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## Food Problem; Some Reflections

By S. SIVASUBRAMANIAM

Honorary Secretary Council for National Unity

It is a piece of good fortune for Sri Lanka and other affected countries, that the ECAFE Conference held at the Bandaranaike Memorial Hall should have been pin-pointing the food problem. The constructive approach to the subject made by our own Prime Minister was welcomed by all the delegates. "How timely are the remarks of the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka" said the Pakistan delegate, "That this is not a time for debate; it is a time for action."

It is realised that the food situation during this year ahead will be still more critical and that unless adequate steps are taken to deal with it, more serious hardships might occur. We have been reminded of this danger by world famed food experts, including Dr. Addeke Beerma, the Director General of FAO, and Dr. Norman Borlaug, the agricultural scientist.

So far as Sri Lanka is concerned, we shall have to depend for some time more to come on supplies from foreign countries. At the same time, we have to redouble our own efforts for local production of rice and subsidiary food items:

The action by the Prime Minister in sending delegation to foreign countries for obtaining help for us in our present situation has to be greatly commended, and the outcome of these missions has been heartening.

The following are some relevant matters worthy of being kept in mind, if the country is to pull through difficulties and avoid repetition of similar visitations in the future.

It is an indisputable fact that just now we cannot meet the requirements of the hungry millions of our people by depending exclusively on

internal cultivation and production; though we must steadfastly continue our efforts to increase our own production substantially.

There is no use of crying over spilt milk in any matter unless it is for the purpose of rectifying the present situation, especially in national affairs. Decades ago, during pre-independence days, a statesman of Sri Lanka with great foresight and constructive genius, Mr. K. Balasingham, former member of the Legislative and Executive Councils and a respected friend of our successive Prime Ministers warned the British Colonial Government, then in charge of our country's affairs, and our people, of the grave risk of the Island being starved, if sufficient attention was not given to local food production; and he held up the ideal of self-sufficiency. That message was not heeded and we are in a sorry plight now. Our sufferings are mainly a legacy of the past.

We are all painfully aware of the grave hardships caused to the people of the Island by shortages of essential requirements. This applies more particularly to food. There are questions of availability of bare necessities, of daily escalation of prices,

and of time consuming, and sometimes inefficient methods of distribution. All sections of the people are suffering. The poorer and middle classes of the population are the Chief sufferers. Even the more well-to-do have their problems with the present heavy taxation and ceilings of many kinds.

It is generally agreed that if Sri Lanka can produce a substantial part of her food requirements and thus reduce the expenditure of foreign exchange on food imports, the other problems connected with shortages of essential goods might gradually ease.

We read in the press and hear from platforms many appeals to grow more food, which is all good. At the same time, it would be useful to know in detail the difficulties in the way of achieving our goals.

One of the most heartening reports in the Press recently in this connection is that of the Seminar held at the Chamber of Commerce on the cultivation of Sorghum and its uses as a food crop. At the meeting, there were representatives of the private sector, the Director of Agriculture, and other government experts,

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## Uttamayoga Maha Kumbhavishegam

Some of us might have read or heard about the rites concerning temples as set forth in the Vedas and the Agamas. But it is rare an occasion to listen to the experts reading the relevant texts on the one hand and to see for oneself the rites, being performed duly, by the prominent Brahmins, on the other. The Veerakathy Vinayagar temple at Moothanayinarpalam in Pungudutivu was the venue of such a splendid sight in early April an example for the preservation of Vedic rites, connected with Saivism as prevailing in Sri Lanka.

The origin of this temple harks back to more than two centuries. The entire Vimana and the Antaralam were recently built with white granite blocks, and following this saptadasa (17) kunda Uttamayoga Maha Kumbhabhisekam was performed on Monday April 8, 1974 in the morning.

It is indeed a rare occasion to see a Maha Kumbhabhisekam being performed, after the sacrificial fire is burnt in seventeen sacrificial pits in accordance with the rules as set forth in the Vedas and the Agamas. Such a consecration is very rare in Sri Lanka, especially for three days (April 6-8). It attracted the attention of all those assembled there. One could see for oneself the relevance and the spirit of the Vedic traditions which are more than 5000 years old. Hundreds of brahmins had assembled there.

When the stupa, as well as the image of the God Vinayaka were consecrated, there was a slight shower of rain, as if the God Vinayaka and other devatas had accepted the age-old Vedic and Agamic rites and blessed all those who had assembled there. Such was the view of many a devotee who was there.

The elaborate ceremonies were performed by

more than twenty four brahmins headed by the expert Siva Sri T. Kailasanathakurukkal with the assistance of several others. This grand consecration ceremony was financed mainly by a prominent businessman Sri N. K. Mylvagamam a devout devotee of Vinayaka and president of the trustees of this temple. The temple priest Siva Sri S. Balakrishnakurukkal arranged everything necessary for the ceremonies. The Yagasala was designed by Shri Somasundaram sthropati.

## Thirugnana-Sambanthar Swamigal Maha Poojah

At Nallai Aatheenam

A three day spiritual program at the Nallai Thirugnana Sambandha Aatheenam attached a large number of devotees who participated in the Special Poojahs, depicting the Life and Teachings of Sambandha Swamigal.

Sri la Sri Swaminatha Thambiran Swamigal of the Aatheenam conducted the special observances, Shri R. N. Sivapirakasam, President of the Saiva Paripalana Sabhai, Shri T. Murugesampillai A. G. A. Jaffna, Senthamil Seivi Pandit Thangammah Appakutty delivered lectures. Recital of Thirumurai in Pann Issai were conducted.

Sri la Sri Thambiran Swamigal stressed the need for a Thiru Neri Peravai to enforce religious discipline and spiritual studies.

Shri Murugesampillai made the observation that performance of poojahs should be entrusted to priests of adequate learning in the Vedas and Agamas.

சைவ பரிபாலன சபையாரது

அகில இலங்கைச்

சைவமகாநாடு

31-5-74-1. 2-6-74

அண்ணாலைப் பல்கலைக் கழகத் தத்துவத் துறைத் துணைப் பேராசிரியர் திரு. கி. இராமலிங்கம் M. A. அவர்கள் கலந்து கொள்கின்றார்கள்.

விபரங்களை எதிர்பாருங்கள்!

THOUGHTS TO BE TREASURED

சின்று உயிராக்கும் நிமிஷன் என் ஆருயிர்,
ஒன்று உயிராக்கும் அளவை உடலுற,
முன்று உயிராக்கும், உடற்குக் துணையதாய்,
கன்று உயிர்ப்பாசே, நடுவு நின்றானே,

The taintless Creator, my inner Soul, when He gives me a birth by uniting the soul with a body, does so according to my deserts resulting from my previous deeds. They are the aids to the new body. The Lord is my well-wisher. He is just and impartial (and not at all capricious.)



திருச்சிற்றம்பலம்

நமச்சிவாயவே ஞானமும் கலியுகம்
நமச்சிவாயவே நானறி விச்சையும்
நமச்சிவாயவே நானறிந் தேத்துமே
நமச்சிவாயவே நன்னெறி காட்டுமே.

திருச்சிற்றம்பலம்

Hindu Organ

FRIDAY MAY 3, 1974

WORK IS WORTH IN GOLD

May Day has come and gone in all its majestic significance. And it will reappear one year hence. This tradition cannot die.

Work signifies sacrifice which denotes benevolent feeling for others while satisfying the needs of self. Hence its worth in gold.

It does not require, therefore, authority to be cited, chapter and verse from texts. First principles alone will suffice to understand the loftiness of labour.

Dignity denotes worth and therefore the dignity of labour lies in the fact that work has a value of its own as a stimulating trait that keeps society on a high level of sufficiency. Marx, Lenin, Engels and many others had written learned treatises on the subject of labour inspiring the formation of forums to catechise the theories and found ideologies. They were, however, conscious of the truth that the basis for their thoughts were no recent discoveries but well known principles of life. However, the text writers seldom demonstrated the value of their precepts by practice. It may be said without fear of contradiction that Mahatma Gandhi was singularly effective in placing before the people these age-old axiomatic truths about the dignity of labour and the imperative need for individual exertion-work-to achieve economic and political independence by himself practising the precepts. Need we remind our readers that Gandhiji did even scavenging not merely for the love of labour but also to be of service to others. He interpreted the rare definition of labour as explained by Saint Thiruvalluvar in the captivating couplet

"முயற்சி திருவினையாக்கும் முயற்சினை
இன்மை புகுத்தி விடும்."

"Labour will produce wealth; idleness will lead to poverty".

Gandhiji by his exemplary living, labouring night and day, produced wealth for Bharat freedom and a sense of self-confidence in every follower of his way of living. He was the ideal leader. He did not lead labour associations or trade unions, nor did he incite unrest by calling strikes. He persevered to preserve the dignity of labour.

The May Day is therefore to be observed with a sufficient understanding of its special significance. This is so in our Island.

FOOD PROBLEM ...

(From page 5)

and FAO Economist and a dynamic food-grower in the person of Mr. W. A. V. Sinnatamby of the Trinity College Farm. It is trusted that the Chamber of Commerce will publish and distribute the full transcript of the proceedings at the seminar as a booklet and have it translated into Sinhalese and Tamil.

Sorghum ranks fifth in the line of cereals now grown. There are many varieties grown. There is, I believe, a variety to suit most climatic conditions and elevations. New varieties have been discovered with an impressively high protein content. Yields of six to seven thousand pounds an acre

The Government will do great good if it succeeds in getting people to grow Sorghum on an extensive scale and obtaining all the help it can from the private sector, as well as, from its own political authorities.

There is another important step which the Prime Minister and Government could take in relation to the Food Problem. This is the creation of a separate Ministry of Food. This humble suggestion is not a reflection on the good work done in this connection by the Ministry in charge of producing and distributing food in spite of inherent handicaps. Our Ministers are burdened with heavy work as

NOTICE

EXIGENCIES OF CIRCUMSTANCES COMPEL THE ABRIDGING OF THIS ISSUE

MANAGER

are not unusual, but much higher yields have been obtained. Indian varieties grow in Ceylon have done well. India has forty five millions acres under Sorghum cultivation. The potential thus is great for the cultivation of this crop in Sri-Lanka especially, as it is largely independent of the weather, and the same sorghum plants yield three crops.

Growing rice is not at all times and at all places a facile task. Good rainfall is necessary, failing which, adequate irrigation facilities. Hence, the necessity for cultivation of subsidiary crops along with rice. The Deputy Director of Agricultural Development, said at the seminar that we should not put all our eggs in one basket. If the rice crop failed, the entire economy failed. It was necessary to produce one or two other cereals as an insurance and that Sorghum, was ideally suited because it had the required nutritional value and could be easily grown even in the dry zone. The nutritionist of the Medical Research Institute said that where-ever rice and water were not available, Sorghum could be made readily available with the effort. It had wide scope for meeting the food needs of the people.

Sri Lanka is a developing country. Our present difficulties have come as a further burden and are a legacy from the past. Hence our Ministers however capable they may be, should not be over burdened.

The work involved in getting and distributing the nation's food requires the undivided attention of a separate Ministry with competent specialized departments of officers and competent advisory committees, including members of the general public. At least till we are out of the woods, it appears unavoidable to have such a separate Ministry, for food exclusively. Such a separate Ministry should be Sine qua non for all Governments of Sri Lanka, now and hereafter.

There is another step which strikes one as being capable of producing good results. That is the appointment of a Commission composed of politicians, experts, administrators, agriculturists and industrialists, to advise Government, Parliament and the Nation on steps—necessary to overcome the country's present food and economic difficulties and to avoid recurrence of same in the future.

One of the gravest challenges which our country has been called upon to

Inherent Danger In Insecticides

Increasing deaths due to the indiscriminate use of insecticides in the course of agricultural pursuits must have by now drawn the attention of the people and the Authorities to the need for warnings to be published for the information of those who handle insecticides against the lurking dangers. The ordinary cultivator has an abiding faith in insecticides as something in the way of rescue to him from the sustained attack of insects on his cultivation.

Insecticides

This belief is in itself not very harmful; but what causes damage is the absence of the potentialities of the insecticide and how the insecticide is double-edged. It eliminates the insects but at the same time retains the capacity to endanger the life of the person who uses it without adequate precaution. Indifference, and negligence on the part of the person who sprays the insecticide certainly build up circumstances that eventually prove to be the destroyer of the bigger insect—the human being.

There is hardly any time to be lost. The inherent dangers in the use of insecticides should be brought to the immediate notice of all cultivators by means of explanatory instructions in the form of tracts.

meet is the present food and economic crisis. No doubt, several other countries are meeting with even graver problems. That latter fact should not lull us into a sense of complacency but could well spur all sections of the people to close their ranks and thus surmount the crisis, the first step being an indispensable pre-requisite for the second.

P. S

One of Sri Lanka's most successful agriculturists is a former Editor of the "Hindu Organ", the veteran lawyer, journalist, and publicist Mr. A. V. Kulasingham — Another successful agriculturist is Mr. V. Kumaraswam, also a lawyer and former M. P. for Chavakachcheri. It would indeed be very helpful if the experience, knowledge, and skill of these two gentlemen are made use of by Government and the people generally at this juncture in dealing with the Food Problem and Agricultural Efforts.

செய்யும் முயற்சி திருவினையாக்கும் முயற்சினை
இன்மை புகுத்தி விடும்.

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