

### **Service Centre for Lepers**

Awadhoot Bhagwan Ram has not ignored any portion of the society which is in trouble. The Samooh believes that the real worship of God is the service of suffering humanity. The Samooh wants to raise up the down-trodden and ensure a respectable status for them as human beings. With this end in view, Awadhoot Bhagwan Ram started a service center for Lepers, soon after the establishment of the Samooh, in January, 1962. The center is widely known as Awadhoot Bhagwan Ram Kust Seva Ashram, Parao, Varanasi. There are now Sixty beds for male and Ten beds for female patients, at this centre.

During a short time the Centre has rendered services to thousands of the patients suffering from leprosy. Out of the 1,33,262 lepers treated in the Ashram from 1962 to March, 1978, 62,552 were fully and 70,710 partially controlled, according to the Samooh's progress report. In the in-door service there is arrangement for dispensing medicines, food, clothes and residential facilities free of charge. Out-door patients are also treated free of cost. Almost all the medicines are prepared in the centre. The system of Ayurvedic treatment is followed. Medicines being pure and of local origin, prove very effective and wonderfully useful. This is the only centre where leprosy treatment is carried on under the Ayurvedic system in India. Allopathic medicines are not very effective, rather some medicines react harmfully.

For the last few years, the Samooh has been trying to build a cancer hospital but for the want of money and suitable site this plan is delayed. However, the primary treatment of cancer patients is being arranged by the hospital. Despite limited resources the Samooh is trying to finalise the plan as soon as possible. For the manufacture of Ayurvedic medicines, the hospital has already built a new factory where medicines are being prepared by means of electric machines. Efficient doctors carry on this work. The doctors give free advice to patients to save themselves from this disease and free primary treatment is already in practice.

In order to facilitate the functioning voluntary and free service centers, experts and experienced doctors are needed. The Samooh has arranged to train such doctors at the Ashram. The Trainees, after leaving this training centre, take to the service of curing the patients of this disease in villages. They also teach persons how to check the spread of the disease. Our trainees have not only been recognized by the Bihar government but they have been issued certificates by that state.

We have a large number of lepers in India, a little over one percent of the total population. Many

hospitals are at work, but still this disease is on the increase. One of the causes of leprosy is lack of nourishing food and adulteration of the stuff. To check leprosy a number of centers have been and continue to be opened in different parts of India. The Samooh is trying hard to establish Leper Service Centres in various parts of the country. Such centers have already been established at Rai Bareilly(U.P.), Dalton Ganj and Nagar Attari (Bihar), Gamharia and Narianpur, Raigarh (Madhya Pradesh). Till March, 1978 about 5,000 patients were treated at these centers. Such centers are coming up at other branches also.

To enable the cured patients to earn their living in an established manner, the Samooh has started a plan to help them. The Samooh has a plan to start a colony for such patients by the side of river Ganges and a tract of 16 acres of land has already been sanctioned by the U.P. Government for this purpose. But owing to some technical difficulties the plan is still to be implemented. The Samooh at the Ashram also manages an agricultural farm in which, besides patients, other members of the Ashram take part in producing different cereals and vegetables. There are also attached to it a kitchen known as 'Bhansa' and a Goshala (cow shed) for the benefit of the patients and other members of the Ashram.

## **Nursery School**

In order to bring up good citizens, it is essential that children should be provided with proper education. Usually children below 7 years are not admitted in schools and they remain unattended. To overcome this difficulty and to set a good example, the Samooh has started a nursery school in its Ashram at Parao, not only for the children of Ashram families exclusively, but also for the children of families living outside the Ashram. Under the guidance of Pujya Baba, efficient teachers look after these children and teach them good habits and proper behaviour, so that in years to come they all may prove to be promising citizens. Children are also fed in the nursery. After getting a proper education they are admitted into primary classes.