

easy english books

*My Experiments  
with Truth, Pt. 1*

By Mohandas K. Gandhi

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## ***Gandhi* in 'Easy English'**

'Easy English' books by David and Kevin McKay use words from the 900-word list in the *Easy English Word Book for Adults and Children*. The *Easy English Word Book* has a picture for each word in the list, to help people understand them more clearly.

There is a small dictionary at the back of this book to help you understand the words from this book that are not in the Easy English word list.

This book uses **1150** different words. Each 'Easy English' book has a number on the cover to say how many words you must know to read that book. It is best to read the books with smaller numbers before reading those with bigger numbers.

Look for the name "McKay" on Easy English books to know if they are true 'Easy English' books. These books are all easy for people who are learning English as a second language.

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*Questions are at the end of each part.*

## Through Christian Eyes

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by David McKay

As a serious Christian I was deeply moved when I first heard the story of Gandhi. My feeling was (and is) that he is one of the truest Christians to have lived in the past century. But I should add that, as I see it, the past century has not been a good one for Christians.

Gandhi was right in what he said about the churches of the West. They have, for the most part, been hiding behind a teaching that says it is wrong to try to be good. This is one of the worst lies in history. If you look closely, you will see that the churches still teach people to follow rules. But the rules are *their* rules and not the rules of Jesus. If anyone seriously tries to follow the teachings of Christ, as Gandhi did with Christ's teaching about not hitting back, the churches will say that such a person is trying to "work their way to heaven". For some strange reason the same churches that say God will forgive all *their* wrong actions, say God will not forgive someone who tries to "work their way to heaven" by being good! For them, trying to obey Christ is the worst thing that anyone could do, and it is the one thing that will keep you out of heaven!

It is not surprising that Gandhi was turned off such religion; but he found some other church teachings more to his liking.

But as I see it, the teachings that most interested Gandhi were more Hindu than Christian. They were teachings about health... about not eating meat, about not drinking alcohol, and about not smoking. He also showed a deep interest in things like expensive church buildings and people praying to statues.

Teachings about health do not come from the teachings of Christ. Jesus said: "You have many rules about health, but I say that what goes into your mouth will not make you good or bad. What makes you good or bad will be what comes out of your mouth; for your words will tell where your heart is." Gandhi did not choose to follow this part of the teachings of Jesus.

True Christian teaching is that God does not live in temples or in idols, but he lives in the hearts of people who love and obey him. Jesus was killed because the religious leaders of his day believed that he was going to destroy their temple.

## 6 MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH

Gandhi believed strongly in following his parents. This was good. But Jesus said that to find real truth, we must be willing to "hate" the ways of our parents when God shows us something better. It is easy to see that the ways of his parents stopped Gandhi from following many of the teachings of Jesus.

Jesus was very clear about fasting and praying too. He said that we should do these things in secret. He knew that if people heard about our prayers and our fastings, they would praise us instead of praising God. Letting people know that we are praying or that we are fasting is a way to *look* humble at the same time that we are, in God's eyes, robbing the praise that people should be giving to him, and taking it for ourselves. This was another teaching of Jesus that Gandhi did not choose to follow.

Jesus did teach that adultery was wrong; but he did not go so far as Gandhi in teaching that sex between married people was wrong. Gandhi never seemed to question his life long war against his need for sex, and he seemed at times to think that sex sins were worse than other sins.

There were a few times when Jesus talked to important people, but it was mostly when they were arguing against him or sending him to be killed. His friends were the poor, the sick, the sinners. He did not move in important circles and he did not come from an important family. He did not need big names to force people to listen to him. The truth in what he said was enough. Gandhi was not completely opposite to Christ in these things; but he did spend a lot of time trying to meet important people.

Jesus said that his kingdom was not of this world. He did not try to start a new government or change the old, apart from the changes that happened when the hearts of people were changed. Jesus died with only a few friends who were almost as hated as he was.

Gandhi half followed Jesus in this too. He could have been the leader of the new Indian government, but he did not choose to be that. His strength was spiritual and he knew it. Yet he is still remembered most today for forcing the English government out

of India and for helping India to stand on its own. Indians today call Gandhi the Father of their country because of it. Good or bad, right or wrong, we must say that forcing the English government out of India (or forcing the Roman government out of Israel at the time that he lived) would not have been important in the thinking of Jesus. And if we were to look down on earth from the eyes of God fifty or a hundred years after Gandhi, would it really make that much difference? India has been freed from Britain, but has it been freed from greedy leaders? It could be argued that the leaders now are even worse!

But you may ask, "If Gandhi was so very far away from the teachings of Christ, how can you say that he is one of the best Christians who has lived on earth in the last century?"

I say it because Gandhi did try to follow *some* of the teachings of Christ. And he tried to teach others to do the same. As I said at the start, this has not been a good century for Christians. I do not know of anyone in the churches who is seriously trying to follow *any* of the teachings of Christ. They will follow other Bible writers or church leaders. But they will not follow Christ.

Gandhi saw some of Christ's teachings that he liked, and he tried to follow them. It was not easy. Like Tolstoy before him, he saw that those few teachings started to change everything around him. Gandhi's "experiments" with a few teachings of Christ changed India. Through people like Martin Luther King and Lech Walesa they have changed countries like America and Poland too.

If that much could happen because one man followed *some* of the teachings of Christ, what could happen if one of us (any of us) tried to follow *all* of the teachings of the One that so many people say is God's Son?

Yes, Gandhi was one of the best Christians of the last century. But as he said himself, even a child could do what he did... and more. I do not believe Gandhi is happy with all the people who praise him, but who do not try to build on his experiments with truth, to move closer to Perfect Truth.

## Opening Words

Four or five years ago, after being encouraged to do so by some of my closest friends who were working with me at the time, I agreed to write my life story. I started; but important problems stopped me from finishing. The problems ended with me in prison. A friend who was a prisoner with me at the time asked me to finish my life story there in the prison. I had other studies that I wanted to do first, but my plan was to finish this book in my last year there. As it happened, I was freed from prison with one year left to go of my time, and the book never was finished.

Now I have been asked again to finish this. I do not have the time to write it all at one time; but I have agreed to write a little each week for a newspaper, and all of these writings together can become my life story.

After I agreed to do this, a God-fearing friend questioned my plan. He said, "What has made you agree to write your life story? It is only people from the West who do that. The only people from the East who write their life stories are people who have been pushed into doing it by their friends from the West.

"What if you change your thinking in the future? Can't you see that people who shape their lives on what you have said in a book like this would then be following the wrong things? Don't you think it would be better to wait until you are more confident that you have the right answers?"

This argument had some effect on me. But I do not plan to tell my life story in the way that most people do. I want only to tell of my experiments with truth. It is true that the experiments, put together in one book, will become my life story. But I believe that my experiments can be of help to people even if the experiments themselves do not give all the answers.

Even now much of the world knows about my political experiments. These experiments and the name 'Mahatma' that they gave to me because of them, do not interest me as much as my spiritual experiments. But without this book, the world will never know of these spiritual experiments... the ones that gave me the strength to experiment with political changes in the first place.

And because I will be writing about *spiritual* experiments, they do not leave room for me to say good things about myself. For each step shows only where I was wrong, and how I needed to learn more.

What I have been wanting to do for thirty years now is to see God face to face, to become all that he wants me to be. This is my whole life. All of my words and actions point in this one direction.

But, because I believe that others can do what I have been doing, I do not want to carry out my experiments secretly. There are some things that are between me and God, and I could never put them into words. But there are other things that *can* be put into words, and that is what I want to write about in my life story.

When it comes to my faith, I will try to tell only of those things that children should be able to understand. If I can tell them with an honest and humble spirit, then others can learn from them and use them in their own experiments with truth.

I can never say that I have Perfect Truth. I can say no more than what the best scientist can say, and that is to tell what I have learned and to pass that on for others to think about, and to add to. I have tried to be honest and to understand myself. From this I have arrived at beliefs that I now think are perfectly true for me. If I did not believe they were true, I would not be doing the things that I now do. But along the way, I have been forced to make changes; and so I cannot stop others from doing the same with what I now believe.

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If I were only going to write about rules for right living, I would not need to write my life story. But I want to write about how I have used and *experimented* with these rules. From that grows my life story. I will be writing about experiments with *parts* of the truth, like experiments with not hitting back when others hurt you, or experiments with controlling the desire for sex. But real truth is much bigger than these experiments. Truth is not just in what we say, but in what we think; and more than that, it is God Himself... Eternal Truth.

There are many ways of saying who God is, because there are many ways that God shows himself to us. But the part of God that I want to give my life to more than anything is Truth. I do not know him perfectly, but I want to know him more than anything. I want to be willing to even give him my life if that is the price I must pay to find Perfect Truth.

But until I find Perfect Truth, I must hold to the little parts of truth that I have received up to this point. These truths are the light that leads me to God, and they are all that protect me from falling away.

Finding truth in this way (that is, by following what little truth I have until I find something better) is the fastest and easiest way I know of to find Perfect Truth. Even when I have been very wrong in my understanding of truth, it has not been important soon after I have learned the truth of how wrong I was. The reason for this is because each experiment brings me closer to Perfect Truth.

As I walk in the light that I have, the light grows. Often I have been able to get a little look at Perfect Truth, a little look at God; and each day my belief grows that God alone is real, and everything apart from him is not real at all.

I want others to travel with me through these experiments. I want others to feel the same faith that has come from them.

Another belief grows in me each day, and that is that what I have been doing to find truth, any child can do. I have good

reason for saying this, for what it takes to find truth is as easy as it is difficult. What a proud person sees as being difficult, a humble child will see as being very easy. The one who wants to know the truth must be more humble than dirt. Hindu, Christian, and Muslim teachings all agree with me on this.

If readers see pride in what I write, then they must understand that the same pride will steer me away from the truth; and even my belief that I can see God will be a trick by my own mind. The truth is far more important than me, and it is better for hundreds like myself to be destroyed than it is for us to lose truth by trying to make Mohandas K. Gandhi look good. In trying to see good in people like myself, who are not perfect, we must not make the smallest change to truth.

I pray that no one will think that what I am saying in this book is finished or perfect. All I am telling you about is my experiments. You too must experiment. I believe that reading about my experiments can be of some help to you in your own experiments.

I will try not to hide the ugliest truths about myself. I want readers to know how wrong I have been. I want to write about my experiments, and not just try to say how good I am. I want to be as honest as truth itself is in judging me; and I want others to do the same. When I measure myself in that way, I am forced to say with Surdas:

*Where is there a person so bad, and so easy to hate, as myself? I have left my Maker and have been so much without faith.*

It is a pain without end to me that I am still so far from God, when I know that he made me and controls every part of my life. I know it is the wrong feelings in myself that keep me so far from God, and yet, up to this point, I have not been able to get completely away from them.

M. K. Gandhi,  
26 November, 1925



**Part 1.  
Gandhi as a Child  
and  
Gandhi as a Student**



## 1. Birth and Parents

My uncle, my father, and my father's father were all First Ministers of Indian states.

I like to tell this story about my father's father, Ota Gandhi, because it shows his strong love for his state and for his people. Because of fighting that was going on in his state of Porbandar, Ota Gandhi had been forced to hide in a different state. He lifted his left hand when saying hello to a leader from this new state, and someone asked him why he used his left hand and not his right hand to do this. Ota Gandhi said, "Because my right hand is promised to Porbandar."

Ota Gandhi had six sons. The last two were Kaba and Tulsidas. Both of these brothers were First Ministers in Porbandar, one after the other. Kaba Gandhi was my father. He was for some time First Minister in Rajkot, and then in Vankaner. I was the youngest of his three sons.

My father loved his people, and he was honest, brave, and generous. But he could quickly become angry. In his family, as in government, people knew he would act equally toward all. No one could buy him. He was not interested in becoming rich, and because of this, he did not leave us with very much wealth.

My father did not go to school, but he learned much, and he was able to learn it quickly, from the world around him. He was able to find answers to the most difficult problems, and he was able to lead hundreds of workers by using only what he had learned from life. He did not study religion, but he remembered much that he had learned from going to the Hindu temples and from listening to others talk about the Hindu religion. In his last days he started reading the Gita, and each day at the time of prayer, he would say out loud some of the teachings from the Gita.

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I remember that my mother was a very spiritual person. She would not eat without praying first. Each day she would go to the temple. As far as I can remember she always followed the rules about fasting for the four months of rain each year. On top of that, she would make very difficult promises and never break them.

I remember one year when she was doing a special fast measured by the size of the moon. She became sick, but she would not stop the fast. At times she would go from one fast to another without a break. Most of the time she would eat only one meal a day for the four month fast. But one year she said she would eat only one meal every two days, and she did.

Another time when she was eating only one meal a day, she said that she would not eat her meal without first seeing the sun. When the rains are very bad, there are whole days when you cannot see the sun at all. We children would stand looking up at the sky, waiting to tell our mother if the sun came out from behind the clouds. I remember times when we would run to tell her that the sun was out; but by the time she was out there to see it with her own eyes, it would be behind the clouds again.

"It is not important," she would say happily. "God did not want me to eat today." And then she would return to her work.

My mother was very smart in many ways. Women in the government looked up to her because of her smartness. I would often go with her when she went to talk with women who were married to the government leaders, and I remember many of the interesting talks that she had with them.

I was born at Porbandar on 2 October, 1869, and lived there as a child. I remember starting school; but I must not have been a very good student, for all I can remember of my earliest studies was that I was forced to call my teachers by special names.

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**BIRTH AND PARENTS**

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**QUESTIONS ON PART 1**

1. Who was Gandhi talking about when he said "No one could buy him. He was not interested in becoming rich, and because of this, he did not leave us with very much wealth."
  2. True or false: Gandhi's father was well educated.
  3. What did Kaba Gandhi start reading in his last days?
  4. What did Gandhi's mother do to show her love for, and faith in, God, that seemed to have the strongest effect on him?
  5. In what year was Gandhi born?
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## 2. School Days

I think I was seven years old when my father left Porbandar for Rajkot. I can remember my school and my teachers in Rajkot very well. But again, I do not remember much about the studies themselves. I don't think I was a special student. But I cannot remember ever telling a lie to my teachers or to my friends in those early school days.

From this school I went to another school, and then to the high school when I was twelve years old. I remember that I was very shy. I would arrive at school at the very minute that classes were to start each day, and then I would run out of the school when classes ended. This was because I was afraid to talk to anyone, and because I was afraid that others would laugh at me.

I remember something that happened in my first year at high school. The School Official had come to the school, and he wanted to test the class on five spelling words. One of the words was "kettle" and I did not know how to spell it. My teacher, who wanted to look good in the eyes of the School Official, pushed me with the toe of his shoe, encouraging me cheat, by looking at the student beside me to see how the word should be spelled. I could not believe that a teacher would encourage a student to do what the teacher should be there to *stop* students from doing, and so I did not follow his lead. Because I was too "stupid" to cheat, I was the only student in the class to spell the word wrongly.

Strangely, this action on the part of the teacher did not stop me from thinking very highly of him. It was easy for me to think the best about those who were older than me. I had learned that it was my job to obey leaders and not to question them.

Two other things happened at this time that I have always remembered.

As a rule, I hated reading. I would, without enthusiasm, read what was needed for my studies, but nothing more. But something made me take an interest in a story that my father had in his books. It was the story of Shravana's love for his parents. I could not put it down. About the same time, some travelling actors came to our place, and they acted out the part where Shravana carries his blind parents on a trip. The story from my father's book, and a song that I learned from the actors stayed in my mind.

"You must be like this," I said to myself. The sad cry of the parents over Shravana when he died is still strong in my mind. The song moved me deeply, and I learned to play it on a musical instrument that I had.

About this same time I went to see another group of actors. The story they were acting out this time was *Harishchandra*, and it too moved me very deeply. I could never be tired of seeing it. I must have acted it out in my own mind many many times. "Why isn't everyone honest like Harishchandra?" I would ask myself day and night. The story made me want to follow truth at all costs as Harishchandra did. Just thinking about it would often make me cry.

My mind tells me today that Harishchandra was not a real person. But Harishchandra and Shravana are very real and very much alive for me, and I believe that even today I would be moved as I was then on reading or seeing those stories again.

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**QUESTIONS ON PART 2.**

1. What did Gandhi say that he could never remember doing in his early school days?
2. Why did Gandhi run home from school as soon as his classes finished?
3. What did one teacher encourage Gandhi to do, that Gandhi would not do, because he believed it was wrong?
4. What did Shravana do in a story that Gandhi remembered deeply?
5. What did the story of Harishchandra make Gandhi want to do?

### 3. Married Children

I would like to jump over this part of my story, but it is one of many that I will have to cover if I am to give an honest picture of my life. I must say here that I was married when I was thirteen years old. I believe it was wrong, and I can see no good argument for anyone being married so young.

Understand that I am not saying that my parents made an agreement when I was thirteen for me to marry at a later time. I am saying that I was fully married at this age. Parents in India often make agreements between themselves that a boy and girl will marry years later. But these agreements can be dropped. I think my parents did this three times for me by the time I was seven. The first two girls died, and the last is the one that I married when I was thirteen.

Remember that I had two other brothers. My oldest brother was married by this time, but my parents agreed with an uncle that his son, who was about one year older than me, my second brother, who was two or three years older than me, and I would all be married at the same time. They were not thinking about what we wanted or what would be best for us. It was all a question of money.

It is not easy to be married as a Hindu. The parents often spend all they have for it. They waste their wealth and their time on all the plans. Months of work go into making special clothes, special food, and all that goes with getting married in India. The girl's parents and the boy's parents race with each other to see who can spend more money and time on it. Women (Some who cannot sing at all!) sing themselves sick, and make life difficult for all who live near them.

But the people living near the families of those who are getting married, quietly put up with all the noise, all the comings and goings, and all the cleaning up that is needed when the wedding is finished, because they know that in a year or two it will be their turn to act just as stupidly.

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So my parents and my uncle were thinking that it would be better to get it all over with in one hit. They could make a bigger show for less money if they put it all into one wedding and not into three separate weddings. My father and uncle were both old, and we were the last of their children.

It was only in the business of planning for the wedding that we learned of our part in it all. I think for myself it was little more than food, music, new clothes, a walk down the road, and a strange girl to play with. The physical side of being married did not hit me until later. I will pull a curtain over much of this, apart from a few things that I will get to later. For the most part, this has little to do with my real reason in writing this story.

My brother and I moved to Porbandar from Rajkot for the wedding, but my father was not free to come until a few days before we were married. On his way there, the coach turned over and he was badly hurt. He arrived covered in bandages. Both his interest and our interest in the wedding was half destroyed by his accident; but after all this work, how could anyone change the plans at the last minute?

I had strong feelings about doing what my parents wanted me to do, and I had strong desires in my body too. So I was happy to be getting married. I can still remember each movement that my father made as he went through the different parts of the wedding plan. I did not dream at the time that one day I would be angry with my father for having planned this wedding when I was so young. On that day, it all seemed so right.

On our first night together as husband and wife we were two children forced together in the ocean of life. My brother's wife had talked with me about what I must do on the first night. I do not know who talked to my wife. I never asked her about it, and I am not interested in learning now. But in the end, we were too shy to even look at each other. All the teaching did not carry me far!

## **MARRIED CHILDREN**

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But what we remember from past births is all that is needed. We slowly learned to know each other and to talk freely. We were the same age, but in no time I made it clear that I was the leader and she was the follower.

### **QUESTIONS ON PART 3**

1. How old was Gandhi when he was married to Kasturbai?
2. What did Gandhi say was the reason for his parents and uncle agreeing to marry three sons off at the same time?
3. On what did Gandhi say that Hindu parents waste their time and money?
4. True or false: Gandhi was angry with his father on his wedding day, because he did not believe it was right to marry so young.
5. What did Gandhi say that he quickly made clear to his new wife?

## 4. Playing the Husband

When I was a child, I remember seeing little leaflets with teachings on many different things, from how to use money well, to how married people should act toward each other. I would often read these leaflets, remembering parts that I liked and forgetting parts I did not like. One part I remembered well was that when people marry it is for all of life. I wanted very much to follow truth, and so I had the understanding that I must follow this, and not leave my wife for any other woman.

But then, at thirteen, there is not much one can do to find another woman even if one wants to!

There was a bad effect from this teaching too. I reasoned, "If I must not leave her, then she must not leave me." That was true, but in my mind it became a job for me to work at, for her good. She did nothing at all to make me believe she would leave me, but I still believed that I must do things to force her to be true to me. I made it a rule that she must never be away from me without asking first. I wanted to know her every movement. And this planted the seeds for many arguments between us.

I had made a prison for Kasturbai with my rules, and she was not one to be easily put in prison. She made a point of going any place and at any time that she wanted. The more rules I made, the more she would break them and the more angry I would become. I can understand now how she must have felt. How could she agree to rules against going to the temple or visiting friends without first asking me, when it was clear in her mind that she was not planning to do anything wrong? All this is clear now, but at that time all I was thinking of was that I must play my part as the husband and leader.

Do not think that our life was all anger and arguments. My rules, hard as they were, came from a heart of love. My dream was to make her, by all my rules, into a perfect wife, living a perfect life, with the same interests and understanding that I had in all things.

This is not to say that Kasturbai wanted such things. She did not know how to read. She was a quiet, hard-working person with little to say... at least to me. She was happy to stay as she was. All of my studying did not make her want to study. So I think my plans for her were all one-sided. All my interest was toward one woman, and I wanted her to be equally interested in me. But even with different interests, it was not all sadness; for there was in my heart a growing love for her.

I liked being with her too much. All day at school I would think of her. I looked forward to night time, when I could be with her. Being away from her was almost more than I could take. I would keep her awake until late into the night with all my foolish talk. If it had not been that I believed strongly in doing my other jobs, I think I would have become sick or even died from wanting to be with her all of the time. Each morning I had jobs to do, and that saved me from spending all of my time with her.

I wanted badly to teach Kasturbai to read; but my need for physical love did not leave me enough time to do this well. For one thing, she did not *want* to learn to read. And for another thing, my only free time was at night. When I was old enough to not need physical love from her so much, my life was filled with other business. I tried bringing teachers in to help her, but that too did not work. So now Kasturbai can only write some easy letters and understand some easy Gujarati. I know that if I had not been so filled with thoughts of mating, she would be a very smart woman today. I know that, with more time, I would have been able to get her to *like* learning. For true love can do anything.

One other thing that saved me from spending all my time with Kasturbai was that Hindu parents of young wives often find reasons for their daughters to come and stay with them for weeks or months at a time. In the first six years after we were married, only for about three of those years were Kasturbai and I together.

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Then, when I was eighteen, I went to Britain. This was the start of a long time away from Kasturbai. When I returned, we were often apart, as I had to go up and down between Rajkot and Mumbai. Then came the call to South Africa. By that time I was more free of my need for physical love.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 4**

1. What rule did Gandhi make for Kasturbai, that became the seed for many arguments between them?
2. Finish this: "My rules, hard as they were, came from a heart of \_\_\_\_\_."
3. What saved Gandhi from spending all of his time with Kasturbai when he was first married?
4. What did Gandhi want badly to teach Kasturbai that she did not *want* to learn?
5. What did Gandhi do when he was eighteen, that took him away from his wife for a long time?

## 5. At High School

I was a student at high school when I married. We three brothers were studying at the same school. My oldest brother was in a much higher class, but the brother who was married at the same time that I was, was only one year above me. The effect of being married was that we both dropped behind for one year. The effect for my brother was worse than that; for he dropped out of school completely. God only knows how many other lives have been changed like this by children being married so young. Only we Hindus try to push our children into studying and into getting married at the same time.

I stayed on at school. My teachers liked me, and my marks were always good. When I was sixteen, and again when I was seventeen, I received awards. But I should say that they were not because I was so smart. The awards were only for boys from around the town where I lived, and in a class of forty or fifty boys, there would not have been many others trying to win the awards.

As I remember it, I was not very interested in becoming a top student. Getting good marks or winning awards was always a surprise to me. But what I was interested in was being good. I would cry over the smallest thing that I did that was bad, or that my teachers believed was bad. I remember being punished for some small thing before I was married. Being hit by the teacher did not hurt as much as knowing that the teacher believed I was bad. I cried deeply.

Again, when I was seventeen, I was punished. The head master was a good teacher, and a man with strong rules. The boys all liked him. He made it a rule that older boys must all take part in cricket and in doing exercises. I hated both. Because I was shy, I had never played at sports with the others. I now see that it was wrong of me to have been so shy.

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At the time I believed that sports were not important in learning; but now I know that exercise for the body is as important as exercise for the brain.

(But I should add that, when I was very young, I read that long walks in open air are good for people. So I started taking long walks; and I still do. They have helped me to stay healthy without sports.)

Another reason I did not like the exercises was because I wanted to nurse my sick father. When school would close, I would run home to be with him. Forced exercises after school stopped me from being able to do this. I asked if I could be freed from the exercises to help my father, but my teacher would not agree to it. On Saturdays there was a break between school in the morning and exercises at 4 p.m. I had no watch, and clouds had covered the sun one Saturday. By the time I returned to school, the boys had all left. When the teacher heard that I had not been there, he asked me why. I told him what had happened, and he said I would have to pay a coin or two for not coming.

He did not believe me! That filled me with pain. How could I prove it was an accident, that I had not planned to stay away from the exercises? There was no way. I cried deeply. But from this I learned that if we want people to believe us, we must always do our best not to forget things. This was the first and last time that I did not show up for a class at school. I think I remember the teacher saying I did not need to pay the money in the end. And after a letter from my father, I was able to stay home and nurse him when other students were doing exercises.

I will tell two more things that I remember from my school days. After I fell behind a year because of being married, the teacher wanted me to catch up by doing two years' work in one. After six months in my third year, I moved up to year four. Classes were in English from the

start of year four, and geometry was a new and difficult study for me. These two together made it a very difficult year. I often had thoughts of returning to year three, but I believed that doing so would make me look bad and make the teacher look bad for having put so much faith in me. I pushed on, and one day I had a break-through in geometry where it all became very easy for me to understand. From that time on, geometry has been both easy and interesting for me.

Another problem I had in school was learning Sanskrit. Sanskrit was a bigger job than geometry. Geometry is all in *understanding* rules, but Sanskrit is in *remembering* hundreds of words. I started Sanskrit in year four, and by the time I started year six I was feeling very discouraged about it.

There was something of a competition between the Sanskrit teacher and the Arabic teacher. The boys would talk secretly about how easy-going the Arabic teacher was. This made me want to change over to Arabic. One day I went to the Arabic class. My Sanskrit teacher learned of it and was hurt by it. He called me to him and said, "How can you forget how important this is to your family? Don't you want to learn the language of your own religion? If you need help, you can come to me. I want to do my best to teach you. As you learn more, you will find it to be more interesting. Do not give up. Come and sit again in the Sanskrit class."

These kind words made me feel guilty. I could not go against my teacher's love. I am happy today for that teacher, because without the little Sanskrit that I learned then, I would not have been able to learn what I have learned from our holy writings. I now feel bad that I did not learn *more* of the language. And I now believe that every Hindu child should learn Sanskrit.

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**QUESTIONS ON PART 5**

1. What bad effect did being married have on Gandhi's brother?
2. Gandhi said he was not very interested in becoming a top student. What was he interested in?
3. What exercise did Gandhi start doing when he was young, that helped him to stay healthy without taking part in sports?
4. What did a teacher punish Gandhi for when he was 17?
5. What language did Gandhi believe every Hindu child should learn?

## 6. A Sad Story, part 1

I had few friends in high school and only two that I would say were very close. My first friend left me when I became friends with the second. My time with this second friend was, I believe, a very sad part of my life. It started with me wanting to make him better, but it did not end that way at all.

This friend was, at first, a friend to my older brother. My mother, my oldest brother, and my wife all said that he was not a good person to have as a friend. I was not afraid to go against what my wife said, but I did not want to go against my mother and my oldest brother. So I talked to them.

"I know that he is weak in the ways that you say," I said. "But he has good points too. He will not be able to change me, because my reason for wanting to be his friend is to change *him*. I think he could be a very good person if I could help him to change where he is weak now. Please, do not worry about me being changed by him."

I do not think they were very confident that what I was saying would really happen, but they agreed to give me my way.

I now know that I was wrong in my beliefs. To make the world better, a good person cannot become too close to the ones he or she wants to change. Your best friends must be equals in spiritual things; for true friends cannot help but change each other. Because it is easier to be bad than to be good, close friends will be able to change us in bad ways more than they will be able to change us in good ways. If a person wants to be friends with God, that person must be ready to stand alone, with no friends at all... or to think of the whole world as his or her friends.

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At the time when I first came across this friend, there was a wave of interest in changing India for the better that was moving through Rajkot. My friend told me that many of our teachers were secretly eating meat and drinking wine. He had the names of many important people in Rajkot who were doing the same. And he said that some of the high school boys were doing it too.

I was surprised and hurt to hear this. I asked why people were changing their ways, and he said that it was because people were starting to see that the English people were stronger, and able to control us, because they ate meat. My friend was very healthy and strong, and he said that it was because he was a meat eater. He said that meat eaters do not have as many sores as vegetarians, and if they get a sore, chemicals in the meat help the sores to heal more quickly for them than they do for us vegetarians.

"Our teachers and these other important people are not stupid," he said. "They know that meat is good for you. You should be eating meat too. Give it a try and see what happens."

He did not give me all of these arguments at one sitting. But over time, he worked away at me with them, one by one. My older brother agreed with my friend, for he too had started to secretly eat meat. It is true that my body was very small and weak beside that of my friend and my older brother. My friend knew no fear. If he was punished for something, he would not worry about the pain. He could run long distances, and he could run very quickly at short distances too. He was very good at both long jumping and high jumping. I was easily confused by all of this, because I wanted to be like him. I was not very strong at all, and I wanted to be.

Worse still, I was afraid of many things... robbers, the spirits of the dead, snakes. I was afraid to go outside at night. It was very difficult for me to sleep in the dark, because of my fears. I was not able to tell my wife – who was sleeping by my side – of my fears, because I knew that she was braver than me. My friend said that he had none of these fears because he was a meat eater.

We school boys had a little rhyme that we learned at this time:

*See the big strong English man.  
He controls us Indians all.  
Because he is a meat eater,  
He is full six feet tall.*

I was not able to stand against these arguments. I started to believe that eating meat would give me strength and confidence, and that, if the whole country were to eat meat, we could be free of control by the English.

So a day was fixed to start our experiment. It had to be secret, because my family was part of a caste with very strong rules against eating meat. In that part of India, the feeling against eating meat is stronger than in any other place on earth.

My feelings about following my parents were strong too. I knew that if my parents learned I had been eating meat it would almost kill them. I had strong feelings about telling the truth, and I did not want to put myself in a place where I would be forced to lie to my parents. I knew that I would have to hide the truth from them, but I believed that doing this was part of helping India. My interest in meat was not because I wanted to taste it, but because I wanted to help India to be free from the English. And my feelings about making India free had made me blind to the truth about what I was doing. I made myself believe that hiding the truth from my parents was not the same as lying to them.

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**QUESTIONS ON PART 6**

1. What did Gandhi say was his reason for wanting to be friends with a boy that his mother and older brother did not want him to be friends with?
2. True or false: Gandhi said that if we want to be friends with God, we must be ready to stand alone, with no friends at all.
3. What did Gandhi's school friend encourage him to do?
4. Why did Gandhi want the whole country to eat meat?
5. What strong feelings did Gandhi have that made it difficult for him to eat meat?

## 7. A Sad Story, part 2

The day came for me to eat meat, and my emotions were mixed. On the one hand, I felt it was a very special day for me, because I was changing myself in a way that would lead to important changes in India. But on the other hand, I had the feeling that I was hiding like a robber to do what I was about to do. I do not know which emotion was strongest.

We went looking for a secret hiding place by the river, and there I saw for the first time in my life – meat. The goat meat my friend brought for me to eat was as hard as leather, and I could not eat it. I became sick and was forced to stop.

That night I had very bad dreams. Each time I started to fall asleep, I had the feeling that a goat was crying inside of me, and I would wake up feeling very guilty. I made the guilty feeling go away by telling myself that what I had done was done to help India.

My friend did not give up easily. He made many different dishes from meat, and mixed other things with the meat, to make it taste better. We moved from the river to a State house with tables and chairs to make me feel more comfortable. My friend was able to get the cook at the State house to help him with his plan to change me.

It worked. I never did learn to like meat by itself, but I did learn to like some of the dishes my friend made with meat mixed in. Over a year, we were able to do this only about six times. I had no money to pay for these meals, but my friend did.

Each night after I would eat a meat dish, I would not be able to eat at home. My mother would ask me why I was not eating, and I would say that there was something wrong with my stomach. I did not find it easy to do this. I knew I was lying, and that I was lying to my mother of all people. This ate away at me.

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In the end, I said to myself, "It is important for India for me to learn to eat meat, but hiding the truth from my parents is worse than not helping India. After my parents have died, I will eat meat; but for now I cannot do it any more."

I told my friend this, and to this day I have not returned to eating meat. My parents never learned that two of their sons ate meat.

I turned away from the meat, because I did not want to lie to my parents; but I did not turn away from my friend. I could not see that he had been changing me more than I had been changing him.

His control over me was so strong that he was almost able to lead me away from my wife. I was only saved by the skin of my teeth.

He took me to a house of prostitutes and paid for a prostitute for me. I walked into the mouth of sin, but God's grace protected me from myself. It was like I was both blind and not able to talk after I went into the prostitute's room. I was sitting by the woman on the bed, but I was not able to talk. She became angry and showed me to the door. My pride was so hurt that I wanted to become invisible. But from that time on, I have only been able to thank God that he saved me.

There were four other times in my life when I was close to cheating on my wife. Each time I was not saved by my own spiritual strength. In God's way of measuring things, I was guilty each time, for I *wanted* to do the wrong thing even if I did not really do it. From the way that most people look at it, I was saved from sin because I was saved from doing the physical act. For someone like myself, even being saved by an act of God is enough to make us very happy after we have come to ourselves and no longer feel like doing what is wrong. But at these times it is hard to

say where the line is between the good that we do because we choose to do good and the good that we do because God stops us from doing wrong.

But, returning to my story, even this trip to the house of prostitutes did not open my eyes to how my friend was changing me. It was some time later that I was able to see that.

But one other thing about this friend that happened at this time: Many of the arguments that I had with my wife started with stories that this friend told me. He said things to make me think my wife was cheating on me. I have not been able to forgive myself for the ways that I hurt my wife by acting on stories from this friend. Only a Hindu wife would put up with the things I did. If you believe wrongly that a servant is cheating on you, the servant will throw up his job. If you do the same with a son, he will leave his father's house. A friend will stop being your friend. But a wife puts up with it all. If a Hindu wife thinks her husband is cheating, she will keep quiet. But if he thinks she is cheating and he says so, her name is destroyed forever. Where can she go? A Hindu wife cannot go to court against her husband. There is no way out. So I cannot forget or forgive myself for pushing my wife into a corner such as that.

I was only able to become free of the fear that my wife would cheat on me when I learned to understand *ahimsa*, or "not hurting others". I then was able to see why it is important to control our feelings for sex if we want to be close to God. The wife should not be a thing that we own, but she should be our friend and our helper, equal to us in all of her feelings, and free to choose her own way. When I think of those dark days of fear, I am filled with hate for my cruel and foolish actions, and I become angry at how blind I was in following my friend.

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**QUESTIONS ON PART 7**

1. What happened the first time Gandhi tried to eat meat?
2. True or false: Gandhi did not return to eating meat after that first time.
3. Where did Gandhi's friend take him, that almost ended in him cheating on his wife?
4. What did Gandhi's friend say to bring more problems between Gandhi and Kasturbai?
5. Who did Gandhi say should be a friend and helper, and a thing that is owned?

## 8. Robbing and Forgiveness

I must tell of some other sins around the time when I tried eating meat. Some go back to before I was married, or a short time after it.

A relative and I became interested in smoking. We did not see any good in it and we did not like the smell of the cigarettes. But we believed that it would be fun to push out clouds of smoke from our mouths. My uncle smoked, and we wanted to be like him. But we had no money. So we started by using the little pieces of cigarettes that were left after my uncle finished smoking them.

We were not always able to get cigarettes this way, and there was not enough left to make a good cloud of smoke anyway. So for a few weeks we robbed small coins from the money for the servant, and we used it to buy Indian cigarettes. But we still had the problem of where to hide the cigarettes, and where to go to smoke them secretly.

We were feeling that adults had too many rules for us, and we wanted to be free of them. We believed that what we were going through was more than we could take. And so we started a plan to kill ourselves!

But how were we to do it? We needed a poison, and we learned of a seed that was a good poison. We went to a jungle near where we lived, and there we found a few of the seeds. We believed that night time was the best time for such things, so we went to the temple, put oil in the temple lamp, said our prayers, and then looked for a quiet corner where we could take our lives.

But then we started to think: What if we do not die quickly? And what is the good of killing ourselves? Isn't it better to be alive and forced to follow the rules of our parents, than to be dead?

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We had come this far, so we ate two or three of the seeds as a sign of our feelings. We did not think it was safe to take more. We decided to go to another temple to get over the effects of the seeds, and to stop thinking about killing ourselves.

The effect of all this was that we both said goodbye to smoking and to robbing coins from the servant to buy cigarettes. Now, as an adult, I think of smoking as a stupid, dirty, and dangerous thing to do. I cannot understand why so many people in all parts of the world do it. I find it hard to breathe when travelling in a train full of people who are smoking.

I was twelve or thirteen years old, or even less when I robbed the coins from the servant. But when I was fifteen, I did something much more serious. My older brother, the meat eating one, owed some money to someone, and he did not have the money to pay. He had a piece of gold that went around his arm. My father gave it to him. It was easy to cut a small piece out of this and to sell it for enough to pay the money. So I did this to help my brother.

But I could not carry the guilty feeling that came with doing it. I promised myself that I would never rob anything again. And I decided to tell the truth to my father. I was too afraid to talk to him myself. It was not that I was afraid of him hitting me. I cannot remember him ever hitting any of us. But I was afraid of the pain that I would bring to him by my action. At the same time, I felt that I must tell him, even if it was going to hurt him to hear the truth about his son. I could not be free of the guilt without telling the truth.

I decided to put my confession in writing, to give it to my father, and to ask him to forgive me. In the letter I told the truth about what I had done, and I asked him to punish

me for it. At the end of the letter I asked him not to punish himself for my sin. I promised, too, that I would never rob again in the future.

I was shaking as I handed the letter to my father. He was sick at the time, and he was in his bed. His bed was just a long board. I handed him the letter and waited.

He sat up in bed to read it. After reading it, pearl drops moved down his face, making the paper wet as his tears dropped on it. He closed his eyes to think for a minute, and then he ripped up the letter. He put his head back down on the board. I could see my father was in much pain over my actions, and I cried with him.

Those pearl drops of love washed the sin out of my heart. Only one who has received love like that can know what I am talking about. As the song says:

*Only one who has been hit by the arrows of love  
can know what strength it has.*

At the time I could only see that this was the love of a father for his son. But I know today that this was perfect *ahimsa* (changing others by not hitting back) in action. When we can have *ahimsa* like this for everyone, it will change all that it touches. There is no end to what it can do.

Forgiving like this was not easy for my father. I had been thinking that he would be angry, say hard things, and hit his head. But he was so very quiet about it! And I believe it was because I was honest in what I said to him. Being very honest about our sins, when joined with a deep promise (to the one who should receive it) that we will not do the sin again, is the perfect way to turn away from sin. I know that what I said made my father feel very safe about me not doing it again, and it made him love me more than I can measure.

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**QUESTIONS ON PART 8**

1. Why had Gandhi and a friend robbed coins from the servants' money when he was about twelve years old?
2. What did Gandhi do when he was fifteen, that made him feel very guilty?
3. How did Gandhi go about telling his father that he had cut something out of the piece of gold?
4. What was it in Gandhi's spirit that he believed had helped his father not to be angry about him selling the gold piece?

## 9. My Father's Death

I am now up to the time when I was fifteen years old. My father, as I have said, was very sick in bed. My mother, an old servant, and I were looking after him.

It was my job to change his bandages, give him his medicine, and mix drugs when they were needed to make up the medicine. Each night I rubbed his legs, going to bed only when he asked me to do so, or after he was asleep. I was happy to do this for him. I do not think I fell down on the job even once. My time, when I was not eating or sleeping, was mostly filled with school work and with nursing my father. The only time that I went for my night time walk was when he said I could or when he was feeling well.

At this same time, my wife was carrying our first baby. I now see that I did two things that were very wrong at that time. For one thing, I did not hold myself back from mating with her, as I should have been doing as a student; and for another thing, I let my desire for sex pull me away from my love for my parents. Each night, when my hands were rubbing my father's legs, my mind was in the bedroom with my wife. And that was happening at a time when she was carrying a baby, a time when our religion, science, and my own heart were all telling me that sex was wrong. I was always happy to finish rubbing my father's legs, because I knew I would be free to go straight to the bedroom with my wife.

My father had been growing worse each day. He was losing his will to live, and becoming weaker and weaker. He was asked to use a bed pan as a toilet, but, weak as he was, he never did this. He forced his body away from the bed to the outside toilet because of the strong rules of our caste about such things.

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It is important to be clean. But I agree with science that a person can go to the toilet in a bed without it making them dirty, if they use the right containers and if they wash after they are finished. I did not think of this at the time, because I was only filled with love for my father for trying so hard to follow the rules of our religion.

But the last night came. My uncle was there at the time. The two brothers were very close to each other. My uncle would sit near the bed the whole day and sleep by his side at night. We did not know that this was to be my father's last night.

It was 10:30 or 11:00 p.m. and I was rubbing my father's legs when my uncle said that he would take over for me. I was happy for him to do this, and went straight to my bedroom. My wife, poor thing, was sleeping; but it did not stop me from waking her.

In five or six minutes a servant came to the door, saying, "Get up. Your father is very sick." I knew he was very sick, but these words had a far more serious meaning at this time.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Your Father is no more."

It was over! I felt very guilty. If I had not been wanting to be with my wife, I would have been there with my father in his last few minutes. If I had been rubbing his legs, he would have died in my arms. Instead, it was my uncle who had this important place in my father's death. It was right that he should be there because he was so good about staying with my father at all times.

My guilt was in wanting sex at a time when my father was dying. It is a dirty mark on my life that I can never forget. After many years of believing so strongly that I must love my parents, I let my need for sex come in the way at the last. I tried to be a good husband, but my need for sex took away from that too. It was a long time before I was able to be free from that need.

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## MY FATHER'S DEATH

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In closing, I must say that the little baby that my wife had lived only three or four days. What more could I think would come of my actions? All married people should learn from what happened to me.

### QUESTIONS ON PART 9

1. When Gandhi was fifteen, he would rub his sick father's legs each night. He was always happy when he was finished. Why?
  2. What did Gandhi's father do to follow a Hindu rule when he was very sick, that made Gandhi love him more?
  3. Who was with Gandhi's father when he died?
  4. What was it about his father's death that made Gandhi feel guilty, and that he said was "a dirty mark" on his life, that he could never forget?
  5. What happened to Gandhi and Kasturbai's first baby, that he believed was God's way of punishing him?
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## 10. Looks at Religion

From the time I was five or six until I was fifteen, I was in school most of the time. In school I learned everything but religion. I am using the word "religion" in the widest possible way here, to even take in things like learning to understand myself. It would not have been hard for the teachers to teach some religion, but they did not. Yet that did not stop me from learning about religion from other people.

From my family I learned something about our part of the Hindu religion. I did not like going to the special meetings that were part of our faith, because I had heard that some people there were using the meeting place for sex, and this turned me off.

I learned more about faith from our family nurse, who was very close to me. For one thing, she heard that I was afraid of spirits of the dead, and she said that when I started to feel afraid, I should say "Ramanama" over and over again. To this day, I find that saying "Ramanama" is good medicine for me.

About the same time, a relative helped my second brother and me to learn *Ram Raksha*. We would say it together each morning for as long as we were in Porbandar. When we moved to Rajkot, we dropped it. I did not have much faith in it, but I had said it mostly because I was proud that I could say it well.

What had the deepest effect on me was hearing the *Ramayana* read when I was with my father. It was said of the man who read it to us that he had been healed of a serious skin sickness by saying "Ramanama" over and over and by putting leaves from a temple idol on his body. They said his faith had healed him. I do not know if this is true, but we believed the story at the time. I do know

that he was completely well when he was reading for my father. His voice was beautiful, and he would sing some of the lines before stopping to tell us the meaning. I must have been thirteen at the time and I remember being carried along with him as he would talk about the truths of the *Ramayana*. That was the start of my deep love for this book. Today, I believe that the *Ramayana* is the best book in all the world about worshipping God.

A few months later we moved to Rajkot and we stopped hearing these readings from the *Ramayana*. Two days a month there was a reading from the *Bhagavad Gita*. I went to listen a few times, but the person doing the reading was flat and boring. I have, over the years, learned to love the book more. I heard Pandit Malaviya read it when I was fasting for twenty-one days, and I was sad that I had not heard it from such a man when I was young. Learning to read and hear good books when a person is young can put down roots that will live through all of life.

What I most learned in Rajkot was to see good in all religions. My parents would go to different temples, and take or send us children there. Jain priests would often come to see my father, and even eat our food. They would talk to my father about religion, and about other things too. My father had Muslim and Zoroastrian friends, who would talk to him about their faith, and he would listen to them with humble interest. Because I was his nurse, I was often able to listen in. All of this helped me to see good in many different religions.

At that time, the one religion I could not see good in was Christianity. I had good reasons for not liking it. Christian missionaries would stand on a corner near the high school and shout against the Hindu religion and against our gods. I stopped only once to listen, and that was enough.

About the same time I heard of an important Hindu who had become a Christian. It was the talk of the town that following his baptism with water to show he was a Christian, he started eating the meat of cows and drinking alcohol; and he changed to wearing clothes from Europe, even to the point of wearing a hat! I could not believe that a religion with such teachings should be called a religion at all. When I learned that this man was starting to talk against the religion of his parents, against his country, and even against the ways of our people apart from our religion, it gave me a strong feeling against Christianity.

My interest in religions did not come from a living faith in God. I happened at this time to come across *Manusmriti* in my father's books. The story in it of God making the earth was not easy for me to believe. The truth is, it made me lean toward *not* believing in God.

I have told the story about my meat eating. At that time I believed too that it was good to kill snakes, insects, and other animals like them. I remember that I believed I was doing good when I killed insects.

But one good thing that I believed at that time was that people should try to do good, and that truth is the way to all that is good. My love for truth was growing, and with it my understanding of all that truth covers.

Then there were some Gujarati lines that became very important to me. They were the start of my interest in returning good for evil. From that time on, I started many experiments with doing this. Here are the lines:

*For a bowl of water, give all that one can eat.  
For a word of kindness, bend down and kiss one's feet.  
For the smallest coin, pay back with all your wealth.  
And if your life is saved, give all that is your self.  
To show that truth is what you most believe,  
Give back ten times more than what you do receive.  
But better still by far, forget what you have had;  
What you would do for good, do just as much for bad.*

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QUESTIONS ON PART 10

1. Where did Gandhi learn to say "Ramanama" over and over any time when he was afraid?
2. What did Gandhi think was the best book in all the world about worshipping God?
3. Why was it hard for Gandhi to feel interest in the Bhagavad Gita when he was young?
4. What was the most important thing Gandhi learned about religion when he was staying in Rajkot as a boy?
5. What was the one religion Gandhi could see no good in when he was a boy?
6. What was the last line of the poem that started Gandhi's interest in returning good for evil?

## 11. Planning for Britain

I finished high school in 1887, when I was eighteen years old. The tests were at Ahmedabad, and I travelled there alone. It was my first trip to Ahmedabad from Rajkot.

My family wanted me to go on with my studies at Bhavnagar, so I moved there. But I was finding it very difficult. By the first break in studies, I was feeling like giving up. My father had a very smart and good friend in a man named Mavji Devi. He was a close friend of the family even after my father died; and he came to see us when I returned from Bhavnagar for the school break. He said to my mother and my older brother, "Times are changing. If any of the boys are to move up in the world as their father did, they will need to go to the best schools. My son Kevelram is studying law in Britain, and he says it is easy to learn there. I think you should send Mohandas to Britain this very year. Kevelram has many friends, and he will help Mohandas. Mohandas should do well there."

He turned to me and said, "Wouldn't you like to study in Britain more than here?" I could think of nothing better at the time. Things were not going well at all at Bhavnagar and I jumped at what he was saying. I asked if I could study medicine.

My brother answered: "Father never liked it. He was thinking of you when he said that people from our caste should have nothing to do with cutting up dead bodies. Father always wanted you to study law."

Mavji added to that, "I do not agree with your father's religious reasons for being against studying medicine; but if you want to do anything with the government, it is better to study law. On top of that, it is the only way that you can make enough money to help your mother and your family. The times are changing and it is becoming harder to make a living.

The best thing for you is to study law." Turning to my mother he said, "Now I must leave. Please think about what I have said. When I return, I would like to hear of plans for Britain. Tell me if I can help you in any way."

He went away and I started to dream about travelling to Britain.

My oldest brother was worried. How could he find the money needed to send me? And was it safe for me to live so far away at my age.

My mother was worried too. She did not want me to be away from her. So she tried to put me off by saying, "Uncle is the oldest person in our family. You should ask him first. If he agrees that you should go, then I will think about it."

My older brother had a plan that could help with the costs of such a trip. He said to my mother, "Father worked for the government of Porbandar. An important official there thinks very highly of Uncle. If Uncle asks for government help to send Mohandas to Britain, that man will not turn him down."

I liked all of this. I have said before that I was a very weak person, and in those days it was a five-day trip by ox-cart to Porbandar, where my uncle lived; but my fears about such a difficult trip left when I thought about going to Britain. I went part of the way by ox-cart, and part of the way by camel. It was my first ride on a camel!

I arrived in Porbandar, kissed my uncle, and told him of our plan. My uncle was not enthusiastic about me going to Britain. "When I see Indians who have studied in Britain," he said, "they do not seem any different from people in Europe. They have no rules about the food that they eat. They never stop smoking. They dress as the English people do. This is not the way of our family. I do not have many years to live, and now you want me to agree at this time in my life for one of our family to go to Britain?"

Then he added, "But I do not want to stand in your way."

What your mother thinks is most important. If you can talk her into agreeing with you, then I will not stop you. My prayers will go with you."

"I could ask for nothing more," I said. "Now I must try to win my mother over. But can you ask for help from your friend in the government?"

My Uncle would not agree to that. He said that I must ask for myself. I cannot say why he did not ask for me, but I think it is because he did not want to be a part of something that he believed could easily destroy my love for my family, my religion, and my country.

I was able only to see my uncle's friend for a few seconds at his house, as he was walking up the steps, and all he said was for me to study in India for three years first, and then he would think about helping me go to Britain. That door was closed in my face.

But I knew there were other ways. I could sell my wife's jewelry. My oldest brother could help. He was always generous, and he loved me as a son.

I returned to Rajkot and asked Mavji Devi what to do. He encouraged us to borrow money from the bank if we needed it. I said we could sell my wife's jewelry. My brother said he would help.

But my mother was still against it. She had been asking around and people were telling her that young men lose their faith when they are in Britain. They eat meat and they drink alcohol.

"What about these things?" she asked me.

"Please believe me," I said. "I would not lie to you. I promise that I will not touch any of those things. If I was in danger, do you think Mavji Devi would encourage me to go?"

"I believe you here," she said. "But how can I go on believing you if you are so far from me? I am very confused. I don't know what to do. I will ask Becharji Swami."

Becharji Swami was a Jain priest. He too was a close friend of the family, and he came up with a way to help me. He talked my mother into letting him lead me in making three very holy promises to her: not to touch wine, not to touch women, and not to touch meat. When I had finished doing this, my mother agreed for me to go to Britain.

My high school had a big meeting to send me on my way. It was very special for one of their students to travel to another country to study and they wanted to make a big day of it. I wrote a few words to read out at the meeting, but I was almost too shy to read them. I remember my whole body shaking and feeling faint as I was standing to read those words.

With my family all behind me, I left with my brother for Mumbai. This was my first trip from Rajkot to Mumbai. But there were more problems to be faced after we arrived there.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 11**

1. What did Gandhi want to study in Britain?
2. What two reasons did his father's friend give for studying law?
3. Who did Gandhi's mother say he must ask first, before she would agree to him going to Britain to study?
4. What argument did his uncle have against Indians studying in Britain?
5. How did a Jain priest help Gandhi to go to Britain?

## 12. Outcaste

I was very happy as I headed with my brother for Mumbai. By that time, my wife had a baby that was only a few months old to look after. I left her behind in Rajkot.

When we arrived in Mumbai, we learned that the Indian Ocean is very rough in June and July. Friends said that, as this was my first trip on a ship, I should wait until November, when the weather would be safer. At the same time news came in about a ship going down in a storm. This worried my brother, and so he decided that I should wait. He left me to wait until November with our friends in Mumbai, and he returned to his job in Rajkot.

As I was waiting in Mumbai, my caste people learned of my plans, and they called a meeting. No one from our caste had ever been to Britain, and they believed I should be stopped. I was told to come to the meeting. I don't know how it happened, but when I went to the meeting, I had a stronger feeling of confidence than I had ever had before.

The leader of our caste was an old friend of my father's and he said to me:

"The people of our caste believe it is wrong for you to go to Britain. We understand that no one can live there without breaking the rules of our religion. You will be forced to eat and drink as they do."

My answer was, "It is not against the rules of our religion to go to Britain. I am going there to study. I have made a very holy promise to my mother that I will not touch the three things that you fear most. I am sure that the promise will protect me."

"But we are saying that you *cannot* keep your promise," said the leader. "You know that I was a friend of your father's. Out of love for your father you should listen to what I am saying."

"I know you are a friend of my father's," I said. "And I look up to you as one who is older than I am. But I cannot change my plans to go to Britain. Another very close friend of my father's, who is from the highest caste in the Hindu religion, says that he can see no problem with me going to Britain. And my mother and brother have agreed for me to go."

"Will you go against what we in your caste have said for you to do?"

"I cannot change," I said. "I don't think it is the job of the caste to tell me what to do in a thing like this."

This made the leader very angry. He shouted a bad word at me. I did not move. So he moved. He said to all the people at the meeting, "This boy will be to us as an outcaste from today. If anyone helps him or goes to see him off, they will be forced to pay for it."

What he said did not have any effect on me. And I was very happy to hear later that my brother too was not moved by it.

But it did make me want to leave quickly, before my brother changed his mind. Then I heard that an Indian court worker had been asked to come to Britain to be received as a lawyer. He was leaving for Britain on September 4. My friends agreed that it would be good to have an Indian friend to travel with, and my brother said I could go.

But my brother had left money for my travels with relatives in Mumbai. They said they could not go against the caste rule, which they would be doing if they gave me the money. So instead, a friend agreed to give me some of his money if my brother would pay him back after the relatives returned my brother's money to him.

With this money I was able to get a bed in the same cabin with the court worker, Sjt. Tryambakrai Mazmudar. He told my friends not to worry about me, that he would look after me; and we sailed from Mumbai on September 4, 1887.

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**QUESTIONS ON PART 12**

1. Why did Gandhi need to wait until November before sailing for Britain?
2. Who believed that Gandhi should be stopped from going to Britain?
3. What was their reason for believing that it was wrong for Gandhi to go to Britain?
4. What did the leader of the caste do when Gandhi would not obey him and agree to stay in India?
5. Why did Gandhi's brother agree to let him leave in September, and not wait until November?

### 13. In London at Last

I was not sick on the trip, but it was far from easy for me. I was too shy to talk to people. Apart from my travelling friend, all the other people in our part of the ship were English. They talked too quickly for me to understand them well. I did not know how to use knives and forks, and I was too shy to ask which dishes did not have meat in them. So I did not eat at the table with the others. I lived for most of the trip on lollies and fruit from my own suitcases.

A kind English man travelling on the ship with me showed an interest in me, and tried to talk with me. He was older than I was. He asked about what I was eating, where I was going, why I was so shy, and other things. He encouraged me to eat with the other travellers, and laughed at my plans to be a vegetarian in London. In a friendly way he said I would be forced to change my beliefs. "It's so cold in Britain that it is not possible to live there without eating meat."

"But I have heard that people *can* live there without eating meat," I said.

"Don't believe them," he said. "I don't know of any vegetarians who live there. Please understand that I am not asking you to drink alcohol, as I do. But for your own good I think you should eat meat. You cannot live without it."

"I thank you for your interest, but I have made a holy promise to my mother not to touch meat. Because of that I cannot even think of breaking it. If I find that it is not possible to live in Britain without eating meat, I will be happier to return to India than to break my promise."

In India, a friend had said that I should get papers from people in Britain from time to time, saying that I was not eating meat, to prove to my mother that I was keeping my promise. This English friend happily gave me such a paper, and for a time I believed this paper was very important. But I later learned that people would sign papers to say I was not eating meat even if I was. Knowing this, made such a paper of little worth. If people could not believe my word, such a paper from people who would gladly lie for me would make little difference.

On the boat I had been wearing a black suit because I wanted to have my best white suit to wear when we arrived in London. I think it was a Saturday when we landed. The other travellers left their suitcases for the ship's workers to bring to them on Monday, so I did the same. It was near the end of September and I found when I left the ship that English people do not wear white clothes in the winter. I had no way to change to dark clothes before Monday, so I was very embarrassed for the next two days about being the only person wearing white.

Someone on the ship said that the Victoria Hotel was a good place to stay in London, so Sjt. Mazmudar and I went there. I had the names of four people in London who could help me. One of them was Doctor P. J. Mehta. I left word with him as soon as we had landed about where I would be, and he called at the hotel at about eight that night. He was very friendly and smiled kindly at the way I was dressed. As we were talking, I saw his top hat on the table, and it interested me. I started to rub the hair on it the wrong way. An angry look from Doctor Mehta told me that I had broken another English rule. With a good spirit he started teaching me some of the many rules I needed to learn to be able to understand the ways of the English people.

"They do not touch things if they do not own them," he said. "They do not ask questions as we do when we first meet people. They talk quietly. They do not use the word 'sir' when talking with each other. Only servants, students, and workers use that word, and they do it when talking to someone who is above them." He taught me many more things along these lines.

Doctor Mehta said that it would be too expensive to stay in a hotel, and that I should live with a family. We agreed to talk about this more on Monday.

Sjt. Mazmudar had made friends with a man on the boat from Italy. As this man lived in London, he said he could find us a much cheaper room. So we moved, after our bags had arrived on Monday morning. I was surprised at what I was asked to pay at the hotel, and that was without eating much food at all. If I asked for one thing, but could not eat it, I would ask for another; but I was forced to pay for them both. The truth is that for weeks now I had been living almost completely on the food that I had brought with me from Mumbai.

Even in the new rooms I was not happy. I could not stop thinking of my home and my country. I would cry at night and not be able to sleep when thinking of my mother and family. I could not talk about my sadness with anyone; and even if I had, it would not have stopped the sadness. Everything was strange – the people, their ways, and even their buildings. I did not know a thing about all the little rules that English people must follow. On top of this was my promise not to eat meat. Even the dishes that did not have meat in them were without spices and without taste. I was between a rock and a hard place! I was not happy with Britain, but I could not return to India. A voice inside of me said that now that I was there, I would have to stay for the whole three years.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 13**

1. Why did Gandhi not eat at the tables with others on the ship?
2. What reason did a kind English man on the ship give for saying that it would not be possible to live in Britain without eating meat?
3. What was strange about the way Gandhi was dressed when he arrived in London?
4. An Indian friend in London, Dr. Mehta, said it would be too expensive for Gandhi to stay in a hotel. Where did he think he should stay?
5. What did Gandhi say was wrong with English food, even when it did not have meat in it?

## 14. My Choice

Doctor Mehta came to see me at our rooms on Monday. He looked around the room and said that it would not do. "We do not come to Britain so much for the studies as we come to learn how to live and act as the English people do," he said. "To do this, you will need to live with an English family. But first, I have a friend you can stay with who will teach you some of what you need to know."

I thanked him for his interest in me, and I moved in with his friend a short time later. The friend was very kind, acting toward me like a brother, as he tried to teach me the English ways and the English language.

But my food was still a serious problem. I was not happy with boiled vegetables on their own without even a touch of salt. The woman cooking for us did not know how to cook for me. We had porridge for breakfast, which filled me up. But I was always forced to go hungry at lunch and dinner. My new friend always encouraged me to eat meat, but I would say that I had made a promise and leave it at that. I was able to eat bread and jam and some spinach for lunch and dinner. I was a good eater and had a big stomach, but I was too shy to ask for more than two or three pieces of bread. It did not seem like the right thing to do. Added to this, there was no milk with lunch or dinner.

At one point, my friend became angry with me. "If you were my brother," he said, "I would tell you to leave. What is the good of keeping a promise made to a mother who cannot read and who has no understanding of what life is like here? No court of law would say you had to keep such a promise. It is stupid to hold to it now that you know better. It will do you no good here. And besides, you say that you ate meat in the past and that you liked it. You ate it when you did not need to eat it then; so why can't you eat it now when you need it so badly?"

But I would not change.

Day after day the friend would argue; but my answer was always the same. The more he argued, the stronger I was about not changing. Each day I would pray for God to help me, and he did. Not that I had an understanding of God. But it was faith that was working in me all the same... the faith of my good nurse, Rambha.

One day, my friend started reading to me Bentham's writings about truth being measured only by what works. I was at the end of arguments. The language was too difficult for me to understand, so my friend tried to say it in his own words. I said, "Please, stop! These arguments are too much for me. I will agree that you are right. I cannot argue with you. But call me foolish or thick-headed, because I still will not break my promise to my mother.

"I know you only tell me these things over and over and over because you want to make things easier for me. But I cannot change. A promise is a promise, and it cannot be broken."

My friend looked at me in surprise. He closed the book and said, "Okay. I will not argue any more." And he did not. For this I was happy. But he did not stop worrying about me. He never tried to get me to smoke or drink as he did. The truth is that he encouraged me to stay away from both of these things. His interest in me eating meat was only because he was afraid that I would become weak without it, and that I would remember my time in Britain in a bad light because of it.

I stayed with him for a month before Doctor Mehta found me a place with a half Indian, half English widow. I told the woman about my promise not to eat meat and she said that she would see that I ate well. But there too I was never able to get enough food. The food was all without taste.

Each day the woman asked if the food was good enough, but I was too shy to say anything. I was afraid to ask for more when I did not have enough. She had two daughters who would give me one or two more pieces of bread. But they did not know that I would not be full without eating the whole loaf!

But by this time I was starting to walk around on my own. My studies had not yet started. I had started to read newspapers, which was something I never did in India. Here I learned to like reading the papers for an hour each day. After finishing the papers, I would go out for a walk. The widow had said that there were vegetarian restaurants in London, and I wanted to find them. I would walk ten or twelve miles each day, find a cheap restaurant, and eat my fill of bread in it, but never feel happy with what I was eating. And then one day I found a vegetarian restaurant. I was like a child getting a toy it had always wanted most. At the door were some books that the restaurant was selling. I saw one with arguments in it against eating meat. I bought it and took it with me to the table. There I had my first real meal from the time I had left India. God had come to help me!

I read the vegetarian book from cover to cover, and agreed with it very much. From the day I read that book, I made it my *choice* to be a vegetarian. I was happy now about the promise that I had earlier made to my mother. Before that I had not been eating meat only because I had made a promise and could not break it. But in my heart I had wanted to eat meat and had wanted all Indians to eat meat so that we could be as strong as the English. I had been looking forward to the day when I would be free of the promise, and when I could openly eat meat and encourage other Indians to do the same. But now all that had changed. It was now my *choice* to be a vegetarian, and from that day on, I was to do what I could to encourage others to be vegetarians too.

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**QUESTIONS ON PART 14**

1. Gandhi moved in with a friend of Dr. Mehta. But after a time with him, the friend became angry with Gandhi. Why?
2. What was Gandhi's last argument to his friend for not eating meat?
3. True or false: When Gandhi was clear that he was not going to break his promise for any reason, his friend stopped arguing with him over eating meat.
4. What would Gandhi be looking for each time he went out for a walk around London?
5. How did a book that he read at the vegetarian restaurant change Gandhi?

## 15. Playing the Part of an English Man

My faith in vegetarian teaching grew from that day. The vegetarian book made me hungry to read other books about food. One of these, by Howard Williams, argued that all of the top philosophers and prophets, from the time of Pythagoras and Jesus, were vegetarians. Another book that I liked was Doctor Anna Kingsford's *The Perfect Way in What We Eat*. Writings by Doctor Allinson argued that you could heal sicknesses by eating the right foods. He encouraged all sick people to become vegetarians.

All of this reading had the effect that I started doing experiments with what I ate. At first I was interested in it as a way to be healthy. But later my interest was in controlling what I ate as a way to be more spiritual. It became an important part of my life.

But at the same time, my friend had not stopped worrying about me. His interest in me made me think that being a vegetarian would make me very much out of place in a country like Britain. He was afraid that I would waste my life on foolish experiments with food, forget my studies, and become someone for others to laugh at. So he made one last try at changing me.

He asked me to go with him to see a play on the stage. Before the play, he said we could have a meal at a very nice restaurant. I think my friend believed that I would be moved by the size of the restaurant and by all the people around us, to act like others acted in such a place. The meal started with soup. I did not want to make my friend angry by asking him, so I gave a sign for the waiter to come over. My friend saw it and asked what I was doing.

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I said weakly that I was going to ask if the soup was a vegetable soup. "You are too stupid to know how to act around nice people!" he said angrily. "If you cannot be quiet about meat, then it would be better for you to leave. Go to some other restaurant to eat and wait for me outside." I was happy with this plan and left to find a vegetarian restaurant that I knew was close by. But it was closed, and I went without food that night. We went together to the play, but nothing was said about what had happened in the restaurant.

That was our last argument about such things. We stayed friends. I could understand that he had been trying to help me, and his actions only made me think more highly of him.

I could not change my choice about what to eat; but I could change my actions in other ways so that I would not embarrass my friend so much in future. I started to work on making myself as much like the best English man that I could be.

I changed from wearing Indian clothes to wearing English clothes. I wasted money on an expensive suit, and I asked my good and generous brother to send me a gold watch chain to wear with it. I learned how to tie my own tie. We did not use a mirror in India much at all. But here I wasted ten minutes each day studying myself in front of one. I worked on my tie, my hair, my hat, and each movement of my hands and body.

I worked on other things too. I heard that it is important to learn how to dance, how to talk English perfectly, and how to talk in French. French was not only the language in France, but it was the language of business in all of Europe, and I wanted to travel in Europe before returning to India.

I paid £3 to learn how to dance, but after six classes over three weeks, I was no better for it. I could not follow the piano, and because of this, I was not able to keep time. But this did not stop me from trying to be something that I was not. I am like the man in the story who wanted to live by himself. But he had a cat to keep out the rats. Then he needed a cow to give milk for the cat, and a servant to look after the cow, and so on.

I decided to learn how to play the violin, and paid another £3 for a violin and a little more for classes to learn how to play it.

I paid a third teacher to teach me how to use perfect English.

But something was not right about all of this, and a short time after I started, I decided that I had been stupid to even try to be like the English people. It wasn't like I was going to live my whole life in Britain. So why learn perfect English? And how would dancing make others think well of me? If I really wanted to learn the violin, I could do that after I returned to India. I had come here to study, and that is what I should be doing. If my honesty and hard work made people think well of me, then that would make me happy. But if it did not make people think well of me, then I should learn to live my life without people thinking well of me.

I said much the same in letters to my English teacher and to my dancing teacher, asking that my classes be stopped. I talked to my violin teacher, asking if I could sell back the violin. She was very friendly and encouraged me in my plan to stop trying to make people think well of me by these studies.

This whole time of trying to be English lasted only about three months. I did not stop trying to *dress* like the English for years after that; but for the most part, I was happy to return to just being a student.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 15**

1. What was Gandhi's first reason for being interested in being a vegetarian?
2. Why did Gandhi choose to be the best "English man" that he could be?
3. Gandhi paid three teachers to help him be a good English man. What did they teach?
4. In the end, what two things did Gandhi think were the best ways to make people think well of him?
5. Gandhi stopped all three classes, but at this time he did not stop doing one other thing to be like the English people. What was that?

## 16. Changes

Do not think that my experiments with dancing and the like marked a time of selfish spending on myself. Even when buying things like a violin, I watched closely how much I was spending. I made a list of everything, from the cost of taking a bus to the cost of a newspaper or a stamp. Each night before going to bed I would see that I had the right sums down for all that I used. The effect of this is that when I later had jobs where I needed to handle big sums of money for the government, or for other people, I was able to control the spending enough to have more than enough left in every movement that I was the leader of. Young people should learn from this. If you keep a list of all that comes into and goes out of your pocket, you will be a winner in the end.

A look at my spending showed a need to cut down on things. I decided to cut my spending in half. I studied my records to see how best to do it. Because I was living with a family, I needed to pay for my room and meals each week. I could not change that. But when living with a family, it is right to take some of them out to eat from time to time, or to go with them to outings or to other entertainment. This cost me more money, not only for food and entertainment, but also for the cost of getting there. If the person was a woman, the rule was that the man paid for both. I could not take money off the price of meals that I missed with the family, even when I did not eat there. So there was only one way to save on all of these things, and that was to move out and live on my own.

I decided to move into two rooms of my own (one for sleeping and one as a living room). The rooms were close enough to my work that I would not have to pay for buses or trains. By walking eight to ten miles a day I was able to stay almost free of sicknesses when I was in Britain. And I finished up with a strong body for it too.

I was able to save a lot of money by making these changes. But I studied how I used my time too. My law classes were not difficult, so I had time that I could use for other studies. If I were to study at Cambridge or Oxford University, it would be too expensive, and I would have to stay in Britain longer than I had planned. But a friend said that I should try to take a high school test in London. It would not cost much at all, but I would learn much by doing it. This sounded good to me. I joined a class and started studying. Every six months there was a test. The next one was five months away. Along with my other studies it seemed impossible to be ready in time. But all my enthusiasm for becoming an English man was now channelled into making myself the best possible student. I measure every minute. When it came time for the test, I passed all but Latin, and I was forced to take that part of the test again. I was sad about not passing Latin, but I did not lose heart. I had started to like it, and I believed it would be good for me to take the French test again too. On top of this, I could do another science study.

As I started planning for the second test, I tried to control my life even more. I did not feel that the way I had been living was right when my family was giving up so much for me to be there. I was very sad when thinking about all that my older brother had done to help me. I saw students who were living on far less than I was spending. One stayed in a very cheap room and lived only on hot chocolate and bread. I could not live as hard a life as he was living, but I could live in one room and not two; and I could cook some of my meals at home. That way I could save even more money. I read books with more teaching on how to live on less. It only took me twenty minutes to make my own porridge and to boil water for hot chocolate for breakfast. I would eat out for lunch, and have bread and hot chocolate for dinner. The more poor in spirit that I became, the easier it was for me to study too; and I passed my next test because of it.

Do not think that my life was a sad one. The opposite was true. These changes made my physical life fall more in line with my spiritual life. And it was more in keeping with how my family lived in India. My life was more whole, because it was closer to the truth; and this filled my spirit with happiness too.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 16**

1. How did Gandhi save on the cost of food and entertainment that came with living with a family?
2. How did he save on the cost of buses and trains?
3. For what did Gandhi study, on top of his law studies?
4. What was the only part of the high school test that he did not pass?
5. What did Gandhi live on for breakfast and dinner, to save more money?

## 17. Food Experiments

As I had been working on making myself better, the list of things that I needed to change had started to grow. After working on how I used my money and how I used my time, I turned to study what I was eating. The books I read used arguments from religion, science, and the good use of money to argue against eating meat.

Religious arguments said people should not use their strength and smartness to hurt animals. We should protect them, because that is part of our job here on earth. They said that the real reason for eating should be to stay alive, and not because the food has a good taste.

Some of the writers had been able to cut out milk and eggs from what they ate too. They argued from science that man was not made to eat food that was cooked, and we were not made to drink milk. After taking milk from our mothers, they said we should (as soon as we have teeth) start to eat solid food. They were against all spices too, because they believed spices were not healthy.

The books showed that eating vegetables is also the cheapest way to live.

All of these arguments had an effect on me. I started reading a leaflet that was printed each week by a group of English vegetarians. I joined the group, went to their meetings, and became one of the leaders. I later started up another group closer to where I lived. It lasted only a few months, but from it I learned a lot about how to lead any group.

It was from my time with these other vegetarians that I started my experiments with food.

First, I stopped using the sweets and spices that I had brought with me from India. My thoughts were moving in a different direction now, and I soon found that I had a liking for boiled spinach without any spices on it, something that I had not liked at all when I first started eating it.

My experiments showed me that what really made food taste good was not in the tongue so much as in the mind.

There were in those days some people who argued that tea and coffee are bad for you, but that a hot chocolate drink was not. So I stopped drinking tea and coffee.

It should be said that a big reason for my changes in what I ate was because I wanted to save money. In the vegetarian restaurants there were two groups of people. One group would eat the meals that were the same for everyone. These meals came with a piece of bread on the side. Another group would choose only the foods that they liked best from a long list of dishes, and they would pay for each piece separately. The second group would end up paying about four times as much as the first group for a meal. So I did most of my eating with the first group.

I tried a few other experiments along with not eating meat. At one time I tried not to eat bread, pasta, potatoes, or any food like them. At another time I tried to live only on bread and fruit. And then there was a time when I lived for almost two weeks on cheese, milk, and eggs. I had listened to arguments about eggs being good for you and about eggs not being meat. I could see that no animal is killed to get eggs, and I decided to try them for a time.

But I could not get away from the understanding that my mother had when she asked me to promise not to eat meat. I knew that she understood meat to mean eggs too. So I stopped that experiment a short time after I started it. I could not feel right about eating eggs if my mother believed I had promised not to eat them.

When I decided to stop eating eggs, it brought with it new problems, even when eating in vegetarian restaurants. Many of their cakes and other foods were made with eggs, and I was forced to ask about each dish, to be sure that there were no eggs used in making them.

The list of foods that I was able to eat grew shorter when I decided to keep my promise as my mother understood it. I was forced to stop eating some foods that I liked very much. But in the end I believe that keeping my promise to my mother added a spiritual spice to what I did eat that was healthier, longer lasting, and tasted better than the food I missed out on.

All over the world people run into trouble over how they understand promises. The clearest possible words will not stop a person from bending them when the promise becomes too difficult to keep. Rich or poor, beggar or king, people will all do this. Their selfish desires blind them to the truth, and they end up lying to the world around them and to God.

I think the best rule is to let the other person say what they understand the words of the promise to mean. If we do not use this rule for working out what the words of a promise mean, we will only end up in arguments and in sin. When you let the other person say what the promise means, you do not need expert lawyers to find the truth. And so, because my mother's understanding of the word "meat" said that I had promised not to eat eggs, that became the only true meaning for me. But if it had not been for her understanding, my own understanding would have said that it was okay to eat eggs.

As I have already said, my reasons for not eating meat grew mostly from my desire to save money. They also grew from an interest in my own health. Religious reasons were not very important at that time. They came later, when I was in South Africa. But the seed for all that followed was planted there in Britain.

A new member in any religion is always more enthusiastic than one who has been born into the religion. Because, in my mind, I had *not* believed the vegetarian teachings of my parents when I was in India, I had become a new member of the vegetarian movement only while living in London; and I was full of enthusiasm for this new teaching.

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QUESTIONS ON PART 17

1. True or false: Religious vegetarian writers in London at the time of Gandhi argued that the reason we eat food should not be because it tastes good.
2. True or false: Gandhi learned to like boiled spinach without any spices on it.
3. What did Gandhi stop drinking after he became a vegetarian?
4. Why did Gandhi stop eating eggs?
5. What did Gandhi think was the best rule for understanding a promise, if we are to stop arguments over the meaning of the promise?
6. What was Gandhi's strongest reason for not eating meat when he first became a vegetarian?

## 18. Being Shy Protects Me

The members of the vegetarian movement chose me to be one of their leaders, and I made a point of going to all of the leaders meetings. But I would not say anything at the meetings.

One of the leaders said to me when we were alone, "You are confident enough when talking to me, but at the meetings you say nothing. Why is that?"

It is not that I had no interest in the meetings. I often wanted to say something, but it seemed that the other leaders all knew more than I did. And then when I would happen to find enough confidence to say something, the talk would move to something different. This went on for a long time.

At the same time, an important question came up in the meetings. Our president was a man with very clear rules about sex. But one of the other leaders was a leader in the birth control movement as well as being a leader in the vegetarian movement. Our president believed that the other movement was encouraging people to have sex, and he did not think that we should have a man in our movement who believed like that.

The question was interesting for me because I too believed that the birth control movement was a spiritually dangerous one; but I knew that the man in question was a good and generous man. I did not think it was right to force him out of our group just because of his beliefs about birth control. I believed that I should make a stand for the man that the president wanted to kick out of our group. But how was I to do it when I was so shy? I decided to write my thoughts down on paper, and I put the paper in my pocket,

to be read out at the meeting. As I remember it now, I was not even confident enough to read it out myself, and the president had to ask someone else to read it for me.

In the end, the man was still forced to leave the group, but I had a good feeling in knowing that I had tried to help him. I seem to remember that I stepped down as a leader in the group soon after this.

This problem with being shy continued through my stay in Britain. Even when I visited people in their homes, I would not be able to talk if there were more than five or six people in the room.

Once I was asked to talk at a meeting of vegetarians. They said I could write out what I was to say, and read it out at the meeting, so I did this. But when I stood up to read, I could not do it. I was shaking all over and I could not see clearly to read the words.

What I had been going to say was only one page long, but I was forced to ask a friend to read it for me. I was very sad and embarrassed by not being able to talk in front of other people.

I made one last try to talk in front of people, on the night before I left Britain; but this ended in me looking foolish too. I had asked my vegetarian friends to a party at a restaurant that sold meat dishes. I had been thinking that restaurants that sell meat should also be encouraged to sell meals made without meat, so that people like ourselves would have more places to choose from when going out to eat. I talked the manager of the restaurant into making a special meal for me and my friends, and my friends were very enthusiastic about this new experiment.

At a special meal like this in the West, it is always right for people to give talks after the meal. When it came my turn to talk, I felt that I was ready. I had planned a very short talk that started with a funny story. But when I had

finished the story, I could not remember another word of what I had planned to say; so I just thanked my friends for coming and sat down.

It was not until I went to South Africa that I stopped being so shy; and even then it never completely went away. It has always been impossible for me to give a talk without planning it out first, and I try not to give a talk at all if I can.

But I would also say that, apart from the pain of others laughing at me because of it, being shy has not been a bad thing for me. The opposite is true; it has been a great help. Because it is difficult for me to talk in front of other people, I have been forced to think well before I say anything. There are very few words that I write or say these days that I have not put serious thought into. Because of this, I do not need to feel guilty or embarrassed about things I have said. This has protected me from many problems. Being quiet is an important spiritual exercise for anyone who is interested in finding truth. It is so easy when talking, for all of us to bend or cover the truth to make ourselves look better. We all need to stop talking and think at times if we are to tell only the truth. People who say very little learn to measure each word and to put more thought into what they say.

Most people want badly to be heard. Anyone who has been the leader of a meeting knows there are always people who want to talk. When the leader says a person can talk, most people will talk longer than they should. Some will ask for more time, and others will just take it without asking. We cannot say that all of this talking is good for the world. Most of it is a waste of time. So that is why I feel that being shy has protected me. It has protected me from this waste of time, helping me to grow spiritually and to learn more about truth.

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QUESTIONS ON PART 18

1. What movement did Gandhi feel was spiritually dangerous around the time that he joined the vegetarian movement?
2. What did Gandhi do to help out a "good and generous" man who was part of this movement?
3. What was Gandhi forced to do when he was shaking too much to read out a talk that he had written for a vegetarian meeting?
4. True or false: Because he believed it was the humble thing to do, Gandhi always tried not to give talks if he could.
5. How did being shy help Gandhi to be more honest and to find the truth?

## 19. A Lie that Hurt Me

Forty years ago there were not many Indian students in Britain. Those of us who were married, as I was, would not say anything about it. None of the English students were married, as the thinking there was that studies should be finished before young people were married. In the good old days, that had been the way in India too. In those days, the name for a student had the meaning of one who was in perfect control of his body. But in these days we have married children in India, something that the English could not understand. So we Indian students who were married in India would hide the truth when we were in Britain.

But there was another reason for hiding the truth. It left us free to be friends with the daughters of the families that we lived with. It is not that there was anything wrong about our actions toward these young women. The parents even encouraged their daughters to be friendly with us. In Britain, where the young people themselves choose who they will marry, there need to be times and places where young people can meet and talk to members of the opposite sex. But when we young Indian men, who have never had female friends in India, act in the same way on arriving in Britain, the effect on us can be very different. I saw that Indian students covered the truth so that they could have female friends, and I now believe that what was okay for English young people was not at all good for us. But, sad to say, I followed the others in hiding the truth about myself from the start. I was married and the father of a son, but I did not tell people.

Hiding the truth like this did not bring me happiness. It is only because I was so shy that I was stopped from going into deeper waters with any of these girls. If I did not talk to them, they did not talk to me, and they were not interested in going out with me. But God wanted me to be free from a lie that was still hurting me spiritually.

In my first year in Britain I met a friendly old widow who became a close friend for the whole time that I was there, and for many years after that. She would ask me to come for dinner at her house in London each Sunday. At times she would ask young women to come as well, and she would encourage me to make friends with them. A young woman who stayed with her was often there for the meal, and the old woman would often leave us alone together. At first I did not feel comfortable with the young woman, as I did not know what to say. But in time I learned to laugh and joke with her, and I started to look forward to our times together.

The old woman became interested in our meetings, and I started to see that she had her own plans for us. I found myself in the middle of something that I could not get out of. "If I had told her that I was married in the first place," I said to myself, "this never would have happened!" But then I saw the simple truth: "It is never too late to tell the truth. If I do that, it will save me from more problems like this." With this thought in my mind, I wrote a letter to her that went something like this:

"From the time we first became friends, you have been kind to me. You have been like a mother to me. You naturally think that I should get married one day, and I can see that this is your reason for bringing me together with a few young women that you know.

"But before things go too far, I must tell you that I am not the right person to receive this kindness. I should have told you when I first started to visit, that I am married. Other Indian students studying in Britain hide the truth about being married, and so I did the same. I now see that it was wrong of me to do so. I must add that I was married when I was still a child, and I now have a son. It hurts me to think that I have been hiding this from you for so long. But I am glad that God has now helped me to tell the truth. Can you forgive me?"

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"I did not act in any way that was wrong toward any of the women that you were good enough to bring to me as friends. For myself I knew how I should act as a married man. It was only natural that you should want me to become engaged if you believed that I was not married. But now I must let you know the truth, to stop things from becoming worse between us.

"If, on receiving this letter, you feel that I should not visit you any more, I will understand. I owe you very much for your kindness toward me and for your help already. But if, after reading this, you still want me to be your friend (and I would try very hard to be a true friend), I will naturally be very happy, and I would see it as yet another sign of how kind you are."

I was not able to write a letter like this in a few minutes. I had to write it over and over to get it right. But when I was finished it lifted a heavy weight from off my back. The old woman answered my letter very quickly with words that went something like this:

"I have your honest letter. The young woman living with me and myself both were very glad to receive it and we had a good laugh over it. It is easy for us to understand and forgive your action. But we are glad too, that you have filled us in on the whole truth. Yes, we still want you to come and visit, and we look forward to you coming on Sunday, when we can hear more about your wife, and when we can all laugh together at how embarrassed you must have been by our actions. Do I really need to tell you that it will not make the least difference to our love for you now that we know you are married?"

And this is how I stopped the pain that hiding the truth brings to all who do it. From that time on I never tried to hide the truth about my being married.

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**QUESTIONS ON PART 19**

1. What were two reasons why Indian students living in Britain would hide the truth about having wives in India?
2. What happened at times when Gandhi would visit a friendly old widow at her house in London, that ended up making a problem for him?
3. Finish this: "It is never too late to tell \_\_\_\_\_."
4. What did Gandhi do to stop the pain that he felt from hiding the truth about his wife in India?

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## 20. Religious Friends

Toward the end of my second year in Britain, I came across two brothers who were Theosophists. They were reading *The Song of Heaven* from the Gita, in English, and they asked me to read it with them in Sanskrit. I was embarrassed because I had not read it before, either in Sanskrit or in my first language, Gujarati. I agreed to help them read it in Sanskrit, but I had to tell the truth, that it was completely new to me. So I started to read the Gita with them. I can still remember the deep feeling I had when I read these words from the second part of the book:

"If you spend your time thinking of physical things, they will pull you toward them like a magnet. Greed grows from this, and greed is like a fire that will grow bigger as time goes by. It will become so strong that you will do stupid things to get what you want. The effect of this will be that you will forget all of the good reasons that you had for doing things in the past. Your understanding will be destroyed. You will be left spiritually dead, and without any true understanding or reason for living."

These words had a deep effect on me. I could see at the time that this was a very special book; but the feeling has been growing even stronger in me for many years. I now believe that it is the best book ever written on how to find Perfect Truth. It has helped me many times when I was feeling down.

I read the *Bhagavad Gita* at that time with these two friends, but I cannot say that I *studied* it then. It was some years later that I started to read the book every day, and to think deeply about all that it was saying.

The brothers said I should read *The Light of Asia* by the same man who did the English words for *The Song of Heaven*. When I started that book, I could not stop. At the time I was even more interested in it than I was in the *Gita*.

These friends asked me to join their religion and to become a Theosophist too, but I did not even know much about my own religion yet, and I did not want to join any other religion. I read a Theosophist book that encouraged me to study the Hindu religion more closely. It showed me that the Hindu religion was much more than belief in magic and in stories that are not true.

About the same time, I became friends with a good Christian who also was a vegetarian. I told him about the Hindu man in Rajkot who had become a Christian and then started to eat meat and drink alcohol. He was very sad to hear this. He said, "I do not eat meat and I do not drink alcohol. It is true that many Christians do eat meat and do drink. But these are not things that the Bible teaches us to do. Please read the Bible for yourself."

I seem to remember that he himself sold Bibles, and I bought one from him that had maps and other helps in it. I started reading, but the early books (written before Jesus was born) were very difficult for me. The first book was okay, but after that I would fall asleep each time I tried to read it. I pushed on without any real interest or understanding, only so that I could say that I had read it. The *Book of Numbers* was the most tiring of all of them.

But when I reached the story of Jesus, all of this changed. His *Words on the Mountain* (in Matthew 5, 6, and 7) went straight to my heart. It was as beautiful as the *Gita*. The best part was where he said these words: "Do not hit back at that which is evil. If someone hits you on the right cheek, turn and let him hit the other cheek also. If anyone takes away your coat, let him have your shirt too."

It made me remember the lines I had learned in Gujarati, which started, "For a bowl of water, give all that one can eat." It too finished by saying that we should do good even to those who are bad toward us.

In my young mind, I tried to put together the truth in the *Gita*, *The Light of Asia*, and Jesus' *Words on the Mountain*. It seemed to me, from reading all of these, that giving up all that we hold onto is the highest way to know God.

This reading made me want to know about other religious teachers. A friend said I should read a book that had a part in it about what it is to be a prophet. It said that a prophet must be brave, and must live a very simple life.

That was as much interest as I had in religion at that point in my life. I did not have time for much more than my studies. But I did promise myself that I would find time later to read more religious books and to learn more about the religions of the world.

Even without studying it, I could not help but know something of the religion that says there is no God. Every Indian knew the name of Bradlaugh and his teachings at that time against God. I read a book on it, but it had no effect on me. I had already been across that desert without finding hope in it. Annie Besant\*, who had started out not believing in God, wrote a book, *How I Became a Theosophist*. It encouraged me in my feelings against Bradlaugh's way of seeing things.

It was about this time that Bradlaugh died. I went to see him being buried. A few Christian ministers were there too. On our way home we were waiting at a train station. One of Bradlaugh's friends, who did not believe in God, started to make fun of one of the ministers. "You believe that there is a God, do you?" he asked.

"I do," said the good man quietly.

"And do you agree that the distance around the earth is twenty-eight thousand miles?"

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\*Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh were very close friends for a few years, before Annie changed to become a Theosophist. D.M.

"Yes."

"So tell me the size of your God and where he lives!"

"If you want the truth, he lives in the hearts of both of us," said the minister.

"Now, now! Don't talk to me like I am a child!" said the man who did not believe in God, with a look at us like he believed he had said something very smart.

The minister stayed humble and quiet.

Seeing the way this man acted, only made me stronger in my feelings against the teaching that there is no God.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 20**

1. Who played an important part in getting Gandhi to read "The Song of Heaven" (from the *Bhagavad Gita*) for the first time?
2. What did the Gita say would make people forget all the good reasons they had for doing things, and leave them spiritually dead?
3. Through what religion did Gandhi first become interested in his own (Hindu) religion?
4. What part of the Bible did Gandhi say was as beautiful as the Gita?
5. From all of his reading, what did Gandhi see as the highest way to know God?

## 21. Strength of the Weak

I had, by this time, started to understand a little about the Hindu religion, and about some other religions. But it was not enough to keep me from sin. We do not really know what it is that keeps us from doing wrong at the time when it saves us. If a person has no religion, he or she will say it just happened. If the person is a believer, he or she will say it was God. They will also believe it was their special understanding of God that made it possible for God to help them in their weakest hour. But can we really know this is true? Who has not been proud of their spiritual strength, only to find themselves humbled in the dirt? Our *understanding* of God is nothing when measured beside God himself.

I first learned this in Britain, when I found myself in a place where my understanding of religion did not help me at all. God had helped me at other times, when I was very young, and I cannot say how he did it; but I was twenty years old by this time, and I was a husband and a father.

It was in my last year in Britain (1890). I went with an Indian friend to a vegetarian meeting happening over two days at Portsmouth. By accident we paid for a room in a house owned by a woman who was more or less a prostitute.

That night, after the meeting, my friend and I played cards with her. When playing games, people often tell jokes. But my friend and the woman joked about things we should not have been talking about. I did not know he knew so many dirty jokes. Before long, I joined in. Just as I was about to leave the cards for another game that I should not have even been thinking of, my friend said in surprise, "I've never seen this devil in you before, Mohandas. Away with you!"

God was shouting at me through my friend. I was embarrassed by the truth of what he had said, but I secretly thanked God for using him in this way. Remembering my promise to my mother, I ran from the room like a rabbit from a fox.

This was the first time any woman had made me want to cheat on my wife. I was not able to sleep all night, as thoughts raced through my head. Should I leave the hotel? Should I leave the town? What kind of a place was this? Where would I end up if I stayed there? I decided to do the safest thing and not only leave the hotel, but leave Portsmouth as well. I left the next day, but my friend stayed on.

There was much about the way God works that I did not know then, but I had a rough understanding that, through my friend's words, God had saved me. He has always been the one to save me when I have been in spiritual danger.

I have a better understanding of God's grace today, but still I feel that I do not know the full meaning of it. As I continue with God I am growing in my understanding of his grace. When there is no other hope, no other friend, and nothing to turn to, help arrives in some secret way from some secret place that is God. Prayer and worship are not empty actions. They are more real than eating, drinking, sitting, or walking. It would not be too much to say that prayer alone is real and these other actions are the ones that are not real.

The prayer I am talking about here is not beautiful words passing over cold lips. Real prayer comes from the heart. If we empty our hearts of all but love, and keep a humble spirit in all that we do, prayer moves from our hearts to God like music. Such prayer does not need words. It just *happens*, without any work on our part. Real prayer like this will always wash our hearts clean. But real prayer happens only when we know how weak we are and how strong God is.\*

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*\*Many Christians say that Gandhi did not understand God's grace . But here he says religion cannot save us in the most spiritually difficult times; only the grace of God can save us. He says, too, that the kind of prayer that brings this grace is not a "work" for which we could be proud. This is just what the Christian church has always taught. D. M.*

**QUESTIONS ON PART 21**

1. True or false: Gandhi believed that a right understanding of God would protect people from sin.
2. How did God wake Gandhi up to how wrong he was when he was being foolish with a woman when playing a game with her?
3. What did Gandhi do the next day after almost sinning with the woman he was playing cards with?
4. Finish this: "When there is no other hope, no other friend, and nothing to turn to, help arrives in some secret way from some secret place that is \_\_\_\_."
5. Gandhi said that real prayer just *happens*, without any work on our part, and it washes our hearts clean. But it only happens when we know two things. What are they?

## 22. Narayan Hemchandra

About this time, Narayan Hemchandra came to Britain. I had heard of this Indian writer, and I met him at a friend's house. He did not know English. He wore loose pants that were too big for him, a rough, dirty, brown coat like Zoroastrians wear, a soft knitted hat, and a long beard. He was a short, thin man. His round face was badly marked from a sickness that he had had when he was younger. His hand was always playing with his beard. Such a strange looking man was sure to be talked about by the people around him.

"I have heard much about you," I said to him. "I have read some of your writings too. I would be very pleased if you would visit me at my place."

Narayan had a rough voice. With a smile on his face, he said, "Yes, where do you stay?"

I told him, and we learned that we were neighbours. He lived very close to me.

"I want to learn English. Will you teach me?" he asked.

"I will be happy to do all that I can to teach you. I can come to your place if you like."

"Oh, no. I will come to you," he said. "I will bring writing paper with me." We agreed on a day to start his English classes and soon we were close friends.

Narayan did not know the first thing about the rules of language. To him "apple" was an action, and "swim" was a thing. I laughed over and over about such things as we studied together. But he did not let such things rob him of his great confidence. To him, my education in the rules of language was nothing, and being uneducated in the same rules was not at all important to him.

With his head up high he would say, "I've never been to

school like you. I don't need such things to say what I need to say. Do you know Bengali? I do. I've travelled in Bengal. And I've put the words of Tagore into Gujarati. It is my plan to put other great writings of the world into Gujarati too. When I change a book from one language to another, I do not study the words. I catch the spirit of what is being said, and that is what I use when writing the new book. In the future others may do it better; for now I am happy with what I have been able to do without knowing the rules of language. I know Marathi, Hindi, Bengali, and now I am learning English. Do you think I will stop there? No. I will go to France and Germany to learn their languages, so I can use the writings of those countries too." On and on he would talk, without stopping. There was no end to his enthusiasm for learning languages and for visiting other countries.

"And will you go to America too?" I asked.

"Oh, yes! How can I return to India without visiting the New World?"

"But where will you find the money to do it?"

"Why do I need money? I do not put on airs as you do. I need only the smallest measure of food and the fewest clothes to get by. What little I get from my books and my friends is enough. I always travel third class. On my way to America I will sleep on the floor of the ship."

Narayan was in a special class of his own in the humble way that he lived and the honest way that he talked. He had no pride at all, apart from a little too much faith in how good a writer he was!

We would spend time together each day. There were many ways that we were the same in our thoughts and actions. We were both vegetarians, so we would often eat together. This was when I was living on very little money

and cooking my own lunch. At times I would go to his room, and at other times he would come to mine. I cooked English food, but he would only eat Indian food. He could not get by without *dhal*. I would make a soup of carrots and other vegetables and he would feel sad that I must eat such food. I remember a time when he found some *mung beans*. He cooked them and brought them to my room, and I ate them with enthusiasm. From this, we started taking food from one room to the other. I would take my best dishes to him and he would bring his to me.

At this time there was much talk about Cardinal Manning, who had helped some workers who were in danger of losing their jobs. Narayan wanted to meet Cardinal Manning.

"But he is a very important man. How can you think that you would be able to meet him?" I asked.

"I will get you to write to him in my name. Tell him that I am a writer and I want to meet him. Tell him that I must take you with me because my English is not very good."

I tried it and it worked! A few days later we received a card from Cardinal Manning giving us a time and place to meet with him. I put on my best suit for the interview; but Narayan was dressed the same as ever, in his rough coat and over-sized pants. I made fun of him, but he laughed it off, saying:

"You rich educated people all live in fear. But great men like the Cardinal never look at what people are wearing. They think only of a person's heart."

After shaking hands with the Cardinal, Narayan said a few words in Gujarati and I changed the words to English for the Cardinal. He said, "I do not want to take up your time. I have heard a lot about you, and I wanted to come and thank you for what you have done to help the workers here.

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In my travels I have tried to meet the great people of the world, and that is why I have taken your time today."

The Cardinal answered: "I am glad that you have come. I hope your visit to London goes well and that you will meet many people from here. God bless you."

With this the Cardinal stood up and said goodbye.

There was another time when Narayan came to my place in a shirt and *dhoti*. The new house owner had not met him before, and she answered his knock at the door. She came running to me in fear.

"Some wild young man wants to see you," she said.

I went to the door and was surprised to see Narayan dressed as he was. But he smiled as he always did and did not show any sign of knowing how crazy he looked.

"Didn't children make fun of you on your way here?" I asked.

"There were some children following after me," he said. "But they were quiet, and I had no problem with them walking behind me."

After a few months in London, Narayan went to France. He learned French and started changing French books into Gujarati. I knew enough French to go through and make some changes for him when he was finished. From this I could see that he truly did not change the books word for word. But he did have the spirit of what they were saying.

And in the end he was able to visit America too. It was very difficult to get a ticket to travel out on the floor of the ship, but he did it. When he was in America, he went out wearing only a shirt and a *dhoti* one day, as he had done in London. A policeman took him to court for the way he was dressed, but I seem to remember that the judge let him off without punishing him.

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QUESTIONS ON PART 22

1. What did Narayan Hemchandra want Gandhi to teach him?
2. Finish this saying from Henchandra: "When I change a book from one language to another, I do not study the words. I catch the \_\_\_\_\_ of what is being said."
3. Why did Hemchandra not need much money to travel as he did?
4. What two spiritual qualities put Hemchandra in a class of his own?
5. What reason did Hemchandra give for not wearing special clothes when meeting Cardinal Manning?
6. What did Hemchandra wear in London, and again in America, that made people think he was crazy and made children laugh at him?

## 23. The Great Show

There was a Great Show in Paris in 1890, and I had read about it in the newspapers. I had been wanting to see Paris, so this was a perfect time to go. There was much to see, but most interest was in the Eiffel Tower. It was almost a thousand feet high. Many people had believed that it was not possible to make such a tall thing out of metal stand up safely.

I found a room in a vegetarian restaurant in Paris and stayed there for the week I was there. I planned each day, so as to use very little money. I did most of my travelling on foot, with the help of a map. In this way I was able to see most of the places of interest.

All I remember of the Show was that it was big and that there were many things to see. I remember the Eiffel Tower well because I went up it two or three times. There was a restaurant in it and I wasted a lot of money to have lunch in it, just so I could say that I had had my lunch so far up in the air.

But the old churches of Paris are what I remember most. They were so great and so full of peace that I could not forget them. The way that Notre Dame was built, and all of the beautiful statues and other things inside it stays in my mind too. I had the feeling that people who could spend so much money on such a beautiful building must have a lot of love for God.

You read much about the clothes and night life of Paris, but the churches are separate from all this. One can forget the noise and business of the outside world when inside a church. People seemed to change as they went in. They would slow down and become more holy. All the kneeling and praying that they do there must be more than empty acts. Those humble people kneeling in front of a statue of Mary must be worshipping more than the statue.

They must have real love for God. I had the feeling then, and I have it now, that their love for idols did not take away from God, but that it added to the praise that God should receive.

But I should say something about the Eiffel Tower. There were people who did not like it, just as there were people who praised it. I remember that Tolstoy was the one who wrote most strongly against it. He said that the Eiffel Tower showed how foolish people are, and not (as they think) how smart they are. He said that there is no art about the Eiffel Tower. There is no way that it can be argued that it made the Great Show more beautiful. The reason so many people came to see it was just that it was a very big toy. Foolish children always like toys, and the Tower proved to the world that most people are just foolish children at heart, who will waste their time on things that have no good use. And as far as I know, that is about all that the Eiffel Tower is good for to this day.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 23**

1. At the Great Show in Paris in 1890, what did people show most interest in?
2. What did Gandhi remember most from the Great Show?
3. What things did people do in Paris that made Gandhi think that they must have a lot of love for God?
4. Who did Gandhi remember writing against the Eiffel Tower at the time of the Great Show?

## 24. 'Called' – but then What?

I have not said anything up to now about the real reason why I went to Britain. I went to be "called to the bar" (that is, to become a lawyer). I will say something about that now.

There are two things that you must do before you can be called to the bar. You must pass your tests, and you must "keep terms". The three years of study are broken up into twelve terms. To keep terms means that each term you must go to at least six dinners with other students and some judges. It was not important that I eat, but I had to be there and to stay for a measured length of time. The cost of the meal was not much for most people, as it covered the cost of wine as well as the food.

Those of us from India who know nothing of Western "progress", are always surprised to hear that people would pay more money for alcohol to go with their meals than they would pay for the meal itself. When I first heard this I was very surprised. I could not believe that people would waste so much money on alcohol. After eating the food I started to understand. The only food I could eat at these dinners were bread, boiled potatoes and cabbage, and I did not like any of them. By the time I had learned to like them, I had enough confidence to ask for other food.

The judges always had better food than the law students. A Zoroastrian student who was also a vegetarian, and I asked if we could have the vegetarian dishes that the judges were served, and the judges agreed. After that we started to get fruit and other vegetables from their table too.

Students sat at tables of four, and each table had two bottles of wine. Because I did not touch the drink, the other students always wanted me to sit at their table with them, so there would be more drink for them. Each term had one special night when special wines were served, and those were the nights when everyone most wanted to be my friend.

I was not able to see then, and I cannot see now, what these dinners had to do with being a lawyer. There had been a time when there were only a few students, and they used the time to talk with the judges and learn things that would help them when they finished their studies. In those days students and others would give talks to go with the dinners too. Much could be learned from giving the talks and from listening to them. But these were things of the past by the time I was a student. We did not even sit with the judges, and there were no special talks. The dinners had lost all of their meaning; but because the English do not like to change, they still have their dinners, without knowing why they do it.

The other part of becoming a lawyer was to pass the tests. For me the studies were easier than the dinners. Everyone knew the tests were of little use to anyone. We had one test in Roman Law and one in English Law. Each was broken up into four smaller tests over the year. There were books to go with each test, but most students did not even read them. I know of some who passed the Roman Law tests by studying for only two or three weeks, and some were able to pass the English Law tests by studying for only two or three months. The questions were easy and the teachers were generous. Of a hundred students sitting for the Roman Law test, ninety-five or more would pass. Seventy-five or more would pass the English Law tests. There is no way that anyone could think of them as being difficult.

No one, that is, but me! I made them difficult by trying to read all the books. It did not seem right not to, after paying so much to buy them! I even decided to read the Roman Laws in Latin. The Latin I had learned in my London high school studies made this possible. All this reading helped me later in South Africa, where they follow Roman Law much more closely.

I passed my tests, and was called to the bar on 10 June, 1891. I joined the High Court on 11 June; and on 12 June I sailed for home.

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But for all of my studies, I did not feel confident as a lawyer. There was no end to my fears.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 24**

1. What was the real reason that Gandhi went to Britain?
2. What must a law student do to "keep terms"?
3. Why did the other students always want Gandhi to sit at their table for the dinners?
4. What did Gandhi say he found to be easier than the dinners?

## 25. My Feeling of Fear

It was easy for me to become a lawyer; but it was difficult for me to *be* a lawyer. I had read the laws, but I did not know how to use them in a court. Here is one to show what I mean: One of the general teachings of the law is that we should use the things we own in a way that will not hurt others. To be sure, it is a very good saying; but how could I use this to help the person I was working for as a lawyer? I had read about how this was used by other lawyers in a court of law, but the readings gave me no confidence to use it myself. It was like this with so much that I had learned.

What is more, I was on my way back to India, and I did not know a thing about Indian law. I had no understanding of Hindu or Muslim law. I did not even know how to do the paper work for a court action. I was completely lost. I had heard of a great Indian lawyer, Pherozechah Mehta. They said that his voice was like that of a lion when he talked in court. But how could he have learned to do that by studying in the schools where I had studied? I knew that it was out of the question for me to ever be equal to him. My biggest worry was that I was afraid I would not even be able to feed myself and my family with what ability I had as a lawyer.

These feelings of fear and worry had been a problem when I was in Britain. I had told some friends of my fears. One friend said I should ask for help from a great Indian teacher at our school. I had a letter that a friend in India had written to him for me, but I had not used it to meet him at first, because I did not believe it was right for me to use his time. I looked up to him as a great man. When he was to give a talk, I would go and listen from a corner of the room, and leave full of enthusiasm from the things that he had said. He started a group for the students and I went to its meetings so that I could come to know him better. I was glad to see how much interest he had in the students, and how much they loved him.

After some time I had worked up enough confidence to give him the letter that I had been holding for so long. He welcomed me, and said that I should feel free to come and see him any time that I had a need.

But when my friend said that I should ask him for help with my fears, I did not feel it was important enough to take the man's time. Then someone encouraged me to ask for help from another teacher, who loved Indian students too. This time I decided to go. The man had helped many other students, and I will not forget my interview with him.

He welcomed me as a friend, and he laughed away my worries. "Do you think we all must be Pherozechah Mehtas?" he asked. "Such people are very difficult to find. Rest in the truth that it does not take any special ability to be as good as most lawyers. Honesty and hard work are all that it will take for you to make a living from law. Most of what you will do as a lawyer will not be difficult at all.

Then he went on, "So tell me something about the books that you read."

When I listed the few books I had read up to that time, I could see by the look on his face that he was thinking that maybe he had put too much confidence in me. But it was only for a short time. Soon his face lighted up with a big smile and he said, "I see what your problem is: You have not read enough about things outside of your studies. You do not have an understanding of real life. You do not even know the history of your own country. A lawyer should know people, and how they think. You should be able to understand people by studying their faces. And every Indian should know about the history of India. I know that these are not covered in your law studies; but these are things that you need to know."

He listed some books that he believed I needed to read, and two of them were about judging the spirit of a person by studying the lines on their face.

I was very happy about his interest in me. That in itself gave me confidence when I was with him. But as soon as I left him, my worries returned. The next day I bought one of the books about understanding people by studying their faces. I found the book more difficult to understand than my law books and almost as boring. I studied what it said, but found that I could not use it to really understand people in the world around me.

So what the man said for me to do did not help me; but still, his kindness was a great help. His smiling, open face stayed in my mind, and I believed what he said about me not needing the ability of Mehta to become a good lawyer. If honesty and hard work were enough, then I could feel encouraged, for these were two things that I did have.

I did not have time to read books about the history of India when I was in Britain, but I did read them later, in South Africa.

So it was with this little touch of confidence, and a whole lot of fear, that I landed in Mumbai.

A powerful wind was blowing when we landed, making the ocean very rough; so we were forced to take a smaller boat from the ship to the jetty.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 25**

1. What had Gandhi not studied in Britain, that he needed to know to be a lawyer in India?
2. Why did Gandhi not ask the Indian teacher for help with his fears about being a lawyer?
3. What question did a teacher ask that showed him what he believed was the reason for Gandhi's weak confidence?
5. What two things did Gandhi have that the teacher said he needed most to be a good lawyer?



**Part 2.**  
**Getting Started**



## 1. Raychandbhai

I said the ocean was rough in Mumbai when I landed. It had been rough for much of the last part of our trip. Almost all of the other travellers were sick. I alone was in perfect shape. I liked standing out on the floor of the ship and watching the waves break over the ship. At breakfast each morning there were only one or two people besides myself eating their porridge, and we would put the bowl on our knees to stop the porridge from landing there.

The storm outside was, to me, a sign of another storm inside of me. But I do not think I was worried about either one. I just knew that there was much that would have to be faced when I landed. There was the trouble with the people from my caste. There was the problem of my fears about starting work as a lawyer that I have just written of. And then there were my thoughts of how to make things better in India. Now that my education was finished, it was time to start making changes, and I was thinking about how I should go about it. But there was even more than that waiting for me in Mumbai.

My older brother came to meet me when I arrived. He had met Doctor Mehta, who was back in India by this time. Doctor Mehta had said that I could stay at his house; so we went straight there from the ship. The tie between Doctor Mehta and myself continued on from Britain to India, and our two families became very close friends over the years.

I had been looking forward to seeing my mother when I returned, and hugging her to my breast. But what I did not know was that she had died while I was in Britain. My brother had not sent me word of her death because he did not want me to go through such sadness while away from my family. But it was still not easy for me to take the news. It was worse than what I had felt when my father had died. Most of my hopes about what I would do on returning seemed to explode on hearing the news.

But I remember that I did not give myself up to any strong show of emotion. I was even able to hold back the tears, and I went on living like nothing had happened.

I met some of Doctor Mehta's friends and relatives; but the one that I want to write of here is the poet Raychand, who married the daughter of Doctor Mehta's older brother. He was not more than twenty-five years old at that time, but from my first meeting with him I knew that he was a great man.

He also had an Indian name that means "one who can remember a hundred things at the same time". Doctor Mehta encouraged me to see how much Raychand could remember. I said as many words as I could remember in the different languages of Europe, and then I asked the poet to say the words back. He was able to say them all just as I had said them to him. How I would have liked to be able to remember things like that!

But I later learned that he had other qualities that I wanted even more. They were his wide understanding of the holy writings, his honesty, and his burning desire to be like God. I saw later that this last quality was what he lived for. The following lines from Muktanand were always on his lips and were written deeply on his heart:

*I will think of myself as blessed only when I see God in every action that I do each day; for he is the thread that holds up my life.*

Raychandbhai's business was in jewelry, and he handled very big sums of money. He was an expert in pearls and diamonds. No business problem was too difficult for him. But none of these was the great interest of his life. The great interest of his life was his desire to see God face to face.

With all that was on his desk, there was always some religious book, and there was always the book that he wrote in each day. As soon as any piece of business was finished, he would open one book or the other.

Many of his writings that people know of today came from that book that he put together in the middle of his business life. It was clear to me that any person who could go straight from a difficult business meeting to write about the secret things of the spirit, as he did, was not really a business man at all, but one whose thoughts were locked on God and Truth at all times. I saw him following God like this not one or two times, but many times. I never saw him lose his peace in the middle of all that was happening around him.

There was no selfish reason for him to be my friend, and yet we were the closest of friends. I was only a young lawyer without a job, but each time we met, he would bring me into some serious religious thought that he was having. At the time I was only feeling my way in the dark spiritually. It could not be said that I had a serious interest in religious things. But when Raychandbhai started to talk, my interest jumped.

I have now met many religious leaders and teachers from around the world; but I must say that none of them have moved me the way that Raychandbhai's words did. They went straight to my heart. He was as smart as he was sincere, and deep down I had the feeling that he would never willingly lead me in the wrong way, that he would always tell me the truth about what he was thinking. So when I was going through a difficult time spiritually, he was the one I would turn to.

But even with this feeling of love and faith in him, I could not make him my spiritual master. To this day, I have no master. I believe in the Hindu teaching about how important it is to have a master if we are to grow spiritually. I think there is much truth in the teaching that we cannot learn without a master. But we should find the best possible master. In little things it is not important that a teacher be perfect, but I feel that in spiritual things only One who is *perfect* should be our Master. With such a master, we will never stop growing.

People get teachers that are equal to their hunger for spiritual things. Eternal movement toward being perfect is its own reward. All else is in the hands of God.

I could not make Raychandbhai my master, but we will see how he was, at many times, my helper, pointing me in the right direction. There are three living people who have had the most effect on my life. Raychandbhai did it face to face; Tolstoy did it through his book, *The Kingdom of God is Inside You*; and Ruskin did it through his *Up to this Last*. But I will say more of these later.

#### QUESTIONS ON PART 1

1. What were the three problems that Gandhi knew he needed to face when he landed back in India?
2. What sad news did Gandhi receive when he returned to India?
3. What three qualities did Raychand have that Gandhi wanted to have?
4. What quality did Gandhi believe that a spiritual master should have?
5. What three living people had the most effect on Gandhi?

## 2. Starting My Life

My older brother had high hopes for me. He had a strong desire for wealth and for a good name for the family through me. He had a big heart too, and was more generous than he should have been at times. This, together with his easy-going spirit, made many friends for him. He had been thinking that I would find a lot of jobs working for these friends of his in court. Believing that I was going to be a top lawyer and that I was going to bring in a lot of money for the family, he had been spending too much money. But he had done all that he could to prepare for me to start my business, and now he believed that it was up to me to make good.

As to the problems with our caste, the people in the caste were of two minds about me. One group had no problem with letting me return as a member. But the other was serious about keeping me out. To please the friendly group, my brother asked me to go through a special washing in a holy river, and then to give a special dinner for the members of our caste after we arrived in Rajkot. I did not want to do this, but because of my brother's love for me and my love for him, I did what he had asked, taking his will to be law. But for me, the argument about me being in or out of the caste was finished after doing that.

I never tried to change the thinking of the group that did not want me back as a member. I did not feel anger toward any of the leaders. Some of them did not like me, but I did all that I could not to hurt their feelings. I believed in the caste rules about outcastes. By these rules, none of my relatives were to eat with me, and I would not so much as drink water at their houses. They were prepared to cheat on the rule for me, but I did not like to do anything in secret that I was not willing to do openly.

Because I followed the rules, I never had problems with others in the caste. Surprisingly, the opposite has been true. Most of the people in the group that still thinks of me as an outcaste have been loving and generous toward me as a person. They have even helped me in my work without asking for me to do anything to help the caste in return. I believe that all of this comes from not fighting against what they decided. If I had tried to force my way back into the caste, it would have made many more problems, with people hating me and hating one another over it.

My wife and I still had problems when I returned. Even my stay in Britain had not stopped me from wanting to own her. I continued to see evil in every little thing, and because of this, all the good that I wanted for her did not happen. I had decided that she should learn to read and write, and that I should help her in her studies. But my desires often came in the way, and the plan was never finished. Once I even sent her away, to stay with her parents. I received her back only after I had made her very sad. It was some time later that I saw the foolishness of my actions.

I had thought that change for India should start with the education of our children. My brother had children, and my own child was now a boy of almost four. I wanted to teach these little ones physical exercises, and to make them strong, while at the same time leading them in other ways. My brother agreed with my plan and I was more or less able to do what I had planned. I very much liked being with the children. Playing and joking with children is something that I have liked doing, to this day. Because of it, I feel that I would have been a good teacher of children.

I could see a clear need for changes to the way my people ate. Tea and coffee were already in the house when I returned. My brother wanted to keep some English ways for me on my return, so the family had started to use dishes and other things that were more English than Indian.

My "changes" only ended up making us *more* English. I started us eating porridge, and drinking hot chocolate. The plan was for the chocolate to take the place of tea and coffee, but, in truth, it was only added to them. The others were already wearing shoes, and I completed the change by wearing English clothes.

All of these changes cost us more money. Each day we were adding new things that we did not need. It was like tying a white elephant to our door. But how were we to pay for all of this? If I had tried to start work as a lawyer in Rajkot it would have been a joke. I did not know as much about Indian law as the uneducated law workers that the people there were already using, and yet I would be asking ten times as much for my help. No one would be stupid enough to pay me. And even if there was someone stupid enough to pay it, it would not have been right for me to take their money.

Friends said that I should go to Mumbai to study Indian law and to get a little work in the courts there. I agreed, and went.

In Mumbai, I started by getting a servant. Ravishankar was from the priest caste and he was as bad a cook as I was. I did not think of him as a servant, but as an equal with me.

He would pour water over himself, but never wash. His *dhoti* was dirty all the time, as was his holy thread, and he had no understanding of the holy writings. But how was I to get a better cook?

"You do not know much about cooking, but as a member of the priest caste you must know something about worship and the holy writings," I said to him one day.

"Worship?" he said. "A shovel is our worship. That is the kind of priest that I am. If you do not keep me on as your servant, I will be forced to return to the land."

So I became his teacher. I had more than enough time for it at this point. I started to do half of the cooking. I bought a stove and tried some of what I had learned in Britain of vegetarian dishes. We worked together in the kitchen and we ate together.

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I had no problem with eating with servants, and Ravishankar had no problem with eating with an outcaste, and so we went on happily together. The one problem I did have was that Ravishankar never stopped being dirty in the way he lived and in the way that he cooked!

But I did not have enough money to stay in Mumbai for more than four or five months. No money was coming in, at the same time that more and more money was going out.

And this is how I started my working life. I found work as a lawyer to be a bad job – much show and little understanding. And I felt very bad about what I was doing.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 2**

1. True or false: Gandhi tried to return to his caste after returning to India.
2. Where did Gandhi want to start in changing India?
3. What changes came to Gandhi's family that made them more English than Indian?
4. Where did Gandhi go to learn about Indian laws?
5. Who did Gandhi teach in Mumbai?
6. Of what job was Gandhi talking when he said "much show and little understanding".

### 3. My First Job

While I was in Mumbai, I started studying Indian law at the same time that I did experiments with vegetarian cooking. My brother, for his part, was trying his best to get someone to pay me to act as a lawyer for them.

The study of Indian law was boring. A friend would tell me stories about great lawyers like Pherozechah and Badruddin, and these stories would only rob me of the little confidence that I had.

"It often happens," my friend would say, "that a new lawyer must wait up to seven years before he is able to start his own business. You will be doing very well if you are able to work on your own in three years' time."

I was not happy to have a board outside the house saying that I was a lawyer when the truth was that I still did not understand the law. My interest in Indian law was growing, but I still did not have the confidence to argue in court. I felt afraid and shy, like a woman must feel on her wedding night!

About this time I received my first job, a very small one. I was told to pay money to a man who brought the woman to me, but I did not feel this was right. I should not have to pay someone else to bring business to me.

"But even the best lawyers, who make three or four thousand rupees a month pay people to get jobs for them!" I was told.

"I don't need to do as they do," I answered. "I'll be happy with three hundred a month. My father did not get more than that."

"But times are changing. It costs more to live now. And this is how everyone does business."

I would not give in. I gave the man no money, and the woman gave me the job all the same. I asked for thirty rupees, because the job did not look like it would take more than one day in a very low court.

On my first day in court I had to ask questions of a man who had said things against the woman. I stood up, but my heart dropped into my shoes. My head was going around and around, and I felt that the court was doing the same thing. I could think of no questions to ask. The judge must have laughed, and the other court workers must have liked the entertainment; but I could not see a thing. I sat down and said that I could not do the job. The woman was forced to pay a different lawyer fifty rupees to finish the job for me. I'm sure he would have found it to be child's play.

I left the court without waiting to see how the woman went. I was too embarrassed, and decided not to return until I had enough confidence to do what needed to be done. I did not return to court work until I went to South Africa. It is not that I was too honest to go to court for them. There really was no one stupid enough to ask me to work for them in the first place!

But I did do one other job in Mumbai before leaving. A poor Muslim needed a special letter written to the government, because land had been taken from him in Porbandar. He asked me, as the good son of a good father, to help him. I did not feel that his arguments were good ones, but I agreed to help him for free. When I had finished the letter, I read it out to some friends and they were happy with it. That lifted my confidence that I was at least able to say what needed to be said on paper; and it is true that I was able to do that.

I could find a lot of business by writing free letters for people; but it would not pay what we owed. So I thought about taking a job as a teacher. My English was very good, and I would have loved to teach English at a high school. I came across a job in the newspaper that paid seventy-five rupees a month to teach English one hour a day at a very good school. I put my name in for the job and was called in for an interview.

I went in high spirits, but when it was learned that I had not studied English at a university in India, they turned me down.

"But I passed the high school English tests in London itself," I said. "And I passed Latin as well."

"True, but we want someone who has finished university studies in English."

What could I do? There was no work, and my brother was becoming worried. We both decided that there was no point in me staying longer in Mumbai. I was to return to Rajkot, where I could make a little money by writing letters and filling in papers for people. At least it would put an end to the added costs of me living in Mumbai. I agreed with the plan, and I closed my business in Mumbai after a stay of only six months.

When I was in Mumbai, I had been going to the High Court each day to listen, in the hope that I would learn something from it. But I did not understand enough about what was going on to learn much from it. Often I could not follow what was happening and I would fall asleep. There were others who would do the same thing, and I was less embarrassed when I looked around to see them. After a time I stopped feeling embarrassed about it at all, and I started to think of it as very smart to sleep in the High Court!

If there are other lawyers living in Mumbai, who do not have enough work, I will tell them of something I did to save money while there. I almost never travelled by coach or tram. I made it a rule to walk to and from the High Court. From where I lived it was a forty-five minute walk. I had become used to the heat of the sun by then, and the walk saved me the cost of travel. On top of that, while many of my friends became sick when I was there, I do not remember being sick myself at any time. Even when I started to work as a lawyer, I continued to walk to and from work, and it has helped me to stay healthy.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 3**

1. True or false: Gandhi had to pay a man to bring him his first job as a lawyer.
2. How did Gandhi's first job as a lawyer finish up?
3. Where was Gandhi living when he next returned to work in a court as a lawyer?
4. Gandhi tried to find a job doing different work. What job did he think he would have loved doing?
5. What did Gandhi often do when he was at the High Court, that embarrassed him at first?
6. What did Gandhi do to save on travel costs when he was living in Mumbai?

## 4. The First Eye-Opener

I felt bad about leaving Mumbai, but I was soon able to make a little money in Rajkot filling in papers for people. I made about three hundred rupees a month this way. But I have to thank others for this business more than my own ability. The man my brother worked with would send people to me if the job they needed done was an easy one.

To tell the truth, in Rajkot I did not follow the rule I had made for myself while in Mumbai, about not paying anyone to give me work. I was told that it was different in Rajkot. In Mumbai we had been asked to pay people who did nothing more than send people to us. Here, my brother, or someone from his company, would tell me more about the job before giving it to me, and I was to give them something in return for their help. My brother had another argument for which I had no answer. He said that he would naturally give all the work he could to me, and because my money was his money and his money was my money, it made no difference if I did not give him money for the work he was sending my way. But it was not right that the man he was working with did not receive something for it, as he would if the jobs were sent to a different lawyer. I gave in to this argument, and felt that if I was to work as a lawyer at all, I would be forced, at times like this, to break the rule I had made for myself. That is how I argued with myself, but to say it more clearly, it is how I lied to myself. I should add that I do not remember ever paying anyone to send work to me after that time with my brother in Rajkot.

By filling in papers for people, I was soon able to make both ends meet. But I received my first eye-opener about life in the real world around this time. I had heard stories about the English officers in India, but up to this time I had never been face to face with one in India.

My brother had a problem with the government about something he had said to a leader in the past, and it was hanging over his head. The English court officer who was to decide what to do about it did not like my brother. I had met this officer when he was in Britain, and he had been very friendly with me at that time. My brother thought that I should go to this officer and put in a good word for him, so that the officer would not be so hard on him. I did not feel good about trying to use the good feelings between this officer and myself to change his thinking toward my brother. I argued that, if my brother really did something wrong, then it was not right for me to try to change things. And if he did nothing wrong, then he should be confident of that, and go through the steps that were needed to clear himself. My brother was not happy with this. "You don't know what life is like here," he said. "Being right or wrong does not count. All that counts is who you know. It is not right to hold back from putting in a good word for your own brother to an officer who is a friend of yours."

I disagreed, but I went to see the officer anyway. I knew it was wrong to try to change the thinking of a court officer in this way, but I asked for an interview and was able to get one. He remembered me from Britain, but from the start I could feel a difference in his spirit. An officer away from his job in Britain is not the same as one on the job in India. He remembered me, but that in itself seemed to make him less friendly here. It was like his first thought was, "You must be going to use our friendly meetings in Britain to get something selfish from me now."

All the same, I started to talk about my brother.

"Your brother is a trouble-maker," he said. "I do not want to talk to you about it. If he has something to say, let him say it himself."

Maybe what he said was true, but when we are being selfish we are often blind to the truth. So I went on with my story.

The officer stood up and said, "You must go now."

"But please hear me out," I said. That made him more angry. He called a servant and told him to show me to the door. I was still talking when the servant came in, placed his hands on my shoulders, and put me out of the room.

I left the building feeling very angry with my old friend. When I was outside, I wrote a short letter and sent it to him by hand. It went something like this, "Your actions have made me very angry. You have used your servant to physically hurt me. If you do nothing to fix this problem between us, I will be forced to take court action against you."

His answer came straight back through another one of his servants: "What you did was wrong. I asked you to leave and you would not go. I had no choice but to tell my servant to show you to the door. Even after he asked you to leave, you did not go. You made him use just enough force to get you out. Feel free to take any action against me that you choose."

With his letter in my pocket, I came home and told my brother what had happened. He felt bad about it, but did not know how to make me feel better. He asked his friends for help, because I did not know how an Indian would go about taking action against an English court officer. It happened that Sir Pherozechah Mehta had come down to Rajkot from Mumbai around this time for some other business. I sent my papers to him, asking him what I could do.

The word I received back through another worker was this: "Tell Gandhi that this is the way English court officers often act toward Indian lawyers. Gandhi thinks he is still in Britain. He is too hot-blooded. He doesn't know English officers. If he wants to work here without problems, he will rip up the letter and forget what happened. He'll win nothing by taking action, and could easily destroy his future instead. Tell him he has much to learn about life."

The truth was like poison, but I was forced to drink it.

I turned the other cheek, and I learned from it. I said to myself, "Never again will I think of myself so highly, and never again will I try to use a friend in this way." And from that time, I have never been guilty of breaking that promise. This eye-opener changed the whole direction of my life.

It is true that I was wrong in the first place for going to the officer. But his anger had been far too strong for what I did. He did not need to physically kick me out of the room. I was not there more than five minutes. But he was too proud to give me even that much time. He could have asked me kindly to go, but power had made him crazy. Later I learned that he was like this with many of his visitors. The smallest thing was enough to make him explode.

Most of my work was going to be in his court, and there was nothing I could do to make him my friend again. I would not say nice things to him just to get around his proud spirit. Having said I would take action against him, I felt it was now difficult enough just to be quiet and say nothing.

At the same time, I was starting to learn something about the small minded power interests of the country. Little fights between one leader and another were everywhere. Leaders could not hold power without the help of servants, who were their eyes and ears. These servants would tell the leaders who were their friends and who were their enemies, who to help and who not to help. In this way, the servants often had more power (and more money from those who wanted to be on the list of "friends") than the leaders themselves.

Living in a place like this was like breathing in air that was filled with poison. How could I keep it from destroying me, or from making me like the others?

I was very sad, and my brother could see it. We both thought a good job might free me from all of this cheating and in-fighting. But without joining in the secret fights and selfish plans of different leaders, I would never be able to move up from being a lawyer to being a judge or a minister.

And my fight with the English officer was in the way of my even being able to work as a lawyer.

I had some business to do in Porbandar for some farmers and for the Indian prince for that part of the country. The officer I had to see was an Indian, but I found him to be worse than the English officer in Rajkot. He had ability, but his ability was not being used to help the poor farmers. There seemed to be almost no interest in the needs of the people. But what could I do about it? The best I could have done was to turn to the English officers over the Indian officer for help. But all they would have said would be, "We will not become a part of this argument." There were no rules to say what the English officers should or should not do, and anything they might choose to do became the "law". That was all there was to it.

I felt like I had been pushed to the end of what I could take.

Then a company from Porbandar wrote to my brother the following letter: "We are a big company doing business in South Africa. We have an argument before the court there that has been going on for a long time. We have lawyers working for us there, but if your brother could go from here, he would be able to talk to these lawyers for us better than we could talk ourselves. He would be able to help us and to help himself too. He could see a new part of the world and make new friends there."

My brother talked to me about it. It was not clear if they wanted me to talk in court or if I only needed to talk to the lawyers who were to do the talking in court. But I was interested.

I talked to one of the heads of the company.

"It won't be a difficult job," he said. "We have many friends there from Europe, and you can talk to them for us. Many of the letters to us are in English, and you can help us in that too. We will pay for your food and room and everything else that you will need while you are there."

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"How long do you want me to stay there, and how much will you be paying me?" I asked.

"Not more than a year. And we will pay for your ticket there and back, all of the costs while you are there, and give you £105 on top of that."

I was clearly not being paid as a lawyer. I was little more than a servant of the company at that price. But I wanted to leave India, and it would be interesting to see a new country. I could at least give the whole £105 to my brother to be used for the family in India. I agreed without any argument, to what they had promised, and I started to prepare myself to go to South Africa.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 4**

1. Did Gandhi ever break his own rule about not paying anyone to send work to him?
2. What were the two arguments that Gandhi's brother gave for asking him to put in a good word for him with the English court officer?
3. How did the meeting with the English court officer finish up?
4. In Britain, a lawyer would not be physically forced out of an office over a little thing. Who told Gandhi that English court officers often acted differently toward Indian lawyers?
5. If he wanted to be a lawyer, he would need to work in the same court where the court officer did not like him. What happened to help Gandhi get away from this problem?

## 5. The Trip to South Africa

It was not as difficult for me to leave my family to go to South Africa as it had been when I left for Britain. My mother was now no more. I now knew more about travel and about the ways of other countries, and the trip from Rajkot to Mumbai at the start of my trip was no longer a strange trip.

But I still had the pain of leaving my wife. Another baby had been born to us after my return from Britain, so you could not yet say that our love was free from sex. But it was slowly becoming more perfect. From the time I returned from Europe, we had not lived together much, and we both felt a need to be together more if for nothing more than to continue with the teaching that I had started with Kasturbai, poor as it was. But the pull of South Africa was enough to make me willing to go through the pain of being away from Kasturbai. "We will be back together again in a year," I said to her, to make her feel better, before I left Rajkot for Mumbai.

I was to buy a first class ticket on a ship to South Africa through a company in Mumbai. But when I arrived, they said there were no cabins left on the ship. If I did not find a room on the ship, I would be on my own again in Mumbai, waiting for the next ship.

The company said that they would give me a ticket to travel and sleep out in the open on the floor of the ship, but in those days I was too proud for that. A *lawyer* does not travel like that! I could not believe what the company was telling me, so I asked if I could go on the ship and ask around for myself. They agreed and I went onto the ship, where I met the first officer. He said that an important government leader from Africa was travelling on the ship, and that was why it was so full.

"Can you possibly squeeze me in somewhere?" I asked.

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The first officer studied me from head to toe before saying, "There is just one way. There is a bed in my cabin that I do not use. I will let you use that." I thanked him and bought my ticket. In April, 1893, I left Mumbai full of enthusiasm to see what was ahead for me in South Africa.

The first stop, after thirteen days, was in Lamu.

I had become good friends with the Captain of the ship by this time. He liked to play chess, but he was new to the game. If he was to win, he would have to find a player who knew less about the game than he did. I was the perfect person for the job. I had heard a lot about the game, but had never tried my hand at it. I understood that it was a very good way to exercise the brain, so I was happy to let the Captain teach me. I was a good student, and I lost every game. That made the captain even more enthusiastic to teach me. I liked the game, but I did not continue playing it after leaving the ship, and I never learned more than how to move the pieces.

The ship was to stop in Lamu for only three or four hours, but I wanted to see what the people were like. Some of us went in a small boat to the beach, but the captain said that we should plan to return early, because it was often hard to get from a small boat back onto the ship when the waters were rough.

It was a small place. I was happy to see Indian workers there, and I talked with them for a time. I also studied the people of Africa and the way they lived. That was very interesting.

I had met some of the poorer people who had been sleeping out on the floor of the ship, and they had left the ship with me because they wanted to cook a meal for themselves, something they could not do on the ship. After they had had a quiet meal, we all started back toward the ship in a small boat.

There were too many of us for the boat, and it was riding very low in the water. The water was so rough that we were not able to hold the boat to the ladder hanging down the side of the ship. Each time we would touch the ladder, the boat would move away again.

The first whistle sounded, to say that it was time for the ship to leave. I was worried. The Captain could see our problem from up above, and he stopped the ship for five minutes to wait for us. There was another smaller boat near us, and for ten rupees, it agreed to take me to the ship. By this time the ladder had been pulled up, and I was pulled up by a rope. When I was safely on the ship, it pulled away, leaving the other people behind. I now saw how important the Captain's words had been about returning early!

From Lamu we went to Mombasa and then Zanzibar. We were to wait eight or ten days in Zanzibar before changing to a different ship.

The Captain liked me very much, but that worked against me when we landed in Zanzibar. He asked a friend and myself to come with him for an outing. I did not know where he planned to go, and the Captain did not know how stupid I was, so I agreed to go with him. We ended up in the rooms of some Black prostitutes. Heaven only knows what the poor woman must have thought of me; for I was not able to say a word and I just stood there in her room, saying nothing. When the Captain called for me, I came out of the room as I was when I went in. He could see that I had done nothing.

At first I was very much embarrassed to let him know that I had done nothing. But as I thought more about it, I could see that it was nothing to be embarrassed about. I should have been more embarrassed for having been so weak as to have agreed to go into the woman's room in the first place. I have thanked God since, that seeing the woman had not moved me in the least.

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So this was the third time that I had faced the same test. How many other young men have faced the same test and done the wrong thing only because they were afraid of what their friends would think of them. Again, I could not say that I did anything special to save myself. If I had been strong enough not to go into the room in the first place, then I might have been able to say that I took a stand for what was right. But again, all of the praise goes to God for saving me. This made my faith in God stronger, and I learned something about the false feeling of guilt that we get when we worry about what our friends will think of us.

In what was left of my time in Zanzibar I walked around a lot and looked at what I could see. I was surprised at how big the trees were and how big their fruit was as well.

After leaving Zanzibar, we stopped at Mozambique, and then, toward the end of May, we arrived in South Africa.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 5**

1. True or false: Gandhi believed that sex was a part of perfect love.
2. Whose cabin did Gandhi travel in on his trip to South Africa?
3. What did Gandhi learn from the captain of the ship on his way to South Africa?
4. What happened to the poor people who had left the boat with Gandhi for a short visit to Lamu?
5. Where did the boat captain take Gandhi in Zanzibar?

## 6. Some Happenings

Abdulla Sheth, the brother of the man I was working for in India, met me when we landed in Durban. As our ship was coming in, and as friends and relatives were coming on to meet the people travelling on the ship with me, I could see that people acted in a different way toward Indians than what they did toward other people on the ship. It hurt me to see people acting toward Abdulla Sheth like they were better than him. Abdulla did not have a problem with it, because he had learned to live with it. As for myself, people looked at me with a special interest because I was wearing a turban, something that other Indians did not wear there.

I was taken to my room, which was beside Abdulla's room. He did not understand why I was there, and I did not really know either. He read the papers that his brother had sent with me; but they only confused him. He believed his brother had sent him a white elephant. Because, apart from my turban, I dressed like people from Europe, he believed that my tastes were too expensive. He did not have any work to give me at that time. The court action was happening in Pretoria, many miles away. There was no point in sending me there too quickly. He did not yet know how much faith he should have in me, or how much ability I had. If he sent me to Pretoria, he could not be there to watch me. The people we were fighting in the courts lived there, and they might try to find ways to win me over to their side if he were not there to watch me.

But if I was not going to help in the court action, what was I to do? Abdulla already had servants who could do the other work better than me. He knew how to control them. But if I did something wrong, would he be able to punish me for something that was not my job in the first place? So with no work for me to do, Abdulla was forced to house and feed me in return for nothing.

Abdulla was not well educated, but he had learned much from life. He was very smart, and he knew it. He had learned just enough English to get by when talking with people. And with what little English he knew, he was able to do business with bank managers and rich business men from Europe, as well as being able to tell his lawyers the important points to argue in court. Indians thought very highly of him. He had one of the biggest (if not *the* biggest) Indian businesses in South Africa. But he had one bad quality – he found it difficult to put faith in people.

He was proud of his religion and loved to talk about the teachings of Islam. He did not know Arabic, but he had a good general understanding of the writings of Islam. Abdulla always had a good story to tell to make his teachings easier to remember. I learned much about Islam from my time with him. Later, when we were much closer, we had long talks about religious things.

Two or three days after I arrived, Abdulla took me to the Durban court, where we met a few different people. In the court, I sat beside Abdulla's Durban lawyer. The judge looked at me for some time before telling me to take off my turban. I would not do as he said, and I left the court before I would take it off.

So here, too, it looked like there would be things to fight about.

Abdulla later told me why some Indians had to take off their turbans and others did not. He said that if they were dressed as Muslims, it was okay to wear a turban. But other Indians were forced to take their turbans off when in court.

I will take time here to clear up why there was a difference between one turban and another. In my first two or three days in Durban, I had come to see that there were different groups of Indians. One group was made up of Muslims, who were business men. These people liked to call themselves "Arabs".

Then there were the Hindu and Zoroastrian office workers. Zoroastrian office workers liked to call themselves "Persians". Hindu office workers could become part of the "Arab" group if they chose. If they did not, then they were a separate group from the other two (as Hindus). These three groups of educated Indians often made friends of one another.

But the biggest group of Indians were those who did humble physical work with their hands. The other three groups of Indian office workers did not make friends of Indians in that group. The English name for these uneducated Indians is "coolies", and because most of the Indians in South Africa were in this class, all Indians received the name "coolies" at times, or "*samis*".

"*Sami*" is a word that comes after many Tamil names. What it really means is "master"; but when the white people used that name, they would do so in a cruel way, thinking that they were putting us down, and showing that they were better than us by using it. A smart Indian could confuse the people who called him *sami* by saying, "It is kind of you to call me *sami*, but you should understand that the word means 'master', and I am not really your master." This would make the English angry, because the last thing they wanted to do was to think of Indians as masters!

So I was called a "coolie lawyer" and the Indian business men were called "coolie business men". In this way, the word "coolie" stopped meaning an Indian who does humble work with his hands, and started meaning any Indian. The Muslim business men did not like this, and they would say, "I am not a coolie. I am an Arab," or "I am a business man." And some of the better English people would stop calling them coolies. In this way they started to think of Muslim business men as being in a class of their own. But we Hindus could not honestly say that we were Arabs.

My turban was important in the light of all this. Forcing one Indian to take off his turban, at the same time that other Indians (that is, Muslim business men) were free to wear their turbans, was a way of saying that the Indian in question was from a lower class, one that could and should be put down. It looked like the best thing for me to do was to drop the turban and buy an English hat, so that I would not have to humble myself in court each day by taking my turban off.

But Abdulla did not see it that way. He liked the thought of an Indian lawyer wearing a turban. He said, "If you give in, it will make it harder on any other Indian who wears a turban. You look good in a turban. If you wear an English hat, you will look like a waiter."

Abdulla showed his smartness, his love for his country, and a little touch of narrow thinking in saying this. He was smart enough to understand what was going on; he loved his country enough to think about how the action of taking off my turban would hurt other Indians; and he was narrow enough in his thinking to look down his nose on Indian waiters.

There were three groups of worker Indians (or "coolies"). There were Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. The last group were those who had come over as agreement workers and then changed their religion to become Christians. Even in 1893 there were a lot of them. They would dress like the English, and most of them would get special jobs working as waiters in hotels. What Abdulla was saying about me wearing a hat was a way of putting down the Indians in this class. Even today many Indians look down on Indians who work as waiters in hotels.

But on the whole, I liked what Abdulla said. I wrote to the newspapers about what had happened in the court, and I said that all Indians should be able to wear their turbans in court.

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## SOME HAPPENINGS

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There was a lot said about it in the papers, and they said I was a "visitor who is not welcome here". So just a few days after I had arrived in South Africa, people were already talking about me. Some agreed with me, but others disagreed strongly with my proud spirit.

My turban stayed with me for most of the time that I lived in South Africa. We will see later when and why I stopped wearing any hat at all in South Africa.

### QUESTIONS ON PART 6

1. What did Gandhi think were Abdulla's reasons for not sending him straight to Pretoria?
  2. What was the one bad quality that Gandhi saw in Abdulla?
  3. What part of his clothes was Gandhi asked to take off when he was in a court in South Africa?
  4. What were the names for the three different groups of Indian office workers?
  5. What two names were often used in a cruel way for all Indians?
  6. What was different about the religion of most Indians who worked as waiters in South Africa?
  7. What did Gandhi do to make many people in South Africa think about the rule against Hindu Indians wearing turbans?
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## 7. My Trip to Pretoria

I met some Christian Indians in my first few days there in Durban, as well as some Zoroastrian Indians.

And then the company received a letter from their lawyer in Pretoria, saying that Abdulla should go to Pretoria or send someone to help with preparing the arguments in the court action. Abdulla asked if I would go. I wanted to study what the company planned to do first, and he asked an office worker to help me with what I needed.

As I started to study, I had the feeling that I did not understand a thing about what was going on. I knew nothing about book keeping; and that was what the whole argument was about. How could I understand the different parts of the argument without understanding the books. The more Abdulla's office worker tried to teach me, the more confused I became. He would use words that I could not find in the dictionary because they are only used by people working with numbers and sums. So I bought a book on keeping sums for a company, and I studied it. That gave me some confidence, and soon I felt that I was ready to go to Pretoria.

Abdulla was worried that the man we were fighting against would find some way to read letters between myself and him; but I promised that I would do all I could to keep everything secret.

"But I will be trying to talk to the man," I said. "I want to do all that I can to be friendly with him. He is your relative, you know, and I will be encouraging him to come to an agreement with you outside of the court."

I had been in Durban for a week, and Abdulla was starting to understand that I knew my business. But he was surprised that I believed I could come to an agreement with the man without going to court.

"There is nothing that I would like better," he said. "But we are relatives, and we know each other very well. He is not one to back down easily. If he learns that we are willing to meet half way, he will think we are afraid of losing, and he will become even harder; he'll ask for even more. Please think seriously before you say anything to him."

"Don't worry about that," said I. "I don't need to talk about the arguments themselves. I would only talk to him about the good that can come to both of you by coming to an agreement outside of the court."

So, after only seven or eight days in Durban, I left on the train. I had a first class ticket to Johannesburg. Most people pay a little more and get blankets with their ticket. But out of pride, and because I wanted to save a little money, I said I would not pay more for something I did not need. Abdulla did not think I needed to cut corners in this way. "This is not India," he said. "Thank God that we have more than enough money to pay for little things like this."

I thanked him and asked him not to worry about me.

The train arrived in Maritzburg at about 9 p.m. This is where the blankets were handed out to people. A servant came to ask me if I wanted a blanket, and I said that I did not. Then another traveller came and looked me up and down. He saw my dark skin and he did not like it. Out he went, and he came back with one or two officials. They were all quiet when another official came to me and said, "Come along. You must go to the third class car."

"But I have a first class ticket," I said.

"That means nothing," said the man. "I'm telling you that you must go to the third class car."

"This is where they put me at Durban, and this is where I will stay."

"No, you won't," said the official. "If you don't leave, I will call a policeman to throw you off the train."

"Go ahead and do what you like. I will not leave here of my own free will."

The policeman came and pulled and pushed me out of the train. My bags were put out too, and the train left me there in Maritzburg. The station master put the bags in his office, and I went to sit in the waiting room. It was winter and Maritzburg, being in the hills, was very cold. My coat was in my bag, but I would not ask for it, because I did not want to humble myself before the officials. So I sat shaking in the cold all night.

Through the night I thought about what I should do. I could stand and fight for what was right. I could return to India. Or I could bury my pride, do my business in Pretoria and *then* return to India. It would be wrong to return to India without doing what I had been sent there for. Travelling third class was not so bad in itself. The real problem was much deeper than my little problem. It was in the thinking of the people. I would make plans to fight the sickness I had come to see in the country; but I would not worry too much about the pains that I might go through on the way. So I decided to catch the train to Pretoria the following night.

In the morning I sent a telegram to the Manager of Trains in Durban, and another one to Abdulla about what had happened. Abdulla and the Manager had a talk the same day. The Manager tried to say the officials had done the right thing. But he also sent word for no one to stop me from finishing my trip in first class. Abdulla sent a telegram to some Indian businessmen in Maritzburg, telling them about what had happened to me. They came to the station that day and encouraged me with stories about things they too had been through. That whole day I listened to how Indians who want to travel first or even second class in South Africa face problems with the officials. That night the train arrived, and this time I made a point of paying for a blanket!

The train went as far as Charlestown.

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QUESTIONS ON PART 7

1. Gandhi needed to buy a book and study it, before he could understand what was happening in the court action in Pretoria. What was the book about?
2. What did Gandhi believe he could do about the court action, that surprised Abdulla?
3. Why was Abdulla afraid to let his relative know that he wanted to come to an agreement without going to court?
4. Gandhi had a first class train ticket from Durban to Johannesburg (near Pretoria). What did an official tell him to do when the train stopped in Maritzburg?
5. What happened to Gandhi when he did not obey the official?
6. True or false: Gandhi travelled first class as far as Charlestown.

## 8. More Problems

We arrived at Charlestown the next morning. There was no line between Johannesburg and Charlestown, so my ticket covered the cost of a coach for that part of the trip. When I left Durban, I had planned to take an earlier coach; but my ticket was good for any day. Besides, Abdulla had sent a telegram to the coach company in Charlestown to tell them I would be one day late.

But the official there used the change in plans to say my ticket was no good. I stood my ground. There was more than enough room for me in the coach, but he had other reasons for trying to stop me. In the end he agreed to take me.

People with tickets travel inside the coach, but because I was a "coolie" and looked like a stranger, the "leader" (as the white official travelling with the coach was called) did not want me travelling with the Whites inside the coach.

There were open places to sit on each side of the coach box. Most of the time the leader would travel on one of these and his servant on the other. But this time he travelled inside, and he forced me to take his place outside. I knew it was just another way to put me down, but I decided to pocket it. I could not have forced my way inside, and if I had argued, the coach would have left without me. I would have lost another day, and heaven only knows what would have happened the following day. So, angry as I was, I sat quietly outside as the coach left Charlestown.

At about 3 p.m. we stopped, and the leader decided that he was going to come out to smoke and to breathe the open air. He took a piece of dirty cloth from the driver, put it on the foot board, and said to me, "*Sami*, you sit on this. I'll sit here now." It was more than I could take.

With fear in my heart about what it would lead to, I said, "You put me here in the first place. I should be sitting inside.

But I put up with that. Now you want to sit outside and smoke, so you tell me to sit at your feet. I won't do it. If you want to sit here, then I will sit inside."

As I was saying this, the man came down heavily on me, hitting me on the sides of my head. He took hold of my arms and tried to pull me down from where I was sitting, but I was hanging onto the metal border of the coach box, and I was not going to let go even if I ended up breaking my wrists by doing it. The people inside could see what was happening. The man was shouting dirty words at me, pulling at me and hitting me, and I was doing nothing. He was strong and I was weak. Some of the travellers were moved to protect me. "Stop hitting him!" they shouted. "He has done nothing wrong. He's right, you know. If he can't stay there, let him come and sit with us."

"No way!" said the leader. But he had been embarrassed enough, and he stopped hitting me.

He let go of my arm, shouted at me a little more, and then asked the servant who had been sitting at the other side of the coach box to sit on the foot board so that he could sit where the servant had been sitting.

With a blow of the whistle, the coach started up. My heart was hitting against my ribs, and I was starting to fear that I would not live out the trip. The leader would look at me angrily every now and then. We were to stop for the night in Standerton. He pointed his finger at me and said, "When we arrive in Standerton I will show you what I can do." I said nothing and prayed that God would help me.

I breathed more easily when we arrived in Standerton and I saw some friendly Indian faces waiting for me. Abdulla had sent a telegram to these people, asking them to meet me and to take me to a friend's shop. I told them about what had happened and they too had stories to tell about hard times that they had been through.

I wrote a letter to the Standerton coach company official, telling him all that had happened and about the man's promise to hurt me. I asked him to travel with us on the next leg of the trip, to see that there were no problems; and I asked him to let me sit inside with the other travellers when we left the next morning. The official told me that I would be travelling in a different coach the following day and it would have a different leader. He said that I would be able to travel inside. I was happy enough with this, and no more action was taken.

I had a nice trip the next day and arrived in Johannesburg safely that night.

Abdulla had sent a telegram to friends in Johannesburg too; but it is a big city, and I missed them. I knew where Abdulla's shop was, but I decided to go to a hotel. I went to one and asked the manager for a room. He looked at me for a few seconds and then said very nicely, "I am afraid that we do not have a room. We are full."

So I decided to go to the shop after all. Abdulla's friend, Abdul Gani, was there waiting for me. He gave me a warm welcome and had a good laugh over the story of what had happened at the hotel.

"How is it that you thought they would give you a room in a hotel?" he asked.

"Why not?" I asked in return.

"You will come to know why not after you have stayed here for a few days," he said. "Only we business men can live in a land like this, because, for money we will let our pride be broken." He then went on to tell me more stories of what Indians must go through in South Africa.

Abdul Gani said, "This country is not for people like you. You will be leaving for Pretoria tomorrow. Here in the Transvaal it is even worse for Indians than it was in the State of Natal [where Durban is]. They never sell first or second class tickets to Indians here, so you must agree to travel third class tomorrow."

"But have you really tried to change things?" I asked.

"We have sent letters; but for the most part we would not want to travel with the people who go first class anyway."

That day I had a good look at the train rules. They were not very clear one way or the other.

I said to Abdul Gani, "I want to go first class. If I cannot, then I will take a taxi. It is only thirty-seven miles."

Abdul Gani agreed to help me. We sent a servant with a letter to the station master. In it I said that I was a lawyer, and that I always travel first class. I said that I would be coming to the station, and I wanted a first class ticket to be waiting for me when I arrived. I had a reason for not "asking" for a ticket. It would have been very easy for him to send back word through the servant saying that I could not have a ticket for one reason or another. But if I came to the station in my best English clothes and talked to him in my best English, it might help to change his thinking about "coolies" being uneducated. I went to the station in a coat and tie, put my money on the counter, and asked for a first class ticket.

"Was that letter from you?" asked the station master.

"Yes, it was," I said. "I am needed in Pretoria today, and I would like a ticket."

He smiled. Then, moved with feeling for me, he said, "I'm not from this part of the world. I'm from Europe. I know how you must feel, and I do want to give you a ticket. But before I do it, you must promise that you will not bring me into it if any of the officials on the train argue with you over the ticket. You must not take action against the train company, or I could lose my job. I can see by looking at you that you are an educated person, and I hope that you have a safe trip."

I thanked him and agreed to do what he had asked.

Abdul Gani was happily surprised, but he said, "I don't think the ticket will make much difference. If the official does not send you to the third class car, the other travellers will."

When the train came, I went and sat in the first class car, and the train started. A while later an official came to see everyone's tickets. He was angry to see me in the first class car and, with a movement of his finger, he told me to go to the third class car. I showed him my first class ticket. "I am not interested in that," he said. "Go to the third class car."

It happened that there was only one other person in that part of the car, and he disagreed with the official.

"Why are you making problems for him?" he asked. "Can't you see that he has a first class ticket? I have no problem with him travelling here with me." He turned to me and said, "Make yourself comfortable where you are."

The official said, almost to himself as he turned to walk away, "If you want to travel with a coolie, then go ahead." And he went away.

We arrived in Pretoria at 8 p.m. that night.

#### **QUESTIONS ON PART 8**

1. When he left Charlestown, where was Gandhi travelling?
2. What stopped the coach "leader" from hitting Gandhi when they stopped for a rest?
3. How was Gandhi protected when he arrived in Standerton?
4. What was Gandhi not able to get in Johannesburg because he was an Indian?
5. What happened in Johannesburg that "happily surprised" Abdul Gani?
6. How was Gandhi able to stay in the first class car from Johannesburg to Pretoria?

## 9. My First Day in Pretoria

I looked for someone from Abdulla's company of lawyers to meet me at Pretoria station. But it was Sunday, and it had not been easy for them to find someone to send. I was worried, and I did not know where to go. I was afraid that no hotel would give me a room.

I waited for the other travellers to leave the station, thinking that I could ask for help from the man taking the tickets if I waited until after he had finished taking tickets. I would tell him that I needed to find a hotel that would take me; and if I could not find one, then I would be forced to sleep there at the station. The truth is that I was afraid that he would be angry with me too.

When the other travellers had left, I asked my question. The man was not angry, but he was not able to help me either. A Black from America, who was standing near there, heard what I was saying.

"I see that you're a stranger here, without any friends," he said. "If you'll come with me, I'll take you to a small hotel. I know the owner, who is from America. I'll ask him to help you."

I was afraid that his reasons for helping me might not be the best, but I thanked him and went with him anyway.

At the hotel, he pulled the owner to one side and talked to him. The owner agreed to give me a room for one night if I would agree to eat dinner in my room, and not with the other people staying there.

"It's not that I have anything against your skin colour myself," he said. "But all the people staying here are Whites, and if I let you eat with them, they may get angry and leave."

"Thank you," I said, "for at least giving me a room. I have been learning quickly how it is here, and I now see how difficult it could be for you too. I'll gladly eat in my room, and I'll try to find another room tomorrow."

When I was in my room I had time to think, as I waited for my dinner. There were not many people in the hotel, so I did not think it would be long before the waiter would come with my meal. But instead, the owner himself came to my room. He said, "I was feeling guilty about making you eat here, so I talked to the others who are staying here, and asked if it would be okay with them for you to eat with them. They all said that they had no problem with that, and they are happy for you to stay on here too. So please come and eat with us, and feel free to stay with us as long as you like."

I thanked him again, and then went and had a very good dinner with the others.

The next morning I went to see Abdulla's top lawyer. His name was Mr. A. W. Baker. He was very friendly, as Abdulla had said he would be. He told me that I was not needed to work as a lawyer, because they already had the best lawyers working for them.

"What we need you for," he said, "is to act as a go-between, between us and Mr. Abdulla. It will be much easier for us to understand what he wants if you can tell us in English."

Mr. Baker went on: "I waited to see you before finding you a room. White people here have very bad feelings about people with dark skin, so it's not easy to find rooms for someone from India. But I know a poor woman who needs the money. Her husband makes bread and cakes. I think she will take you in. Come, let us go to her place."

We went to her house, and Mr. Baker talked to the woman alone. She agreed to take me in.

Mr. Baker, besides being a lawyer, was a part-time preacher. He is still alive today, and now spends all of his time doing Christian work. He stopped working as a lawyer to do that. He has a lot of money now and he often writes to me. In his letters he always says the same things.

He puts forward many different arguments to prove to me that Christianity is a very good (if not the best) religion; and he argues that it is impossible to find peace with God without believing that Jesus is the only Son of God and the one person to save everyone on earth.

In my first interview with Mr. Baker he learned of my religious beliefs. I said to him, "I am a Hindu by birth. But I do not know much about my religion, and I know less of other religions. The truth is that I do not know where I am, or what I believe. I plan to make a serious study of my own religion and, as far as I can, of other religions too."

Mr. Baker was glad to hear this and said, "I am one of the leaders of the South Africa General Mission. I have built a church with my own money, and I preach there each week. I do not have feelings against people with dark skin, and I have a prayer meeting with the people I work with at 1 p.m. each day. I would be happy to have you come. You will be able to meet my friends, and I think you will like them. I'll give you some religious books to read too, but the best book of all is the Bible, which I think you should read."

I thanked Mr. Baker and agreed to come to his prayer meetings as I was able.

"So I will see you here tomorrow at one, and we can go together to pray," added Mr. Baker before saying goodbye.

I did not have time to think about all of this just then. I had to go and pay for my hotel room, and then I had to move into the bread-maker's house. The woman was very kind. She cooked a vegetarian lunch for me, and in a short time I was feeling very much at home with her family.

After lunch, I went to see a friend of Abdulla's, to give him a letter from Abdulla. From him I learned more about the problems facing Indians in South Africa. He asked me to stay with him. I thanked him and told him that I already had a room. He encouraged me to ask him if I needed anything.

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By this time it was dark. I returned to the house, had my dinner, and went to my room, to think about all that was happening. I sent word to Abdulla to tell him that there was no work for me to do at this time.

I was thinking about Mr. Baker. What was the reason for his interest in me? What could I learn from his religious friends? How far should I go in studying Christianity? How could I learn more about the Hindu religion? And how could I understand Christianity without first knowing my own religion? I could come up with only one answer: I must do my best to study all that I could, and to follow God's leading in my meetings with Mr. Baker's group. But I should not think of joining another religion without first understanding my own.

And I was thinking like this as I fell asleep.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 9**

1. Who helped Gandhi at Pretoria Station?
2. Why did the hotel owner change his mind and ask Gandhi to eat with the Whites who were staying at the hotel?
3. What did Abdulla's top lawyer do on top of working as a lawyer?
4. What did Gandhi say in his first interview with Mr. Baker that he was glad to hear?
5. What was the meeting that Mr. Baker asked Gandhi to come to the next day?
6. True or false: Gandhi decided that he would do his best to follow God's leading in his meetings with Mr. Baker's group.

## 10. Christians

The following day at 1 p.m. I went to Mr. Baker's prayer meeting. There I met two older women (Miss Harris and Miss Gabb), a young man from the "Friends" Church (Mr. Coates), and some other people. We all kneeled to pray. The prayers were all asking God for things, with each person listing what he or she wanted. Most wanted a day of peace, and for God to open the doors of our hearts.

A prayer was added for me: "Lord, show the way to our new brother. Give him the peace that we have. May the Jesus who has saved us save him too. We ask it in Jesus' name." There was no singing or other music at these meetings. After praying for something special each day, we would each go our own way to eat. The prayers did not take more than five minutes.

Miss Harris and Miss Gabb lived together, and they asked for me to come to their house for tea at 4 p.m. each Sunday.

I would write in a book each day what I was learning of spiritual things. I would give this to Mr. Coates at our Sunday meetings, and talk to him about the books I had read that week. The women would talk about sweet things that had happened to them and the peace that they had found.

Mr. Coates was a true and honest young man. We would often go for walks together, and he took me to meet other Christian friends. As we came closer to each other, he started to give me more books that he believed I should read, until my shelf was full of them. In good faith I agreed to read them all, and as I finished each, we would talk about it.

I do not remember all the names of the books I read that year. Parts of some I could not understand at all. I liked some things and did not like others. One book tried to prove the religion of the Bible, but it had no effect on me. One encouraged people to be good, but it was only written for those who were already Christians. There was one very deep book, that you needed to read three or four times before you

could understand it well. It tried to make people who did not believe in God believe in him. The arguments for God were not needed by me, as I already believed in him. Arguments in it to say that Jesus was the only Son of God and the only one who could talk to God for us did not move me.

But Mr. Coates was not one to give up easily. He liked me very much. He saw around my neck a prayer necklace and he believed that it had something to do with Hindu magic. This gave him great pain. "This necklace is bad for you," he said. "Let me break it."

"No, you must not. My mother gave it to me."

"But do you believe in it?" he asked.

"I don't think anything bad will happen if I don't wear it, if that's what you mean. But, without a good reason, I won't give up a necklace that my mother put around my neck in the belief that it would protect me. When it breaks in time, I'll drop it and not buy another one. But I see no reason to break it now."

Mr. Coates could not see the point of my argument, because he could see nothing good in my religion. He wanted only to save me from all the evil that I could not see. He wanted me to believe that the good in other religions could not save anyone... that being saved was impossible without joining the Christian religion... that Christianity was *the* Truth... that my sins could never be washed away without me praying to Jesus... and that all of my good works were a waste of time.\*

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*\*The Bible does say Jesus is the only one who can save us, because he was the only Son of God. But Gandhi and the people he talked to were confusing Jesus with the Christian religion. The Bible says the death of Jesus paid for God's forgiveness for all those who have faith in God. Their religion was not important. Gandhi had faith in God. That is all he needed. He did not need to have faith in the Christian religion for the blood of Jesus to save him. D. M.*

Through Mr. Coates I read many new books, and I met many new people... people that he believed were very good Christians.

Many of these people were good people. I had the feeling that most of them really wanted to do what God wanted. But one of his friends from the Plymouth Brothers gave me an argument that I was not at all prepared for. Here it is:

"You don't understand what is so beautiful about our religion. It seems you spend all your time thinking about what is right or wrong. You keep trying to change your ways. You keep trying to fix up things that you have done wrong. How can all of this make you right with God? You can never find peace that way.

"We are all sinners. But look at the answer that our religion gives us. We Christians see it as a waste of time trying to change or fix up what we have done wrong. We too want to be right with God. But if we can't stop sinning, the only way is to put all our sins onto Jesus. He's the only perfect Son of God. He says if people will believe in him they'll have eternal life. So that's how God's grace works. By just believing that Jesus will fix everything, we don't need to worry about our sins. We must sin; it is impossible not to. That's why Jesus died for our sins. The only way to perfect peace is to let Jesus do all the work. Think how you will be trying all your life to be perfect, while we already have God's promise of peace."

There was no way I could believe such an argument. My answer:

"If this is what all Christians teach, then I am not interested in it. My interest is not in hiding from being punished for my sins. I want to be free from sin itself. More than that, I do not even want to *think* about doing wrong. Until that happens, I am happy to spend my life fighting against sin."

The Plymouth Brother finished off by saying, "I tell you, trying to be good is a waste of time. Think again about what I have said."

And the man proved to be as good as his word; for he would knowingly do things that were wrong, and he showed by his actions that he had no feeling of guilt about any of it.

But I knew before meeting him that not all Christians agreed with this reasoning about God's grace. Mr. Coates himself walked in the fear of God. He was a sincere man and he believed that a person could be without sin. The two women also followed this teaching. Some of the Christian books that I read were filled with teachings that encouraged people to try to obey God. So when Mr. Coates became worried that this Plymouth Brother would turn me against Christianity, I was able to tell him that it would not change my thinking at all.

The most difficult problem I had was with something else. It had to do with the Bible and the way that most Christians understood it.

#### **QUESTIONS ON PART 10**

1. Who did Gandhi meet at the prayer meetings that he said was "a true and honest young man"?
2. What reason did Gandhi give for Mr. Coates wanting to destroy his Hindu prayer necklace?
3. What did the Plymouth Brother tell Gandhi was a waste of time?
4. Did Gandhi show much interest in what the Plymouth Brother had to say about being a Christian?
5. Why did the Plymouth Brother not turn Gandhi against Christianity?

## 11. Touching other Indians

Before writing more about Christians, I must report on other things that were happening at that time.

Sheth Tyeb Haji Khan Muhammad played the part in Pretoria that Abdulla did in Durban. No Indian movement could start without him. I met him in my first week in Pretoria, and told him that I planned to get in touch with every Indian in Pretoria. I said that I wanted to study the life of Indians living there, and asked for his help in my work. He gladly agreed to help.

My first step was to call a meeting of all the Indians living there, and to give them a picture of the problems that they each faced. Most of the people who came to the meeting were Muslim business men. There were only a few Hindus, because not many Hindus lived there.

It may be said that this was my first real talk in front of other people. I prepared well for the talk. It was about truth and business. I had always heard that business people say it is not possible to tell the truth when you are in business. I did not agree when I heard it, and I do not agree now. I still have friends who are in business and who argue that they cannot tell the truth. They say that business is about real life and truth is only for religion. Religion, they say, will not work in business. In business you can only tell as much of the truth as helps you, and the whole truth will never do.

In my talk I strongly argued against this belief. I tried to wake the business men up to the need for them to do what is right. I said that the need was greater in a different country, because all of India was being measured by their actions.

I had found that our people were very dirty when measured against the English people around them, and I talked to them about the need to change this. I said, too, that it was very important for us to forget about our religious and language differences.

In the end, I asked for them to start up a group that would be able to talk to government officials about what was happening to Indians living in Pretoria. I promised to give them all the time that I could. I could see that I was getting through to them.

After I talked, they talked. Some agreed to help me, and I was encouraged.

I could see that very few knew English. Because I believed that the English language would be a big help to them in that country, I encouraged all who had the time to learn it. I told them that it was possible to learn a new language even when a person is old, and I told stories of people who had done so.

I said that I would teach a class in English if someone would start it; or if only a few people wanted to learn, I would teach them one by one.

They did not start a class, but three young men said they would try to learn English if I would come to them to teach them. Two were Muslims. One of these worked in an office, and the other cut hair for a living. The third man was a Hindu who owned a small shop. I agreed to come at any time they liked.

I was very confident about my ability to teach. My students might become tired, but I did not. At times I would arrive to teach them, and they would still be working. But I would simply wait. They did not want to learn English *well*. They wanted only to know enough to help them in their businesses. But in about eight months two of them knew enough to write simple business letters.

I think their English was enough to make a big difference in how much money they could make. The man who was cutting hair only wanted to learn enough English to talk to the people whose hair he was cutting.

I was happy with the effect of the meeting. The people decided to hold meetings, as far as I can remember, once a week, or maybe it was once a month. At these meetings I was able to meet, and learn about the problems of, every Indian living in Pretoria. This gave me the confidence to go to the English government official in Pretoria on the part of these people. He was interested in helping them, but he could not do much to change the thinking of the people of the country. He did agree to help in any way that he was able.

Then I went to the top officials for the trains in that state, and told them that, even under their own rules, they could not say that it was right to stop Indians from travelling in first or second class. I received a letter from them saying that first and second class tickets would, in future, be sold to Indians if they were well dressed. This was not good enough. They left it up to each station master to decide who was "well dressed".

The top English official in Pretoria also showed me some interesting papers about the way people were acting toward Indians there. Tyeb Sheth had papers that were a help in this way too.

In short, my stay in Pretoria helped me to make a deep study into what it is like for Indians living in that part of South Africa – in their businesses, in government, and with their neighbours. I did not know how important this study would be for me in the future, for I believed that I would be returning home by the end of the year, or even earlier if the court business was finished before the year was out.

But God had other plans.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 11**

1. Gandhi called a meeting for all the Indians living in Pretoria. From what group were most of the Indians at that meeting?
2. What belief did Gandhi argue strongly against in his first talk to the Indians living in Pretoria?
3. What did Gandhi agree to teach, because he believed that Indians living in Pretoria needed to learn it?
4. How many Indians wanted Gandhi to teach him?
5. What officials did Gandhi go to, to argue for the Indians living in Pretoria?
6. Why did Gandhi feel that the letter from the train officials, saying that Indians could travel first class, was "not good enough"?

## 12. What it Means to be a 'Coolie'

It would be out of place to spend too much time here writing about life for Indians in South Africa. Readers who want to know more should read my *History of Satyagraha in South Africa*. But I should say a little something about life there.

In the Orange Free State (which is south and west of Johannesburg), a special law made in 1888, or earlier, took all power away from Indians. Any Indian who chose to live there could only work as a waiter in a hotel or in some other very humble job. Indian businessmen were forced out. They tried to fight the law, but they were not able to stop it.

A very strong rule had been passed in the Transvaal (where Pretoria and Johannesburg are) in 1885, that was changed a little in 1886. It said that Indians must pay to move into the state and live there. They could not own land outside of special places that were marked out for them, and even that land could not be fully owned by them. They had no say in choosing the government. This was all under a special law for all people from Asia.

All laws against Blacks from Africa were used against people from Asia too. Under these laws, Indians could not walk on the footpaths at any time, and they could not go out of their homes after 9 p.m. without a special ticket. There was some room to bend this law, because "Arabs" did not need to follow it. But in the end it was up to the sweet will of the police to decide if you were an "Arab" or not.

I would often go for walks with Mr. Coates at night. We would not return much before 10 p.m. Mr. Coates worried more than I did about the police putting me in prison. Strangely, he could give a ticket to his servants to be out late, but he could not give one to me, because I was not his servant. If he had tried, he would have been breaking the law.

So Mr. Coates or a friend of his took me to the official State Lawyer. He could not believe that I needed a ticket to be out after 9 p.m. Instead of giving me a ticket, he wrote a letter, saying that I could be out at all hours without police stopping me. I always carried this letter on myself when I went out. It is only an accident that I never had to use it.

The effect of the rule against walking on footpaths was a little more serious for me. I often went for a walk down the road where President Kruger lived. His was a simple house without a big yard. It was no different from other houses on the same road. Many of the rich people in Pretoria had much bigger and much more expensive houses. Only the policemen, who would always be standing in front of the house, marked it as being the house of an important official. I almost always walked on the footpath in front of this house when taking my walks; and I did so most of the time without any problems.

But from time to time, the policeman whose job it was to watch the house would be changed. Once one of these men, without saying a word to me, that is, without even asking me to leave the footpath, pushed and kicked me into the road. I could not believe it. Before I could question him for what he had done, Mr. Coates, who happened to be going by on his horse, shouted out:

"Gandhi, I have seen everything. I will gladly go to court for you if you want to take action against this man. I feel very bad about the way he has so roughly hurt you."

But I said that there was no need for action. All coloured people were the same to the man. He did not know me. He would have acted in the same way toward a Black from his own country. I said to Mr. Coates, "I have made it a rule not to go to court to help myself alone; so there is no point in taking action against the man."

"That is just like you," said Mr. Coates. "But we must teach such people not to act in that way." He then talked to the policeman, who came to me and asked for forgiveness.

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There was no need for him to ask; I had no hard feelings against him.

But I never walked on that road again. There would be other men in the place of this man, and they might act in the same way. Why should I walk into another kick if I did not need to. So I chose a different direction for my walks.

What happened to me helped me to feel more strongly for other Indians living there. After talking with the top English official, I talked with the Indians themselves about arguments for and against going to court to test the law against them walking on footpaths.

So in the time that I lived in Pretoria, I had learned about how difficult life is for the Indians living there. I had learned through reading, through listening, and through living it myself. I saw that South Africa was no country for a confident Indian to live in. My mind became full of thoughts about what could be done to change things there.

But my first job at that time was to help Abdulla with his court action.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 12**

1. Which Indians had been forced out of the Orange Free State under a law passed there around 1888?
2. What did Indians need, to be out after 9 p.m. in Pretoria?
3. What group of Indians did not need this?
4. Why did a policeman push Gandhi roughly to the ground when he was walking by President Kruger's house?
5. What was Gandhi's reason for not taking action against the policeman?
6. What were the three ways that Gandhi had learned about the difficult life of Indians living in South Africa?

## 13. Preparing for Court

My year in Pretoria was an important time for me in many ways. Here is where I started to learn how to work for the people from my country, and where I was able to find some measure of my ability to do it. Here too the religious spirit in me started to come to life. And here was where I started to learn what it really is to be a lawyer.

I learned many of the things that a new lawyer learns when he first starts to work for an older lawyer; and with it I found confidence that I would be able to make a living as a lawyer when I chose to do so. But more important than those two things, I learned what the secret is to being a really good lawyer.

Abdulla's court action was not a small one. He was asking for £40,000 from a relative that he believed had wronged him. Because the action was over things that had happened in his business, many of the arguments were very difficult to understand. Part of it was to do with agreements, and part was to do with promises to put agreements into writing. There were many points of law in this, and there were many things that the two sides did not agree on.

Both sides had the best lawyers, and I was in a place where I was able to study closely the work of them all, and to learn from them. It was my job to prepare the arguments for Abdulla's lawyers, and to go through every little piece of what had happened. I learned a lot by watching to see which of my arguments and which of the happenings that I listed were believed to be important enough to keep when the lawyers finished with what I had prepared. I learned a lot about how to best go about preparing these arguments too.

I was very enthusiastic about this job. I read every paper I could find that had something to do with it. Abdulla was a man of great ability himself and he soon had perfect confidence in me, which made my job much easier. I studied much about keeping books for a business. My understanding of language became sharper through all of the letters that I had to change from Gujarati to English.

I have said that I became very interested in religion and in helping the Indian people at this time, and it is true that I always gave some of my time to these two interests; but my first interest was the court action. Reading the law and looking up old court actions, when needed, had first use of my time. From this, I believe that in the end I understood what was happening even better than the two men who were arguing with each other. This was because I had taken the time to study what *both* sides were saying.

I remember hearing someone say that knowing what really happened is most of what being a lawyer is all about. I remember later working for a man who did not seem to be guilty of anything; but the law still seemed to be against him. I asked an important lawyer in South Africa for help, and he agreed that it did not seem right for the man to be punished. He said, "Gandhi, I have learned one thing, and it is this: If we know perfectly what happened, the law will do what is right. So you must look more closely at what happened." On studying again what had happened, I came to understand things in a new light, and I could see that the law was not against the man at all. I also found an earlier action much like his, that helped him to win his argument in court.

When I was preparing Abdulla's arguments, I did not know how true this was. Knowing what really happened means knowing the *truth*. If we stick to the truth, the law will always come to help us. Because I made it my job to know what had happened, I came to see that the law was on Abdulla's side.

But I also saw that if they were to fight it out in the court, it would destroy both Abdulla and his relative. There was no way of knowing how long it would take to finish the action, and they both were paying top prices for the top lawyers. It was for the good of both of them that the argument be ended quickly.

I went to Abdulla's relative and encouraged him to bring someone in that they both believed to be honest, and let that person decide who was right. In this way it could be over quickly. On top of the high prices they both were paying for their lawyers, bad feelings between the two men were growing each day. I felt sick at the way most lawyers work. Both sides work on digging up one point of law after another in trying to win, making the argument go on and on. When the argument is over, even the winning side does not get enough money from the other side to cover all of the costs. This is because the lawyers themselves ask for more than the price that the court says the losing side must pay. I could not be a part of this, and so I believed it was my job to be a friend to both sides and bring them together outside of the courts. I did everything I could to encourage it, and in the end Abdulla's relative agreed. They brought in a man to listen to their arguments, and, after listening to it all, the man agreed that Abdulla was in the right.

But there was another problem. How was the money to be paid? It was not possible for the losing side to pay the whole sum at once without his business being destroyed.

It was more difficult for me to bring about an agreement between the two sides on this than it had been to get them to meet outside of court. But in the end, Abdulla agreed that his relative could pay the sum a little at a time over a very long time. It was in the best interests of both of them, and in the end, others thought well of them both for coming to such an agreement.

There was no end to my happiness at bringing this action to such a good ending. And this is where I learned the truth about a lawyer's job. Our job is to find the best side of each person and to get into their hearts. Our true job is to bring people together and not to force them apart. I believed this so strongly that in the twenty years that I worked as a lawyer, much of my time was used in bringing people together outside of court. I was able to work out agreements like this for hundreds of people. As a lawyer I did not lose a thing by doing this. I clearly did not lose any money (because the people I worked for were happy with what I did, and they told others of it), and, most important, I did not lose my soul.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 13**

1. In what three general ways did Gandhi start to learn when he was in Pretoria?
2. What was Gandhi's first interest at this time?
3. In what way did Gandhi understand the arguments in the court better than the men who were arguing?
4. Finish this: "Knowing \_\_\_\_\_ is mostly what being a lawyer is all about."
5. Finish this: "If we stick to \_\_\_\_\_, the law will always come to help us."
6. What was it about the way that most lawyers work that made Gandhi feel sick?
7. What did Gandhi learn that the true job of a lawyer should be?

## 14. Religious Action

I will now return to what was happening with my Christian friends.

Mr. Baker was becoming worried about my future. He took me to a three-day meeting that Protestant Christians hold every few years to bring new spiritual life to people. He was hoping that the enthusiasm and sincere faith of the people there would lead me to put my faith in Christianity. But his greatest hope was prayer. He had a strong faith in prayer, believing God had no choice but to listen to deep, serious prayer. He told stories of people like George Muller, from Britain, who did not even work for money, having faith that God would feed him if he asked for such help.

I listened to Mr. Baker as honestly as I could, promising that, if I believed God was telling me to, I would join the Christian religion. I had no problem with making such a promise, because I had long believed that one should follow the voice of God in his or her own heart. It would have been difficult for me to fight God if I had felt sure that he was telling me to join the Christian religion.

It was not easy for Mr. Baker to take me to the meeting as his friend, because of my skin colour. On the way there, we had to stop at a hotel on Sunday, because Mr. Baker and his friends did not believe in travelling on Sunday. After much arguing, the manager of the station hotel agreed to let me stay there. But he said that I could not eat with the others staying at the hotel. Mr. Baker was not one to give up easily, and he continued to argue that I should be able to eat there too. He tried not to let me know of the problems that he was having over this, but I could see that he was going through a lot for me.

There were many sincere Christians at the meeting. I liked their faith, and I could see that many of them were praying for me. I liked some of their music. It was very sweet. I could understand the faith of those who were there, and I could see how it was true for them; but it did not seem a good reason for me to change my own faith. I could not possibly believe that theirs was the only way to God. When I said so to some of these good Christian friends, they were very surprised and hurt. But there was no way that I could change my feeling about that.

I had other problems. I could not believe Jesus was the only Son of God, and that only people who believed in him could have eternal life. If God could have sons, then all of us were his sons. If Jesus was like God, or God Himself, then all of us were like God and could be God Himself. I could see that the death of Jesus might be a *picture* of God's love for the world and what it means to forgive; but I could not believe as strongly as they believed that it paid the price for everyone's sins for all time. Christianity teaches that animals do not have a soul. I could not believe that either.

I believed Jesus was a great man, a teacher from God, full of love, and ready to die for what he believed; but I could not say he was the most perfect person ever born. His death on the cross was a beautiful picture of love for others to follow, but I could not see some special miracle in it that the Christians said was there.

Christian faith in God seems no better than the faith in God that people from other religions have. Christians have brought many good changes to the world. But people from other religions have done the same. I see nothing special about Christian teachings on such things as love and truth. When it comes to going through difficult

times for their faith, I believe Hindus are far ahead of Christians. So I could not think of Christianity as a perfect religion, or even as the best religion.\*

I told my Christian friends how I felt, but the arguments they gave in answer to my questions did not seem strong enough to change my beliefs.

But, if I could not say that Christianity was a perfect religion, I also could not say that the Hindu religion was perfect. I was not at all comfortable with some things that seemed very wrong in Hindu teaching too. The teaching that we cannot touch a person who is an outcaste or from a very low caste, if it is truly part of Hindu teaching, can only be a very sick part of it, and a part that must be changed. I cannot understand the reason for all the different castes, and the different teachings that separate Hindus from each other. And why do we need to say that our holy writings are the perfect Word of God? Are they any more perfect than the holy writings of Muslims and Christians?

As my Christian friends were trying to change me, so were my Muslim friends. Abdulla was always encouraging me to study Islam, and he always had something to say about how beautiful it was.

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*\*Again, Gandhi and his friends seemed to be thinking more about the Christian religion than about faith in God. True Christianity (Jesus) teaches that faith in God is all that is needed. In one of the best loved stories of Jesus, the "Good Samaritan" had the wrong religion, but it did not keep him out of heaven. The first disciples did not think of Jesus as the only Son of God when they first started to follow him. That faith needed to grow slowly. The Christian religion asks people to say things from the start that an honest person (like Gandhi) would only be able to say after following Jesus the Teacher for some time. D. M.*

I wrote a letters to Raychandbhai and other religious leaders in India about all of this, and they answered me. I received some peace from Raychandbhai's letters. He asked me to wait until I had studied Hindu teaching more deeply. One line went something like this: "In looking at the question as honestly as I know how, I still arrive at the truth that no other religion has the truths of the Hindu religion, its understanding of the soul, or its love."

I started to read the Koran and other books on Islam, and I wrote to Christian friends in Britain. One of them put me in touch with Edward Maitland, who sent me *The Perfect Way*, a book that he had helped to write. It argued against the way that most Christians thought, and I liked what it was saying. He did not see a need for Christians to be fighting Hindu teaching and truth. Then I read Leo Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Inside You*. It filled me with enthusiasm for the things of God. The feeling I received from this book never left me.

All of the books that I had received from Mr. Coates were nothing beside the thought that went into Tolstoy's book. He was able to free himself from the way that other Christians thought, and to find real truth and real understanding of how God sees us.

So my studies of Christianity carried me in a different direction to what my Christian friends wanted. I continued to write to Edward Maitland for many years, and to Raychandbhai until his death. He sent me many books on Hindu teachings.

I did not go in the direction that my Christian friends wanted for me, but I owe them very much for waking me up to my need to think seriously about following God. I will always remember our times together with warm feelings. The years that followed had more, not less, of such sweet and holy times with them.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 14**

1. True or false: Gandhi was open to joining the Christian religion if he had believed that God was telling him to.
2. What problem did Mr. Baker have on the way to the Christian meeting with Gandhi?
3. What did Gandhi say that surprised and hurt some of his Christian friends at the big meeting?
4. In what way did Gandhi feel that Hindus were far ahead of Christians?
5. What part of Hindu teaching did Gandhi think was a "very sick" part of the Hindu religion?
6. Were his Christian friends the only ones trying to change Gandhi?
7. When Gandhi's Hindu teacher heard that he was being encouraged to change his religion, what did he ask Gandhi to do?
8. Gandhi said that all of the books that he had received from Mr. Coates were nothing beside one book. What book was that?

## 15. Man Plans; God Changes the Plans

Because my business with Abdulla was finished, I had no need to stay in Pretoria. I returned to Durban to prepare for my trip home. Abdulla was not one to let me sail without a send-off. He gave a party for me in Sydenham a short time before I was to leave.

We planned to spend the whole day there, so I was reading a newspaper before the party was to start and I saw a small piece with the words "Indian Vote" at the top of it. It said the government was going to make a new law that would stop Indians from being able to vote in Natal. It was the first time I had heard of the law, and the same was true of the others who had come for the party.

I asked Abdulla about it. He said, "We don't understand such things. We only know about things that have to do with our businesses. As you know, we can no longer work in the Orange Free State. We tried to fight it, but we lost. We are crippled when it comes to such things, because we have no education. We only read the papers for the business news that is in them. What can we know of government and the laws they make? Our lawyers are all from Europe, and they have become our eyes and ears."

"But," I said, "there are so many young Indians who have been born and educated here. They can help you."

"They!" shouted Abdulla sadly. "They're not interested in us; and to tell the truth, we are not interested in them. The young ones are all Christians, and their white preachers control them. The white preachers, in turn, are controlled by the government."

This opened my eyes. I felt we should think of the young Indians as Indians. Was this what Christianity was all about?

Did they stop being Indians because they had become Christians?

But why was I getting into this? I was on the point of returning to India. I was holding back from saying all that I was thinking. Instead, I said quietly to Abdulla, "If this law passes, it will make life even more difficult for us Indians. It is the first nail in the box they will use to bury us in. It cuts at the roots of who we are."

"Yes, it may," said Abdulla. "I'll tell you how this interest in the Indian vote started. In the past we never took time to vote. But one of our best lawyers was trying to get a job as Lawyer General, and he encouraged us all to vote for him. We did, and we helped him to win. Before that, we had not used our votes. But we understand what you are saying and what the Indian vote can do. So what do you think we should do now?"

The others were listening closely by this time. One of them said, "You know what I think we should do? I think Gandhi should stay here for another month, and together we should fight this thing."

The others joined in, "Yes! Yes! Abdulla, tell Gandhi to stay for another month, and we will fight it."

Abdulla was a smart business man. "I have no power over him now," he said. "Or to put it another way, you have as much power over him as I do. But I agree that *together* we may be able to talk him into staying. Just remember, that he is a lawyer, and he must be paid."

It pained me to hear talk of giving me money, and I cut in: "No, Abdulla! Paying me is out of the question. I cannot receive money for helping my country. If I am to stay, I will stay as a servant. As you know, I do not know all these people. But, Abdulla, if you believe they really will help me, I will be happy to stay for another month."

"But there is one thing... I *will* need money for things like telegrams and printing, travelling, and help from other lawyers. Because I do not know your laws, I will need to buy some law books and study them. And I cannot do all that needs to be done by myself. There must be many others who will help me."

I heard many voices singing out: "God is great! Money will come. Tell us how many people you need, and you will have them. Please stay and we will do our part."

So the party to send me off turned into a meeting to plan our work. I said that we should eat quickly and return to Durban. My head was too full of plans for our action. I decided to give it one month, and I started by making a list of Indian voters.

This is how God started my work in South Africa, and how he planted the seeds for the move to make India free.

### **QUESTIONS ON PART 15**

1. What did Gandhi read about in the newspaper on the day of the send-off party before he was to leave South Africa?
2. What was the reason that Abdulla gave for Indians not thinking of the young educated Indians (who had been born in South Africa) as being their brothers?
3. What do you think Abdulla was trying to get the people to do to show that they wanted Gandhi to stay on and help them fight the new law?
4. How much longer did Gandhi agree to stay on in South Africa?

## 16. Staying on in Natal

Sheth Haji Muhammad was the top leader of the Indians living in Natal in 1893. It is true that Abdulla was their leader when it came to business, but in things to do with government, Haji Muhammad was their leader. So we called a meeting in Abdulla's house, with Haji Muhammad as the President. At the meeting we all agreed to fight the law against Indians voting.

We needed helpers, and there were a good number of young Christian Indians at the meeting, who all said they would help. Many of the business men agreed to do the same. They were surprised to find themselves becoming part of a political action, but they were happy about it too. It was a new part of their lives. In the face of what the government was planning to do to us, we dropped all that separated one Indian from another. High and low, small and great, master and servant, Hindu, Muslim, Zoroastrian, Christian, and Indians of all languages were as one. We were all children and servants of our mother land.

The Law was about to pass its second reading. Government arguments for the law against Indians voting said that Indians had said nothing against it, and this proved that Indians were not interested in voting anyway.

I told the people at the meeting about this. The first thing we did was to send a telegram to the Leader in the House where the law was to be made, asking him to stop all talk about the law until we had time to prepare our arguments. Other telegrams were sent to other government leaders. We received word back that the government would wait for two days for word from us.

We needed to write up our arguments against the law, and give these to the newspapers and to the government. But we wanted hundreds of people to put their names on the papers too. And we had only one night in which to do all of this. Those who knew English stayed up the whole night writing the arguments out over and over by hand. Business men took the arguments out in their coaches to find other Indians who would put their names on the papers, saying that they agreed with us. In no time we had enough names, and we sent the papers off to the government and to the papers. The newspapers printed our arguments and said some nice things about what we had said. The arguments were read and talked about by the leaders of the government, but in the end, it did not stop the law from passing.

We all knew that this would happen, but we Indians were alive with interest now, and we were working as one. We knew that it was our job to fight political moves against us as well as fighting for our businesses.

We decided to send a letter with a long list of names on it to the government in Britain, asking for their help. We needed more than a day to do that. We made another list of helpers and each one received a job to do.

I worked hard on what to say in the letter. I studied everything that I could find that might help me. In the end, my argument was that it was *right* to let us vote, and that it was *easy* to let us vote. I said that we should be able to vote in Natal just as we had in India; and, because there were very few of us, it would not cost the state of Natal much at all to do what was right for us.

In two weeks we had ten thousand names on the letter. It was a big job covering the whole state in such a short time. It was made more difficult because our workers had

never done work like this before. We used only the most educated people on this, because we wanted to be sure each person who put their name on the letter understood what it was saying. Towns were far apart from each other, but our helpers put their whole heart into the job. Each one was filled with enthusiasm for what we were doing. Not one of the business men who helped us asked for money for his time or even to cover travel costs. Abdulla's house was a meeting place for all the comings and goings. A number of friends who were helping me, and many others, had their meals there. So each person who joined in was giving much of themselves to make this movement work.

The letter was sent off to Britain. We printed a thousand of them to give to people in Natal, India, and in Britain. For the first time, it told the people of India what life was like for Indians living in Natal. I sent it to all the newspapers and to other writers that I knew of.

*The Times of India*, in a leading story about the letter, stood strongly behind what we were saying. The London *Times* did the same, and we started to have some hope that the law would be dropped.

By this time it was not possible for me to leave Natal. Indian friends on all sides were asking me to stay on and help. I told them what I needed. I did not want to make a living from helping the Indian people. I wanted to have a house and a job of my own. I wanted a nice house with nice neighbours, and I believed that others would think better of what I was saying if I were to live as well as other lawyers. To do this, I needed at least £300 a year. I decided that I would only stay if Indian business men agreed to give me that much work as a lawyer each year. And that is what I told them.

"But we will give you that much *without* you having to work as a lawyer," they said. "If you get work as a lawyer, you can keep that on top of it."

"No, I could not ask you to pay me just for helping my country," I said. "My biggest job in this movement will just be to make *you* work. How can I ask money for doing that? Besides, we will need big sums of money for other things, and I would find it difficult to ask you to give for those things if I knew that you were already giving to feed me. Believe me, it will take much more than £300 for what we need to do."

"But we know you well. We know you would not take more than you need," they argued. "Do you think we would ask you to stay and not pay for what you need?"

"Your love for me and your enthusiasm for what we are doing makes you talk like this now," I said. "But how can I know that your enthusiasm will continue? And as your friend and servant, there will be times when I will need to say hard things to you. God only knows if you will still feel like paying me after that. The truth is that I must not take any money for my work for the Indian people. I will be happy if you will just let me work for you as a lawyer. Even that may be difficult. For one thing, I am not a white lawyer. How can I know if the courts will hear my arguments? So just paying me to be your lawyer could end up costing you. I will think of what you pay me to act as your lawyer as reward for what I do for you in our movement."

The effect of all this talk was that about twenty business men gave me money to act as their lawyer in the year ahead. On top of this, Abdulla bought furniture for my house with money that he had planned to give me on my leaving for India.

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And that is how I decided to stay on in Natal.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 16**

1. True or false: Some groups of Indians were not interested in fighting against the new law to stop Indians from voting.
2. The law was very close to being passed. How long did the government agree to wait for the Indians to give their argument?
3. In two days the Indians were able to get hundreds of names of their list of arguments and to give the list of arguments to the newspapers and the government. Did that stop the law from passing?
4. Gandhi wrote a letter to the government in India against the new law. How long did it take him and his helpers to get 10,000 names on that letter?
5. What were the names of the newspapers in London and In India that stood strongly behind the movement to let Indians vote in South Africa?
6. What would Gandhi not let the people do for him if he was to stay on in Natal and fight for them?
7. So how did Gandhi make money for his family over the next year?

## 17. Colour Bar

The picture we have for courts is that of a smart woman with two weights, one for the truth on each side of an argument. An important part of the picture is that her eyes are covered. She cannot judge by looking at the way the person is dressed or the colour of the person's skin; she can only judge from the weight of the arguments. But the Company of Lawyers of Natal tried to encourage the top court in that country to break this most important rule in judging me.

I asked to be able to work as a lawyer in the top court in Natal. My papers from study in Britain were at the Mumbai High Court; I had to leave them with that court to get papers saying I could work as a lawyer there. So I sent my Mumbai papers to show that I really was a lawyer. I also needed to send letters from two people saying I was a good person. I thought that letters from Whites living in South Africa would be best. Through Abdulla I had met two very important White businessmen, and they agreed to write letters for me. I needed one other lawyer to write a letter for me, and I could do no better than to get a letter from the Lawyer General, who had worked for Abdulla in the past, and who so many Indians had voted for. I visited him, and he agreed to help me.

But that is when the Company of Lawyers pulled a surprise move, sending me a letter to say that they were going to fight against me being able to work in the top court. One reason they gave was that I did not send the papers from my studies in Britain (the ones that were with the High Court in Mumbai). But they said that their other reason was that, when the rules were made for lawyers working in the top court, no one would have believed that a person with dark skin would ask to work there. They said that the wealth of Natal came from Whites, and so it should be Whites who controlled the work in the top court. If they were to let me in, then others like me would want to come in too, and the Whites could lose their control.

The Company of Lawyers had a top lawyer who was going to argue for them against me. But this lawyer, too, was a friend of Abdulla's, and he sent me word through Abdulla to say that I should come and see him. He talked very openly to me, and asked a few questions about my past.

Then he said: "I have no problem with you. I was only afraid that you were someone who moves from place to place to hide from his past. Because we did not have your papers from Britain, I was even more worried about who you really were. People have come here saying they were lawyers when they were not. And the letters you have sent to us from two business men were no help because they know nothing of your past before coming to South Africa."

"But," I said, "that is true of everyone I know here. Even Abdulla himself first came to know me when I arrived here."

"But you say that he is from the same place as you in India. If your father was a government leader there, Abdulla must know of your family. If you get him to write a letter saying this, I will have no reason to argue against you working in the top court, and I would tell the Company of Lawyers that."

I was angry at what he was saying, but I did not show my feelings. To myself I was thinking, "If I had sent a letter from Abdulla, the argument would have been that they needed letters from Whites. And what difference does it make if my father was rich or poor, powerful or weak? How can my family and birth be used against me?" But I did not say this. What I said was: "I do not agree with the argument that the Company of Lawyers needs to know so much about my past; but I will do as you have asked, and get a letter from Abdulla telling you about my family."

I did just that; and the lawyer acting for the Company of Lawyers said that he was happy with it. But the Company of Lawyers was not. They went to the top court to fight against me being able to work there; but the Court did not listen to them. It could see through their argument. The top judge

said, "The argument that Mr. Gandhi must show his papers from Britain is an empty one. If he has said anything that is false, and you can show it, he will be punished for it. But until you can show that he has lied, we must believe what the papers from the High Court in Mumbai say. As for his skin colour, the law says nothing about skin colour for lawyers working here. I can see no reason for stopping Mr. Gandhi from working in this court as a lawyer. Mr. Gandhi, you can now make your promise to follow the rules of this court."

I made the promise, and as soon as I finished making it, the judge turned to me and said, "You must now take off your turban, Mr. Gandhi. You must follow the rules of this court if you want to work here."

I could see that I would not be free to do everything my way. The turban that I would not take off in the lower courts I now took off in the top court when the judge told me to. It is not that I agreed with the rule; and I can see good arguments for fighting against it. But I wanted to save my strength for bigger wars. My ability as a fighter would be wasted on a very small argument over wearing a turban.

Abdulla and other friends did not agree. Giving in made me look weak to them. They thought I should have stood up to the judge. I argued that "When in Rome, one should do as the Romans do."

"It would be different," I said, "if I was in India, and the English were telling me how to dress in my own country; but as an officer of the court, it would not be smart of me to go against the dress rules of Natal."

I was able to put to rest most of their arguments, but I do not think they were perfectly happy with the teaching that something which is right in one place may not be right in another place. All through my life, I have found that trying to find the truth often leads me to give in on some points that I had been holding onto before that time. In later life, I saw that this giving in is a very important part of *satyagraha*.

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My friends often became angry with me when I would do it, and at times my life was even in danger because of it. But truth is like that. It is as hard as diamond in one place, but soft as a flower in another.

The court argument with the Company of Lawyers was reported by newspapers in South Africa, and through this, more people learned about me. Most of the newspapers took my side, and said the Company of Lawyers were just angry because I was better than them. The newspaper reports, in some ways, made my work easier.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 17**

1. What two arguments did the Company of Lawyers have against Gandhi working as a lawyer in South Africa?
2. A statue of a woman is used all over the world to show how courts should act. How did Gandhi say that the Company of Lawyers was not acting in that way?
3. Gandhi had letters from important White businessmen to say that he was a good person. What did the lawyer acting for the Company of Lawyers say he would need before he would believe that Gandhi was a good person?
4. What was Gandhi thinking angrily to himself about this?
5. The judge did not agree with the Company of Lawyers, but what did he tell Gandhi that he must do if he wanted to work in the court as a lawyer?
6. What saying about Rome did Gandhi use to tell why he agreed to take off his turban?
7. What did most of the newspapers say about the action against Gandhi by the Company of Lawyers?

## 18. Natal Indian Congress

Working as a lawyer was not my first job in Natal. My reason for staying there was to help the Indian people. Sending the letter to Britain about the Indian vote was not enough in itself. We needed to continue other actions if we were to move the Government in Britain to help us. For such a movement, we needed leaders and rules. I talked with Abdulla and other friends about this, and we all agreed that we needed to start such a group.

I worried a lot about a good name for the group. We did not want to be seen on one political side or another. The name "Congress" has a bad taste to it for some people in Britain, but the Congress is the very life of India, and I wanted to make it the same in Natal. So I put forward the name "Natal Indian Congress", and on 22 May, the Natal Indian Congress came into being.

Abdulla's big room was full that day. Everyone liked the new name. Our list of rules was simple, but the cost of being a member was high. Only those who paid £3 or more a year could join. The richer classes were encouraged to give more. Abdulla was at the top of the list, promising to give £24 a year. Two other friends agreed to do the same. I thought I should not be selfish about giving to the work, so I promised £12 a year. This was a lot for me, but I believed that I could find that much. As it happened, God helped me to keep my promise. From this start on my part, we were able to find many others who were willing to give £12 a year as well.

We were each to pay a little each month, but as the months went on, we found that it was difficult to get people to pay what they had promised at a time when they had been full of enthusiasm. We could not go to people who lived away from Durban and ask them for the money; and even people who lived in Durban would not pay without us asking them many times.

It was my job as leader to get the money. Soon my office helper was working full time just trying to get people to pay up. He was growing tired of the job. I felt the only way to fix it up was for us to ask people to pay the whole year up front. We called a Group Meeting to ask for this, and everyone agreed. This made the business side of our work much easier.

I learned from the start that such work cannot be done on borrowed money. People will keep most promises, apart from promises to give money. They are always slow to pay money that they have promised to pay, and the Natal Indians were no different from anyone else. But because we would not do anything without the money in our hands, the Natal Indian Group Meetings never owed money to anyone.

The people working with me showed special enthusiasm for finding new members. It was interesting work, and they learned much just from doing it. Many people came forward with money to help us. It was not easy to tell people living far away from Durban about what we were doing, but top business men in many of these places helped us to go there and tell of our work.

Getting money was not the only thing we had to do. I had learned that it is a waste to have too much. We had the job of using the money well after we had received it.

We had meetings at least once a month, and sometimes as often as once a week. Most of the people had never learned how to give short talks that were to the point, so these meetings were a good way for them to learn, and to grow in confidence. Many of these people became very good at talking in meetings, and at saying things that were a help to the group as a whole.

Knowing that groups like this often use too much money on little things, I decided not to waste money on printing.

I had a small machine that I used to print reports and other papers by hand. Only when the Congress had enough money and there were too many people to do all the work on my machine did we pay for real printing. Little ways to cut corners on spending can be a big help in any group; but groups often do not think to use them. That is why I have written here what we did to cut printing costs.

People never asked for a written record of the money they gave us; but we always gave one anyway. Every rupee was listed, and I think the records of our business in 1894 are still there today in the books of the Natal Indian Congress. No group can get along without good money records. Without them, there will soon be serious problems over where the money is going. Good records and truth go hand in hand.

A branch of the Congress was for young educated Indians who had been born in South Africa. They, and a few other members, started an Indian Learning Group as a part of the Congress. They paid a small sum to join, and they had their own meetings: to talk about what they needed; to come in touch with Indian business men; and to act to help other Indians. The members met to give talks and read papers to each other too. And they started a small reading room.

The third thing the Congress did was to teach. We did this by sending leaflets to English people in South Africa, Britain, and India. The leaflets told of the needs of our people in Natal. I wrote two leaflets that we used for this. One was about Indian life in Natal; the other was about the law that stopped Indians from voting there. It took me a long time to write these leaflets, but it was worth the time, because they were very widely read.

From all of this, we started to win many friends in South Africa. People from all political groups started to feel what we were feeling. And the Congress helped to give Indians living in South Africa a clear line of action that they could follow in making life better for themselves.

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**QUESTIONS ON PART 18**

1. What name did Gandhi put forward for the group that he started in Durban?
2. What problem did Gandhi have with the money that people promised to pay to be members of the group?
3. Finish this: "People will keep most promises, apart from promises to \_\_\_\_\_."
4. What did many of the people learn from the Congress meetings, that helped them to grow in confidence?
5. Finish this: "Good records and \_\_\_\_\_ go hand in hand."
6. How did the Congress teach others about the problems facing Indians living in South Africa?

## 19. Balasundaram

What your heart wants most truly, it will have. I have often seen this to be true in my own life. Work for the poor is something my heart has always desired, and because of this desire, my heart has always put me with the poor in one way or another.

Young Indians born in South Africa, and Indian office workers were part of the Natal Indian Congress; but uneducated workers and agreement workers were not. They were not able to pay the cost of being a member, so the only way the Congress could win their love would be by serving them. An opening came for us to do that at a time when we believed we were not yet ready for it.

I had only been working in my new job for three or four months, and the Congress was still a baby, when a Tamil man in very rough clothes, holding his head cloth in his hands, with two front teeth broken and his mouth bleeding, stood in front of me shaking and crying. He had been hit many times by his master. My visitor's name was Balasundaram. He was working under an agreement with a White man in Durban – a man that very many people knew of. His master had become angry and lost control of himself, hitting Balasundaram very badly, and breaking two of his teeth.

I sent Balasundaram to get a doctor to list the ways that he had been hurt by his master. Then I went straight to a judge with Balasundaram and the paper from the doctor. The judge was angry at the man and sent the police to bring him to court.

I did not want the master to be punished. All I wanted was for Balasundaram to be freed from working for him. The law for people like Balasundaram, who work under agreements, was very hard. If a servant left his job without giving his master time to find a new servant, the master could take the servant to court to get money from him.

But if a servant working under an agreement like we Indians worked under left his job, he could be put in prison for it. Servants working under the agreement were the same as slaves, owned by their masters.

There were only two ways that they could be freed. One way was to get an important official from the government to say they could be free, and the other was for the master himself to say they could be free.

I first went to the master, saying, "I do not want to take action against you to have you punished. I think you can see that you have been very cruel to him. But I will be happy if you agree for Balasundaram to finish his time under the agreement with a different master." The master quickly agreed to this. Then I talked to the government official, who said he would agree to Balasundaram leaving if I could find him a new master.

I went looking for a new master. The master had to be White, as no Indian could have an agreement worker working for him. At that time I knew very few White people. I met one who kindly agreed to take on Balasundaram. I thanked him for his kindness. The judge said that the master was guilty, but he wrote down that he had agreed for Balasundaram to leave and work for someone else.

Soon every Indian working under the agreement heard about what we had done for Balasundaram, and they all thought of me as their friend. I was filled with happiness at this opening with the poorer Indians. A line of agreement workers started to pour into my office, and I was able, through it, to learn more of their good times and of their bad times.

Even in Chennai people heard of Balasundaram. Workers from different parts of the state who went to Natal on agreement, came to know of this through other workers there.

It was not such a special action in itself that we did, but just knowing that there was someone who would take a stand for them surprised them, and gave them new hope.

I have said that Balasundaram came to my office with his head cloth in his hand. There was a special sadness about this, that showed how badly we had been humbled. I have already told the story of how I was forced to take off my turban. Every agreement worker was forced to take off his head cloth when visiting a White person. It was the same for a hat, a turban, or a scarf. The humble Indian sign of touching both hands together in prayer when meeting a person was not good enough. The Whites still wanted them to take off their hats. Balasundaram believed that he must do that even with me, because I was a lawyer. It was the first time that anyone had done this to me, and I was embarrassed by it. I asked him to tie up his scarf. At first he was afraid to do it, but he was very happy when he understood that he really was free to do that.

I have never been able to understand how people can believe it makes them look good when they force others to go through humble acts in front of them.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 19**

1. Why were agreement workers not part of the Natal Indian Congress?
2. If an agreement worker left a job against the will of the person he or she was working for what could happen to the worker?
3. What did Balasundaram's master agree to, that made the judge go easy on him for hurting Balasundaram?
4. What effect did Gandhi's action for Balasundaram have on other agreement workers.
5. What action do English people do that has the same meaning as the Indian action of touching your hands together in prayer when you meet a person?

## 20. The £3 Tax

After Balasundaram, I came in touch with many other Indian agreement workers. What forced me to make a deeper study of their lot was a movement to put a special heavy tax on them.

That same year, 1894, the Natal Government tried to make a yearly tax of £25 on Indian agreement workers. The plan greatly surprised me. I asked the Congress to look into it and they quickly decided to fight against the movement.

But first I must tell the story behind the tax.

Around 1860, Whites living in Natal found a great need for workers to help them with their sugar-cane farming. The Blacks living in South Africa were not able to do the work well, so the Natal Government wrote to the Indian Government to ask for workers from India.

An agreement was made between the government of India and the Natal government that workers from India could come to Natal if they would agree to work on these farms for five years. In return, at the end of the five years, they would be free to live in South Africa and even to own land there. In this way the Natal Government hoped that Indians would make their country richer.

The Indians did more than was asked of them. They not only helped to grow sugar-cane, but they grew many vegetables as well. They brought new fruit and vegetables with them from India, and they found ways to grow the South Indian vegetables more cheaply. They did not stop with farming. When their time was up they started businesses. They bought land and built houses. Business men from India followed them, moving to South Africa to do business.

The White businessmen were afraid. They had welcomed some uneducated workers, but they had done it without thinking that these same workers might end up becoming their competition in the business world.

Anger against Indians started from these seeds. But other things encouraged the anger to grow. We had a different way of life. We were simple people, happy with few things. We were not very interested in rules about health and about keeping things clean. We did not keep our homes neat. We were slow to spend money to fix things if they were old or broken. All of these things, plus our differences in religion, encouraged the fear and anger to grow. The anger came out in laws... first the law against us voting, and now the tax on agreement workers, who did not receive much more in their pay than what the tax was asking them to give to the government.

On top of the laws, people had been doing and saying other things against us.

The first argument against the Indian agreement workers had been that the government should just send them all back to India. Most people knew that the government of India would not agree to that. So that is when the new tax law was dreamed up. It said that when the five years of work was up, the Indian workers should be forced to choose between agreeing to two more years of work, returning to India, or paying a tax of £25 a year.

Government leaders from Natal went to India to talk to the government there about the plan. The government in India disagreed with the £25 tax, but agreed to a £3 tax on each member of an Indian family.

I believed at the time (and still do) that it was wrong to do that. There was no way that this helped India. Why should the Indian Government need to make such an agreement that could only help the Whites in South Africa?

By the time an Indian worker finished his work under the agreement, he would be paying about £12 a year if he had a wife and two children. That is close to what he would have been paid when working under the agreement. No other country in the world had ever made such a cruel tax.

We put together a plan to fight this tax. I believe it was the Natal Indian Congress that made English officials in India try so hard to get the tax dropped from £25 to £3 for each person in the family in the first place; but I cannot prove this. Even if their action was not an effect of what we had said, they needed to know that the £3 tax was wrong too; it was up to us to tell them.

The Congress did not feel a drop from £25 to £3 for each person was anything to be happy about. We were still sad that the Indian Government was not completely acting to protect the interests of Indian agreement workers. It was twenty years before we were able to get the tax dropped, and then it was only because the Congress had help from all Indians in South Africa. The agreement workers themselves paid highly for the change, with some of them dying when the government started shooting at them. Over ten thousand of them went to prison before the tax was dropped.

But truth was the winner in the end. What we Indians went through was needed to tell the truth. The truth would not have been a winner without the brave faith and continuing work of the Indian people. If the people had stopped trying, or if the Congress had dropped the fight, believing that there was no way to change the law, the hated tax would be there to this day; and it would be an eternal mark against Indians living in South Africa, and a mark against the whole of India.

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QUESTIONS ON PART 20

1. In the 1860's the government in Natal asked for Indians to come to South Africa to help them grow a plant. What was it?
2. If Indians helped with the farming for five years, what would they be able to do at the end of it?
3. What happened after the agreement workers came to Natal, that made the White businessmen afraid?
4. Gandhi said that the tax on agreement workers was not what the White businessmen really wanted. What did they really want? And why were they not able to get it?
5. Did the government in India stop the government in Natal from taxing the Indian agreement workers there?
6. How long did it take for the Natal Indian Congress to get the tax dropped?
7. How many agreement workers were put in prison for fighting against this tax?

## 21. Different Religions

My desire to work for the people was because I wanted to know God. Work for the people became my religion, because I felt I could only know God through loving and helping others. For me, loving and helping others was loving and helping *Indians*... because they were the ones who came to me asking for help, and because I had a natural ability for helping them. I went to South Africa in the first place for the fun of travel, to get away from problems in India, and to make money. But as I have said, I found myself instead looking for God and looking for God's plan for my life.

Christian friends had started my interest in knowing more about God, and that interest grew to become a very strong hunger. My Christian friends would not give up on me, even if I had not shown an interest in God. When I moved from Pretoria to Durban, the Durban head of the South Africa General Mission, Mr. Spencer Walton, found me, and I became like a member of his family. Mr. Walton's way was different to that of many Christians. At no time can I remember him asking me to make Christianity my religion. But his life was placed before me as an open book. He let me watch all his movements. His wife was a quiet, kind woman with much ability. I liked the spirit of these two people. We knew there was a serious difference between us, and arguing would not take it away. But even differences can help people spiritually, if there is love, honesty and an open heart toward those who are different. I liked Mr. and Mrs. Walton's humble, hard-working spirit, and we met very often.

They helped to keep my interest in religion alive. I could not find the time that I had been able to find in Pretoria for religious studies. But I used well the little time that I had. I continued to write to Raychandbhai, who was leading me. A friend sent me a book by the poet Narmada Shankar.

I had heard that he lived a very loose and free life, without a job, and I was filled with interest in the way that his interest in religion had changed his life. I read other books too. Some put out by the Theosophists made my love for the Hindu religion grow. But it did not make me want to turn against other religions. Writings by Washington Irving and by Thomas Carlyle on the prophet Muhammad made me think more highly of Muhammad.

So I was growing in my understanding of the different religions. The study encouraged me to look at myself too, and started me changing my life to take on what I liked best of each religion. I started some of the Yoga exercises of the Hindu religion, as well as I was able to understand them just from reading the Hindu books, but I did not get very far. Up to the present I have not been able to find time to return to them.

I also made a very close study of Tolstoy's books. The one about the teachings of Jesus, and what we should do about obeying Jesus, and some of his others, made a very deep change in me. I started to see more and more the eternal power of perfect love.

About the same time I came in touch with another Christian family. They asked me to go to their Methodist Church each Sunday, and to have a meal with them after the meeting. I did not like the church. The talks were boring. The people did not seem to be religious, or at all serious about serving God. They seemed to be more interested in the things of the world. Going to church was just something they did because everyone else was doing it. At times I would fall asleep in the meetings. I was embarrassed, but my guilt was made lighter when I saw that my neighbours were doing the same thing. I could not continue for long like this, so I stopped going to the meetings.

My ties with the family came to an end in this way: The wife was a good and simple woman, but a little narrow minded. One day we were talking about Jesus and Buddha. I said, "Buddha's love was very great. It did not stop with people. Doesn't it fill you with love to think of the baby sheep happily riding on his shoulders? I don't see this love for animals in the life of Jesus." This hurt the good woman. I could see that, and I quickly stopped what I was saying. Then we moved to the table to eat. Her five year old was with us. I am happiest when with children, and I had long been friends with this boy. I made fun of the piece of meat in his dish and praised the apple on mine. The boy liked what I said and he joined me in praising the fruit.

But the mother? She was worried by this.

I could see this and again stopped what I was saying, changing the talk to something else. The next week I returned, but not without a little fear. I did not think it was right to stop going for the visits, but the good woman made it easy for me to stop anyway.

"Mr. Gandhi," she said, "please don't think badly of me, but I must say that my son has not been helped by your visits. He no longer feels comfortable eating meat. Each day he asks for fruit, telling me what you said about fruit being better than meat. This is too much. If he stops eating meat he'll become sick, or at least weak. How could I live with that? From now on, you must not talk to him. Things you say are not good for children to hear."

"I am sad that I have hurt you," I said. "I understand your feelings as a parent, for I too have children. We can easily end this problem. What I eat will have more effect on the child than what I say, and if I keep coming, he will see my actions. The best way to protect him from me is for me to stop coming. But we can still be friends."

"Thank you," she said. She was clearly happy for me to stop coming.

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QUESTIONS ON PART 21

1. Gandhi said that he went to South Africa in the first place to travel, to get away from problems in India, and to make money. But later, because of his Christian friends there, he found himself looking for something different. What was that?
2. Fill in the missing words: "Even differences can help people spiritually, if there is \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and an open heart toward those who are different."
3. Whose writings made Gandhi think more highly of the prophet Muhammad?
4. Gandhi said that a book by Tolstoy made a very deep change in him. What was the book about?
5. What did Gandhi say to the Methodist woman that he could see had hurt her?
6. How had Gandhi's talk to the woman's son made him disagree with his parents?

## 22. House Workers

Starting up a house was becoming easier for me. But my house in Natal was to be different from the ones I had had in Mumbai and London. This time I was to spend on things that were there just to make me look good. I believed that, as an Indian lawyer and a leader of the people, I should have a nicer house. So I found a place in a better part of town. The furniture was also better than I had owned before. Food was simple, but because I often had English and Indian friends over for meals, the cost of the food was still high.

Any home needs a good servant. But I never knew how to keep anyone as a servant. I had a friend who helped me, a cook who had become part of the family, and some office workers who lived and ate with me.

On the whole, I think I did a good job of leading the house, but there were some sad happenings.

The friend staying with me was very smart. I believed that he was true to me, but in this I was wrong. He did not like one office worker who stayed there, and he told stories about him that I started to believe. The office worker had a problem with getting angry too quickly, and when he learned that I had started to believe stories against him, he left and stopped working for me. I felt bad because I didn't know if I had wronged him or not. I always felt a little guilty about that.

At about this time, the cook needed to be away for a few days for some reason. I had to put another man on for those few days. I later learned that the man I put on was not a good man at all; but for those few days he was a big help to me. In the first few days that he was working there, he learned that things were happening under my roof that should not have been happening, and he decided to tell me. People knew me as a very honest person who believed the best about other people, so what this man learned was a big surprise for him.

I would go home for lunch each day at 1p.m. But at twelve one day, the new cook came running to the office, breathing heavily. He said, "Please come home now. You will be surprised at what you will see there."

"What is this?" I asked. "You must tell me what is wrong. How can I leave work early without knowing why I am doing it?"

"All I can say is that you will be very hurt if you do not find out now what is happening."

I could see that he was serious. So I and one of my workers went with him. He took us to my friend's room and said, "Open the door and see for yourself."

Now I could see what he was talking about. I knocked at the door and there was no answer. I knocked again, hard enough to shake the walls. The door opened, and in the room was a prostitute. I asked her to leave the house and never to return.

To my friend I said, "From this minute on, I want nothing more to do with you. You have tricked me, and made me look stupid for believing in you. Is that how you act after I have put my faith in you?"

Instead of seeing that he was wrong, he said that he would make me look bad.

"I have nothing to hide," I said. "Do what you like, but you must leave here... now!"

This made him worse. He would not go. So I said to the office worker, who was still outside the room, "Please go and tell the Police that a person living with me has done something very wrong. I do not want him to stay in my house, but he will not go. I would be very glad if police help could be sent here."

This showed my friend that I was serious. His guilt made him lose confidence. He agreed that he had been wrong, and he said he would leave the house if I would not tell the police. So that is what we did.

This happening taught me an important truth at an important time in my life. I had wanted to help the man by making him my friend. But I could not do that without some change in the man himself. I knew he had a bad side, but I had closed my eyes to it because I believed that he would be true to me. I had been hoping to get good fruit from a bad tree. Trying to help the man had come close to destroying people's faith in me. I had closed my ears to kind friends who had said I should not let the man stay there, because my hopes for the man had made me blind to the truth about him.

It was only the new cook who had helped me to see the truth. I would not have been able to walk the straight line that God had planned for me if I had stayed with this friend, because I would have been always wasting time on him. He had the ability to keep me in the dark, and to lead me in the wrong direction.

It was like God used the cook to save me. He was not a good cook, and he was only to be there for a short time; but he was the perfect one to open my eyes. I later learned that this had not been the first time that the prostitute had been brought to my house. She had often come before, but the other workers had all been afraid to tell me. They all knew of my blind faith in this friend. The cook had been sent just for this reason; for he asked me there and then if he could leave.

"I cannot stay here," he said. "You are too easily tricked by other people. This is no place for me."

I let him go.

After that I could see that my friend had poisoned my mind against the office worker who had left me in anger. I tried very hard to fix things up with the office worker for not having believed him, but I feel very sad that I never was able to make him fully happy. All that you may do to fix a break between two people will never make the truth of that break go away.

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**HOUSE WORKERS**

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**QUESTIONS ON PART 22**

1. Why did an office worker who was living with Gandhi leave him in anger?
2. What did the new cook show Gandhi about his friend?
3. How was Gandhi able to make his friend move out of the house?
4. Gandhi said he had closed his ears to friends who had said that he should not let the man stay with him. Why had he closed his ears to them?
5. Why had the other workers not told Gandhi about what was happening with his friend?

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## 23. Going Home

By this time I had been in South Africa for three years. I had come to know the people well and they had come to know me well. In 1896, I asked them if I could return to India for six months. I could see that I was going to be a long time in South Africa. My business as a lawyer was going well, and the Indian people felt that they still needed my help. So I decided to go home and bring my wife and children back to live with me there.

I also believed that I could use my short time in India to educate people there about life for Indians living in South Africa. The £3 tax was an open sore, and there could be no peace until we could get it dropped.

About the middle of 1896, I sailed for home in a ship headed for Calcutta. There were very few people travelling on the ship. There were two English officers that I was in close touch with. I would play chess with one of them for one hour each day.

The ship's doctor gave me a book that showed how you could teach yourself Tamil. I started to study it. From my time in Natal I had decided that I needed to learn Hindustani to get closer to Muslim Indians, and Tamil to get closer to the Indians from Chennai.

The English officer and I found one of the poorer travellers who agreed to help us both to learn a little Hindustani. The officer could remember words better than me. I often found it difficult to work out the Hindustani letters. I think I worked harder than the officer, but I was not able to keep up with him in learning.

I did better with Tamil. I had no teacher, but the book was well written, and I did not feel that I needed much outside help.

I had hoped to continue these studies after arriving in India, but I was not able to. From 1893 on, most of my reading was done in prisons. I returned to these studies at times when I was in prisons in South Africa and in India, but I was never able to talk in Tamil, and I forget much now that I learned to read in the past, because I have not been using it. Each time I see someone from South India, I feel bad that I have not learned the Tamil language, so that I could talk with them.

But back to my trip home. The captain of the ship was a Plymouth Brother, and we became friends. We talked more about spiritual things than about ships and travel. In his thinking there was a clear line between faith and being good. He said that the most beautiful thing about the Bible was that it was very simple. Even a child could understand that anyone who puts their faith in Jesus and his death on the cross has no more need to worry about their sins. Their sins would be paid for and they would be saved. This friend made me think of the Plymouth Brother I had met in Pretoria. Any religion that made rules about good and evil was no good for him. My vegetarian food had been what started this talk. Why should I not eat meat, or better still, why should I not eat cows? Didn't God make these animals for us to eat in the same way that he made vegetables for us to eat? These questions would always pull us into talk about religion.

He could not change me and I could not change him. I could not stop believing that religion and doing good are one and the same thing. And the Captain could not stop believing that the opposite was true.

After twenty-four days, we came to the end of what had been a very nice trip. We landed in Calcutta, and from there I took a train to Mumbai.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 23**

1. What were two reasons that Gandhi had for wanting to return to India for six months?
2. On his trip from Durban to Calcutta, what did Gandhi try to learn?
3. From 1893 on, where did Gandhi do most of his reading?
4. Gandhi became friends with the captain of the ship on his trip from Durban to Calcutta. What did they mostly talk about?
5. How were Gandhi and the ship's captain different in their thinking about religion and doing good?
6. How did Gandhi travel from Calcutta to Mumbai?

## 24. In India

On the way to Mumbai, the train stopped at Allahabad for forty-five minutes. I decided to use the time for a short drive through the town. I needed some medicine, so I stopped at a shop; but the owner was half asleep and was very slow about mixing it for me. Because of that, when I returned to the station, the train was pulling out. The station master had kindly stopped the train for one minute for me, but when he could not find me, he had had my suitcases taken off the train for me, and let the train go.

I found a room and decided to start my work for Indians in South Africa right there in Allahabad while waiting for another train. I sent a short letter to the owner of the newspaper, saying that I had missed the train, and would be leaving on the next one, the following day. I had heard that the paper was against Indians having too much power. I asked if I could have an interview with someone from the newspaper right away, and the owner agreed. He listened closely to what I had to say. He promised to put in his paper anything that I might write, but added that he could not promise to agree with all that I said, because it was his job to give a good hearing to both sides.

"It is enough," I said, "that you should study the question, and talk about it in your paper. I am not asking for more than what is right."

This interview by accident with the newspaper in Allahabad was the start of a chain of actions that ended in my being punished in Natal.

When the train came, I did not take time to get off in Mumbai. I went straight to Rajkot, where I started making plans for a leaflet about what was happening in South Africa. It took a month to finish, and because it had a green cover, people called it the Green Leaflet. In that leaflet I tried not to make things sound too bad, because I knew that from a distance things can sound worse than they are.

Ten thousand leaflets were printed, and sent to all the papers, and to leaders of every political group in India. The newspaper in Allahabad was the first to act on it. They put the most important points in a telegram to a big news company in Britain, and that company sent a much shorter telegram to Natal. It was not more than three lines, but it made things sound much worse than the picture that I had made for people to read in India, and it did not use the words that I used. We will see later what effect this had in Natal. But at least in India, every important paper had something to say about the question of Indians in South Africa.

Putting the leaflets together was not an easy job. It would have been expensive too, if I had paid people to do it. But I had a much simpler plan. I asked the children who lived near me to help for two or three hours in the morning, when they had no school. They willingly agreed to do this. I promised to bless them and to give them used stamps that I had been saving from letters I had received. This was the first time that I had used children as helpers, and two of those little friends still work with me today.

About this time a very bad sickness hit Mumbai, killing many people there. People were afraid that it would hit Rajkot too. I believed that I could be of some help by teaching people to be clean. I said that I would help the State, and I was put with a group that was to look into the question. I said that we should take special interest in cleaning up the toilets, and the group decided to look at the toilets in every road in town.

The poor people were happy for us to look at their toilets, and if we told them to make changes, they were happy to do as we asked. But when we went to the houses of the rich people, some would not even let us in, much less listen to what we were asking them to do. For the most part we found the toilets of the rich to be dirtier than the toilets of the poor.

They were dark, smelled very bad, and were full of dirt and worms. The changes we asked for were very simple. We asked them to do things like using buckets for the dung and not letting waste fall on the floor, or making a hole in the wall so that light and air could come into the toilet, and so that it would be easier for the toilet workers to take the buckets away when they were full. The richer people argued against putting holes in the wall, and most of the time they did not follow our rules.

It was also our job to look at the toilets of the outcastes. Only one member of our group was prepared to go there with me. The others believed it was too much to even *visit* outcastes, much less to look at their toilets. But I found the visit to be a nice surprise.

It was the first visit in my life to such people. The men and women were surprised to see us. Then I asked if we could look at their toilets.

"Toilets? For us?" they said in great surprise? "We go out in the open. Toilets are for you important people."

"Then will it be okay for us to look at your houses?" I asked.

"You are perfectly welcome to do that, sir. You may look in every corner. But they are not houses; they are holes."

I went in and was happy to see that the insides were as clean as the outsides. The floors were clean, as were the few pans. There was no fear of the sickness starting there.

In the rich houses we came across a toilet that I must tell about. There was a small open channel around the wall of each room, that water could move through. The men would stand and use the channel for a toilet at any time. In one bedroom at the top of the house, the channel was used for dung too. There was a pipe from that room to the bottom rooms. The smell of that room was too much for me. I do not know how people could sleep there.

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We also visited a religious meeting place for Hindus. The priest there was a close friend of my family, so he agreed for us to look at everything and say what we thought needed to be changed. There was one place, on the far side of a wall, where people would throw food that they did not use, and leaves that they had used as dishes. All this dirty material made a hill where many birds would come to eat. The toilets too were dirty. I did not stay there long enough to know if the changes we asked for were carried out.

I felt very sad to see a place of worship so dirty. One would think that people would do their best to be clean in a holy place. The holy writings taught people to be clean, both inside and out.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 24**

1. What happened when Gandhi was at Allahabad?
2. What did Gandhi do while waiting for a train in Allahabad?
3. Gandhi printed ten thousand "Green Leaflets". Who did he send them to?
4. What did the newspaper in Allahabad do with the leaflet, that later made problems for Gandhi in Natal?
5. What did Gandhi encourage people to do in Rajkot, to stop the sickness that was hurting so many people at that time?
6. True or false: For the most part, Gandhi found the toilets of the rich to be dirtier than the toilets of the poor.

## 25. Two Loves

I know few people who have more love for the laws of Britain than what I had at that time. I see now that my love for truth was at the root of it. At every meeting I went to in Natal, people would sing the holy song of Britain, and I always felt that I should join in singing it too. My love was real. I could never act like I had a good quality that I did not have. There were problems with English control of countries like India and South Africa, but on the whole I thought it was okay. In those days I believed that control by Britain was, for the most part, good for the people that they were over.

I believed that the feeling against Indians in South Africa was opposite to the true English spirit, and I believed it was a special problem in that one country alone. I had as much love as the English themselves for the Queen, and any time there was a movement to show love for Britain without showing too much emotion, I would happily take part in what was happening.

Never in my life did I do this for what I was to receive from it. Never did I try to do it in a selfish way. For me it was something I did because I believed it was *right*. I did not think I should be rewarded for it.

When I arrived in India, people were preparing to mark seventy-five years from the birth of Queen Victoria. I was asked to join a group that was doing this in Rajkot. I agreed, but I had the feeling that what we were doing was mostly just show. People were saying things they didn't really mean, and I asked myself if it was right to be a part of it at all. In the end I decided to just do my part of the business and not worry about the others.

One part of the plan was to plant trees. I saw that many people were doing it only to please the English officials.

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I tried to tell them that they did not need to plant the trees if they did not believe in what they were doing. It should be done seriously or not at all. I had the feeling that they were laughing at me for taking it all so seriously. I remember that I was so serious about the trees that I had planted that I continued to give them water and to protect them long after that.

I taught my children to sing the holy song of Britain. Later I changed my thinking about some of the words. As my understanding of *ahimsa* grew, I looked more closely at all that I said. The lines in the song that were against the spirit of *ahimsa* were these:

*Separate her enemies, and make them fall.*

*Confuse their government and destroy their evil tricks.*

I talked to Doctor Booth about this, and he agreed that it was not right for a believer in *ahimsa* to sing those lines. How could we say that the so-called "enemy" was "evil"? And because they were enemies, did that prove that they were in the wrong? All we could ask for from God was that he do what is right for each of us. Doctor Booth agreed completely, and for his people he wrote new words for the holy song. But I will say more of Doctor Booth later.

When I was in Rajkot working on the leaflet about South Africa, I had to make a very short trip to Mumbai. I wanted to educate the people by holding open meetings, and Mumbai was the first place I chose to do this. I talked to two judges about where to start and they both said that I should start by talking to Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. The judges themselves were not free to take part in actions which might be looked on as political. But they said that their hearts were with me.

I had already been planning to see Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, and the words of the two judges helped me to see

how right my choice was. When I did meet him, I was prepared to see someone very special. He was called the "Lion of Mumbai" and other names that showed how highly people thought of him. But the Lion did not use his power to make me feel weak. He met me as a loving father would meet his adult son. We met in his office, and some of his friends and followers were there too. One of these people was Mr. D. E. Wacha, Sir Pherozeshah's right hand man. He asked to meet me again.

Sir Pherozeshah listened closely and then said, "I see that I must help you. I'll call a meeting here." A day was fixed for the meeting and he said goodbye, asking me to see him again one day before the meeting. I went home from the interview filled with happiness.

Like my love for the truth, my other deep love was for nursing. I liked to nurse both friends and strangers.

While I was in Mumbai, I called on my sister's husband, who was very sick. He did not have much money, and my sister was not able to nurse him, so I took him and my sister back to Rajkot with me. The sickness went on longer than I had believed it would. I stayed with him in my room day and night. I needed to stay awake part of the night to get work done on the leaflet at the same time that I was nursing him. In the end he died, but I felt better just knowing that I had been able to nurse him over his last days.

My interest in nursing became such a strong love that I often would leave my other work and bring not only my wife, but my whole family into working with me on nursing someone.

Such work can have no meaning if you do not do it happily. If you do it because you want others to think well of you, it makes you a very small person, and it destroys your spirit. Serving others without being happy to do it will not help the servant or the one who is served. But all other happiness goes flat when you put it beside the happiness that comes from freely choosing to serve others.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 25**

1. True or false: At this time in his life, Gandhi believed that control by Britain was, for the most part, good for the people that they were over.
2. When Gandhi arrived back in India, what special day were people all over India preparing for?
3. What were the lines from the holy song of Britain that Gandhi later believed were against the true spirit of *ahimsa*?
4. Where did Gandhi want to hold his first open meeting to educate people about problems in South Africa?
5. Who agreed to call an open meeting for Gandhi in Mumbai?
5. Besides his love for the truth, what was Gandhi's other deep love?

## 26. The Mumbai Meeting

On the day after my sister's husband died, I had to go to Mumbai for the meeting. I had not been able to think about what to say, much less write it out. I was very tired after days and nights of nursing, and even my voice was rough. But I went to Mumbai believing that God would help me.

As Sir Pherozeshah had asked me to do, I went to his office at 5 p.m. on the day before the meeting.

"Is your talk ready, Gandhi?" he asked.

"No sir," I said, shaking with fear. "I think I will just have to make up the words as I go along."

"That will not do in Mumbai," he said. "Newspaper reporting is very bad here. If you want to come across well, you must write out what you plan to say. I will have it printed by tomorrow morning to give to the newspapers. Can you do that?"

I was not very sure of myself, but I said that I would try.

"Then tell me when we should come for the finished talk."

"At eleven tonight," I said.

At the meeting the next day I could see how right Sir Pherozeshah had been. It was in a very big building. It was the first time I had talked to so many people. My voice was not loud enough to reach more than just a few of the people. I was shaking as I started to read. Sir Pherozeshah tried to encourage me by asking me to talk more loudly, and then still more loudly. I have a feeling that, far from encouraging me, it made my voice go lower and lower.

At last I gave my papers to a friend who had a strong voice, but the people would not listen to him. They started shouting "Wacha!" "Wacha!" So Mr. Wacha stood up to read my talk, with very good effect. The people became perfectly quiet, and listened to the end, stopping him at times to show their agreement with what was said. This made me feel very good. Sir Pherozeshah liked the talk too, and this made my happiness perfect.

The meeting moved two important lawyers to say they would go to South Africa with me when I returned. And at a later time, another lawyer said he would go with me to help. But none of these men ever came with me.

I ran into a friend in Mumbai that I had met in a vegetarian restaurant in London years before. He was working on a dictionary in Gujarati. I did with him as I did with all of my friends, asking him to come and help me in South Africa. He not only said that he would not come, but he tried to talk me out of going myself.

"I cannot help you," he said. "But I must say that I do not even like *you* going to South Africa. Isn't there enough work to do here in your own country? I am doing what I can for our language. But this is only one branch of the work that is needed here. I know that there are problems in South Africa, but a man like yourself is needed here. If we can win self-government for ourselves here, we will, by doing that, help our people there as well. I know you will not change your plan, but I must tell you that I will not encourage anyone with your abilities to throw in his lot with you."

I did not like what he was saying, but it made me think more highly of the man. I could see how much he loved our country and our language. What he said brought us closer to each other. I could understand what he was saying, but far from giving up my work in South Africa, I became stronger in my plans. One who loves his country cannot forget any part of the work that may help his country. For me, the teaching of the Gita was clear and strong:

"It is better to do your own job as well as you can, even if you are not able to win, than to take jobs that are not your own, even if they seem to be good. If you die doing your job, there is nothing wrong with it. But when you look for other roads, you will finish up lost."

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## THE MUMBAI MEETING

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### QUESTIONS ON PART 26

1. Why did Gandhi not have his talk prepared for the big meeting in Mumbai?
2. What reason did Sir Pherozeshah give for Gandhi needing to put his talk in writing?
3. How did it help Gandhi to have his talk written out, when he went to give it?
4. True or false: From the meeting in Mumbai, Gandhi was able to get two important lawyers to come to South Africa with him.
5. What reason did a friend of his give Gandhi for not returning to South Africa?

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## 27. Poona and Chennai

Sir Pherozeshah had made my way easy. From Mumbai I went to Poona. The people there were separated into two different groups. I wanted the help of both. I met Lokamanya Tilak, the leader of one group, and he said, "You are right to want help from all sides. There should be no difference in our feeling on the South Africa question. But you need a president for your work here who is not on one side or the other. See Doctor Bhandarkar. He has not been a part of any movement for some time now. But this question could pull him out. See him, and then come and tell me what he says."

Next I met Gokhale, the leader of the other group. He gave me a warm welcome. It was our first meeting, but it seemed like we were old friends. Sir Pherozeshah had been like a mountain to me, Lokamanya Tilak like the ocean, and Gokhale like the holy river. Most cannot reach the top of the mountain or cross the ocean, but we all can wash in the river.

Gokhale looked me over like a school teacher studying a student who wanted to come to his school. He told me which people I needed to talk to about the meeting and what I needed to say to them. He asked to have a look at my planned talk, and asked me to return and tell him what Doctor Bhandarkar had to say. He sent me away very happy. In all my future political actions, Gokhale had a very special place.

Doctor Bhandarkar received me warmly, like a father. When I said I wanted a man who was not on one side or the other, he liked that at once. "That's it! That's it!" he said enthusiastically.

After hearing me out, he said, "Everyone knows that I do not like to take part in political things. But I cannot say no to this one. Your argument is too strong and your work too good for me to turn you down. Tell Tilak and Gokhale that I will be happy to be president over a meeting that both of their groups agree to come to. They can choose the time."

Without a big show, this little group of generous workers came together for a simple meeting, and sent me away with more confidence about my work in South Africa.

I next went to Chennai. It was wild with enthusiasm. What we did for Balasundaram had a strong effect on the people who came to our meeting there. My talk was printed out. For me, it was a long talk, but the people listened closely to every word. At the close of the meeting there was a run on the Green Leaflet. I had a second printing with me of ten thousand leaflets. They sold very well, but I could see that I did not need so many. There were not enough people in all of Chennai who knew English for us to sell that many leaflets.

The greatest help in Chennai came from *The Chennai Standard* newspaper. *The Hindu* also helped us, but *The Standard* let us say anything we wanted to say; and I did.

The love that most of the friends I met there showed toward me was so great that I felt very much at home in Chennai. Because I did not know Tamil well enough, I was forced to talk to them in English, but even this wall did not stop love from moving between us.

#### QUESTIONS ON PART 27

1. Who were the leaders of the two political groups in Poona?
2. What did Lokamanya say would be the best way for Gandhi to win help from both political groups in Poona?
3. What had Gandhi done earlier that made the meeting go so well in Chennai?
4. What newspaper in Chennai did Gandhi think had helped him the most?

## 28. "Return Soon"

From Chennai, I went to Calcutta, where I had many problems. I did not know anyone there. I met a man from *The Daily Telegraph*. He asked me to come and see him at an English hotel where he was staying. He did not know that Indians could not go to the sitting room there, so when he learned of this, he took me to his room. He was sad about the English rule and asked me to forgive him for not being able to talk to him in the sitting room.

I went to see Surendranath Banerji, the "Idol of Bengal". When I met him, he had many friends around him. He said: "I do not think people will take an interest in your work. As you know, we have many problems here. But you just do your best. You will need the help of Indian leaders who work with the English."

He named some men that he thought I should see, but they were no help. They received me with a cold spirit and said that if I wanted to have a big meeting in Calcutta, the only person who could help me was Banerji.

My job in Calcutta was becoming more and more difficult. I went to some newspapers, but they gave me something of a run around. I waited at one newspaper for an hour and then when I started to tell my story, the top man said, "Don't you see that our hands are full? There is no end to the number of people we have coming here and asking for help. You should leave. I do not have time to listen to you."

I started to feel angry; but then I could see that there really were many visitors who came there asking for help. And most of them knew the man. There I was, a stranger, talking about a problem in South Africa that he knew nothing of.

Each person feels his story is serious and important; but for a newspaper, there are many stories and the paper cannot write them all. Often people believe the newspaper has more power than it has; but those who work there know better.

I did not give up. I went to other newspapers. I went to the English-Indian papers too. *The Statesman* and *The Englishman* could see that my story was important. I had long interviews with them, and they printed them in full. The top man at *The Englishman* did all he could to help me. He even let me see what he had written before he printed it, so I could make changes if I liked. We became good friends. He promised to help in any way he could, and he carried out his promise to the letter. We wrote to each other until he became too sick to write.

In my life I have found many such friends almost by accident. What this man liked in me was that I did not bend the truth to make my argument look better. He asked many difficult questions before he would help me out, and he could see in my answers that I had a feeling for the arguments of the Whites in South Africa as well as for my own arguments.

I have learned that we will win what is right for ourselves most quickly when we will take pains to do what is right for those who disagree with us.

From the help I was getting from *The Englishman*, I started to think that we could hold a big meeting in Calcutta too. But then I received a telegram from Durban: "The Government meets in January. Return soon."

I sent a letter to the newspapers in Calcutta saying that I had to leave early, and I left for Mumbai. Before leaving, I sent a telegram to Abdulla's company in Mumbai, asking them to get me tickets on the first boat to South Africa. Abdulla had just bought a ship and he said that I and my family could travel on it for free. I thanked him, and in early December, I headed a second time for South Africa. But this time my wife, my two sons, and my sister's only son were with me. Another ship sailed for Durban at the same time. It was Abdulla's company that sold tickets for that ship too. There were about eight hundred people travelling on the two ships, and we were all headed for South Africa.

**QUESTIONS ON PART 28**

1. Gandhi was not able to get help from the man who could do the most for him in Calcutta. Who was the man?
2. Gandhi became close friends with the top man at what newspaper?
3. What did the man from *The Englishman* like most about Gandhi?
4. Fill in the missing word: "We will win what is right for ourselves most quickly when we will take pains to do what is right for those who \_\_\_\_\_ with us."
5. What did Gandhi receive that put an end to his plans for a meeting in Calcutta?

**Read  
"My Experiments With  
Truth" Part II  
(also in Easy English)  
for the second half  
of this interesting story.**

## List of Words

Below are some words that you will need to know to read this book:

**adultery** (n) mating between people who are not married to each other.

**age** (n) how old a person or thing is.

**ago** (adv) in the past.

**ahead** (adv) forward.

**ahimsa** (n) Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist teaching against hurting others.

**airs (putting on)** acting smarter or more important than you are.

**alone** (adj; adv) with no others.

**along** (adv; prep) with; beside.

**already** (adv) before this or that time; early.

**also** (adv) too.

**anyway** (adv) not changing because of a reason you were giving that could make a change.

**Arab** (n) person from Arabia; Muslim.

**Arabic** (n) language of the Muslim holy book.

**arrive** (v) come to the place where you were going.



**arrow** (n) stick weapon with a point at one end.

**ate** (v) did eat.

**bandage** (n) piece of cloth that you put around a sore.

**Banerji, Sir Surendranath** (1848-1925) Owner of a newspaper, who started Ripon College in Calcutta, and was two times president of the Indian National Congress.

**baptism** (n) being covered.

**bean** (n) seed people use for food; long, thin, green vegetable.

**beard** (n) hair on the bottom of the face.

**became** (v) did become.

**bedroom** (n) room where a person sleeps.

**beggar** (n) person who asks strongly many times for food or money.

**belief** (n) thing you believe.

**Bengali** (n) language of Bengal, in east India.

**Besant, Annie** (1847-1933) Friend of Charles Bradlaugh, who became the world leader of a theosophist group in Chennai, India, and helped fight for India to be free from Britain.

**besides** (adv) added to that.

**Bhagavad Gita** (n) "Song of the Holy One", a Hindu holy book.

**Bible** (n) Christian holy book.

**Blacks** (n) people with dark skin.

**blanket** (n) thick cloth to keep a person warm in a bed.

**bleed** (v) lose blood from a cut.

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**bless** (v) make happy; ask God to help.

**blind** (adj) not able to see.

**blow** (v) move or push with wind or breathing.

**boil** (v) cook in hot water; change liquid to gas with heat.

**borrow** (v) use a thing for a time, that is not yours.

**bought** (v) did buy.

**Bradlaugh, Charles** (1833-1891) Free-thinker, who argued against God and religion in Britain.

**brave** (adj) confident and strong; not afraid of pain.

**breakfast** (n) first meal in the morning.

**break-through** (n) important step that makes what you are trying to do easier.

**brought** (v) did bring.

**bucket** (n) round container for carrying water.

**Buddha** (n) name for the man who started the Buddhist religion.

**built** (v; adj) did build; made.

**cabin** (n) small rough house; room on a ship.

**call** (v; n) shout for a person to come; use a telephone to talk to a person; visit; talking on a telephone.

**came** (v) did come.

**camel** (n) animal like a horse, with a thick projection on its back.

**Cambridge** (n) very old university in Britain.

**captain** (n) leader in the army or on a ship.

**Cardinal** (n) one of seventy top leaders in the Roman Catholic Church.

**Carlyle, Thomas** (1795-1881) Writer from Britain.

**caste** (n) one of many Hindu groups that an Indian is born into.

**century** (n) one hundred years.

**channel** (n; v) line that water or other things travel in; make a channel for things to move through.

**cheat** (v) hide the truth to get a thing you want.

**cheek** (n) side of the face.

**chocolate** (n) brown sweet solid or drink.

**choice** (n) what you choose.

**chose** (v) did choose.

**cigarette** (n) stick of leaves with paper around it, that people smoke.

**city** (n) big town.

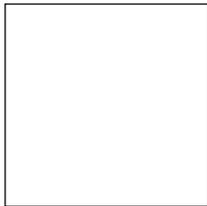
**class** (n) group in a list of groups, with some groups being better or higher than others.

**coach** (n) vehicle that carries many people; car in a train; bus.

**comfortable** (adj) with no pain or other difficult quality.

**complete** (v; adj) finish; whole.

**confession** (n) saying that you were doing a bad action.



**confuse** (v) make a person not able to understand.

**Congress** (n) meeting of people who make rules for others; Indian political group, started in 1885.

**continue** (v) (of a person or thing that is doing an action) go on doing an action without stopping.

**coolie** (n) person from Asia who is brought to another country to work cheaply.

**counter** (n) cabinet between the person working in a shop and the people who buy from the shop.

**curtain** (n) cloth that hangs in front of a window or other thing, to cover it.

**daily** (adv) happening each day.

**death** (n) time or act of dying; being dead.

**decide** (v) choose, often to do an action.

**desert** (n) very big piece of land with no water or trees.

**desire** (v; n) want strongly; thing you want strongly.

**desk** (n) table you use when writing.

**dhal** (n) cooked dish of small seeds.

**dhoti** (n) cloth a man wears around his stomach and legs in India.

**diamond** (n) very hard expensive stone, that you can see through.

**dictionary** (n) book that lists the words in a language.

**dinner** (n) biggest meal of the day.

**disciple** (n) person who listens to and follows a teacher.

**done** (adj; v) finished; was doing.

**dream** (n; v) story or pictures you see in your brain when sleeping; see a story or pictures in your brain when sleeping.

**easy-going** (adj) not easily worried or made angry by problems or by the actions of other people.

**educate** (v) teach, often in a school.

**education** (n) learning, often from a school.

**Eiffel Tower** (n) very tall iron tower built in Paris in 1889.

**either** (adj; pro) each of two; one or the other of two.

**else** (adv) more; if not.

**embarrass** (v) make a person feel like they want to hide from others because of what others will think.

**enemy** (n) person who hates or competes against you.

**engaged** (adj) (of a woman and man) planning to marry each other.

**enthusiastically** (adv) with enthusiasm.

**eternal** (adj) with no end.

**even** (adv) showing a stronger thing; too.

**ever** (adv) at any time.

**everywhere** (adv) in every place.

**evil** (adj; n) very bad; very bad or dangerous thing, often against God.

**experiment** (n; v) test or other action you do to learn; do a thing to learn.

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**expert** (n) person who knows very much about one thing.

**eye-opener** (n) surprising thing that you learn from.

**face** (n; v) front of the head; point the front toward.

**faint** (v; adj) collapse to sleep, often from being sick; feeling that you will collapse to sleep; weak.

**faith** (n) believing a thing; religion; church.

**farm** (v) work on land to grow plants or animals.

**fast** (v) go without eating for a time.

**felt** (v) did feel.

**footpath** (n) place, often beside a road, where people walk.

**forever** (adv) for all time.

**forget** (v) not remember.

**forgiveness** (n) forgiving.



**fork** (n) eating tool with points on it.

**found** (v) did find.

**free** (v) take (a person) out of prison, or from another thing that was controlling them.

**French** (n) language of France.

**fun** (n) thing you do because it is interesting, and not because you are serious about it.

**make fun of** laugh at.

**funny** (adj) making people laugh.

**gave** (v) did give.

**geometry** (n) study of shapes and sizes, and number rules about them.

**Gita** (see *Bhagavad Gita*)

**glad** (adj) happy.

**go-between** (n) person who takes words from one person to another, often trying to bring the two people together.

**God-fearing** (adj) serious about obeying God.

**Gokhale, Gopal Krishna** (1866-1915) A teacher in Poona, and head of a Marathi newspaper there, who pushed for free education and help to the poor.

**goodbye** (interj) friendly word to say when leaving a person.

**government** (n) leaders of a country; rules for leading.

**grace** (n) forgiving love.

**great** (adj) very good; big in size or number; important.

**grew** (v) did grow.

**guilt** (n) feeling bad or wrong; being bad or wrong.

**guilty** (adj) bad or wrong.

**Gujarati** (n) language of north west India.

**Haji** (n) name for a Muslim who has been to the holy city of Islam.

**hand** (v) give with the hand.

**head** (v) go.

**heal** (v) fix a sickness or sore.

**health** (n) how healthy a person is.

**heard** (v) did hear.

**heart** (n) organ that pushes blood through the body; thinking and feelings of a person.

**big hearted** generous.

(my) **heart dropped** (I) became afraid.

**lose heart** feel like stopping.

**open hearted** loving.

**whole hearted** with enthusiasm.

**heaven** (n) place where God lives; the sky.

**hello** (interj) friendly word to say when you see a person.

**Hindi** (n) state language of India.

**Hindustani** (n) important language in North India.

**holy** (adj) from, or for, God; perfect in spiritual things.

**home** (n) place where you live.

**honest** (adj) not hiding the truth.

**honesty** (n) not hiding the truth.

**hope** (n; v) believing or wanting to receive a good thing in the future; thing you want in the future; believe or want a good thing in the future.

**hot-blooded** (adj) easily showing anger or love.

**hotel** (n) building where people stop to sleep when they are travelling.

**hunger** (n; v) feeling that you need food or some other thing; feel that you need food or some other thing.

**hungry** (adj) wanting and needing food or some other thing.

**idol** (n) thing you love like a god.

**impossible** (adj) that cannot happen at any time.

**in-fighting** (n) arguing between people in the same group.

**insides** (n) all that is inside a place or thing.

**instead** (adv) in the place of another.

**interview** (v; n) ask a person questions about himself or herself; this action.

**invisible** (adj) that you cannot see.

**Irving, Washington** (1783-1859) American writer and lawyer.

**Jain** (n) person from an Indian religion with a strong belief in ahimsa.

**jam** (n) food from fruit and sugar, that people often put on bread.

**jetty** (n) road projecting out

from the beach over water.

**jewelry** (n) pieces of metal and stone that people wear.

**joke** (n; v) thing you do or say to make people laugh; do or say a thing to make people laugh.

**jungle** (n) land in a hot country, with many trees and plants growing close together.

**just** (adv) with no more.

**kettle** (n) covered metal container with a handle on the top, for making hot water.

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**kindness** (n) friendly, loving action.

**kingdom** (n) country that a king leads.

**kitchen** (n) room where food is cooked.

**kneel** (v) put your knees down on.

**knew** (v) did know.

**knock** (v) hit a door with your hand, to make a sound for people on the other side to hear.

**Koran** (n) holy book of the teachings of Islam.

**ladder** (n) tool with steps, for going up to high places.

**lamp** (n) container with a light in it.

**last** (v) be, or stay doing for a time.

**Latin** (n) language from Europe in the past.

**law** (n) important rule.

**lawyer** (n) person who studies rules for a job.

**leaflet** (n) one of many printed papers that you give to many people.

**lean** (v) go over to one side from the middle, or from being vertical.

**least** (n; adj; adv) smallest thing; smallest; in the smallest measure.

**leather** (n) dry, strong skin from animals, that people use for cloth or rope.

**let** (v) not stop an action from happening, that you could stop from happening.

**loaf** (n) bread you cook in one whole piece.

**Lokamanya** (see *Tilak*)

**Lord** (n) God.

**lost** (v; adj) did lose; (of a person) not knowing how to get to where you want to go; (of a thing) in a place where you cannot find it.

**lot** (n) many things or much of; group of things.

**lunch** (n) meal in the middle of the day.

**Luther, Martin** (1483-1546) Leader of the movement to break away from the Catholic Church.

**magic** (n) action that uses secret spiritual strength to do things that others cannot do.

**magnet** (n) piece of metal with a special ability to pull other metals toward it.

**Mahatma** (n) name for a very spiritual person who thinks of God at all times, and who is spiritually free from all that is bad.

**manager** (n) person who controls a business.

**Marathi** (n) language of Mumbai, in west India.

**Mary** (n) the mother of Jesus.

**master** (n) teacher; person who has people working for him.

**Matthew** (n) one of four books of the Bible that tells the story of Jesus.

**may** (v) (of an action) can happen, when you do not know if it will.

**maybe** (adv) that easily can happen (but you cannot say that it will).

**meal** (n) food that you eat at a special time in the day.

**mean** (v) want people to understand.

**meaning** (n) what you want people to understand from a word or action.

**Mehta, Sir Pheroza** (1845-1915) "Father of city government in Mumbai". He started the English language newspaper, the *Mumbai Chronicle* and was president of the Indian National Congress in 1890.

**member** (n) person in a group.

**met** (v) did meet.

**Methodist** (n) person from a church that started with strong rules about things like not drinking and not smoking.

**might** (v) (of an action) could happen, when you did not know if it would.

**mile** (n) measure of distance (about as far as you can walk in 15 minutes).

**mind** (n; v) brain; thinking; protect; control; obey; not like; think about.

**mine** (adj) that I own.

**minister** (n) leader in a church or in a country; person who helps.

**miracle** (n) very difficult thing, that needs God to make it happen.

**mirror** (n) flat glass that shows pictures of things that are near it.

**Miss** (n) name for a girl or woman who is not married.

**miss** (v) not hit, catch, meet, find, or see a thing you were trying to hit, catch, meet, find, or see; want to be with a person or thing you were with in the past.

**mission** (n) important job to finish; place or group for Christian workers.

**missionary** (n) person who goes to another country to tell about Jesus.

**Muhammad** (c570-632) Man who started the religion of Islam.

**mung** (n) seed that people eat in some countries.

**natural** (adj) happening without people making it happen; made by God and not by people.



**necklace** (n) string of stones or other things that you wear around your neck.

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**neighbour** (n) person living near you.

**never** (adv) at no time.

**news** (n) story or stories about things that have happened a very short time in the past.

**next** (adj; adv) closest to; first after.

**nice** (adj) friendly; easy to like.

**ninety** (adj) 90.

**none** (pro) not any.

**Notre Dame** (n) very big old church in Paris.

**nurse** (v; n)

help a person who is sick; person who helps sick people.

**office** (n)

room where people work

with papers; job of a leader.

**officer** (n) policeman; leader in a group, army, town, or country; government worker who does important work with papers.

**official** (n) leader in a town or country.

**once** (adv; conj; n) for one time; at a time in the past; after; one time.

**only** (adj; adv) being all that is in a group; being not much, and with nothing more; for no other person.

**outing** (n) short, happy time of travelling to a place and returning.

**outcaste** (n) person in India who has been forced out of his family group.

**outsides** (n) part that is on the outside of a thing or place.

**over-sized** (adj) bigger than what it should be.

**owe** (v) need to give money or another thing for what you received in the past.

**own** (v; adj) have as yours; of that person.

**ox-cart** (n) heavy timber vehicle that a male cow pulls.

**Oxford** (n) very old university in Britian.

**paid** (v) did pay.

**pan** (n) metal container.

**pandit** (n) name for a smart person, often one who understands much about Hindu laws.

**part-time** (adj) (of a job or other action) not for the whole time that most people would use for it.

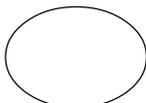
**party** (n) happy time with friends, often with food and music.

**pass** (v) move across, by, in front of, or through; give enough right answers in a test; (of a law) become a law by agreement of the leaders of a group or country.

**pasta** (n) food made from wheat paste, that people often eat with tomatoes and meat.

**peace** (n) time without fighting or noise; friendly spirit between people.

**pearl** (n) smooth, round white stone from inside an



**Persian** (n) person from a country near Arabia.

**philosopher** (n) person who thinks deeply, trying to find the truth.



**piano** (n) musical instrument with hammers that hit strings in a big box.



**pipe** (n) tube that water or other liquid travels through.

**please** (v; interj) make a person happy; humble word to ask for a thing.

**Plymouth Brothers** (n) Christian group that started in the 1830's with strong teachings about Jesus returning to earth.

**p.m.** letters to show that the time is after the middle of the day.

**pocket** (n) small bag that is part of some clothes.

**poet** (n) person who writes words that show strong emotion and often rhyme.

**poison** (n; v) chemical that makes you sick or kills you if you eat or drink it; dangerous teaching; kill by giving a dangerous chemical to.

**political** (adj) about leading countries, and about arguments between people who are trying to lead the country.

**porridge** (n) soft food from flat grain that you cook in water or milk.

**possible** (adj) that could be or happen.

**potato** (n) round root of a plant, that many people eat.

**power** (n) strength; ability; being a leader over.

**powerful** (adj) strong.

**praise** (v; n) say good things about; good sayings about.

**prayer** (n) words you use to pray.

**preach** (v) teach important things about God; talk loudly, thinking you are right and others are wrong.

**prepare** (v) cook or make a thing, to use it in the future; do an action that will help you to better do a future action.

**president** (n) leader of a company, group, school, or country.

**priest** (n) leader in a religion.

**prince** (n) male in the family of a king; king of a small country; husband of a queen.

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**progress** (n) forward movement.

**promise** (v; n) say clearly and strongly that you will do a thing; saying that says clearly and strongly that you will do a thing.

**prophet** (n) person who says words from God.

**prostitute** (n) person who mates for money.

**Protestants** (n) churches that separated from the Roman Catholic Church.

**prove** (v) show clearly how a thing must be true.

**Pythagoras** (c 580Bc-500BC) Philosopher from Greece.

**Queen Victoria** (1819-1901) Queen of Great Britain from 1837-1901, and Queen of India from 1876-1901.

**Ramayana** (n) the shorter of two great poems of India. It has been written in many languages, and is also acted out in other countries of Asia, often with dancing and music.

**ran** (v) did run.

**rat** (n) animal like a big mouse.

**reach** (v) move out to touch or talk to; go as far as.

**ready** (adj) with all parts right for doing or using now.

**reason** (n; v) what makes you choose to do a thing; ability to think well; softly argue with; try to understand.

**record** (n) writing; paper or other thing that keeps words, sounds, or numbers for you to see or hear later.

**relative** (n) person from the same family.

**report** (v; n) write or tell about; telling about; things that tells about.

**reward** (n; v) award; give an award.

**rip** (v) cut or pull a piece of paper or other material apart.

**Roman** (adj; n) of Rome or Italy; person from Rome or Italy.

**rupee** (n) measure of money in India and some other countries.

**Ruskin, John** (1819-1900) Writer and artist from Britain.

**Samaritan** (n) follower of a religion in Israel that was hated by the Jews at the time of Christ.

**sami** (n) master.

**Sanskrit** (n) very old language of the holy books of India.

**sat** (v) did sit.

**satyagraha** (n) name for Gandhi's way of changing a country through love, and by not following a rule, but doing it without hurting anyone.

**save** (v) keep away from danger; keep for the future; stop a thing from becoming bad.

**saw** (v) did see.

**scarf** (n) piece of cloth you wear around your neck or head.

**science** (n) understanding how things work and happen; serious study of a special thing that you can measure.

**scientist** (n) person who studies much to learn how things work or happen.

**second** (n) short measure of time (about as long as it takes to say two words).

**seem** (v) look or feel like it is true.

**seen** (v) been seeing.

**self** (n) the special feelings and interests of a person, to that same person.

**self-government** (n) control by the people of a country over themselves, without another country controlling them.

**selfish** (adj) loving yourself more than other people.

**send-off** (n) special happy time with a person before that person leaves a place.

**sent** (v) did send; that a person was sending.

**servant** (n) person who works for you, often doing work in your house.

**serve** (v) work for; help; give food or other things to.

**seventy** (adj) 70.

**sex** (n) being male or female; thinking and actions about mating; mating.

**shoulder** (n) part of the body between the arm and the neck.

**shovel** (n) tool for digging.

**show** (v)  
use actions  
to say a thing;  
help people to see  
or understand a thing.

**shown** (v) had been showing.

**sign** (n) words or pictures for many people to read or see; board that words or pictures are on for all to see; actions that shows a truth; action that shows a person has strength from God.

**simple** (adj) easy to understand or do; not smart; not beautiful or expensive.

**sin** (n; v) bad action; disobey a rule from God.

**sincere** (adj) wanting to know the truth and do the right thing.

**sir** (n) name for a male teacher, leader, or important person.

**slave** (n) person that another person owns.

**so** (adv; adj; conj) in the way you were saying; as; very; too; because of this; after that.

**so-called** (adj) having a name that is not a true name.

**sold** (v) did sell.

**somewhere** (adj) in or to some place.

**soon** (adv) in a short time from now.

**soul** (n) spiritual or thinking part of a person or animal; person.

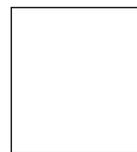
**soup** (n) hot liquid food.

**spell** (v) say or write the letters of a word.

**spend** (v) use (money or time).

**spinach** (n) vegetable from the big, dark green leaves of a plant.

**stamp** (n) small piece of paper you stick on a letter before you can send it.



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**standard** (n) measure that you try to be equal to.

**state** (n) country; big part of a country, with one group of leaders.

**statesman** (n) leader of a country, who plans well for the good of the people and for the future of the country.

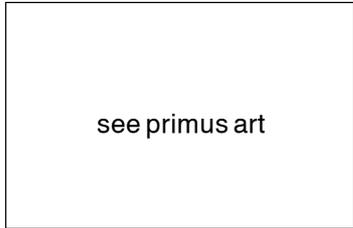
**station** (n) stopping place for trains or buses.

**statue** (n) art shape, often of a person.

**still** (adv) without changing or stopping.

**stood** (v) was standing.

**storm** (n;v) strong wind, rain, snow, or lightning; move quickly, with much anger or noise.



**stove** (n) instrument for making heat, to cook food.

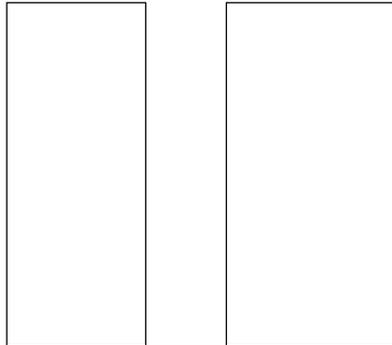
**strange** (adj) very different from most other things; that you cannot understand.

**stranger** (n) person you do not know.

**studies** (n) things that you were studying.

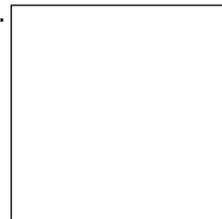
**such** (adj) of this way, quality, or measure; this big; this much.

**sugar-cane** (n) very tall grass that people make sugar from.



**suit** (n) pieces of clothes that you wear together.

**suitcase** (n) container with a handle, that you carry clothes in.



**sure** (adj; adv) confident; that will clearly happen; strongly.

**swami** (n) religious or holy man in India.

**sweets** (n) sweet food that you eat after a meal; lollies.

**Tagore, Rabindranath** (1861-1941) Bengali poet who did much to bring East and West together through his writings.

**taken** (v) had been taking.

**Tamil** (n) language from South India, that people use in many parts of Asia and in islands in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

**taught** (v) did teach.

**tax** (n; v) money that you must pay to the leaders of a country; make people pay this money to leaders of a town or country.

**taxi** (n) car or small vehicle pulled by horses that carries people to places for money.

**tears** (n) water from the eyes when a person is crying.

**telegram** (n) words you send over a long distance by electricity.

**telegraph** (n) way of sending words by electricity.

**term** (n) word; time of studying in a school year.

**test** (n) questions or actions to find how good a person or thing is; ask questions or do actions to find how good a person or thing is.

**thank** (n) tell a person that you are happy for a kind or good action.

**theosophy** (n) religion that takes truth from many religions, with strong teachings about miracles, about finding God through prayer, and secret meanings in holy writings.

**thick-headed** (adj) stupid.

**third** (adj) first after two others.

**thought** (v; n) did think; thinking; what you think.

**thread** (n) very thin string.

**ticket** (n) small piece of paper to show that you did pay to go in, use, or travel on a thing; paper showing your ability to do a special job.

**Tilak, Bal Gangadhar** (1856-1920)

Called Lokamanya ("loved leader") after going to prison in 1897 because he argued for the Indian people to be free from Britain. First person to encourage Indians not to buy things from Britain to show they disagreed with Britain controlling India. Gandhi called him "the father of present-day India" when he died in 1920.

**today** (n; adv) this day; on this day; now, and not in the far past.

**toilet** (n) room with a hole in the floor that dung and liquids from the body can go into.

**told** (v) did tell.

**Tolstoy, Leo** (1828-1910) Writer from Russia who believed strongly in the teachings of Jesus in his later years. He is believed to be one of the greatest writers of all time.

**tomorrow** (n; adv) the day after this day; on the day after this day.

**tonight** (n; adv) this night; on this night.

**took** (v) did take.

**tower** (n) tall building; tall projecting part of a building. (see *Eiffel*)

**tram** (n) train car that travels on roads.

**trouble** (n) thing making you angry, sad, sore or worried; worry, sadness or pain; angry or loud happenings.

**trouble-maker** (n) person who encourages arguments between people.

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**turban** (n) long cloth to make a hat; hat shaped like this.

**uncle** (n) brother of your mother or father; husband

of your mother or father's sister; male adult to a child.

**understood** (v) did understand.

**uneducated** (adj) not having been to school.

**university** (n) school for adults, where they can learn to be doctors, teachers, or to do other jobs that need much learning.

**until** (prep; conj) up to the time of.

**vegetarian** (n; adj) person who eats no meat: (of food) made from vegetables.

**Victoria** (see *Queen Victoria*)



**violin** (n) instrument with four stings that you pull other strings across.

**visit** (v; n) go to see a person or place, often to stay there for a time; this action.

**visitor** (n) person or animal that comes to see a person or place, often to stay there for a short time.

**vote** (v; n) choose a leader, with each person counting as one mark for the person that he or she chooses; choosing.

**waiter** (n) man who takes food or drinks to people sitting at tables in a restaurant.

**wake** (v) stop sleeping; make a person stop sleeping.

**Walesa, Lech** (1943-) Leader of workers against communist control of Poland, who was the leader of the country after the fall of communism.

**waste** (v) use too much; use without having a good reason to use it.

**wave** (n) high part between low parts on top of moving water.

**wedding** (n) special time when two people marry.

**weight** (n) how heavy a thing is ; heavy thing.

**welcome** (interj; n; v; adj) word to say that you are happy when you meet a person; happy receiving; receive with happiness; that you are happy to receive.

**went** (v) did go.

**Western** (adj) of the rich countries of the world, like America and Britain.

**which** (adj; pro) of what quality; word asking you to choose; that; who; what person or thing; what people or things.

**while** (conj; n) at the same time; short time.

**whistle** (n; v) loud, high sound from pushing air through a small hole; tool or toy made to give a high, loud sound when you breathe into it; make this sound.

**Whites** (n) people with light-coloured skin.

**whose** (adj) who owns; of what person.

**why** (adv) for what reason; for that reason.

**widow** (n) woman with no husband, because her husband is dead.

**willing** (adj) happy to agree to or do a thing.

**winter** (n) coldest time of the year.

**worm** (n) thing, often digging, animal with no bones and no legs.

**worship** (n; v) actions showing that you love and want to obey God; show you want to love and obey God; love a person or thing like it is God.

**worth** (adj; n) equal to (often in money); good enough for; how good a thing is; measure of money that is equal to a thing.

**written** (v) had been writing.

**wrong** (adj; n; v) bad or not right; action that is bad or not right; do a bad or wrong action to a person.

**wrote** (v) did write.

**yard** (n) piece of land with a fence around it, often around a house.

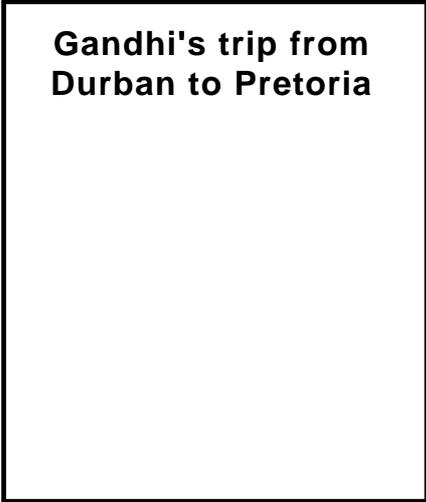
**yet** (adv; conj) up to now, or to that time; in adding; but at the same time.

**yoga** (n) Hindu exercises and teaching to control yourself and to become one with God.

**Zoroastrian** (adj) of the religion that was in some of the countries between India and Israel before Muhammad started Islam.

## Southeast Africa

**Gandhi's trip from  
Durban to Pretoria**



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MAPS

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# India

⋮



## ENDINGS

You can show more than one of a thing by adding *s*. If it ends in *x*, *s*, *sh*, or *ch*, you must add *es*:

dogs, fox**es**, bus**es**, dish**es**, church**es**

If one person, animal, or thing is doing the action, you add *s* or *es* to the action word.

dig**s**, fix**es**, cross**es**, wash**es**, teach**es**

When the word ends in *y*, change the *y* to *i* first. But if there is a vowel (*a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, or *u*) before the *y*, you do not need to change the *y*.

babies, boys, monkeys, cries, buys, pays

You can show **more** of some qualities by adding *er*, and you can show the **most** of some qualities by adding *est*. For some words you first add another letter like the last letter of the word you started with. If the last letter is *y* change it to *i* before adding the ending. If the last letter is *e* do not add another *e*.

hard, hard**er**, hard**est**

big, big**ger**, big**gest**

easy, eas**ier**, eas**iest**

early, ear**lier**, ear**liest**

blue, blu**er**, blu**est**

You can change some actions to make them name the person or thing that is doing the action by adding *er*.

work**er**, lead**er**, rob**ber**, kill**er**, run**ner**, own**er**

You can change some qualities of things to qualities of actions by adding *ly*. If the word ends in *y*, you change it to *i* before adding the ending.

sad**ly**, eas**ily**, angr**ily**, slow**ly**, cruel**ly**

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## LOOK AT SOME OF OUR OTHER BOOKS

All of these books use the same basic word list, adding 50-100 new words with each title. All but one of these books have a small dictionary at the back. The dictionary includes all new words used in that book plus many other words from the basic word list.

The King's New Clothes	250 words
The Ugly Little Duck	350 words
Book of Good Sayings	500 words
Stories that Teach	600 words
Jungle Book	700 words
Invisible Man	750 words
Robinson Crusoe	800 words
Tom Sawyer	900 words
A Christmas Story	950 words
Walk of Faith	1000 words
Uncle Tom's Cabin	1050 words
Tolstoy's Confession	1100 words
My Experiments with Truth, Pt. I	1150 words
Julius Caesar	1200 words

Chris, you might like to stick another ad in here, perhaps for the dictionary, with an order form that people can send in if they want a copy. It's up to you, however. I don't mind if we just leave a blank page for a change.

Dave

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## Back cover blurb

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### **The Way to be Great**

Here, in his own words, Mohandas Gandhi tells about his life as a child, a student, a lawyer, and as a leader of his people.

He does not come across as being very special in many of the ways that most people think of when they talk about a "great" person.

But what readers do see is that from the earliest part of his life, telling the truth and doing what he believed was right were very important to Gandhi. As he grew older, when most people were learning to cheat on the truth, Gandhi, instead, became even *more* honest and even more serious about learning what was right and what was wrong.

His whole life was one long "experiment with truth", and his story should encourage anyone who is trying to do what is right today, in a world where truth and love and faith and honesty seem to be losing the war against all that is evil.

Read his story, and let it change your life.

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