefore, entitled to claim their sole attention."<sup>12</sup>

The Chandil Conference gave a new inspiration to the workers who then spread out in their respective areas. Vinoba resumed this trek through Bihar on 12 March, 1953--after about three months' fateful stay at Chandil.

The effect of the growing Bhoodan Yajna movement on the richer land-owning section of Bihar was very remarkable. The Raja of Ramgarh donated one lakh and one acres, the Raja of Ranka donated 115,501 acres, and the Maharajadhiraj of Barbhanga donated 118,800 acres. The Raja of Ramgarh accompanied Vinoba throughout his sojourn in the Hazaribagh District. The Raja of Palkot worked as convener of the Ranchi District Bhoodan Committee.

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12. From Vinoba's letter to a constructive worker published in Harijan dated 11 April, 1953.

A complete story of Vinoba's 27-month-stay in Bihar would be extremely fascinating. Because of lack of space, however, only a few of its main high-lights are given here.

In all, Vinoba visited about 5,000 villages of Bihar and spoke out his message directly to more than five million peasants of the State. His "melodious symphony moved the chords of the heart of Bihar's loving and intelligent populace" in a very "subtle and silent" manner.<sup>13</sup> As mentioned earlier, Gaya District was particularly chosen by Vinoba for intensive work. He walked on from one place to the other, passing through Gaya District whenever it was on his way. On January 30, 1954, the sixth death-anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, he entered Gaya District for the fourth time and announced his pledge not to go out of it until the entire quota of three lakhs of acres for the Gaya District was realised. It may be added here that the quota for the State of Bihar as a whole was 3.2 million acres.

Vinoba was still in Gaya District when the sixth Annual session of the Sarvodaya Samaj was held on April 18-20, 1954 at Sarvodayapuri near Bodh-Gaya. The session was attended by more than five thousand persons from all over the country, including Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Nehru and Dr. Radhakrishnan.

The highlight of the Bodh-Gaya Sammelan was Jayaprakash Narayan's dedication and call for Jivandan (gift of life). Among others who took this resolve at the same time, mention may be

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13. Sarvodaya, February 1955, p. 235.

made of the names of Shrimati Asha Devi Aryanaykam and Shri Dhirendra Majumdar.

The resolution adopted at the Conference expressed joy at the collection of 2,615,101 acres of land from 237,022 donors within the last two years--an achievement of the target fixed in the Sevapuri resolution--and reaffirmed that the underlying idea was not merely to collect or distribute land but to build up an exploitation-free and classless society. In the words of Shri Shankarao Deo, the message of this Sammelan was that "life itself is a yajna".

While leaving Gaya for North Bihar, Vinoba Said:

The quota (for Gaya District) could be fulfilled in any of the three ways. First, by collecting the fixed acreage of land; secondly, by securing the required number of gift-deeds; and thirdly, rehabilitating the landless in every village. There was ceaseless and intensive work for about three months. Out of six thousand villages in the district, we succeeded in collecting land from about three and a half thousand and though the quota in terms of acres of land could not be reached, the number of gift-deeds secured far exceeded the quota. It has been a rich experience for the workers from every point of view. The work in Gaya having thus been largely realised I am now leaving Gaya and proceeding to North Bihar.<sup>14</sup>

The message of Bhoodan penetrated very deeply into the hearts of the people of Bihar. The unsophisticated peasants as well as the Adivasis (aboriginal people) contributed very sincerely to the creation of a favorable atmosphere all around. As Shri Suresh Ramabhai remarks:

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14. Harijan, 26 June, 1954.

15. Sarvodaya, February 1955, p. 245.

When Vinoba had entered Bihar (in September, 1952), his words were 'I want land. Give me land'. On the eve of his departure (on January 1, 1955), Bihar's sky echoes and re-echoes with the words 'Take land! Take land!' 15

The next State on Vinoba's itinerary was West Bengal, the land of devotion and revolution. Vinoba observed that many orthodox Vaishnavites of West Bengal were interpreting Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teachings to mean that Bhakti (or devotion to God) alone was sufficient for spiritual emancipation. He, therefore, devoted several of his past-prayer speeches to a discussion of the relative importance of Bhakti, Jnana (knowledge) and Karma (action). At Vishnupur he said:

"I want to assure you that I share your profound respect for Chaitanya Mahaprabhu....The current of Bhakti started by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was holy like the sacred Ganga. But it is one thing to be a Ganga current, and quite another to be the great ocean itself....I do believe that a particular individual with Bhakti as basis can reach the ultimate stage, even as does a river on entering the sea.... But when we take into account the uplift of the society as a whole, one idea or one quality alone won't suffice. Developing only one feature renders the society one-sided....Mere intoxication with Bhakti and forgetting oneself completely in it does not make life perfect. It must find expression in solid work and in public service. I am saying nothing new. The Upanishads have said it already." 16

Spending only twenty-five days in West Bengal, Vinoba entered Orissa on 26 January, 1955. It was in Orissa that the Bhoodan Yajna movement developed into its last and the most comprehensive phase, viz., Gramdan on an extensive scale.

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16. Sarvodaya, March 1955, pp. 271-4.

*Sammelan*

The seventh Sarvodaya <sup>17</sup> was held at Jagannath Puri in Orissa in the last week of March, 1955. About six thousand persons from all over the country took part in the conference. The sammelan did not pass any resolution as such, but the "Sarva Seva Sangh placed a statement reflecting the determined will of the Sarvodaya Sevaks for the fulfillment of the Bhoodan Revolution by 1957." The Sangh also appealed to all those who believed in the Sarvodaya ideology to suspend all other activities for two years and dedicate their services to Bhoodan Yajna.

On 29 May, 1955, Vinoba entered the Koraput District of Orissa. This district is inhabited largely by aboriginal people. Part of this district was formerly included in a princely state. Within a few months, hundreds of villages in Koraput were obtained in Gramdan (gift of the whole village). On September 11, 1955, i.e., Vinoba's 60th birthday, when a simple and brief ceremony was being performed at Gunupurt (Koraput), it was announced that 469 villages had by then been offered in Gramdan in Koraput District alone and more than 100 more in other parts of Orissa. Just then came a telegram presenting to Vinoba twenty-five more villages in Gramdan on that happy occasion.

On October 1, 1955 Vinoba left Orissa for Andhra. The total number of Gramdan villages in Orissa then stood at 712 out of which 605 were in Koraput District alone. Suresh Ramabhai has commented on this phenomenon in the following words:

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17. Sarvodaya, April 1955, p. 307.



A new era is fast approaching in this unheard-of area (i.e., Orissa State in general and Koraput District in particular). Its innocent and so-called backward people seem to throw a challenge not only to potentates of power and pelf but also to professors of economics, sociology and religion.<sup>18</sup>

On December 16-19, 1955, the Sarva Seva Sangh organised a Sampattidan Conference at Vijayawada (Andhra). Vinoba explained that the chief purpose of Sampattidan was not merely to distribute what is usually called 'wealth' but to revolutionise people's thinking about it by establishing the dignity of labor.

Vinoba recently (i.e. in January 1956) said in his post-prayer speech at Anisettipalli (Hyderabad { Deccan):

With the Bhoodan movement are linked movements like 'Gramdan', 'Sampattidan' and 'Shaktidan'. To achieve the object of all these movements it is necessary to launch a "Buddhidan" movement to make the people, particularly the rich, realize that they should share the wealth and step up production. The earlier the rich do this, the better it will be for the nation. Such a step by the rich will enable the poor to taste the fruits of swaraj. <sup>19</sup>

The total number of Gramdan villages received upto the middle of January 1956 stood at 850.

The eighth Annual Sarvodaya Sammelan is due to be held in the Changelpet District of Madras in the third week of May, 1956. A great impetus will naturally be given to the Bhoodan and Gramdan movements thereby.

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18. Sarvodaya, December 1955, p. 198.

19. The Oversease Hindustan Times, New Delhi. 19 January, 1956.



## CHAPTER 2

### SARVODAYA, THE IDEAL NON-VIOLENT ORDER

#### (a) The Meaning of Sarvodaya

Sarvodaya literally means uplift (udaya) of all (sarva). This word was first used by Gandhi as the title of his Gujarati translation<sup>1</sup> of John Ruskin's book "Unto This Last".

The word 'udaya' or uplift used in Sarvodaya connotes the cultural or spiritual ideal of "simple living and high thinking", and not an indiscriminate multiplication of wants. Similarly the word 'sarva' or all includes everyone without exception and not simply a majority or "the greatest possible number". Gandhi wrote in his Introduction to "Sarvodaya",

People in the West generally hold that the whole duty of man is to promote the happiness of the majority of mankind, and happiness is supposed to mean only physical happiness and economic prosperity. If the laws of morality are broken in the conquest of this happiness, it does not matter very much. The consequences of this line of thinking are writ large on the face of Europe.

This exclusive search for physical and economic wellbeing prosecuted in disregard of morality is contrary to divine law, as some wise men in the West have shown. One of these was John Ruskin who contends in "Unto This Last" that men can be happy only if they obey the moral law.<sup>2</sup>

Gandhi regarded the following teaching of "Unto This Last"

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1. M.K.Gandhi: "Unto This Last: A Paraphrase". Original Gujarati edition called "Sarvodaya" was published in 1908. The English edition was published in 1951.

2. Ibid. 1951, pp. ix-xi.

as basic to all other notions:

That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.<sup>3</sup>

It must, however, be explicitly understood that this concept is essentially different from the socialist or the communist idea that the individual is for the society. In the Sarvodaya Order, the good of the individual is not antagonistic to the good of all; the former is 'contained in' the latter, and nothing is to be imposed by violence or physical force or even laws. Sarvodaya therefore stands for not only the uplift of all but also the total uplift of each.

To explain the above point further, let us note that the basis of Sarvodaya is all-embracing love. No individual or group is to suffer suppression, exploitation or liquidation. All are to be equal members of the Sarvodaya Order.

The all embracing-love, which is the basis of Sarvodaya manifests itself in the willingness and desire of every individual to perform selfless service of the others. Self-giving or sacrificing oneself for the loved ones is one of the essential qualities of love. Therefore Tapas or self-discipline involving voluntary self-suffering forms one of the basic requirements for Sarvodaya.

It should be added that even though the good of all naturally includes the good of the greatest possible number,

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3. M. K. Gandhi: "Autobiography, or The Story of My Experiments with Truth." 1948. Part IV, Chapter XVIII.

the concept of self-sacrifice in Sarvodaya makes it essentially different from the utilitarian point of view. As Gandhi put it,

The greatest good of all inevitably includes the good of the greatest number, and therefore, he and the utilitarian will converge in many points in their career, but there does come a time when they must part company, and even work in opposite directions. The utilitarian to be logical will never sacrifice himself. The absolutist will even sacrifice himself. 4

Not only does Sarvodaya rest upon a spiritual basis, but the means for achieving Sarvodaya must also be spiritual. In fact, in the Sarvodaya thinking means are more important than the ends. The purity of means is regarded as the sine qua non of good ends.

In terms of the traditional Indian concepts, the good end is represented by Satya or Truth while the good means are represented by Ahimsa or Non-violence. Only through Ahimsa, then, can we proceed towards Sarvodaya. The Gandhian concept of Satyagraha stands for the use of Ahimsa on all occasions, by the individual as well as the group. To cling to Truth and Non-violence at the cost of untold suffering to oneself and even death is therefore basic for the entire approach of Sarvodaya.

The adherence to Truth and Non-violence must be complete, viz., in word, deed and thought. The most difficult part from the point of view of actual practice is Non-violence in thought, because it means having no ill-will but only love, even for those who in ordinary language are called opponents or enemies.

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4. Young India. 9 December, 1926.

Turning once more to Ruskin's "Unto this Last", the following two principles were considered as important by Gandhi:

That a lawyer's work has the same value as barber's inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.

That a life of labor, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living.<sup>5</sup>

A practical hint as to where to begin in order to bring about Sarvodaya (uplift of all) is contained in the allied word Antyodaya meaning uplift ('udaya) of the persons who are at the end (antya) or the bottom. A worker for Sarvodaya should therefore "build from below" and not from top down. The far-reaching consequences of this approach will be noticed when we consider the details of the Sarvodaya order in the next section.

In the Ashrams of Gandhi where life was regulated in the light of the Sarvodaya concepts the following virtues were regarded as essential:--<sup>6</sup>

1. Truth
2. Non-violence or Love
3. Brahmacharya or Chastity
4. Fearlessness
5. Non-stealing
6. Non-possession
7. Restraint in Food and Drink
8. Renunciation and Self-Sacrifice
9. Bread Labor
10. Swadeshi
11. Respect for all Religions
12. Anti-Untouchability

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5. M. K. Gandhi: Autobiography 1948, part IV. Chapter XVIII.

6. M. K. Gandhi: From Vervada Mandir, 1945.

A brief outline of the picture of Sarvodaya for India embodying the above virtues was given by Gandhi in the following words, shortly before his death,

If we would see our dreams of Sarvodaya i.e., true democracy realised, we would regard the humblest and lowest Indian as being equally the ruler of India with the tallest in the land. This presupposes that all are pure or will become pure if they are not. And purity must go hand in hand with wisdom. No one would then harbour any distinction between community and community, caste and outcaste. Everybody would regard all as equal with oneself and hold them together in the silken net of love. No one would regard another as untouchable. We would hold as equal the toiling labourer and the rich capitalist. Everybody would know how to earn an honest living by the sweat of one's brow and make no distinction between intellectual and physical labour. To hasten this consummation, we would voluntarily turn ourselves into scavengers. No one who has wisdom will ever touch opium, liquor or any intoxication. Everybody would observe Swadeshi as the rule of life and regard every woman, not being his wife, as his mother, sister or daughter according to her age, never lust after her in his heart. He would be ready to lay down his life when occasion demands it, never want to take another's life. 7

Vinoba's outline of Sarvodaya is as follows:--

The villages of India must become self-supporting and they must be saved from fluctuations as much as possible. They must manufacture the finished goods which they require, in their own villages if the requisite raw material for them is produced locally. Machines should belong to society at large. There should be no intervening agency between production and ultimate distribution. A society based on Ahimsa cannot function through intermediate agencies. To bring about such a society village industries should thrive. All should get food and all must work. The economy of the nation should be planned on the lines of a joint family. If

the Charkha can provide employment to all, it should be used. If you cannot plan for the whole nation but have to discriminate, posing myself as a Communist, I say, in that case, you should discriminate in favour of the poor in making your plan. This is my outline of Sarvodaya in brief. 8



(b) The Social, Economic And Political Order

In Sarvodaya

Sarvodaya, as mentioned above, represents the ideal non-violent order for India according to Gandhi. The details of the social, economic and political order in Sarvodaya follow from its spiritual basis. Non-violence or love is the keynote everywhere. Gandhi regarded non-violence not merely as a personal virtue but also as a social virtue. Human society, according to him is largely regulated by the expression of non-violence in its mutual dealings. What is needed is a strict adherence to this principle in all affairs--national as well as international.

About the comparative importance of the individual and the society Gandhi wrote as follows:

I value individual freedom but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to his present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of jungle. We have to learn to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society, enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member.<sup>1</sup>

In the context of social conditions in India the Sarvodaya concept places great emphasis on complete removal of untouchability. To regard any human being as impure is to deny the basic human right. Such an exclusion<sup>on</sup> can have no place when we want the uplift of all without exception. In fact, the important services to society that the untouchables do in India should

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1. Harijan. 27 May 1939.

entitle them to a high place of honor. That is why Gandhi called them Harijans or the people of God. Furthermore, in view of the significance of Antyodaya (the uplift of the people at the bottom), the removal of untouchability and amelioration of Harijans' conditions assumes great importance.

Another important item in the Sarvodaya ideology for India was Hindu-Muslim unity and mutual fellow-feeling in the society. Different religions are merely different roads converging to the same point. The basic doctrine of Ahimsa or love enjoins upon everyone a behavior full of great sympathy and respect for others.

Another important item in Sarvodaya social order is the equality of rights for men and women. Men and woman are complementary to each other, and even though the spheres of their work are different to suit their physique, they must enjoy the same status and have equal rights.

Extending the above considerations to the larger society which includes animals too, Sarvodaya means kindness to all creatures. According to Gandhi:

In the purest form of Hinduism a Brahmana, an ant, an elephant and a dog-eater (shwapaka) are of the same status. 2

The economic order in Sarvodaya also follows from its non-violent basis. The essential point is that man is more important than gold or silver. Sarvodaya therefore aims at the

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2. Harijan 28 March 1936. An echo of Bhagwad-Gita V.18 "The men of self-realization look with an equal eye on a Brahman a possessed of learning and humility, a cow, an elephant, a dog and even a dog-eater."

economic and spiritual uplift of all through the maximum utilisation of the individuals capacity to work. According to "Unto This Last",

There is no wealth but life. That country is richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the function of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others. 3

Again,

True economics is the economics of justice. People will be happy in so far as they learn to do justice and be righteous. All else is not only vain but leads straight to destruction. To teach the people to get rich by hook or by crook is to do them an immense disservice. 4

The economic order in Sarvodaya thus stands on social justice. It promotes the good of all, taking particular care of those who are at the bottom.

Multiplication of wants, as mentioned above, is not emphasised in the Sarvodaya economy, the ideal being 'simple living and high thinking'. Of course the necessities of life must be available to all, and all the ordinary amenities must be enjoyed by all. Excessive physical comforts and luxuries are, according to this way of thinking, not necessary for human happiness. What is aimed at is not so much a high 'standard of living' but a high 'standard of life'.

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3. M. K. Gandhi: "Unto This Last: A Paraphrase" 1951, p. 57.

4. Ibid. p. 53.

As K. G. Mashruwala put it,

The standard of life should be distinguished from the standard of living; it is the former that is fundamental and not the latter; a rise in the standard of living might even lower the standard of life, by reducing man's physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual standards, powers and potentialities. Hence, the progressive development of Nature must be consistent with rise in the standard of life, and not of living. 5

A basic plank in the Sarvodaya economy is that of decentralisation. A centralised system requires violent force for its defense and sustenance. Man is reduced to the status of a cog in the machine. As Gandhi put it,

You can not build non-violence on a factory civilisation, but it can be built on self-contained villages. Rural economy as I have conceived it, eschews exploitation altogether, and exploitation is the essence of violence. You have, therefore, to be rural-minded; you have to have faith in the spinning wheel. 6

According to Sarvodaya thinkers, large-scale industrialisation using labor-saving devices depends mostly on the nation's capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to them, and on the absence of competitors. This does not mean that all types of machinery are to be avoided. Machinery has come to stay, but only in its place; it must not be allowed to displace necessary human labor. What is aimed at, therefore, is not the eradication of all machinery but their limitation. The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man.

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5. Harijan 27 October 1951.

6. Harijan 4 November 1939.

Useful machines saving mankind from drudgery do have their place in Sarvodaya economy. An illustration often given by Gandhi was that of the Sewing Machine. Of course, in that case there would also have to be factories for making these Sewing Machines. According to Gandhi,

Such factories should be nationalised or State-controlled. They ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity, love taking the place of greed as the motive. It is an alteration in the conditions of labor that I want. This mad rush for wealth must cease, and the laborer must be assured, not only of a living wage, but a daily task that is not a mere drudgery. 7

Thus, the work in a factory that is merely a drudgery does not satisfy the Sarvodaya thinkers. The uplift of all and the total uplift of each being his aim, he sees no good to mankind as a whole in indiscriminate multiplication of machinery. Vinoba has given the following criterion for general guidance in this respect:

Machines are of three categories: time-saving, destructive and productive. I am not against time-saving machines, such as trains, aeroplanes etc., Though they do not add to the production of the country, they save time.

Destructive machines such as gun, bomb, etc., have no place in non-violence. We are therefore opposed to them.

Productive machines are again of two categories: those that are helpful and those that are harmful, depending upon time, place and circumstances in which they are used. A machine which might be harmful to one country may be helpful to another. A machine which might be helpful at one time might be harmful at another time. So also with the changes in circumstances. No set formula can be laid down to judge whether a machine is harmful or helpful. We, therefore, have neither blind infatuation for machinery nor irrational opposition to



it. Service of man will be the sole test for acceptance or rejection of a machine. 8

The industries that receive the place of honor in the Sarvodaya economy for India are village industries. India has more than half-a-million villages and the vast mass of humanity living in these villages would be the primary concern of the Sarvodaya planners. According to them, the basic requirements of life, viz., food, cloth, etc., must be produced in the villages themselves. Indian agriculture being such that several months out of the year go away idly even for the farmer, a good deal can be produced if all of them utilise their time, energy and talents. The spinning wheel was the ideal cottage industry for this purpose and therefore it became a symbol of the Sarvodaya economy. Thus Sarvodaya stands for production by the masses, and not mass production in the ordinary sense.

Another basic idea of the Sarvodaya economy is that of economic equality. Equal importance is to be given to all kinds of useful work, physical or mental. It therefore means voluntary agreement to accept equal wages whether one is a doctor, lawyer, carpenter, scavenger or teacher. Man's talents are not for selfish gain but for the good of all in the society. And recognition of greater value of some occupations does not mean giving higher wages for those works, because money is not to be the measure of one's capabilities. As J. C. Kumarappa says,

Where we desire to deal with man as a human being, the consideration should be based on social values. The

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8. Suresh Ramabhai: Vinoba and His Mission, 1954. pp. 196-7.



price we pay for human labour should be calculated not on the basis of the market price that will be fetched by any commodity to be produced but on what it will cost to maintain the producer. 9

Something might be added here about the place of money in the Sarvodaya economy. Since voluntary labor, either on land or in some village industry, will be a common characteristic of almost all the persons, that would serve the same functions as money does now-a-days. It must be added, however, that this is not conceived of as reverting to the barter system. The main idea in regarding labor as the unit of currency is that it would relieve the villagers from the oppressive clutches of the money economy.

As a non-violent solution of the problem of extremely unequal distribution of wealth in India, Gandhi proposed the doctrine of Trusteeship. The following is a 'simple and practical formula' explaining his views on this subject:

1. Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present owning class a chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.
2. It does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except in as much as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.
3. It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.
4. Thus under State-regulated trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interest of the society.

5. Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that could be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such minimum and maximum incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.
6. Under the Gandhian economic order the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed. 10

As we shall see in the following chapters, a practical shape to this formula has been given by Vinoba in the form of Sampattidan Yajna.

Next, let us consider the political order in a Sarvodaya State. Here also the emphasis is on decentralisation. The village republics are to be self-autonomous and flourishing units of the Indian Union. Real power will be vested in the people. The village affairs will be conducted by the Panchayat (the Village Council), which will derive its authority from the support of the villagers. It will thus be a democracy worked from below by the people of every village.

In this democracy, non-violence will play the central role. The ultimate authority will rest upon the selfless service of sincere workers who renounce both wealth and power, and not upon physical force. Satyagraha will act as the principal tool for settling things right whenever some conflict arises.

A geometrical picture of the Sarvodaya democracy was given

by Gandhi in the following words:

In this structure composed of <sup>n</sup>innumerable villages, there will be ever widening, never ascending circles. Life will. . . be an oceanic circle whose center will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of the villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

Therefore, the outermost <sup>ference</sup>circumstances will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it. 11

S. N. Agarwal has given the following characteristic of a non-violent Constitution:

The administrative system envisaged in this Constitution is that of a pyramid whose broad base is composed of numberless village communities of the country. The higher panchayats shall tender sound advice, give expert guidance and information, supervise and co-ordinate the activities of the village panchayats with a view to increasing the efficiency of administration and public service. But, in the non-violent State of Gandhi's conception, it will be the basic units that would dictate to the Centre and not vice versa. 12

Further details of the Sarvodaya order will be given in the following chapters while discussing its synonyms: Ramraj and Samyayoga. Some brief remarks may, however, be added here about a common criticism of this system.

To many persons the Sarvodaya ideal looks like a Utopia. They are prepared to accept that it would be desirable to have such a state of affairs; but they say that human nature being what it is, it is impossible to achieve this ideal on this earth. On the

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11. Harijan. 28 July 1946.

12. S.N. Agarwal: Gandhian Constitution for free India, 1946. p. 135.

other hand, Gandhi always called himself a "practical idealist". He always contended that the conception of human nature usually held by man is not the right one. According to him, human nature is essentially good. The element of greed, selfishness, lust for power and authority, etc. that people usually associate with human nature is largely a debasement brought about by artificial circumstances and situations. Man's real glory is in amending and changing these situations and not falling a helpless prey to them. To strive to realise the basic human nature is to rise above these evils and to see that the Sarvodaya ideal is quite practicable.

Gandhi explained his views on this question in the following words:

I may be taunted with the retort that this is Utopian and, therefore, not worth a single thought. If Euclid's point, though incapable of being drawn by human agency, has an imperishable value, my picture has its own for mankind to live. Let India live for this true picture, though never realizable in its completeness. We must have a proper picture of what we want, before we can have something approaching it. If there ever is to be a republic of every village in India, then I claim verity of my picture in which the last is equal to the first or, in other words, no one is to be the first and none the last. 13

### CHAPTER 3

#### BHOODAN YAJNA: A NON-VIOLENT REVOLUTION

In this chapter we shall try to analyse in detail the various components of the Bhoodan Yajna movement. This will be done by considering the following questions:

1. Why does Vinoba call his movement a Yajna? In what way does his interpretation of Yajna agree with, or differ from, the traditional meaning of the term?
2. In what way does Vinoba's interpretation of the word 'Dan' differ from its traditional meaning?
3. What ideas did Gandhi have about the land-problem of India? How does Bhoodan Yajna constitute a non-violent revolutionary approach?
4. Has participation by political parties, and in particular by the Praja-Socialist leader Jayaprakash Narayan, caused a difference to the general approach of the Bhoodan Yajna movement?
5. In what way does the non-violent revolution represented by Bhoodan Yajna differ from the communist revolution?

An examination of these questions will now be taken up.

(a) Traditionalist Elements in the Bhoodan Yajna Movement

In his presidential address to the Third Sarvodaya Sammelan (conference) of Tamilnad, C. Rajagopalachariar said:

Vinoba is an Avatar (Incarnation of God) and we are fortunate to have him in our midst. 1

This is the type of approach that appeals very strongly to the common Indian masses. As Jawaharlal Nehru puts it:

Perhaps this is as good a test as any of a nation's cultural background and its conscious or subconscious objective: to what kind of a leader does it give its allegiance?... (In India) the ideal has continued to be of a man full of learning and charity, essentially good, self-disciplined, and capable of sacrificing himself for the sake of others. 2

Vinoba's appeal is easily understood by every one in India because it is put in traditionally familiar terms. The words 'Yajna' and 'Dan' are well known even to an illiterate Bhangi (scavenger). Of course, the interpretation that Vinoba gives to these terms is so modern as to satisfy even the socialists. This will now be examined, first with regard to the word 'Yajna' and then with regard to the word 'Dan'.

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1. Sarvodaya, July 1955, p. 5.

2. Jawaharlal Nehru: The Discovery of India, 1947.p.62.



( 1) The Concept of Yajna in the Hindu Scriptures and  
Interpretation by Gandhi and Vinoba

The Concept of Yajna is one of the oldest in the Hindu civilization. It goes back to the Vedic period. In its original form it meant offering of Havi (oblation) to the sacrificial fire while mantras were chanted invoking the gods. It was believed that the gods would then bestow on the yajmana (the person who organized the yajna and for whose benefit the yajna was performed) health, wealth and progeny here on earth and enjoyments and peace hereafter in Heaven.

Some scholars, who take an historical approach on anthropological or sociological lines, ascribe the origin of the yajna to the geographical or social contingency of the Vedic people. Those of them who believe in the theory of the arctic home of the Vedic Aryans assert that, since the arctic region was extremely cold, fire was the most important thing in the domestic as well as social life of the Aryans. Others suggest that in the early Aryan society fire was very difficult to be produced and all the more difficult to be preserved for frequent use. It was of immense use, but it was not easily accessible to the ordinary house-holder; and this made it the most important thing in daily life. From this circumstance fire acquired a religious significance among the early Vedic Aryans. Offerings to the fire meant offerings to the gods, because fire was supposed to be the mouth of the gods. (agnirmukham prathamam devatanam).

Apart from the above consideration, the religious significance of fire may also be attributed to the fact that fire has two very significant characteristics. One, that it never has a downward tendency; its flames always go up. Two, that it reduces the physical mass of everything that is put into it. Therefore, if the offerings were to be sent to the gods (who are higher and subtler beings), the offerings had to be reduced of their gross magnitude and to be sent upward. In other words, fire acted as an instrument to take the offerings of men to the gods.

According to Sayanacharya's commentary on the Rig-veda, yajna could also be mental (manasam). For example, it is said in the Purusa-sukta <sup>1</sup> :

The gods performed the yajna with Purusa as the offering....Purusa who has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet,...is verily all this, all that is, and all that is to be. Purusa is also the lord of immortality....His mouth became the Brahmana, his arms became the Rajanya, his thighs became the Vaishya; the Shudra was born from his feet....By sacrifice the gods worshipped him who is also the sacrifice; those were the first duties.

Among the Vedic literature, the Brahmanas deal elaborately with the cult of yajna, its various types and the minutest details about its performance. Although in many cases the yajna was performed with the aim of achieving some tangible gain either here on earth or hereafter in heaven, it had other deeper functions too. These deeper functions were mainly in two directions, one in the direction of self-expansion and the other in the direction of self-purification.

When the cult of fire-sacrifice developed into an elaborate performance, it took the form of team-work. The hotri was

<sup>1</sup> Rig-Ved Samhita, VIII. 4.6, according to Mandalas, X. 90. Translated by Wilson. Vol. VI, pp. 249-254

to recite the mantras invoking the gods, the adhvaryu was to make the actual oblations, the udgatri was to sing the samans, and a large number of other helpers were to procure the specially required wood, to prepare the ground strictly according to the code, to make the fire and preserve it, etc. This team-work gave yajna the nature of a concerted action of many with one end in view. The aim of this co-operative effort was also not always the fulfillment of the desires of a particular individual but some common aim--some benefit to the society at large and even to the entire mankind. This was self-expansion.

Whatever might have been the original character of fire-sacrifice, it soon acquired the meaning of a process of purification. A synonym for the word 'fire' is 'pavaka' which means "that which purifies". With this idea of purification, the idea of fire itself underwent a philosophic modification. Fire came to be viewed as the divine lustre (jyoti). A very famous mantra in the fire-sacrifice is 'agnirjyotir jyotiragnih' (fire is lustre and lustre is fire).

We see quite frequently in the Brahmana literature that the aim of yajna is said to be the attainment of heaven. The Satapatha Brahmana says:

The Yajna is born of fire, which is of the nature of divine lustre, burns all sin; this fire burns out the sins of the yajamana, and he (the yajaman) by his beauty, wealth, and fame becomes like a luminary here on earth, and because of the accumulation of merits, shines like a luminary also in heaven. It is for this that he performs the yajna. 2

Even the gods are said to owe their position to yajna. There are many stories of the conflict between the devas and the asuras for world power and it is said that ultimately the gods won through the power of the yajna. The Satapatha Brahmana says that the gods conquered heaven by dint of performing sacrifices. 3 In these references, heaven suggests the ideal of a higher life, a luminous life of purity and bliss. Yajna was thus recognised and practised as the best method for attaining that ideal.

Coming to the period of the Aranyakas and the Upanisads, we find that the ceremonial character of yajna was replaced by the meditative. The first chapter of the Brāhadaranyaka Upanisad gives a striking interpretation of the Asvamedha Yajna. According to the original description given in Satapatha Brahmana, a horse was let loose and a guard of three hundred followed his track. If anyone hindered the horse's progress, the guard would fight. When the horse completed a victorious circuit of the earth and returned to the capital, he was offered as a sacrifice. The king who thus performed the Asvamedha Yajna assumed the title of sovereign, emperor. The Brihadaranyaka Upanisad gives a cosmic interpretation:

The dawn, verily, is the head of the sacrificial horse, the sun the eye, the wind the breath, the open mouth Vaisvanara fire; the year is the body of the sacrificial horse, the sky is the back, the atmosphere is the belly, the earth the hoof,...4

The horse is thus the cosmic process of a complete year, and this horse is to be sacrificed to the Brahma-fire, i.e. the

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3. Ibid., I.5.1.1.

4. Brihadaranyaka Upanisad, I.I.I.

light of the Supreme One. Yajna in this context then means an attempt at getting the meaning of the universe in the light of the absolute; it is going from the effect to the cause.

Chandogya Upanisad says that, "What purifies is yajna"<sup>5</sup>. The aim of yajna, viz., devaloka, is explained by the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad<sup>6</sup> as "the land of divine lustre". The agnividya (the knowledge of fire) has therefore been identified in the Upanisads with the atmavidya (the knowledge of the self), and that again with the Brahnavidya (the knowledge of Brahman).

The Bhagwad-Gita introduces the philosophy of yajna in a new context. Its essential feature is anasakta karma (non-attached action) with the ultimate ideal of a supreme good in view. Here are a few relevant passages:

9. This world of men suffers bondage from all action save that which is done for the sake of yajna, to this end, O Kaunteya, perform action without attachment.
10. Together with yajna did the Lord of beings create, of old, mankind, declaring:  
"By this shall ye increase; may this be to you the giver of all your desires."
11. "With this may you cherish the gods and may the gods cherish you; thus cherishing one another may you attain the highest good."
12. "Cherished with yajna, the gods will bestow on you the desired boons." He who enjoys their gifts without rendering aught unto them is verily a thief.
13. The righteous men who eat the residue of the sacrifice are freed from all sin, but the wicked who cook

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5. Chandogya Upanisad, IV. 16.1.

6. Brihadaranyaka Upanisad, III. 1. 8.



for themselves eat sin.

14. From food springs all life, from rain is born food; from yajna comes rain and yajna is the result of action.
15. Know that action springs from Brahman and Brahman from the Imperishable; hence the all-pervading Brahman is ever firm-founded on yajna. 7

The implication of the above stanzas is that yajna is the basis of the entire cosmic process itself. The world and our life-process in it are held fast by an underlying principle of sacrifice. When this universal ideal of yajna is accepted, there will be no greater sin than to be selfish. The same idea is emphasised in the Manusmriti also:

He eats but sin who cooks but for himself; a meal of what remains after yajna has been offered is ordained to be the food of the good. 8

The Upanisadic doctrine of yajna, viz., the ideal of a progressive ascent by offering the lower principles of our life to the higher ones, is also explained in the Gita. 9

Gandhi has interpreted yajna to mean social action, an act directed to the welfare of others, done without receiving or desiring a return for it, whether of a temporal or a spiritual nature. Act must be taken in its widest sense, and includes thought and word, and 'others' embraces not only humanity but all life. Therefore, it will not be yajna to sacrifice lower animals even with a view to the service of humanity.... The world can not subsist for a single moment without yajna in this sense. 10

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7. Bhagwad-Gita, III. 9-15.
  8. Manusmriti, III. 118.
  9. See, for example, Bhagwad-Gita, IV. 23-33.
  10. M. K. Gandhi: From Yavada Mandir, Chapter XIV.



Again,

Yajna is duty to be performed, or service to be rendered all the twenty-four hours of the day....to serve with out desire is to favor not others, but ourselves, even as in discharging a debt we serve only ourselves, lighten our burden and fulfill our duty. 11

Vinoba's use of the word yajna is similarly in a wide sense and is revolutionary in character. He wants all to set fire to the feeling of possession or ownership of land, be it a fraction of an acre or a thousand acres. He wants to teach every one that it is his duty to be concerned about the welfare of his neighbors. As he put it:

It (i.e. Bhoodan Yajna) invokes and inspires nothing but the fire of revolution in the Dharmaic Values of life in Society. The ideal behind the Yajna is a mighty one--once it catches your imagination, you will refuse to eat before you feed others. It will develop in you that sensational joy which is there in the football game. Everyone is anxious to kick off the ball; none keeps it with him. All feel the sense of joy. Likewise everyone in society should feel the anxiety to kick off the wealth continuously; none should ever think of keeping it for himself. But all should feel the joy of it and feel happy. 12

In contrast to the Rajsuya-yajna (yajna by the kings) of the old days, Vinoba calls Bhoodan Yajna a Prajasuya-yajna (yajna by the people). He therefore wants everyone to take part in this yajna. This was emphasised by him again when he explained why the word yajna was added after Sampattidan (gift of wealth):

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11. Sarvodaya, October 1955, p. 113.

12. Sarvodaya, November 1954, p. 133.

It should be clearly understood that the Sampattidan Yajna is not intended for collecting or creating a fund. There is not only a difference in its purpose but also in the technique of its collection work. If there were the usual way and idea of a centralized fund, it would not be called Yajna or Sacrifice. The Sampattidan movement has been named as a Yajna deliberately and with mature thought about it, and the Yajna is a religious duty which applies to all without exception. It has a universal character in that nobody can escape it. It is of the nature of what are called man's prathamani dharmani i.e. man's basic duties, such as truth etc. 13

Referring to the vow of Jivandan (gift of life) taken up by several people, led by Jayaprakash Narayan, at the Bodhgaya Sarvodaya Sammelan, Vinoba remarked:

I regard it as the manifestation of the deity of the yajna following the successful completion of the sacrifice--a phenomenon which is frequently referred to in our Puranas. 14

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13. Harijan, 10 October 1953, p. 255.

14. Harijan, 26 June, 1954.

(ii) The Concept of Dan in the Hindu Scriptures and  
Vinoba's Interpretation

Like yajna, the concept of dan is also very ancient in Indian thought. The word dan is derived from the Sanskrit root da which means to give. Therefore, dan enjoins gifts. In its positive meaning it is assistance to those in need, while in its negative sense it is freedom from greed.

There are many places in the upanisads where dan is commended and the idea of greed or possessiveness is condemned. The Brihadaranyaka Upanisad<sup>1</sup> gives the following conversation between Yajñavalkya and Maitreyi:

Then said Maitreyi: 'If, indeed, Venerable Sir, this whole earth filled with wealth were mine, would I be immortal through that?' 'No', said Yajñavalkya: 'Like the life of the rich even so would your life be. Of immortality, however, there is no hope through wealth.'

In the same upanisad again, dan is mentioned as one of the three <sup>principal</sup> ~~mundane~~ virtues. Prajapati addresses the three classes of his creation, viz., gods, men and demons. The principal virtues are brought together under the three da's which are heard in the voice of the thunder, namely, dama or self-restraint, dan or self-sacrifice, and daya or compassion. The Upanisadic text is as follows:

The threefold offspring of Prja-pati, gods, men, and demons, lived with their father Prja-pati as students of sacred knowledge. Having completed their studentship the gods said, 'Please tell (instruct) us, sir.' To them then, he uttered the syllable da (and asked) 'Have you understood?' They (said) 'We have understood, you said to us "damyata," "Control yourselves".' He

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1. Brihadaranyaka Upanisad, II. 4.2.

said, 'Yes, you have understood.'

Then the men said to him, 'Please tell (instruct) us, sir.' To them he uttered the same syllable da (and asked) 'Have you understood?' They said, 'We have understood, you said to us "datta," "give".' He said 'Yes, you have understood.'

Then the demons said to him, 'Please tell (instruct) us, sir.' To them he uttered the same syllable da and asked, 'Have you understood?' They said, 'We have understood, you said to us, "dayadhvam," "be compassionate".' He said, 'Yes you have understood.' This very thing the heavenly voice of thunder repeats da, da, da, that is control yourselves, give, be compassionate. One should practice this same triad, self-control, giving and compassion. 2

The Taittiriya Upanisad regulates the art of dan in the following words:

(What is to be given) is to be given with faith, should not be given without faith, should be given in plenty, should be given with modesty, should be given with fear, should be given with sympathy. 3

The Isavasya Upanisad also emphasises the spirit of giving and renunciation. Its first mantra says:

(Know that) all this, whatever moves in this moving world, is enveloped by God. Therefore find your enjoyment in renunciation; do not covet what belongs to others. 4

Radhakrishnana commentary on this mantra runs as follows:

Tyaktena Bhunjitha: enjoy through tyaga, or renunciation of self-will. Enjoy all things by renouncing the idea of a personal proprietary relationship to them. If we recognise that the world in which we live is not ours, we enjoy it. When we know that the one Real indwells all, we will get rid of the craving for acquisition.

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2. Ibid. V.2. 1-3.

3. Taittiriya Upanisad, I.II.3.

4. Isavasya Upanisad, 1.

Enjoy by giving up the sense of enjoyment....

Sometimes this passage is interpreted as meaning: enjoy what is allotted to you by God (tena). Do not ask for more than what is given.

Ma gridhah: covet not. Do not be greedy. When we realize that God inhabits each object, when we rise to that cosmic consciousness, covetousness disappears....

Kasyasvid dhanam: This is taken independently. Whose indeed is wealth? It belongs to the Lord.... 5

Kama (desire), lobha (greed), and krodha (anger) are regarded as the three worst vices in the entire Indian thought.<sup>6</sup> The three virtues mentioned in the upanisad, viz., dam, dan and daya are ways of freeing ourselves from the sway of the three evils. The Buddha also emphasised these three virtues in his teachings when he asked people to put out in their hearts the monstrous fire of infatuation, greed and resentment.

The Bhagwad Gita emphasises the virtue of dan in many places. The translation of some of the relevant verses is as follows:

Non-violence, even-mindedness, contentment, austerity, beneficence (dan),....--all these various attributes of creatures proceed verily from me. 7

Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in jnana and yoga-- knowledge and action, beneficence (dan), self-restraint, sacrifice, spiritual study, austerity, and uprightness;....--these are to be found in one born with the divine heritage, O Bharata. 8

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5. Radhakrishnan: The principal Upanisads, 1953. pp.567-8.

6. For example, see Bhagwad Gita XVI. 21.

7. Bhagwad Gita I. 5.

8. Ibid. XVI,3.



Action for sacrifice, charity (dan) and austerity may not be abandoned; it must needs be performed. Sacrifice, charity and austerity are purifiers of the wise.

But even these actions should be performed abandoning all attachment and fruit; such, O Partha, is my best and considered opinion. 9

The Yajnavalkya Smriti also mentions dan as one of the great virtues for mankind.<sup>10</sup>

In the Shrimad Bhagawata Purana the Lord says that anyone who does not care for the people who are in need of care and simply takes to the worship of God, his effort is wasted.

The great Indian philosopher of the 9th century viz., Shankaracharya has given very interesting commentary on the passages quoted above from the upanisads and the Gita. About the three principal virtues mentioned in the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad (V.2), Shankar says:

The Gods are said to be naturally unruly and so are asked to practise self-control. (dam)

Men are naturally avaricious and so they should distribute their wealth to the best of their ability. (dan)

The demons are cruel, given to inflicting injury on others, they should have compassion and be kind to all. (daya) 11

The interesting thing to note in Shankar's commentary is that he explains dan as "yathashaktya samvibhajata" which

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9. Ibid. XVIII. 5-6.

10. Yajnavalkya Smriti, I. 4. 122.

11. quoted by S. Radhakrishnan in The Principal Upanisads, 1953, p. 290.



literally means "equitable distribution to the best of one's ability". The same explanation is repeated by him in his commentary on the Gita (X. 5 and XVI. 1.). In the latter case he writes "yathashakti samvibhagah annadinam" which means "equitable distribution of food and other articles to the best of one's ability".

The concept of dan was similarly emphasised by the saints that flourished in India between the 15th and the 17th centuries. Tulsidas said in his Ramcharitmanas:

"Sampatti sab Raghupati ki ahi",  
which means "All wealth belongs to God." This in fact is the basic tenet of Vinoba's Sampattidan Yajna.

While we do not find an explicit mention of the word dan in Gandhi's works, his ideas of non-stealing and non-possession stress the same approach. He believed that antyodaya or the uplift of the people at the bottom can be best brought about if social workers could voluntarily identify themselves with their poverty. A few excerpts from his writings are given below:

The rich have a superfluous store of things which they do not need, and which are therefore neglected and wasted; while millions are starved to death for want of sustenance. If each retained possession only of what he needed, no one would be in want, and all would live in contentment. 12

In India we have got three millions of people having to be satisfied with one meal a day, and that meal consisting of a chapati containing no fat in it, and a pinch of salt. You and I have really no right to anything that we have until these three millions are clothed and fed better. You and I, who ought to know better, must adjust

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12. M. K. Gandhi: From Yervada Mandir, 1945, pp. 23-24.

our wants, and even undergo voluntary starvation in order that they may be nursed, fed and clothed. 13

We are not always aware of our real needs, and most of us improperly multiply our wants, and thus unconsciously make thieves of ourselves. If we devote some thought to the subject, we shall find that we can get rid of quite a number of our wants. One who follows the observance of non-stealing will bring about a progressive reduction of his own wants. Much of the distressing poverty in this world has arisen out of breaches of the principle of non-stealing. 14

In Vinoba, of course, not only is the concept of dan very much emphasised but attempt is being made to give it a much wider meaning. His demand for Bhoodan is not like a beggar's asking for something by way of charity or gift. Rather it is a revolutionary teaching to reveal to all the importance of voluntary sharing. He uses the word dan in the same sense as Shankar did. He said:

We should not feel ill at ease with the word dan (gift) in the term Bhoomidan Yajna. Shankaracharya has explained the word dan as equitable division. I use the word with that connotation. The receiver of the land will not get his bread for nothing....He will have to work upon the land, improve it, and wet it with his own sweat before he can get his bread from it. He has no reason to feel humiliated. So we are giving him his own share and not bestowing charity on him. 15

The Bhoodan workers approach people for land-gift with love, humility and reasoning. They feel happy only if the land-owner gives his land with understanding because then it creates deep and far-reaching good-will. Vinoba has explained:

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13. Speeches and writings of Mahatma Gandhi, 4th ed. p. 384.

14. M.K.Gandhi: From Yervada Mandir, 1945. pp.19-20.

15. Harijan, 17 May 1952.

If someone gives without grasping the idea behind it and under pressure, we do not want to grab land anyhow but to create the sentiment of Sarvodaya and Samya Yoga in the world. 16

On the other hand, if someone does not give land even after understanding the idea behind it, the Bhoodan workers are advised not to feel angry or disappointed. The principle of non-violence should give them the belief that one who does not give today, will give tomorrow. The seed of thought sown in his heart is bound to bear fruit some day.

Vinoba has classified the acts of dan into three categories:

1. Dan for religious institutions like temple, mosque, church, monastery, etc.
2. Dan as an act of kindness towards the sick and the needy.
3. Dan for revolutionising social concepts and for bringing about equality and justice in the social work.

The relative merits of the above three types of dan have been explained by Vinoba as follows:

Dan for religious institutions like temple, mosque, church, monastery, etc. is usually given with a desire for obtaining its fruit in terms of Heaven or God's grace or merit in the next life. Dan for the sick and the needy is usually given out of kindness for the poor and in the hope of cleansing one's heart thereby. These two types of Dan are prevalent in every religion. The westerners call them acts of charity. However, the third type of Dan is a special feature of the Indian social thought; it has not yet found a place in the western social thought. This type of Dan is based upon the principle that the wealth or special talent that an individual possesses is not exclusively for his personal use but is for all

the members of the society....Our Bhoodan Yajna, Sampattidan Yajna, etc. are Dams of this special type. They are intended to revolutionise social concepts and to bring about balance, equality and justice in the social order. 17

This special meaning of Dan is emphasised by Jayaprakash Narayan and other Bhoodan thinkers also. Jayaprakash Narayan said at Madurai:

The Bhoodan worker, who is entrusted with the work of collecting lands for distributing among the landless is not a beggar but a carrier of new ideas, a new philosophy, a new outlook. Everyone should understand that he could not claim any exclusive right to the land he owned, for he is able to own or cultivate only with the co-operation of his neighbours. It is a social process. 18

Gora Ramachandra Rao's explanation is as follows:

Dan should not be taken to mean either gift or charity... What is asked for in Bhoodan movement is not a donation of some land or wealth, but a share of what one has. The share should be given with the same love and in the same proportion as one would give to his brother. 19

This idea of sharing with brotherly love is the heart of Vinoba's appeal. He wants everyone to realise that Daridranarayan is a member of his family. As Vinoba puts it:

Though my own stomach is very small, that of the Daridra-narayan is very big. So if any one asks me what my demand is I say, "Five crore acres of land." I mean thereby cultivable land. If there are five sons in the family, I want to be considered the sixth; if four, the fifth. Thus I claim one-fifth or one-sixth of the total cultivable land in the country. 20

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17. Bhoodan Yajna (Hindi Weekly), 6 May 1955, p. 4.  
Author's translation.

18. Sarvodaya, January 1956, p. 252.

19. Ibid. pp. 240-41.

20. Harijan 27 October 1951.

(b) Bhoodan Yajna in the Light of the  
Gandhian Approach

The basic tenets of the Bhoodan Yajna movement follow very closely the Gandhian approach. Vinoba has put it in the following words:

I believe that I am doing just what Bapu<sup>1</sup> would have done after independence. <sup>2</sup>

In the pre-independence days, the symbol of Gandhian program for the economic uplift and unity of India was the spinning wheel. Its function was not only to give the poor farmers an additional income by the utilisation of their idle hours, but also to bring the different sections of the society together. A constructive worker was, with the help of the spinning wheel, immediately able to receive the attention and cooperation of the villagers, and the all-India organization of Khadi<sup>3</sup> work gave the national movement great strength and power. As Gandhi said:

Khadi connotes the beginning of economic freedom and equality of all in the country. It must be taken with all its implications....

Khadi to me is the symbol of unity of Indian humanity, of its economic freedom and equality and, therefore, ultimately in the poetic expression of Jawaharlal Nehru, 'the livery of India's freedom.'...

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1. Bapu literally means father. Indians use this term for Gandhi to indicate their respect and closeness to him.

2. Vinoba Bhave: Bhoodan Yajna, 1953. p. 79.

3. Khadi means hand-spun and hand-woven cloth.



Imagine the unifying and educative effect of the whole nation simultaneously taking part in the processes up to spinning. Consider the levelling effect of the bond of common labor between the rich and the poor. 4

The shifting of the emphasis from the spinning wheel to Bhoodan represents the big change that came about with the achievement of India's political independence. Khadi and the allied work represented almost the maximum that could previously be done by the constructive workers under the British rule. Under a national government, however, the problem could be tackled more thoroughly. Bharatan Kumarappa has commented on this development in the following manner:

Not that he (i.e. Gandhi) did not realize the importance of agriculture, but that he felt that with a foreign government at the helm nothing much could be done to improve the lot of the agriculturist, weighed down as he was by tenancy laws and a wooden system of land revenue and village administration. But with the advent of independence, Gandhiji's followers have rightly taken up the problem of land, which is the most crucial for the agriculturist who forms the backbone of our nation. 5

The change-over from charkha<sup>6</sup> to Bhoodan was neither immediate nor easy nor automatic. Hallam Tennyson observes that:

For two years the government, as well as his (i.e. Vinoba's) Sarvodaya colleagues, had been attempting to thrust him (i.e. Vinoba) into the position of Gandhi's successor. He had traveled in the north of the country, addressing

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4. M. K. Gandhi: Constructive Programme, 1945; pp. 11-14.

5. Editors Note to M. K. Gandhi: Sarvodaya, 1954; p.v.

6. Charkha means spinning wheel.



meetings, attending deliberations, negotiating with officials. For some time he had even been installed in Delhi, where he had given a daily prayer address from Gandhi's cremation ground. But secondhand halos don't fit, even when handed to you by others, and Vinoba had felt that his words came from a world which the country had already forgotten. 7

Vinoba himself has said:

After he (i.e. Gandhi) passed away...the question haunted me: What should be done to implement the fundamental program of Bapu; how are we to achieve the social revolution, he envisaged, through Ahimsa? And finally I came upon the chintamani, which is now before you in the form of Bhoodan Yajna and Sampattidan Yajna. 8

Let us now examine what Gandhi's views were about the land-problem of India. Addressing a gathering of peasants at a public meeting in May 1939 at Brindaban, Bihar, he said,

I believe that the land you cultivate should belong to you, but it cannot be your own all at once, you can not force it from the zamindars. Non-violence is the only way. 9

At another place he remarked:

Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught....'All land belongs to Gopal; where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can therefore unmake it.' Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, i.e., the people. That the land today does not belong to the people is too true....

I have no doubt that we can make as good an approach to it as is possible for any nation, not excluding Russia, and that without violence....land and all property is his who will work it....10

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7. Hallam Tennyson: India's Walking Saint, 1955; pp.46-7
  8. Vinoba Bhave: Bhoodan Yajna, 1953; p. 78.
  9. Harijan, 20 May 1939.
  10. Harijan, 2 January 1937.

An idea of this approach can be had from the talk Gandhi had with Mirabehn in the Aga Khan Jail. Mirabehn one day asked Gandhi: "How will land be distributed under swaraj?" Gandhi replied:

Land will be owned by the State. I presume the reins of Government will be in the hands of those who have faith in this ideal. A majority of zamindars will give up their lands willingly. Those who do not do so will have to do so under legislation. 11

Thus the basic principles which Gandhi wanted to apply for a non-violent solution of India's land-problem are the same as underlie Vinoba's Bhoodan Yajna movement, viz.,

- (i) All land belongs to Gopal;
- (ii) Land and all property is his who will work it, and
- (iii) The zamindars will give up their lands willingly.

The aim of the non-violent worker must ever be to convert them.

J. B. Kripalani has commented:

Following his Master, Vinobaji wants the simultaneous<sup>t</sup> reform of the individual and society....Gandhiji always called the movement for the independence of India that he had initiated through Satyagraha as one of self-purification. That too is the idea of Vinobaji. Like Gandhiji, he wants individual life to be integrated with social life on the basis of the moral law as embodied in truth and universal love. 12

The difference between a non-violent revolution and a violent one has been explained by Vinoba in the following words:

A non-violent revolution is a fundamental change or

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11. Harijan, 29 December 1951.

12. Sarvodaya, October 1955, p. 122.

revaluation of values. I unnecessarily put the word 'non-violent' to qualify the revolution, because true revolution is never violent. A change that is brought about by terror, destruction or intimidation is never a fundamental change in values or ideas, and therefore it can not be called a revolution. Some people think that the rapidity of change is an essential feature of a revolution. Of course, it is better if the change in ideas is rapid, but rapidity by itself is not a revolution. If a man is hungry, he should certainly be provided rapidly with food, but if food is not available at once, then hastily giving him poison is surely not the right thing. Hence, the main consideration is a fundamental change in the right direction and this can be brought about only by non-violent methods. I describe my revolution as non-violent simply because some people now-a-days think in terms of bloodshed and destruction when they speak of a revolution. I shall call that sort of thing merely violence-ism or haste-ism (Himsavad or Shighravat), but not a revolution.13

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13. Bhoodan Yajna (Hindi Weekly), 23 September 1955.  
Author's translation.

(c) The Contribution of the Indian National Congress  
and the Praja-Socialist Leaders to the  
Bhoodan Yajna Movement

As we saw earlier, the Bhoodan Yajna movement was started by Vinoba in April 1951. Among the political leaders of the country, the first one to take notice of the movement was Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister and, at that time, President of the Indian National Congress. Nehru wrote a personal letter to Vinoba in May 1951, appreciating the work that he was doing in Telangana. It may also be recalled that it was on Nehru's invitation to come to Delhi to discuss the Five Year Plan that Vinoba undertook the march to Delhi, spreading the message of Bhoodan Yajna on the way.

The Praja-Socialist leader, J. B. Kripalani, was probably the first political leader to appreciate publicly the Bhoodan Yajna movement and to commend it to the people. In October 1951, when Vinoba first set his foot on the soil of Uttar Pradesh, Kripalani issued an appeal to the people of the State in general and constructive workers in particular to make Vinoba's mission a success.

Upto the time of the Sevapuri Sarvodaya Sammelan (April, 1952), Vinoba was almost all alone working whole-heartedly for the Bhoodan Yajna movement. However, he was joined by several notable personages after the Sevapuri Sammelan. Prominent among these were Shankarrao Deo, Bada Dharmadhikari, Shrikrishnadas Jaju and Vallabhaswami.

Jayaprakash Narayan's joining the Bhoodan Yajna movement about the close of the year 1952 was of immense significance. His attraction towards the movement was in fact evident at the Socialist Party's convention at Pachmarhi (Madhya Pradesh) in May 1952. It was at Jayaprakash Narayan's initiative that this convention of the Socialist Party passed a long resolution in support of the Bhoodan movement. This was the first resolution passed by any political party in India on this subject.

In the Congress organisation, the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, as has been said earlier<sup>1</sup>, was the first to pass a resolution in October, 1952, for the Bhoodan Yajna movement, calling upon its subordinate committees and workers to fulfill the quota of 4 lakh acres. The All-India Congress Committee issued, during the same month, a letter to all State and District Congress Committees asking them "to strain every nerve" to make Vinoba Bhave's movement a success.<sup>2</sup>

The Indian National Congress, in its annual session at Hyderabad in January, 1953, passed a Bhoodan Yajna resolution to the following effect:

The annual session of the Indian National Congress deeply appreciates the Bhoodan Yajna movement started by Acharya Vinoba Bhave and appeals to the countrymen, specially the congress workers, to give active support and co-operation to this movement. It also requests the Central and the State Governments to do their best for its success.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Viz., in Chapter 1 (c) of this paper.

2. Indian Press Digests, October 1953, p. 74.

3. Harijan, 7 February 1953.



After the Hyderabad Congress Session, Govind Ballabh Pant, the U. P.'s Chief Minister, made a fervent appeal to the people of his State to fulfill Vinoba's demand. Later, on 11 Sept. 1953, i.e., Vinoba's 58th birthday, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of India, as well as Pandit Nehru, the Prime Minister, issued similar appeals to the nation.

Both Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Pandit Nehru donated for Koopdan (gift of well), the former contributing to Bhoodan also.

Many well-known Congress leaders have participated in Bhoodan work during the last three years. Several of them also accompanied Vinoba on his journeys in different parts of the country. The Congress Governments in the various States have enacted laws to facilitate the activities of the Bhoodan Yajna movement.

The Praja-Socialist Party of Bihar as well as Maharashtra instructed the party-members to make their own contribution to Bhoodan according to the following formula:

1. Those who own more than 30 acres of land shall donate one-sixth or the portion above 30 acres, whichever be greater.
2. Those who own less than 30 acres, should also donate one-sixth at least and those having below five should also donate as much as they can.
3. Those whose land forms part of a joint family should donate out of their share according to the above procedure.

The outstanding contribution of the Praja-Socialist Party to the Bhoodan movement is, however, the personality of Jayaprakash



Narayan, its most popular leader. He has taken to it with a devotion next <sup>to</sup> only Vinoba's. He has brought new life and blood into it. He has awakened the intelligentsia of the country to the depth and significance of this movement. His offer of, and call for, Jivan Dan (gift of life) at the Bodh Gaya Sarvodaya Sammelan (April, 1954) is one of the most significant events in the history of Bhoodan.

During the latter part of the year 1953, several papers in India commented<sup>4</sup> that Jayaprakash Narayan tended to create a sort of fear-complex in the minds of the prospective donors. Jayaprakash's reply to such comments was as follows:

I gave no threat to any one. But in some places I did try to answer those who pooch-pooched the movement as being only a begging campaign which could lead to nothing but the dissipation of the revolutionary forces and the ultimate betrayal of the masses....I said that Gandhiji himself had said so often that if persuasion failed there was the unfailing weapon of non-cooperation to which the satyagrahi would turn. At the same time, I took care to make it clear that I did not expect that any occasion would arise for launching upon such a non-cooperation movement. <sup>5</sup>

Such criticism of Jayaprakash Narayan's speeches, and in general of the Praja-Socialist Party's role in Bhoodan, became even more pronounced when, about this time, Praja-Socialist leaders organised Land Satyagraha movements in Azamgarh District (U.P.) and in Pardi Taluka of Surat District (Bombay). Questions

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4. See, for example, Harijan, 3 October, 1953, and Vedanta Kesari, September, 1953.

5. Indian Press Digests, May 1955, p. 93.

of political motivation were raised about both these movements, and Congressmen generally tried to defend the positions taken by the respective State Governments. The Pardi episode in particular aroused wide discussion as to "the relative merits and possible points of conflict between the two techniques of attacking the land problems--direct action in the form of Satyagraha, and the persuasive strategy of Bhoodan."<sup>6</sup> Harijan's editor (Maganbhai Desai) argued that:

The Khed-Satyagraha of Pardi is not in accordance with Bhoodan principles....It would not be proper...to call the Pardi agitation Satyagraha. <sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, Kripalani, Chairman of the Praja-Socialist Party, asserted that:

The Bhoodan approach to the zamindars was made....Let it (i.e., the case of the Kisans) not be prejudiced because it has been taken up by a political party opposed to the Congress. <sup>8</sup>

This discussion was still going on when the Gujarat Bhoodan Committee, meeting in Ahmedabad, adopted a resolution which appealed on the one hand to the Gujarat Praja-Socialist Party to withdraw its Satyagraha and to turn its efforts to Bhoodan, and, on the other, called upon the Bombay Government to withdraw legal proceedings against Satyagrahis in order to create a favorable atmosphere for Bhoodan. Finally, the resolution appealed to zamindars in the area to donate lands generously and to stop

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6. Ibid. p. 76.

7. Harijan, 19 September 1953.

8. Janata, 11 October 1953.

eviction of tenants.

Vinoba Bhave has always urged the Bhoodan Majna Committees to avoid politics in the Bhoodan movement. Addressing a conference at Khadigram (Bihar), he said that Bhoodan had "a politics of its own, a politics with a distant vision that aims at sublimating the present system of party politics and raising it to a higher level of comprehensive politics." 9

Recent statements of Jayaprakash Narayan have stressed the necessity of persuasion to spread the Bhoodan ideology. While inaugurating the Tamil Nad Students' Bhoodan Conference at Madurai on 31 December 1955, he said:

The good of all could be achieved only by adjustments of the interests of everyone in such a manner that no one suffers, no one incurs any loss and everyone gains. This ideal could be attained only by change in our outlook and approach to life....This change of heart, outlook, etc. could be achieved only through persuasion. 10

In fact, Vinoba does not recognise the labels of parties or classes. He only knows individuals as men and women whose service and welfare is his only concern. He himself is a member of no organisation or group. His name does not appear even on the register of Sarvodaya Samaj which owes its birth to him.

As he himself put it:

I do not recognise parties at all. Moreover, my study of history, experience of current affairs and thinking, all lead me to the conclusion that parties in our country can not only not do much good but are in the long run likely to prove disastrous...Service of our fellow-beings

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9. Indian Press Digests, May 1955, p. 94.

10. Sarvodaya, January 1956, pp. 252-2.

must be our sole objective. 11

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11. Suresh Ramabhai: Vinoba and His Mission, 1954. p. 155.

(d) The Bhoodan Yajna Movement and

Communism in India

The subject of communism has, in recent years, received a very great attention in the west and especially in the United States. The question is frequently asked: Can the Bhoodan Yajna movement successfully stop communism from spreading in India? Vinoba gave the following reply to this question:

Stopping communism is not our concern. Ours is a positive ideology; it is not an expedient useful for certain temporary ends. There is no disputing the fact that there is acute poverty in India, and we need to eradicate it. Now if this can be achieved by fair means, there is no reason why anyone should still think of employing foul means. A thirsty man, if he can get good, clean water, will not touch dirty water. If we are able to resolve our problem of poverty through good means, we may be sure that communism will be automatically stopped. 1

When Vinoba was in Telangana, where, as we saw before, the communists had been quite active prior to April 1951, he made it a point to see many of them (i.e. the communists) so that mutual discussion might help-move the misunderstanding. He even went to the jails of Hyderabad, Warangal and Nalgonda for this purpose. He made it clear that he bore no ill-will or malice towards the believers in the communist doctrine. All He wanted was to try to convince them that the path of non-violence was better than that of violence and murder.

On its part, the Communist Party of India has maintained a very cautious attitude towards the Bhoodan movement. When

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1. Harijan, 1 August 1953.

Vinoba obtained donations in Telengana it attributed them to the extraordinary atmosphere prevailing there. Next when Vinoba marched on to Delhi and thereafter in Uttar Pradesh, some of its members and sympathisers called Vinoba an 'agent of zamindars' and termed the Bhoodan movement as a 'farce to perpetuate exploitation' of the poor. Conceding the former title, Vinoba claimed to be a representative of the poor as also a zamindars' agent (but not of zamindari) provided the latter made him one. But he regretted that the communists could not appreciate whether his was a move to give a long lease to exploitation and poverty or to wipe them out. Yet he felt certain that there would come a time when communists, friends of the poor as they also were, would change their opinion about him. Chester Bowles has commented:

He (i.e. Vinoba) says that he will not consider his movement successful until he has converted the Communists and received their co-operation. Members of his party are especially urged to sell Gandhian literature to the Communists, who always stand uncertainly on the outskirts of the meetings. 2

When asked what he thought of the Indian Communists,

Vinoba replied:

The (Indian) Communists have two very serious defects: One they are book-worshippers, and two, they are ignorant of the development of Indian thought....They have no independent intelligence of their own....Communism with the Communists is not a living thought. They have turned it into a dogma based on a book....Had Marx been living today in India, he would have certainly changed

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2. Chester Bowles: Ambassador's Report, 1954. p. 191.



his ideas....The Communists have no knowledge of the ten thousand years of the development of Indian thought. Even assuming that this ancient Indian thought is defective in certain respects, its knowledge would still be necessary if only to know those defects. 3

To the communist charge that: "Five acres of land per family is too low; we need collective farms," Vinoba replies:

Japan has a national average of just over two acres per family and yet the standard of living of her farmers is much higher than that of our own. Surely what we need is not extensive collective agriculture as in Russia, but intensive family agriculture as in Japan. Mechanized farming might be common sense in a country like America which wants to save labor. But in India we have a surplus of labor and our problem is to increase production through an intensive use of this labor. I do not see how this can be done except on the small family farm. 4

As the Bhoodan Yajna movement gained momentum, the attitude of the Indian communists also showed a change. A. K. Gopalan, leader of the Communist Party in Parliament, declared in August 1953 that though he felt that the land problem could not be solved without legislative measures yet he had "no opposition" to the Bhoodan movement. Hearing this, Vinoba remarked at a public meeting in Bhagalpur district that that was an instance of the change of heart and that the moment he obtained 32 lakh acres of land in Bihar, more than 90 per cent among communists, except, if at all, the few die-hards, would be entirely converted to his view.

Douglas Steere has recently reported:

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3. Vinoba Bhave: Bhoodan Yajna, 1953. p. 128.

4. Hallam Tennyson: India's Walking Saint, 1955, p. 81.

It is Bhave who is challenging the Indian Communists with the non-violent aspect of land-reform and they recognize it as their most formidable ideological enemy. Some Communists are even toying with the idea of seeing if they can produce an Indian non-violent version and it remains to be seen if it will end up as Communism or as something else. 5

It is interesting to note that the Hindi word for Communism is Samyavad (ism of equality), while Vinoba calls his ideology as Samya-yoga (yoga or way of equality)<sup>6</sup>. If the communists give up their creed of "the ends justifying the means", they would realise that Vinoba's program is really revolutionary in character. As Vinoba says:

I want to make it clear to the communists that it is not necessary for them to murder the rich, for the era of democracy has ushered in. As a matter of fact the rich can be killed without a pistol; for every adult has now acquired the right to vote. The future Raj will be of the common man. I request the communists to come out openly and work. If they do that I will give my co-operation. If the communists abandon their practice of violence, all good and moral people will co-operate with them. Mahatma Gandhi also used to say: 'I am a communist, but I will not accept the suicidal path of violence'. 7

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5. Haverford (College) News: 13 February 1956.

6. Further discussion of Samya-yoga will be given in chapter 4 (a).

7. Suresh Ramabhai: Vinoba and His Mission, 1954. p. 42.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE RELATIONSHIP OF BHOODAN YAJNA AND SARVODAYA

While inaugurating a Bhoodan conference in Travancore, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan said:

The Bhoodan and Sarvodaya have been intimately associated....I do believe that the Bhoodan movement is going to....bring down heaven <sup>on</sup> earth....The call of Sarvodaya is very relevant to our present context and I do hope that these beginnings will lead to a great upheaval. 1

We shall examine the relationship between Bhoodan Yajna and Sarvodaya from four points of view:

1. How does Bhoodan Yajna bring about Antyodaya (uplift of the people at the bottom) and Samyayoga (yoga or way of equality)?
2. How does Bhoodan Yajna generate Jan-shakti (the moral power of the people) and thus make them capable of being the citizens of a Sarvodaya society?
3. The relationship between Gramdan (gift of the whole village) and Gramraj, and the significance of the latter in the Sarvodaya ideology.
4. The work of rural reconstruction (on non-violent lines) that is being done in the Bhoodan and Gramdan villages, and its importance from the point of view of helping Sarvodaya thinkers re-examine their concept of Gramraj.

A detailed examination of these questions will now be given.

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1. Sarvodaya, February 1955, pp. 245-8.

(a) The Relationship of Bhoodan, Antyodaya and Samyayoga

The relationship between Bhoodan, Antyodaya<sup>1</sup> and Samyayoga may briefly be stated in the following way. Bhoodan had its origin in Antyodaya, and as its scope was extended, it became a comprehensive program for the establishment of Samyayoga. Let us now examine this statement in some detail.

We have seen earlier that the idea of Bhoodan Yajna was arrived at by Vinoba not by an intellectual formulation sitting at a desk but as a spontaneous outcome of his visit to the terror-stricken villagers of Telangana. Here were landless Harijans, not only having no appropriate means of earning their livelihood but also being subjected to severe hardships by the activities of the Communists and the official police. They were the antya, the people at the bottom, suffering at that time the additional burden of terror and intimidation. Vinoba's non-violent attempt to find a peaceful solution of the tragic situation gave birth to the Bhoodan Movement. Thus Bhoodan had its origin in Vinoba's attempt towards Antyodaya in a terror-stricken atmosphere.

Even after the birth of Bhoodan in Telangana, it remained to be seen whether the movement would succeed as a program of Antyodaya in the absence of the terror and the tragedy of Telangana, Vinoba's experience on his way to Delhi proved this point. It became clear that the special circumstances of Telangana were

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1. Antyodaya, as mentioned in Chapter 2 (a) of this paper, means uplift ('udaya) of the people at the bottom (antya). The meaning of Samyayoga will be discussed in this chapter.

not essential for the success of the Bhoodan Movement. This established a closer link between Bhoodan and Antyodaya. Bhoodan could now be applied to the uplift of people at the bottom all over the country, and not only in the terror-stricken areas.

This development in the experience of Bhoodan is indicated to some extent in the Sevapuri Sarvodaya Sammelan Resolution of April 1952. Attention was now given to all the villages of the country, numbering more than five lakhs<sup>2</sup>. The decision to collect "within the next two years at least 25 lakhs of acres of land...on the rough basis of 5 acres per village"<sup>3</sup> indicates that Bhoodan was gradually being expanded to the entire rural community.

The Chandil Sarvodaya Sammelan Resolution of March 1953 marked a further development on the same lines. Attention was now given not only to all the villages of the country but to all the landless people, numbering more than 50 million. The call to collect 50 million acres of land shows that the uplift of all the people at the bottom was engaging the attention of the Bhoodan workers.

However, land alone would not solve the colossal problems of the antya. Those who receive land have to be provided with the wherewithal, so that they may be securely settled on the land. The realisation of this need is indicated in the call for Sampattidan, Buddhidan and other Dams.

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2. 1 lakh is equal to 100,000.

3. From the Sevapuri Resolution, given, for example, in Suresh Ramabhai: Vinoba and His Mission, 1954. pp. 216-17.



To understand the significance of the steadily growing scope of the Bhoodan Yajna movement for the establishment of Samyayoga, let us examine what the latter connotes. Vinoba's philosophy of Samyayoga is based on the following verses of the Bhagad-Gita.

1. The man equipped with yoga looks on all with an impartial eye, seeing Atman in all beings and all beings in Atman.
2. He who sees Me everywhere and everything in Me, never vanishes from Me nor I from him.
3. The yogin who, anchored in unity, worships Me abiding in all beings, lives and moves in Me, no matter how he live and move.
4. He who, by likening himself with others, senses pleasure and pain equally for all as for himself, is deemed to be the highest yogi, O Arjuna. 4

From this follow the following three requisites for Samya Yogi Society:

1. No power should be dominant in the society; there should only be a discipline of good thought.
2. All faculties of the individual to be dedicated to the society which must provide the individual with opportunity to growth and development.
3. The moral, social and economic value of all sorts of callings performed honestly according to one's strength should be the same.

Samyayoga literally means the yoga (way) of equality or sameness (samya). The same spirit dwells in every man, and



therefore, there should be no distinction between man and man. In fact, Samyayoga recognises no ultimate difference between the spirit of man and other animals.

Although Samyayoga is essentially a synonym for Sarvodaya, the use of the term Samyayoga emphasises two points.

First, that we should concentrate on the way (yoga), the means. In the entire non-violent thought, means are more important than the ends. As Joan Bondurant says:

The challenge of Satyagraha is directed at the fundamental problem of ends and means. The solution which it points lies in the direction of reconciliation of ends and means--indeed, of the refusal to admit such artificial distinction.<sup>5</sup>

Second that the concept of equality (samya) must be stressed in the context of modern Indian conditions. Without taking immediate steps to reduce considerably the inequalities that exist between different sections of people today, no definite progress can be made towards the establishment of Sarvodaya. In the words of Vinoba:

Unless the existing social order, which is based upon inequality, strife and conflict, is replaced by one founded on equality and mutual co-operation, there can be no salvation for mankind.

In a society where some own land and others are landless, there can be no peace. People might bring legal documents to substantiate their claim of proprietorship. These serve no useful purpose. They tear our hearts and keep us divided. Let us light their bonfire on the occasion of Holi.

People should accept the principle that all land belongs

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5. Joan V. Bondurant: Gandhian Satyagraha and Political Theory: An Interpretation. 1952. Chapter VII.

to God. If all land is socially owned, the present-day discontent would disappear and an era of love and cooperation will take its place. 6

In God's world, I want equality as God wished. I am collecting land for the landless. I want each village to become like a family, but only through persuasion and affection. 7

Through Bhoodan and the allied Dams an attempt is being made to bring about greater and greater equality by peaceful methods. The idea of Dan or sharing is propagated so that everyone may be more conscious of one's duty towards the other members of the society. The program is comprehensive enough for everyone to contribute his share, because not only are there Bhoodan (land-gift) and Sampattidan (gift of wealth), but also Shramdan (gift of labor), Buddhidan (gift of intellect), Premdan (gift of love), and finally Jivandan (gift of life). Those who have no land or wealth to offer can render service to their fellowmen by their labor, wisdom and sympathy. The important thing is not how much one contributes but the spirit in which it is done. As Vinoba says:

When a gift is given, we may hope that it will generate purity of mind, motherly love, feelings of brotherhood and friendliness and love for the poor. When a person begins to feel concerned for another, a feeling of equality manifests itself, and feelings of hatred and enmity are unable to survive. Enmity has no absolute existence. Like light, virtue is power, a positive substance. Sin is like darkness, without any power of its own. It is negative--absence of substance. Carry light to age-long darkness and the latter will disappear in no time.

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6. Hindustan Times, New Delhi. 14 November 1951.

7. Hindustan Times, New Delhi. 24 November 1951.

Similarly when virtue makes its appearance, hatred and enmity can not exist in its presence. 8

Thus the Bhoodan Yajna movement aims at integrating individual life with social life on the basis of the moral law as embodied in truth and universal love. It strives to establish not only new values of truth and non-violence in individual and collective life, but also a new order in which the new values and the new spirit are to work. J. B. Kripalani has indicated the relationship between Bhoodan and Samyayoga in the following words:

The Bhoodan idea is thus the Sarvodaya idea of Gandhiji with temporary emphasis on the equitable redistribution of land which by slow degrees should belong, as of old, to village communities. 8

While replying to Harekrishna Mehtab's criticism that Bhoodan merely distributes poverty, Shriman Narayan has said:

Acharya Vinoba's movement is essentially moral and has given to India and the world a new set of values in life. In place of social and economic exploitation and monetary calculus, it has substituted a sense of socio-economic equality and justice on the basis of voluntary and peaceful surrender of one's property. This is why the movement has been an eminent success and has already attracted world-wide attention. 10

The significance of gramdan, which is the final stage of the Bhoodan Yajna movement, will be discussed in chapter 4 (c).

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8. Harijan. 29 September, 1951.
  9. Sarvodaya. October, 1955. p. 124.
  10. Sarvodaya. August, 1955. p. 45.

(b) Bhoodan, Jan-Shakti and Satyagraha

A question is often asked: "Why not resort to legislation in bringing about equitable distribution of land?" Vinoba's views on this subject will be examined in this chapter.

To begin with, it should be pointed out that Vinoba does not preclude the Central or the State Governments from passing Acts to provide land to the landless. In fact, legislation concerning Bhoodan Yajna has been passed by many States<sup>1</sup> and Vinoba has welcomed the facilities provided thereby. However, Vinoba has always emphasised that the role of legislation in this connection is very limited.

Legislation, especially in the conditions that exist in India today, can be effective only if it prescribes something which is recognised by a large majority of the people as a normal code of behavior. It can not succeed in suddenly imposing upon the people something which is either quite new and unheard of or against which there is widespread opposition. The treatment meted out to Vinoba and the Harijans when they were entering the Baidyanath temple in Bihar<sup>2</sup> is an example of a law which has been passed by India's Parliament, but which so far has not been recognised by many people as a normal code of behavior.

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1. For information on this subject, see Appendix B.

2. India's Constitution and laws lay down that untouchability is a crime and anyone discriminating against the untouchables will be punished. However, when Vinoba and a few untouchables were going to enter the Baidyanath temple, the priests maltreated and even beat them.

As things stand today, land in India is a marketable commodity, held out for sale or mortgage etc. No stroke of pen of any authority, howsoever mighty, can stop this practice if a suitable atmosphere for the purpose is not created first.

Again, legislation in modern Indian conditions gives rise to a huge amount of litigation and ill-will. The Zamindari-Abolition Act of Uttar Pradesh had a similar story about it. What was intended to be smoothly carried out was stained with malice; and, of course, the landless got no land through this process. On the other hand, the Bhoodan movement in Bihar has led to a great fall in litigation.

There is much talk of fixing ceilings on land-holdings by law and thus obtaining the extra land for the landless. However, the land-owners, in anticipation of such legislation, have been known to divide their land into many parts and to get them registered in the name of their numerous near and dear ones. Law proves to be helpless in such cases. Furthermore, if a ceiling, say of thirty acres of wet land, were fixed in a State like Bihar, no good land would be available for the landless by this procedure. That is why the Bhoodan workers are not enthusiastic about this type of legislation.

Even granting for the moment, however, that legislation can transfer land to the landless, the real problem is not solved. For the issue is not merely to provide land to the tiller but to change the outlook of the people about ownership of land and other property. Significantly enough, Vinoba's movement is not Bhoodan but Bhoodan Yajna. He does not merely want a transfer of land from



~~one~~ hand to another but wants to inculcate in the people a permanent taste for giving their best unto the **society** for universal good. Legislation alone cannot achieve such transformation of mentality.

Thus, to be really effective and serviceable, legislation can only follow, and not precede, the creation of a suitable atmosphere for an equitable distribution of land. As Vinoba puts it:

I do not stand in the way of legislation....whatever the measure of success I may achieve in my work, it will surely facilitate the passing of such legislation. I am creating the atmosphere which will smoothen the way for it. 3

Furthermore, if man is prepared to obey law, why, asks Binoba, will **he** not respond to the higher law--the call of love?

Let those who advocate legislation ponder over this question. For my part, I am convinced that if law which is at the most an indirect expression of man's will can work, his direct will as expressed in love must work better, more quickly and more easily. 4

Thus, in Vinob's view, for bringing fundamental changes in social and economic values, Governmental Legislation can not be of much help. Vinoba's invocation of Jan-Shakti is based upon this realisation.

Jan-Shakti literally means power (shakti) of the people (jan). At the Chandil Sarvodaya Sammelan, 1953, Vinoba urged

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3. Vinoba Bhave: Bhoodan Yajna, 1953. p. 88.

4. Suresh Ramabhai: Vinoba and His Mission, 1954. p. 177.



upon the constructive workers to build up Swatantra Jan-Shakti, or the <sup>self-</sup>self-reliant (swatantra) power of the people. This, he said, must be distinguished from the other two forms of power--Himsa-Shakti (the power of violence) and Danda-Shakti (power of the State). Vinoba explained the distinction between these forms of power in the following words:

The power of the people is the opposite of the power of violence, and though there is no such trenchant opposition between the power of the people and the power of the State, yet the two are different....We, however, intend to go further ahead of it and create conditions which will do away with the need to use even the power of the State. Then only could it be said of us that we have realised our Swadharma (or essential duty) and done it. On the contrary, if we go after political power in the mistaken belief that it is the only way to serve the people, we will not be fit to fulfill the expectations people have of us but may also prove a burden to them.<sup>5</sup>

Again,

We do not aim (merely) at doing acts of kindness but at creating a kingdom of kindness. Kindness can and does exist even in the kingdom of wickedness, but only as a pinch of salt does in food,--kind acts only add to the taste of that with which they are mixed. Such kindness brings a sort of flavor to the violence of war.... We must, therefore, develop a larger view and desist from undertaking any activity merely because it appears to be a constructive act of service.<sup>6</sup>

To build up Jan-Shakti, Vinoba proposed two methods of procedure, Vichar-shasan, or peaceful winning-over of people to the non-violent point of view by making them think about it, and Kartritva-vibhajan or distribution of work among the individuals without creating an administrative authority resting upon legal

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5. Vinoba Bhave: Bhoodan Yajna, 1953. pp. 86-87.

6. Ibid, p. 88.

procedure and inequalities.

The Sarvodaya order is ultimately based on Jan-Shakti and not upon Himsa-Shakti or Danda-Shakti. The Bhoodan Yajna movement is not only tackling the problem of land but is also generating at the same time the self-reliant power of the people to move towards Sarvodaya. The entire program is one composite whole. The following conversation between Hallam Tennyson and Vinoba stresses the same point:

Question: Could not Sarvodaya use Government help in reinstating peasants on land received?

Answer: No objection to receiving Government's help provided people do not become dependent on Government. We object to the coercion behind the Government. I would not ask the Government itself to give Sampattidan but would do so from its ministers who can provide from their own private funds. I would have no objection in accepting 1/6th of National Extension Service fund if Government offered it. 7

Closely related to the concept of Jan-Shakti is that of Satyagraha. Satyagraha literally means insistence (agraha) on truth (satya). Its basic components are truth (satya), non-violence (ahimsa), and tapas i.e. self-discipline involving voluntary self-suffering. It connotes the power of non-violence, or moral force.

Satyagraha is the key to Sarvodaya. Whenever some problem arises, people themselves are to find out a solution through the use of Satyagraha. They are not to depend upon any external authority or force; they should utilise their own inherent power or



(c) Swaraj, Gramraj and Ramraj

In the language that appealed very strongly to the common Indian mind, the Sarvodaya ideal was described by Gandhi as Ramrajya or Ramraj. The word Ramraj literally means Rama's rule. Ram in Indai is synonymous with God and therefore Ramraj means the Kingdom of God. However, it must be emphasised that it does not indicate any resemblance to theocracy. God, in the Indian philosophic tradition, is not supposed to have vested any kings or priests with any divine powers. Therefore God's rule does not mean monarchy or priest's rule. Ram, to an Indian, represents the ideal man. Gandhi defined Ramraj as "sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority."<sup>1</sup> The emphasis upon pure moral authority is the principal significance of the word Ram. The Indian epic Ramayana tells the life-story of the ancient Indian hero Ram. Therefore, several persons on different occasions tried to interpret Ramraj as Hinduraj. Such confusion was noticed many a time and Gandhi had to give long explanations; This is another instance of the attempt made by Gandhi to combine tradition with change. He introduced a new significance into the traditional meaning of the word Ram but retained the word because the common people appreciated it much better.

Before 15 August 1947, when India was not independent, the first major step in the direction of Ramraj was mentioned as Swarajya or Swaraj meaning Self-Rule. The word Swa (meaning self)

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1. Harijan. 2 January 1937.

double connotation. Ordinarily one may think of it political independence. However, in a deeper, sense it implies that every individual must lead a life governed by the spirit, a life of purity, renunciation and service. To Sarvodaya thinkers, the attainment of independence was only one of the steps in the direction of Ramraj.

The process of elevating the ordinary meaning of Swaraj to Ramraj is through the intermediary stage of Gramraj. Gramraj normally means village-rule. We have seen before<sup>2</sup> that in the Sarvodaya order, great emphasis is placed upon decentralization. In the context of Indian conditions, this means making the village like a self-autonomous republic. Gramraj thus represents an order where exploitation can be reduced to a minimum, where the pure moral authority of the people can have its full

The difference between Swaraj, Gramraj and Ramraj has been explained by Vinoba in the following manner:

Gramrajya means, ordinarily, the rule of the people by the people and for the people. It comes into existence on the withdrawal of the political domination or paramountcy of the foreign power. But it is Gramrajya only when the rule of the people or self-rule spreads far and wide in every village in the country. And when all the people in the village become intelligent, adept and sensible and when the necessity to rule over anyone by anyone else, ceases, this Gramrajya turns into Ramrajya.

Even the disputes, for example, of the village are brought

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In Chapter (2) (b) of this paper.



to the city courts for settlement and when the city people sit in judgment and decide them, it is slavery, servitude or subordination. When the disputes of the village are settled in the village by the village people themselves, it is Swarajya of the village or Gramrajya. And when disputes do not at all arise in the village, it is Ramarajya. First we have to establish full Gramrajya in the village and then turn it into Ramrajya. 3

Vinoba has also given in detail the state of affairs under Gramraj. He calls it the implementation of Gram-dharma or villagism. He emphasises five main principles:

First, the disputes in the village should be settled locally in the village. It would of course be best if there were no disputes at all. But that is an ideal hard to attain....

Next, you must arrange for providing medical help and treatment to all those who may be out of health....

Thirdly, we must provide for the education of the village children. All the children in the village should be enabled to receive education and not only those, as at present, who can afford....

The fourth constituent of grama-dharma is agriculture or service of land. Land will not be owned privately inasmuch as it belongs to God. We are all servants of land and not its owners. We distribute land to individuals, but the ownership is vested in the village community. We undertake distribution for the sake of practical convenience, but the ownership both of land and its produce belongs to the community....

Fifthly, there should not be any privately owned shop in the village. All village shops will be held jointly by all the villagers who will have each a share in its capital. The poor who have no money will contribute their labour...4

Who will be the bulworks of gram-dharma in the villages?

The answer is given in terms of an old Indian saying: "Santo

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3. Sarvodaya. Nov. 1955. p. 156.

4. Harijan. 5 June 1954, pp. 109-110.



Bhumim Tapasa Dharayanti". Literally this means that the good people sustain the world by their austere life. The idea is that those who are intelligent and clever and experienced persons in the village must come forward and offer their selfless services, as the elders and the parents do in the family, to conduct the affairs of the village. In their selfless service lies all their strength, and not in their wealth or authority.<sup>5</sup> They will serve as examples to all the villagers. The manner in which, and the spirit with which, they work will enthuse other people also to become selfless servants of the society. What can not be achieved by law "can be brought nearer by the increase in the numbers of the men and women who have renounced selfish ambition, surrendered personal interests, who die daily that others may live in peace and comfort."<sup>6</sup>

At the root of this approach lies the enthusiasm for the development of non-violent methods for the solution of all problems. In the whole scheme as discussed above, the method or the way is of far greater importance than what is attained. The ultimate picture of Gramraj or Ramraj may not be explicitly determined in advance. What is basic is that the steps in this direction must be based on non-violent techniques and that the villagers

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5. Dada Dharmadhikari calls such a system as Vashishtha-satta. See, for example, his article in Bhodan Yajna (Hindi Weekly), 7 October 1955. pp. 4-5.

6. From Radhakrishnan's forward to Suresh Ramabhai: "Vinoba and His Mission" 1954.

must be guided by devoted spirits working on these lines.

A detailed picture of the ideal village structure is sometimes thought of in terms of what is held to have existed in Indian villages before the establishment of the British-Raj.<sup>7</sup> The village, in those days, enjoyed great powers. It was to a great extent a self-sufficient unit in matters of important needs of life, e.g., food, cloth, etc. Agriculture and cottage industries flourished simultaneously, each helping the other. The land of the village belonged to the village as a whole. The village-council (panchayat) looked after the day-to-day administration of the village affairs. The Central Government or the Regional Government would send their representative, once or twice a year, to collect the revenue from the village-council. This is why the continuity of the village administration and culture was not disturbed even when there were great changes in the Central Government.

Some people think that to revert to the above state of affairs would be like turning the hands of the clock back. They call it an unpleasant return to primitive ways. The advocates of Gramraj, on the other hand, assert that they do not think so much of returning to the past as of establishing a decentralised order which would minimize the exploitation of simple men and which would ultimately rest on pure moral authority. The pre-

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7. See, for example, Bhoodan Yajna (Hindi weekly), 12 August, 1955. p. 6.

British structure of the villages is not to be copied in toto; whatever changes can be introduced for the better would always be welcome. A system does not become good or bad simply because it is old or new. As Maganbhai Desai says,

Those who stand for decentralization through small-scale village industries do desire to avail of the benefits science can give to help them. Only they do not agree that the way of centralized industrialism is the only scientific way; it is not the one they stand for. 8

A common criticism of the decentralized structure for modern India is that the Indian villagers are so ignorant and inefficient that it will be impossible to change them into ideal citizens of Gramraj. In the words of S.N. Agarwal:

It may be argued that the Indian villages are, at present in a bad way. There are petty jealousies, quarrels, party feelings and rivalries among the villagers who are still illiterate and devoid of keen civic sense. It will, therefore, be risky to repose too much confidence and trust in the Village Panchayats. But such arguments betray gross ignorance of the fundamental principle of human psychology: 'Trust begets trust'...What does it matter if we commit mistakes and even blunders? We learn through our mistakes. We need not, therefore, hesitate to ~~develop~~ <sup>devolve</sup> a large measure of political power on the village Communities. The process of devolution and decentralisation may be gradual and by graded installments. But the ultimate objective must be clear-cut, definite and unmistakable. 9

We shall now discuss the role of Bhoodan and particularly Gramdan in bringing about Gramraj.

In order that all the villagers can function in a spirit of cooperation and follow gram-dharma, it is essential that the

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8. Harijan, 8 October, 1955.

9. S.N. Agarwal: Gandhian Constitution for free India, 1946, pp. 135-6.

structure of gross inequality that exists in the villages today has to be changed. There are no bright prospects of the very rich and the very poor working hand in hand on a footing of equality. The problem of getting the landlord and the Harijans work together like members of the same family can be solved only if their conditions can be made less unequal. Bhoodan and Gramdan are steps in this direction. That is why Vinoba has said,

Wherever full villages are received for Bhoodan, there will be no more of the richman's contempt for the poor, the poor man's hatred for the rich or the jealousy or rivalry among the middle class. All become equals. There will be none high, none low, and none in between the two. Of course there will be some difference but such variations will be only such as are found in the five fingers of the hand. 10

In the gram-dan villages, not only is there no one without land, but also there is no one owning land. And this is achieved, not by imposition or physical force but by the power of love. After the entire land is donated to the village community as a whole, each family is allotted its share of land for cultivation. The share is determined on the basis of the size of the family. The allotment is to be reviewed within ten years and suitable adjustments are to be made if necessary. The significant fact is that those who formerly owned a large amount of land might receive just a little after this sharing, but still they are happy and joyous. The following account of what happened in a gramdan village in Orissa is significant;

At Dangsuruda, the Naik of the village, who till the

other day owned 180 acres, had the next day, having become a member of the village family, gladly accepted only 7 acres, the share according to his quota. The whole village, with one voice and most sincerely requested the Naik to accept at least a few acres more than the rest. "How can I take more?" came the reply. "You have made me the head of the village; mine is, therefore, to accept my due and not more and that too, in the end after every one else had received." His bright eyes, adds Sri Nirmala Behn, only reflected the joy and peace within and revealed how blessed he felt that evening. 11



(d) Non-violent Reconstruction Following Bhoodan and Gramdan:  
Experiments in the Sarvodaya Order

At several points during the course of this study, the following question has been raised in one form or the other: How can we be sure that the Sarvodaya Order will successfully work in present-day India? Such a question is raised not only by those who do not believe in the Sarvodaya ideology but also by those who believe in it as essentially good but have doubts about its being practicable in modern conditions.

It <sup>has</sup> ~~have~~ been noted that the Sarvodaya thinkers attach the greatest importance to the means, the way of achieving their objective. Therefore, they do not deny the difficulties that lie in the way. Vinoba himself has said:

The condition now-a-days is so bad that in every village there are factions and jealousies. Even though living in the same village, people have no consideration for one another. They do not cooperate, they do not share their joys and sorrows. They live together but are mentally poles apart. 1

However, what the Sarvodaya workers are attempting is to bring about a fundamental change implied by a non-violent revolution. This means not only a change in the scale of values but also a change in the social, economic and political set-up. J.B.Kripalani has observed:

A revolution whether social, economic, political or religious, does not merely formulate values, but on the basis of the new values it seeks to transform life, individual and collective. 2

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1. Bhoodan Yajna (Hindi Weekly), 20 May 1955.
  2. Sarvodaya, October 1955, p. 123.



Nothing will probably do more to clarify thinking on these problems than actual experimentation with the Sarvodaya program in some groups of villages. Bhoodan and Gramdan have now created conditions in which such an experimentation can be made.

Vinoba has emphasised again and again that the success or failure of constructive work depends upon the success or failure of the Bhoodan Yajna movement. As he puts it:

Without village industries we cannot hope to regenerate the village. Village industries cannot prosper in the absence of proper planning for the entire village. You cannot have such planning unless you have a village committee for the purpose. And last but not the least, the committee will not be recognized by the entire population of the village till you have fair distribution of land in it. Thus you will see that village industries and redistribution of land are inseparably associated with the idea of regenerating the village. 3

This is why Vinoba spent a good deal of time in Koraput district of Orissa so that a follow-up in the Gramdan villages may be organized. He appealed to all those who wanted to concentrate on constructive work to take up this task in the hundreds of the Gramdan villages that were ready for such work.

Vinoba's secretary, Damodardas Mundada, wrote:

It is heartening to note in this connection that Sarva Seva Sangh has given serious consideration to Vinoba's suggestion and has, by a unanimous resolution, decided

to depute Shri Annasaheb Sahasrabuddhe, the Secretary, to organize the work of reconstruction in the five hundred Gramdan Villages of Orissa....Never before during the last thirty-five years of constructive work was released such a vast energy of willing co-operators in the cause of shaping Gandhian ideology. 4

A Minister of the Orissa Government, surprised at the sudden and heartening progress of Gramdan in Koraput district, expressed his fears about the stupendous nature of planning, if district after district came forward to offer Gramdan. Vinoba replied:

This is exactly the place where the members of the Planning Commission should have their sittings to frame proper plan for the country and they will have to do it one day. 5

Jayaprakash Narayan has expressed his views on this subject as follows:

People often asked me: 'Has rural reconstruction on Sarvodaya lines been tried in even one village so far?' I had to say 'No'....I felt great need of organising intensive reconstruction work in some selected villages that may act as an example to other villages. 6

Accordingly, Jayaprakash Narayan started, in May 1954, an institution called "Gram-Nirman-Mandal" (Village Reconstruction Society), at Sokhodevra (Kauskol Thana, Bihar). This institution carries on intensive constructive work in the area and also trains Sarvodaya workers from other parts of the country.

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4. Bhodan Yajna (Hindi Weekly), 7 October 1955.

5. Sarvodaya, December 1955, p. 192.

6. Bhodan Yajna (Hindi Weekly), 19 August, 1955.

The work in Bihar and Orissa outlined above is gradually progressing. Attempts are being made in other States also to develop some selected villages as models. Vinoba's birthplace in Bombay State, viz., the village of Gagode, as well as the village of Pochampalli in Hyderabad where the Bhoodan Yajna movement began has been particularly selected for this purpose. These experiments in non-violent reconstruction should throw much light on the problems connected with the establishment of Gramraj and Sarvodaya.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The main points that emerge from this study of the relationship between the Bhoodan Yajna (Land-Gift) movement and Sarvodaya (uplift of all) may be summarised as follows:

1. The attainment of the ideal of Sarvodaya requires concentration upon Antyodaya (uplift of the people at the bottom) and Samyayoga (yoga or way of equality).
  2. From the point of view of political set-up, the way to Sarvodaya or Ramraj (sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority) would be through the intermediary stage of Gramraj (decentralisation of political authority taking the village as a unit).
  3. In the Sarvodaya economy, the place of honor would be given to village industries, especially for the production of essential things that are needed by the villagers. Heavy industries would be limited to the manufacture of such things as railway equipment, aeroplanes, sewing machines, etc., and would be run by the Central Government.
  4. Harijans (untouchables) constitute the vast majority of the people at the bottom. Their miserable condition is mainly due to the fact that they have no independent means of livelihood.
  5. Providing the Harijans and other oppressed people with cultivable land would go a long way in lifting them up from
-

their miserable lot. Of course, along with land, they should also have the equipment, that they need for cultivation.

6. Without samya (equality), the relations between the various groups of people in the society would continue to be strained; they would not be able to live like members of the same big joint family, as they should in a Sarvodaya society.

7. Bhoodan (land-gift or rather land-sharing) tries to awaken the conscience of everyone so that the people at the bottom may have their due share and relations between man and man may be guided by mutual love and fellow-feeling.

8. The allied movements, viz., Sampattidan (gift of wealth), Shramdan (gift of labor), Buddhidan (gift of intellect), etc., make it possible for everyone in the society to take part in this ideal of sharing.

9. The most comprehensive of these movements is Gramdan (gift of the whole village), because this really achieves the ideal of the village being a single family.

10. Gramdan paves the way for Gramraj which when ideally realized would lead to the ushering-in of Ramraj.

11. All this work is to be done through Janshakti (power of the people) and not through violence. Legislation may aid the process but is not to be regarded as the principal force behind the movement. Janshakti created by these movements would be indispensable for Sarvodaya order.

12. The comprehensive ideal of Sarvodaya is not attainable overnight. It is a revolutionary change in the entire



scale of values and only selfless workers can bring this about by their non-violent example.

13. The total land requirement of all the landless families that want land is about 50 million acres of cultivable land. Only 9% of this amount has so far been collected. The amount distributed is naturally even less. Similarly, not enough equipment needed for cultivation has so far been received.

14. The total number of villages in India is about 560,000. The number of villages received in Gramdan is about 850 so far. i.e. about 1 out of 650 villages.

15. The fact that the goal is still far off is only an incentive, and not a matter of disappointment, to Sarvodaya workers. There is the ideology of concentrating all their efforts on the means and not to worry about the outcome of the effort; nor are they to be lured into the delusion of violent shortcuts. December 31, 1957 is very often thought of as the date by which the targets are to be realised. However, this only demonstrates the urgency of the problems. The comprehensive non-violent revolution is a continuous program, and successful completion of one step only shows the way to the next.

16. The movement of Bhodan and the allied Dams is a basic step in the direction of Sarvodaya. To the extent that this movement makes headway the readiness of Indian society for the Sarvodaya ideal will be demonstrated.

APPENDICES, GLOSSARY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX A

The Sarvodaya Samaj

The Samaj: After the demise of Mahatma Gandhi the constructive workers met in a conference in March 1948 at Sevagram, Wardha, and decided to form a free world organization, known as the Sarvodaya Samaj. Yet it is not an organization as generally understood with rules of membership, executive, office-bearers and binding decisions. It is a Samaj of free voluntary brotherhood with the simple obligation to themselves, to strive towards the uplift of all in the world through truth and non-violence as the means. The following will give an idea of the objective and work of the Sarvodaya Samaj.

Aim: To strive towards a social order based on Truth and Non-Violence, in which there will be no distinction of class or creed, no exploitation of any kind and offering full scope for the development of the individuals as well as groups.

Basic Principle: Insistence on the purity of the Means as that of the Ends.

Programme: For the achievement of the aim, the following programme will be followed:

1. Communal harmony (fellowship between followers of different faiths and sects).
2. Removal of untouchability.
3. Abolition of class distinctions.
4. Prohibition.
5. Promotion of khadi and other home industries.
6. Village sanitation.
7. Basic Education.
8. Equality of status and rights for both men and women.
9. Health and hygiene.
10. Development of provincial languages.
11. Removal of provincialism.

12. Hindustani as the national language.
13. Economic equality.
14. Development of agriculture.
15. Organization of labour.
16. Welfare of aboriginals.
17. Organization of Students.
18. Service of leprosy patients.
19. Relief-work.
20. Cow protection.
21. Naturopathy.
22. Other similar activities.

Brotherhood: Whoever accepts the above Aim and its Basic Principles and endeavours to follow them is eligible for the brotherhood of Samaj. On sending his or her name and address to the Secretary of the Sarvodaya Samaj, Gaya, he or she will be registered as a "Sevak."

Sarvodaya Day: The 30th January of every year when Gandhiji passed away will be observed at all places as the Sarvodaya Day.

Sarvodaya Fairs: On 12th February every year Fairs will be organized at places where Gandhiji's ashes were immersed.

Sarvodaya Conference: To facilitate mutual contact and exchange of views among the Sevaks there will be an annual conference in March or April at some place in India.

Function: The deliberations of the Samaj will be of advisory nature and not mandatory in any way.

APPENDIX B

Legislation in Indian States Concerning Bhoodan Yajna

Most of the State Governments have enacted (and others are taking steps to enact) laws to facilitate the activities in connection with Bhoodan Yajna. To give a general idea of the principal provisions of these laws, the main features of the Madhya Pradesh Bhoodan Act (as a specimen) are given below:

1. Incorporation of Bhoodan Yajna Board to administer all lands vested in it for the benefit of the Bhoodan Yajna.
2. All land received in the Bhoodan Yajna to vest in the board.
3. The Board will consist of the chairman and six more, but not exceeding ten, members to be nominated by Acharya Vinoba Bhave.
4. The Board shall have its own fund and may accept grants, donations, gifts or loans from the Central or State Governments or Local Authority or any individuals or body whether incorporated or not.
5. The Board may, for any Tahsil or Taluq, constitute Tahsil Committee consisting of not less than three and not more than seven members.
6. The donor of land will submit an application, in a prescribed form, to the Board which the Board shall forward to the Revenue Officer.
7. The Revenue Officer, after summary enquiry, shall issue a notice inviting objections, if any.
8. If the application for the gift is accepted the interest of the donor stands extinguished and the land vests in the Board. The person aggrieved has right to go to the civil court.
9. Lands vesting in the Board are not liable to attachment or sale in execution of a decree or



order passed by civil court against the Board.

10. The Board shall have power to lease out the land vesting in it.
11. The Tahsil Committee or, where no Tahsil Committee is formed, the Board shall distribute the land vesting in the Board to landless persons, landless person meaning a person holding no land or holding land less than the area prescribed by rules.
12. The person, to whom the land will be allotted, will be recorded, as a Bhoodan lessee and shall hold the land on the terms and the conditions that:--

The lease-hold rights shall, on the death of the holder, pass to his heirs;

The lessee shall not transfer any interest in the land;

The lessee shall not sub-let the land;

The lessee shall not allow the land to lie fallow for a period in excess of two years;

The lessee shall comply with any condition which the Board may impose by regulations.

This arrangement to remain in effect for ten years.

13. Arrears of lease money shall be recoverable in the same manner as arrears of land revenue.
14. The gift under the Bhoodan Yajna will be exempt from payment of Stamp Duty and from Registration or Attestation.

APPENDIX C

Procedure Followed for Distribution of Land

Collected in Bhoodan Yajna

As a specimen, the procedure laid down by the Uttar Pradesh Bhoodan Yajna Committee regarding distribution of land is given below:--

1. The date for the distribution of land in the village which may have been chosen for this purpose is fixed several days in advance and is announced to the people of that and the neighboring villages seven days before the date of actual distribution, by beat of drum. Efforts are also made to approach the people personally and inform them of the program. The announcement is repeated a day before the date of distribution.
2. During the seven days preceding the distribution, the distribution workers inspect the donated land, study its fertility and decide the acreage necessary for the maintenance of a peasant family. They also request the head of the local gram-panchayat and the patwari to accompany them and help them in the inspection and the appraisal of the fertility of the land concerned.
3. The information regarding the date and the place of the distribution is sent to the District Magistrate and other officials concerned with it, the intention being that he or his representative and the patwari may be present in the meeting and give to the organizers the benefit of their help.
4. On the distribution day the entire population of the village gather together at the appointed spot. The donors are also present. Then someone from the workers makes a short speech explaining the ideology of the Bhoodan, the method of distribution and the policy underlying it. Next, the landless among the present are asked to stand up. Some of them may not stand up on account of shyness. The organizers, therefore, take care to repeat the request until all of them show up. Since they are all local people who know one another, there is

hardly any room for a land holder passing himself off as landless. Besides, the patwari is there to point out who are the real landless.

5. The landless can be divided into three classes:

(a) Agricultural labourers who have no other means of earning their livelihood and who work on the land of others, (b) those who have taken to other occupations but would like to revert to cultivation because the occupations in which they are engaged are insufficient to support them, (c) those who have very insufficient lands and no other occupations and who are, therefore, very poor.

6. The first preference in the distribution of lands is given to the class (a) landless, next come the poor cultivators belonging to class (c). The rest of the land, if any, is allotted to class (b).

7. However, there might be villages where the number of landless of even the first group may exceed the land available for distribution. That makes distribution difficult. Under the situation the responsibility for picking out the most deserving persons from them is placed on the landless themselves. If they cannot decide it, lots are drawn and land is allotted accordingly.

The Bhoodan Workers act merely as witnesses. The persons going to receive land having been settled, they are asked to sign a printed application purporting to be a request for land, after which they are presented with certificates of having received land. This certificate is signed by the representative of the District Magistrate (the patwari) and the chairman of the village panchayat. The workers have to take care that the certificates are duly filled in and distributed to the recipients of land.

8. The whole procedure is gone through without any fee being charged from the recipients.

9. The lands received should be cultivated by the recipient himself for at least a period of 10 years, and the cultivation should start within 3 years from the date on which he received it. Failing that, it may be taken back from him and given to some other man.

10. Effort should be made to give a bigha of land for every individual in the family of the landless receiving land.
11. In case of a difficulty not covered by the above rules, the Bhoodan Yajna workers should try to solve it in consultation with the people of the village, taking into consideration the local conditions.

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From Secretary U.P. Bhoodan Committee, appearing in Suresh Ramabhai: Vinoba and His Mission, pp. 221-3.

# APPENDIX D

Figures of Land Collected and Distributed Upto August 1955.

State	Figures upto	Collection		Distribution	
		Acres.	No. of Donors	Acres.	Families.
1. Bihar ...	31Aug.55	2,359,879	295,790	34,809	19,062
2. Uttar Pradesh	"	553,640	20,940	65,658	31,190
3. Rajasthan ...	"	359,226	74,803	14,514	2,292
4. Utkal ...	20Aug.55	209,681	81,813	13,210	1,732
5. Madhya Pradesh ...	31Aug.55	116,617	24,638	37,082	6,418
6. Hyderabad ...	"	109,529	4,286	33,674	7,379
7. Madhya Bharat ...	30Jun.55	51,987	5,014	311	...
8. Tamil Nad ...	31Aug.55	42,073	10,751	585	221
9. Sourashtra...	30Jun.55	41,000	15,000	1,500	...
10. Gujarat ...	31Aug.55	39,240	8,877	6,400	2,351
11. Maharashtra..	"	28,146	6,193	...	...
12. Kerala ...	30Jun.55	25,113	1,200	315	...
13. Andhra ...	26Jul.55	22,372	...	...	...
14. Punjab-Pepsu ...	31Aug.55	14,386	3,297	653	161
15. Bengal ...	31Jul.55	10,596	5,641	1,363	1,158
16. Delhi ...	30Jun.55	9,245	249	90	25
17. Mysore ...	10Sept55	7,796	3,005	...	...
18. Vindhya Pradesh ...	31Aug.55	6,883	1,470	771	278
19. Karnatak ...	" " "	3,122	620	269	85
20. Himachal Pradesh ...	30Jun.55	2,025	66	...	...
21. Assam ...	"	1,950	...	...	...
22. Bombay ...	"	123	6	...	...
Total ...		4,014,629	563,659	211,204	72,352

According to information received recently, the total land collection in the country is about 4.6 million acres out of which about 250,000 acres have been distributed. State-wise distribution of these figures is, however, not yet available.



APPENDIX E

Pledge of Sampattidan Yajna

Shri Vinobaji,

With a view to the furtherance and fulfilment of the economic revolution, which in its non-violent working follows the best traditions of our country, you have enjoined that in addition to land, people should now come forward to donate a sixth of their wealth and property also. This throws open the door to those also to associate themselves with your sacred mission, who could not do much so far because they did not possess land. In response to this call in the cause of Daridranarayana, I surrender the....th of my income to you and undertake to devote the same every year, to social welfare work in such manner as you may desire me to do.

I will continue to send in regularly the annual account of my income to you or to the agent or body which you may empower for the said purpose.

I accept the responsibility of keeping whatever amount of money may accrue to the donated share in safe custody and to spend it according to your instructions.

To this pledge, willingly undertaken, I, as the Antaryami i.e., the Inner Guide in me, am myself a witness. I am conscious that I have to be faithful to my antaryami.

May God help me.

Attached herewith please find the statement of my wealth and property.

Date:

Sd.

Full Name:

Address:

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Vinoba Bhawe: Bhoodan Yajna, 1953. pp. 133-4.

GLOSSARY OF INDIAN TERMS USED IN THE PAPER

AND THEIR EQUIVALENTS IN ENGLISH

**Note:** Transliteration of each word is given in parentheses.  
The order of words in this glossary has been determined by the way they are spelled in the text and is then the same as in an English dictionary.

A

Ahimsa (ahimsā) -- non-violence

Anasakta Karma (anāsakta Karma) -- non-attached (anasakta)  
action (karma)

Antyodaya (antyyodaya) -- uplift (udaya) of the people at the  
bottom (antya)

Ashram (āśrama) -- hermitage or an institution working for an  
ideal.

B

Bapu (bāpū) -- literally means father. Indians use this word  
for Mahatma Gandhi.

Bhangi (bhaṅgī) -- scavenger

Bhoodan (bhūdāna) -- gift or sharing (dana) of land (bhu)

Buddhidan (buddhidāna) -- gift <sup>or</sup> sharing (dan) of intellect  
(buddhi)

C

Charkha (carkhā) -- spinning wheel

Crore -- 10 million

D

Dam (dama) -- self control

Dan (dāna) -- gift of sharing

Danda-shakti (daṇḍa-sakti) -- power (sakti) of punishment (danda)

Dan-patra (dāna-patra) -- gift-deed

Daridranarayan (daridranārāyaṇa) -- God (Narayana) in the form  
of the poor (daridra)

Daya (dayā) -- kindness

G

Gopal (go pāla) -- literally means keeper or protector (pala) of cows (go). Indians use this word for Lord Krishna.

Gramdan (grāma-dāna) -- gift (dana) of the whole village (grama)

Gramraj (grāma-rāja) -- rule (raja) by the village (grama); decentralisation of political authority taking the village as a unit.

H

Harijan (harijana) -- literally means people (jana) of God (hari). Gandhi used this term for the "untouchables".

Havi (havi) -- oblation

Himsa-shakti (himsā-śakti) -- power (sakti) of violence (himsa)

J

Jagirdar (jāgīradāra) -- owner of an estate (jagira)

Jan-shakti (jana-śakti) -- power (sakti) of the people (jana)

Ji (jī) -- suffix of respect in modern Indian languages.

Jivandan (jīvana-dāna) -- gift (dana) of the whole life (jivana)

Jnana (jñāna) -- knowledge

K

Kama (kāma) -- desire

Khadi (khādī) -- hand-spun and hand-woven cloth

Koopdan (kūpadāna) -- gift (dana) of a well (kupa)

Krodh (krodha) -- anger

L

Lakh (or lac) -- 100,000

Lobh (lobha) -- greed

N

Naik (nāyaka) -- leader; head of the village-council

P

Patwari (paṭavārī) -- employee of the Revenue and Agriculture department stationed in a village

Premdan (premadāna) -- gift (dana) of love (prema)

R

Raj (rāja) -- rule

Rajya (rājya) -- rule

Ramraj (rāmarāja) -- rule (rāja) of Rama i.e. pure moral authority

S

Sammelan (sammelana) -- conference

Sampattidan (sampattidāna) -- gift or sharing (dana) of wealth (sampatti)

Samyavād (sāmyavāda) -- ism (vada) of equality (samya); Indian word for communism

Samyayoga (sāmyayoga) -- way (yoga) of equality (samya).

Sarva (sarva) -- all

Sarvodaya (sarvodaya) -- uplift (udaya) of all (sarva); Gandhian ideal of non-violent social order.

Sarvodaya Samaj (sarvodaya samāja) -- society or brotherhood (samaja) based upon the Sarvodaya ideal

Satya (satya) -- truth

Satyagraha (satyāgraha) -- insistence (agraha) on truth (satya); Gandhian technique of non-violent action.

Satyagrahi (satyāgrahī) -- one who follows the path of satyagraha

Swaraj (svarāja) -- self-rule

T

Tahsil (tahasīla) -- an administrative subdivision of a district

Thana (thānā) -- an administrative subdivision of a Tahsil

U

Udaya (udaya) -- uplift

Y

Yajna (yajña) -- sacrifice

Z

Zamindar (zamīndāra) -- landlord



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