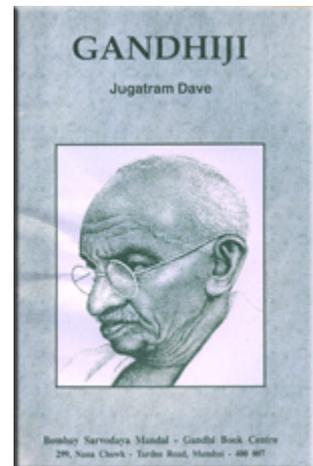


GANDHIJI

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Gujarat Vidyapeeth has been organising an exam on Gandhi every year on the day of Gandhi Jayanti. The book 'Gandhi Bapu' by Kudasia Jaidi is being used as a text book in these exams right from the beginning for the students of Std. 5 to 7.

In addition, it is decided to add as a text book the other book, 'Gandhiji' (originally in Gujarati) by Late. Shri. Jugatram Dave which describes the incidents of Gandhiji's life.

The first edition of this book was published in 1929. About four lac copies of the same have been sold till now. The English version of this book is a special edition available at a subsidized price, used for this exam.

Five poems, expressing the life and work of Gandhiji are given at the end of this book with the thought that it may be useful to create better understanding of Gandhiji's personality. The students attending the exam could memorise them by heart.

1. HOME - TOWN?

Which is Gandhiji's home- town?

Porbunder will immediately say, "I am! He was born here!"

The Phoenix and Tolstoy Ashram abroad will say, "Why do you forget, it was here that he was truly 'born'?"

Ahmedabad will say, "But he did build his Ashram on my river banks!"

Pune will also try to take the credit, "Don't you forget that he was kept in my Yerawada jail."

The farmers from Bihar would exclaim, "Whatever you may claim, but he truly belonged to us. Do you know how much he liked to wander in our indigo fields?"

At this Punjab will come forward roaring, "Who can deny that my..Jallianwala Baug was the one, which kindled the fire within him?"

Kolkata would say, "But it was this place from where he began his non-cooperation movement!"

Mumbai would retort, "Didn't he choose me to begin Satyagraha?"

Bardoli will come forward and say, "Will anyone listen to me? Didn't he begin his fight on my soil?"

Delhi thinks that Gandhiji belongs to her because he spent twenty-one days of his fast there. Belgaum thinks that it has more right to own Gandhiji than any other place. Wasn't Gandhiji honoured with chairmanship at the National Convention here?

Himalaya, the king of mountains, is laughing at this. "Who can explain things to them?"

Can these innocent people understand what Gandhiji really longed for?"

Blessed is the tiny place Segaon! No one knew the name of this village, situated in Central India! It never tried to possess him. Neither did it complain nor make any demand. Yet Gandhiji favoured it.

2. CASTE

Gandhiji was Modh-waniya (Baniya) by caste. But what did he himself say about it?

Once government filed a case against him for sedition. The case was tried in Ahmedabad court.

The judge was sure to ask his name!

"What is your name?"

"Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi."

"Which is your home town?"

"Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati."

"What is your occupation?"

"Weaving and farming."

The judge was astonished with this reply. Even the people there were stunned.

3. PUTLIBAI

Gandhiji's mother's name was Putlibai. She was a true devotee of God. She would not have food until she finished her puja (prayer) rituals. She would go to the temple regularly.

She would strictly keep fast on Ekadashi (Eleventh day of the lunar month). Having meals only once a day was child's play for her.

During the sacred four- month's period (chaturmas) she used to pray devoutly and observe all rituals. During this period she used to be so strict that she would take meals only after she saw and prayed the Sun.

No wonder that the children loved such a religious mother. The children would watch for the Sun to shine through the clouds. They would run in to inform their mother the moment they saw the Sun come out of the clouds.

"Come, mother, come quickly and see the Sun." Sometimes the Sun would disappear before she could come. Then she would have to go without food for the day.

But the mother was a righteous devotee and she would never leave the rituals halfway because of illness or any other reason.

Gandhiji's mother was such a pious and self-respecting person.

4. BA (KASTURBA)

Many of you might have seen Bapu but a lot of people have hardly seen Kasturba.

"Ba" never behaved as if she was a very great person. She never sat on Bapu's seat to meet the people. No! She would be busy doing something or making rotis in the kitchen or preparing a meal for Gandhiji or else nursing a patient. If Gandhiji took ill it was Ba's duty to look after him and comfort him by pressing his forehead softly. She was seen on such occasions only.

She was not a person who would deliver a lecture which Bapu was supposed to do.. She used to sit among the ladies and nobody would notice her or else she would stay at home and get busy with her work.

Ba did not try to be 'great' in other's eyes. She loved only one thing - to follow in Bapu's footsteps and care for him. Sita sacrificed the luxurious life to follow Ram during exile. Similarly, Ba also left behind the comforts of life and started living in the Ashram with Bapu. Ba was a truly sacred soul. She was an embodiment of Sati.

5. TEST

Gandhiji must have been in second or third grade and was trying to learn English.

Once an education officer came to inspect the school and asked the students to write five English words each. The class teacher was keeping an eye on them. His heart was beating rapidly, fearing that the students might make mistakes. If it happened so, the teacher was to be blamed. The officer would blame the teacher for not doing his duty properly.

Mohandas had miss-spelt the word 'kettle'. The teacher saw it but what could he do? Slowly he went to him and tapped on Mohandas' foot with his shoe. Then he signaled him to copy the student sitting next to him. Mohandas did not know how to copy. He would not even dream of cheating. So he could not understand that the teacher was actually asking him to be dishonest and copy from another student's paper.

The teacher scolded him the next day and said, "You are such a fool! You didn't even get the clue!"

Gandhiji didn't say anything to the teacher but he was sure that it was not a good advice to be followed because it was leading to untruth.

6. TRUTH

Gandhiji loved to be truthful since he was a child. He has written how he moved in the company of bad boys for a few days.

Those boys had a habit of eating snacks at a vender's shop and smoking. Since they could not ask their parents to give money for such a thing, they started stealing it from the servants' pockets.

Mohan would feel suffocated due to this, but when he saw those friends he would be tempted to smoke.

As the time went by they had piled a lot of debt at the vender's shop. The shop-keeper would demand his money time and again; it was a difficult situation. They worried about his demanding the money in front of people or that he would come home to take it from their parents. The money stolen from the servant's pockets used to be very little and the debt was big enough. What to do now?

So the group was worried. Gandhiji's elder brother was also there in the group. Then he thought of stealing to escape from this situation. He said, "I have a gold bracelet in my hand. If we take some gold out of it, we would be able to pay the debt and nobody would know!"

This idea made Mohan uneasy but he dared not speak against it. He let them cut a piece out of it. The debt was paid but how could a truth loving person have peace of mind? He thought, "Alas! I have been a part of this theft! Let the snacks and the cigarettes go to hell!"

Again a thought came to his mind, "Oh God! I have even deceived my father!"

Uneasy as he was he could neither eat properly nor do any work! He felt guilty.

At last he decided to go to his father and confess the misdeed. He thought, "I will face his anger and even take the beating if he does so."

But he dared not speak to his father. So Gandhiji wrote a letter to him confessing everything and asked to be forgiven. He handed it over to his father

with tearful eyes and trembling hands. His father overcame with joy on reading that letter. He forgave his son's misdeed and embraced his truth-loving child!

7. PRAHLAD AND HARISHCHANDRA

Since his childhood Gandhiji loved the stories of two truth-loving people- Prahlad and Harishchandra. A person who himself was so truthful was bound to love the story of such truthful people.

King Harishchandra had to face a lot of difficulties and tolerate grief. He lost his kingdom, lost his wealth, had to live in the forest and had to sell his wife and son too. Ultimately he had to sell himself to the keeper of the cremation ground. He had to go through these hair-raising experiences but still he remained truthful.

Gandhiji had seen King Harishchandra's drama in his childhood and since then he always had dreams about Harishchandra. He would weep whenever he remembered this story. Later he wrote, "Even today, reading that drama makes me weep." He said that bearing grief like Harishchandra and yet remain truthful is the real truth!

Yet Gandhiji loved the story of Prahlad more than the story of Harishchandra. He was a king; he was experienced and learned too! But Prahlad was a small child. He dared uttering the name of Rama in spite of the fact that he was born in a demon's family. He did not stop chanting the name of Ram even after his father pushed him down the mountain. He did not stop chanting the name of Ram even after his father drowned him in the river. He was chained to a burning pillar yet he was not scared and did not give up the chanting of Ram's name..

Gandhiji always worshipped Prahlad's truthfulness and set his example in front of him, "Prahlad was such a small boy yet he had the courage to be truthful. One does not need the strength of a wrestler or the army of a king to be truthful."

8.VAISHNAV

(The Devotee of Lord Vishnu)

If Gandhiji was ever asked which religion did he follow, he would say, "Vaishnav!"

A person who doesn't understand its meaning would be astonished. Gandhiji never went to a temple. Neither did he have Krishna's idol in his house nor did he offer food (56 kinds of sweets know as chhappan bhog) to the God. He did not wear the string of tulasi beads and would eat in the company of anybody (without thinking of his caste).

How could he be a Vaishnav?

Gandhiji used to say, "I am a Vaishnav by heart. Saint Narsaiya has defined the qualities of a Vaishnav. I know who can be called a Vaishnav and I am trying to become one."

Call him a Vaishnav who feels other's grieves,

Who helps them through times rough

Yet pride won't make him tough!

Who mingles with everyone?

Yet slanders no one;

One who keeps his heart pure,

God has always blessed his mother!

Call him a Vaishnav...

He has sacrificed all,

With no grudge at all;

A woman is a mother in his eye,

He never tells a lie;
And for others wealth he is not sly!

Call him a Vaishnav...

One who remains free of temptations,
And also has saintly aspirations;
Has engraved on his heart Rama's image,
Is the embodiment of a pilgrimage!

Call him a Vaishnav...

One who is not at all deceitful,
And has won his anger and will;
Narsaiya says, a chance to see such person
Can set all our generations free of sin!

Call him a Vaishnav...

[Mingles = To mix with people; Slander = False or malicious statement about someone.

Grudge = Ill will; Sly = Cunning, deceitful; Temptation = Attraction, fascination.

Aspiration = Strong desire; Engrave = Carve, incise; Embodiment = Symbol;

Deceit = Cheating.]

9. THE SPINNING WHEEL

"Oh God! Let me die when one of my hands is on the handle of the spinning wheel and the other is holding a silver!"

Who would pray like this?

Gandhiji! Who else could it be?

He loved the spinning wheel.

It was his vow to spin daily without fail. Even though he was very busy, he would never avoid spinning yarn.

He kept his spinning wheel with him even while traveling. He would start spinning as soon as he had spare time. He used to insist on spinning during illness also.

He would also take his dearest spinning wheel with him whenever he had to go to jail.

When he was in Yerawada jail he used to spin on a two wheeled spinning wheel. He thought a lot while spinning and created a 'small and delicate', 'sleek and sweet' Yerawada spinning wheel.

Gandhiji called the wheel a 'Kamdhenu' - a cow that could fulfill our every wish!

He said so because spinning yarn could offer clothes to crores of countrymen, as well as food to the hungry. Gandhiji called it a Kamdhenu because he believed that it could even help our countrymen get independence. The sound of the wheel felt like sweet music to him.

Crores of our countrymen remained hungry even after hard labour. How can we feel one with them? We should also do some hard work. So Gandhiji preached that each one of us should spin yarn for half an hour everyday so as to feel one with them.

Gandhiji had the spinning wheel sketched on our tri-color flag. He announced that the nation, which cared for the millions of its poor countrymen, was a truly liberated nation.

10. HOW DID GANDHIJI LIVE?

Do you want to know how Gandhiji lived his life? He used to get up very early each morning. After brushing his teeth he used to pray and then he would go for morning walk while coming back from the walk he used to visit the ill people in the Ashram.

Afterwards he would go to the kitchen to clean and cut the vegetables, which was allotted to him and then he would take breakfast.

Then it would be time for the visitors who had an appointment or else read the letters and reply them. Sometimes he would write articles for 'Navjivan'.

He used to look after serving at the meal- time, personally.

In the afternoons he used to spin yarn regularly. He had made it a rule to spin yarn for at least one hour everyday and make at least 160 strands.

In the evenings he would take meals before sunset and then take a walk for a few minutes.

Apart from this he would teach the women or the students or the small children in the school, according to the time-table.

Like this Gandhiji kept himself busy all day long. He slept at 9 O'clock. Sometimes there used to be so much work that he had to keep awake till late and finish the work. Yet he would get up at 4 O'clock in the morning even if he had slept very late. It would never change his routine.

11. THE ROUTINE OF A SATYAGRAHI

Now you have come to know the daily routine of a satyagrahi. You won't see a single moment being wasted due to laziness.

What made Gandhiji's routine so special was that he made a timetable for himself. He then used to follow every minute of it. He would start working on the exact time he had decided for it and then finish it also in the given time. He planned and spent his day along with hands of the clock.

He would even note down which work was done at what time and then look at the list before going to bed.

12. SILENCE DAY

Gandhiji observed silence on every Monday. He won't talk to anybody on that day. He would not break this rule for any reason. He would write down if there were a need but won't speak at all.

He felt very peaceful due to this. There was nothing to be talked about on that day. Also there were no lectures to be delivered. Likewise, he also did not go for a walk on that day.

The peace gained from the silence-day used to comfort him a lot. But how did he use that comfort?

He would never waste the day keeping idle or sleeping. He used to finish the week's pending work on that day.

It is worth experiencing the joy of observing silence!

13. CHARACTERISTICS OF GANDHIJI

Gandhiji had so many characteristics, which we should know.

He never walked slowly. He would always walk fast and with energy.

He never slumped while sitting. He would always sit straight and be firm. He never wrote sitting at the table; instead he kept the paper on his lap and wrote.

He used to read whatever he wrote and then only write further. He would send a post-card only after he had read it again and corrected the mistakes.

He was very much fond of cleanliness and neatness. That is why his clothes and other things used to be very clean and tidy.

He would do everything quite meticulously.

He would never pose for a photograph. He always had a lot of work to do. But whenever a child came to him he would always play with him.

Gandhiji always laughed aloud heartily while chatting with people.

14. ASHRAM - 1

In old days Ahmedabad was the capital of Gujarat. Gandhiji's Ashram is on the banks of Sabarmati river near this city.

Gandhiji lived in this Ashram with Kasturba and many other men, women and children.

Many of those people came from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Punjab, Sindh, Madras (now Chennai) and Nepal also. There were Indians as well as foreigners and Chinese too.

All of them wore Khadi and regularly spun yarn. They used to get up at 4 O' clock in the morning and would get together for prayer. They would also pray in the evening. They used to recite Shlokas there. Panditji used to teach them bhajans. They used to sing those bhajans along with chanting of Ram naam. They also used to recite Gita regularly. Then Gandhiji would deliver a sermon after the prayer.

All the people living in the Ashram used to dine in the same mess. The food did not contain much of masala (seasoning) but it used to be clean and fresh.

At a fixed time, all of them used to sit together recite hymns for peace and then take the meal. Many a times, Gandhiji himself would serve them. Harijans (the untouchables) also lived in the Ashram along with all others. They used to work in the kitchen with others and ate there too.

People in the Ashram used to be very careful about cleanliness. They won't spit anywhere, won't throw pieces of paper, won't throw leftover food and won't urinate just anywhere.

The inmates of the Ashram never used the jungle as their toilet. They would prepare a small, clean airy room as their toilet and would cover the faeces with soil. They used to clean this toilet themselves. The soil was then used as manure in their vegetable garden.

15. ASHRAM - 2

There was a student's hostel in the Ashram. Many students from the country and abroad lived there. Some of them tried to learn spinning the yarn, comb the cotton or weave Khadi cloth on the handloom. Many students used to learn making spinning wheel in the carpentry workshop.

There were both boys and girls in the Ashram. All of them studied there as well as learnt these occupations.

There was a dormitory for women inmates. They would gather there and pray. They used to study, card the cotton and spin yarn. These women inmates managed the kitchen of the Ashram. They used to clean the grains in the store and cook food turn by turn.

There was also a nursery school for small children but there were no special teachers to attend to them. So, the women inmates worked there also!

There was a tannery also in the Ashram. The skin of the dead animals was tanned there. They believed that using slaughtered animals' skin was violence. So, they used the skin of dead animals to make shoes and chappals.

The Ashram inmates worked in the fields also. They had planted trees of fruits and plants of different types of cotton. Vegetables were also grown there. The grains and cotton were grown in those fields.

All the men, women and children took part in all these jobs. Turn by turn they worked in the kitchen, stored water, cleaned utensils, as well as cleaned the Ashram, the cow-pen and the toilets. They also worked in the kitchen garden.

Just like a beehive, there used to be continuous activity in Gandhiji's Ashram from sunrise to sunset. Gandhiji had named it 'Udyog Mandir' (the temple of work) which was quite appropriate.

16. THE SERVANT

The jobs like storing water, cleaning utensils, sweeping, making flour, washing clothes, and cleaning toilets are considered low standard jobs. It's not that people don't have time but they think that the lowly people should do these jobs. That is why they have servants to do these things. Those people are considered having low standard and are treated badly.

Gandhiji did not consider any work as low. He had same feelings even before he started the Ashram. There were many servants in his home but they were not treated like servants.

When Gandhiji was a child, they had a maid named Rambha. Gandhiji remembered and respected her like his own mother. Rambha had taught him in his childhood that chanting Ram naam could save him from fear. Gandhiji never forgot this advice.

After he became a Barrister, Gandhiji lived in Mumbai for some time. He had a Brahmin servant who cooked meals for him. He had been abroad and had a rich Western life style. Yet he never treated him as a servant.

When he lived in South Africa, he earned a lot of money. There they had so many things to do in the house. Yet he and Kasturba cleaned the toilets, washed clothes and did many other things themselves. They had a number of servants in the house but they treated them like their family members. When they came to live in the Ashram, they made it a rule to do everything themselves. They did not hire a servant. People who want to serve humanity don't discriminate between an employer and a servant.

17. GANGA ON THIS BANK AND YAMUNA ON THE OTHER

Do you know the song of Gokul?

The Ganga flows on this bank,

And Yamuna on the other;

In between lies the lovely village Gokul;

The lovely village,

The lovely village, hey, hey!

Same is the case with Gandhiji's Ashram. The Sabarmati jail is situated on its one side and the Dudheshwar Smashan (funeral ground) on the other.

Gandhiji has selected a place fit for satyagrahis. A satyagrahi is neither afraid of jail nor does he fear death. Both of them are his beloved neighbours!

Pointing towards jail, Gandhiji used to tell the inmates of the Ashram, "Some day we will have to go there and stay. So we would better learn the hardships of a prisoner."

He would point at Dudheshwar and say, "Why be afraid of going where we frequently go for a walk? Always be prepared to sacrifice your life for your country!"

Who would come to live at such a place? Only those people would come there who are willing to learn patriotism, who would like to live with Gandhiji and those who would like to lead a pious and active (industrious) life!

18. THE CHILD WALKING STICK

A lot of children accompanied Gandhiji when he went for a walk. They enjoyed talking to him.

Actually they enjoyed something else. Gandhiji needed support while walking. He needed the support of a walking stick. The children would hug him by the waist and put his hand on their shoulder.

In this way, Gandhiji would have two live walking sticks on both the sides and they would walk down chitchatting and enjoying the weather.

Gandhiji called them child-walking sticks. The children would miss it if they didn't get the opportunity for many days.

Don't think that becoming a child walking stick was an easy job. If you think that being old Gandhiji walked slowly, you are wrong. He used to walk rapidly and with a lot of energy. If the child walking sticks were very small, the poor things almost had to run with him.

The enthusiasm would often make the children forget the time for prayer during their walk but Gandhiji would never miss it. If it was getting late he would start running! Then the child sticks also had to run with him.

19. THE HISTORY OF COSTUME

In the beginning Gandhiji used to wear a coat-pant and a hat. Then he started wearing a lungi (a wrap around cloth). Later he started wearing a dhoti, a long coat and a turban.

Then he changed to wearing clothes made from Khadi - a khadi shirt, a khadi stole and a khadi cap (topi) but later he started wearing only a khadi wrap around.

It would be interesting to know why Gandhiji made so many changes in his dressing habits!

He went to South Africa when he was young. He practiced there along with other pleaders and barristers. So he too wore western clothes like them.

But he realised that Indians were treated very badly there. So he prepared his people for satyagraha.

There were poor Indian labourers in his army. He thought that if he was going to lead them how could he dress up differently from them and eat good food too. A leader like Gandhiji was not going to make discrimination like this!

Then he decided to dress up like his poor brothers. So he bid good-bye to Western coat-pants and started wearing lungi and a shirt.

When he won the struggle for Indians in South Africa he thought of serving his motherland - India.

What sort of dress should he wear in his country?

Being a satyagrahi he was bound to take a decision only after proper inquiry. How would he come to his own country wearing any dress? He would not like this! He decided that he would not wear a suit in his country. There was nothing to bother when he wore a lungi in a foreign country where people were dressed in the same way. But it wouldn't look proper in his country.

After much thought he decided that he would board down the ship wearing the traditional costume of his birthplace - Kathiawad.

So, when Gandhiji returned to India, he started wearing a dhoti, long coat, a stole on his shoulder and a white turban as headgear.

20. KHADI

Did Gandhiji have a spinning wheel in the past? Did anyone know how to spin yarn? Did anyone know what was Khadi?

People came to know about all these things later. Before that Gandhiji used to wear clothes made from cloth woven in the Indian textile mill.

Later, many people learned to weave cloth on the handloom and Gandhiji started using that coarse cloth. Although the cloth was woven on a handloom yet the yarn was made in the mill. Therefore, from where to get the hand spun yarn, was the question!

In due course of time he met Gangaben Mujumdar. Gandhiji got a spinning wheel after consultation with her. Many people then learnt to spin the yarn on it and then they started weaving cloth from that yarn.

How could Gandhiji use clothes made by the textile mills, after this? He started wearing only Khadi clothes then onwards.

He used to be fully clad with those clothes, at first. That is he wore a full-length dhoti, shirt, a long coat upon it, a khadi turban on the head and a stole on his shoulder.

Actually he didn't like moving around wearing so many clothes but he did it for the sake of culture. But an incident made him think why should he wear so many clothes just in the name of false notions about culture?

The same incident caused the making of Gandhi Topi (an Indian type of cap)

21. THE KHADI CAP

The labourers in the Ahmedabad mill had some dispute with the owners.

They went on strike. Anusuyaben took it upon herself to lead them. If she was to lead them, how could Gandhiji stay away from it?

The movement went on for so many months. Gandhiji would visit the labourers everyday and advise them.

The poor labourers were getting unemployed. They had nothing to eat yet they came to listen to Gandhiji's advice. They firmly kept the strike going.

As the days passed by a strong bond developed between Gandhiji and the labourers. Whenever he realised the difference between himself and the labourers Gandhiji would feel very sorry. He thought, "These poor people don't even have rags to cover their bodies. Then why should I have so many clothes? The cloth of my turban is long enough to make ten caps, which would cover ten heads.

Since then he gave up wearing a turban and started using the cap. He also made his dhoti short, gave up wearing a long coat and contented himself with a short shirt.

When he established equality with those labourers then only his truth loving soul felt peace.

22. THE WHITE CAP

People were amazed when Gandhiji started using the white cap.

A white cap? Oh! Can there be a white cap? It could be red, green, yellow or black! But could it be white?

"Hey, look at it! Gandhiji has worn a white cap!" and people would laugh at it.

Some said that it resembled the cap of Kashi's Brahmin.

Was Gandhiji going to worry about people's criticism? No! He thought that it might appear bad to them but the truth is that it saves a lot of khadi cloth.

Actually, a black cap can also get dirty just like a white cap only it wouldn't be visible.

Gandhiji said that if we have to colour it for hiding the dirt, then why not wash it off. A white cap can be washed every day. Why let it get dirty?

23. THE WHITE CAP LIVED ON

The white cap had come into being with a long life!

Gandhiji was its producer. Since he was so firm a satyagrahi, would his cap disappear just because of criticism?

It became popular day by day and the critics calmed down. People got used to the white cap and they started liking it.

The poor people wore it because it was cheap. The people fond of cleanliness used it because it could be washed daily.

The poets and artists also praised the white cap and asked the people to wear it. It was really beautiful. Who would wear a black cap now?

It became a part of the national uniform for the volunteers. The children took pride in wearing it because they would look like the soldiers of mother India.

So, the popularity of the white cap earned it a name- "The Gandhi topi."

24. THE GANDHI CAP

Owner: Manager, don't wear Gandhi topi now onwards, while coming here.

Servant: Seth (sir), you are giving me orders, which can't be obeyed.

Owner: Whatever you may think, but we wouldn't allow Gandhi cap here.

Servant: But I have vowed to wear only khadi clothes. How am I going to break it?

Owner: I am not asking you to give up wearing khadi, you just get it dyed black.

Servant: But I like it white only, so I wear it. Why do you object to it?

Owner: If you want to stay on the job you will have to do what I ask you. You look like a volunteer wearing that cap. If people come to know that we have employed a volunteer it may cause a lot of loss to us.

Servant: I am unable to understand this. I am doing my duty honestly. I don't know how my wearing a white cap is going to affect you?

Owner: Listen manager! Don't debate with me. This is a Gandhi cap; people will doubt us.

Servant: What is there to doubt about? Gandhiji is the most pious person in our country.

Owner: It might be true, but from tomorrow you will come to work without wearing this cap.

Servant: I won't be able to do so.

Owner: Then you are free to go.

Servant: As you wish, sir!

Owner: Mind well, you will repent afterwards that you had to lose the job because of that ominous cap.

Servant: Thank you very much for the advice, sir! But I cannot tolerate disregard for Gandhiji and my country just for money. Good-bye!

The above dialogues are imaginary. But this happened very often in government departments, business places owned by foreigners and in some native business houses too. That brave servant sacrificed the job but did not stop wearing the Gandhi cap.

Actually, the cap's price was only four annas (now 25 paise). But now its price crossed all the limits and has become invaluable.

The first reason of its becoming priceless is that it was launched by Gandhiji.

Another reason is that it is made from sacred khadi.

The third one is that it could always be kept clean and as white as a crane's wings.

The fourth reason was that it was beautiful.

The fifth one could be that it was light, simple and cheap.

The next and the sixth reason was that it was honoured as a part of the national costume.

The seventh reason was that it bore the name of Gandhi.

Above all, the most valuable thing about it was that a lot of patriots sacrificed their life for it.

Who wouldn't feel proud to wear such a priceless cap?

25. SHIRT ALONE

We should be thankful to Gandhiji that now we are able to wear the shirt alone.

What about the past? My goodness! You first had to put on a vest, then a shirt that was topped up by a jacket and then a coat on top of it!

One had to pile up so many garments on oneself and bear the hot climate in the noon. One used to boil up like a potato. But who would dare go out without wearing all those clothes?

The dress was considered incomplete if the coat was not worn! One had to wear it even though the heat was unbearable. A person was called fully dressed only after wearing a coat.

If the students ever went to the school without wearing a coat they would not be allowed to enter it. They would insist that a half dressed student is not allowed to come.

If you went to the court without wearing a coat they would not let you in saying that an uncivilised person had no business to be there.

The heat would scorch people but who would dare being called uncivilised?

But satyagrahi Gandhiji dared do so. He started going out wearing only shirt.

People would laugh at him but Gandhiji would not care. He said that wearing a coat in such a hot weather is actually uncivilised. Wearing so many clothes in a poor country like us is a grave sin.

After this people started wearing only shirt. The students were happy. The khadi shirt and the cap then became the national costume.

26. THE KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGES

Gandhiji knew so many languages. He learned the languages not because he wanted to be a scholar but for serving the people.

As his mother tongue he knew Gujarati.

In the school he learned English. Later, his stay in England and South Africa helped him master it.

In South Africa he had to work with the Muslims. So while serving them he learned Urdu also.

Later, in our country, a large number of labourers from Madras (now Chennai) took part in his Satyagraha. So he learned a bit of South Indian languages too.

He had traveled all over India to convey his message to the people. He had come to know the importance of Hindi during it. People from any state could understand his message in Hindi. In the beginning he could not speak Hindi very well but later he learned it properly.

It wasn't that Gandhiji deliberately tried to learn these languages. Instead he learned them through experience. Still he tried to learn them better whenever he had an opportunity.

Whenever he was sent to jail for long durations he would work hard to learn Urdu and Tamil better.

Gandhiji did not know Marathi very well. In South Africa he once prepared a lecture in Marathi with the help of Gokhale and translated it too. Later he made remarkable progress during his stay in Yerawada jail and at Shegaon. During childhood he had learned a bit of Sanskrit in the school. Afterwards he learned it better in jail.

While during his study in England, he acquired essential knowledge of Europe's ancient language - Latin and then he also gained working knowledge of French.

He had mastered his mother- tongue Gujrati. His language wouldn't be showy but truthful, straightforward and full of emotions.

27. THE EXPERIMENT WITH NUTRITION

Gandhiji loved to experiment with nutrition since his childhood. He did a lot of experiments on himself during his lifetime and had risked his life doing so.

The biggest of his experiments was about milk. He considered using animal milk as unreligious and violent. He thought that God has provided that milk for their little ones, which we take forcibly. This should be considered the biggest sin of all. He thought that it was a non-vegetarian nutrition. When this thought became firm in his mind he decided to give up using milk. He did not take milk for so many years. Once he became seriously ill and the doctors said that he had no choice but to take milk if he had to get better. At last, at Ba's insistence he started taking goat's milk.

After this self-experience Gandhiji accepted the fact that human beings cannot do without animal milk. He wished that someday a scientist would try hard to evolve some nutritious thing from plants which would be as good as milk. It would be a boon to the humankind.

He did the same experiment with salt too. Later he came to realise that it was a necessary element in our meals. He then started using it.

Gandhiji believed that vegetables and fruits are meant to be the real nutrition for human beings. The structure of the human body, the shape of hands and feet, the teeth and the stomach, all are made for vegetarian food only. The monkeys are nearest animals to the human beings. Their eating habits also emphasise this belief.

But how could the poor countrymen get fruits in those critical days? So Gandhiji tried to find the cheapest substitutes for fruits and they were peanuts, dates and bananas. Then for many years he used them mainly in his meals.

Gandhiji even disapproved the traditional methods of cooking. He thought that there was no need to cook food on fire. He believed that the Sun ripens the fruits and cooking them on fire was like destroying them.

At this stage he realised that if the grains were soaked in water it would be easy for the womenfolk to cook them. It would save the cost and time both. The raw water-soaked grains have to be chewed properly and can be consumed in less quantity than the cooked food. It could save a lot for this poor country.

People polish the rice to make it white and become happy. They also remove the husk from the wheat to make fine flour. Actually, the bran and the husk are most nutritious. Throwing it away is like throwing mango pulp and eating its seed. Gandhiji started using coarse flour when he realised it.

As the time passed by Gandhiji's body became very thin and delicate but he did not give up his experiments with the meals. He kept on doing small experiments.

28. NATURE CURE

People get disturbed by the illness and then seek a doctor to cure it. They believe that the doctor will cure them, as if it was not their own responsibility. We often don't consider that god has given us this priceless machine (our body) and we behave as if we don't have any duty towards it. We behave carelessly when the illness is cured and get involved in the luxuries of life.

Gandhiji's views about this are thought worthy. The first thing to be remembered is that we should not lose patience during illness. One should try to cure it in the best possible way, and should not leave everything to a doctor.

Secondly, we need to understand that all ailments are caused due to improper and unrestrained habits. So we should be careful about it.

In spite of this if we still get ill; we must understand that the body machine is trying to purify itself of the undue stress we have burdened upon it. In such a case it would be better to let the illness do its job rather than taking high doses of medicines. This helps the body to cure itself in a few days.

Gandhiji preferred nature cure treatment to the medicines whenever he fell ill. He would use mud covered cloth strips on the ailing body part and would sit in a tub filled with water up to his waist. He knew that these treatments cure any fever and other diseases. So he usually liked to do such experiments.

He did such experiments on himself as well as on his beloved relatives and got results.

Gandhiji's nature cure included sunbath and sleep under the open sky.

But the most important part of his treatment was keeping fast. He had cured so many of his followers by encouraging them to keep fast for long durations.

Doing simple changes in food habits can cure so many ailments. People living with Gandhiji had experienced it so many times.

Yet Gandhiji knew and accepted that many dreadful diseases require treatment by an expert doctor or an operation too. He too had such experience.

He believed that it was not proper to get disturbed in case of illness. Gandhiji's son Ramdas and Kasturba had refused to drink mutton soup during their illness although doctor had recommended it. They said that they would rather die than take the soup. This made Gandhiji very happy. He had blessed the patients for their bravery.

The relatives do a lot of things running around a patient but seldom take care of him with love. Gandhiji was very fond of serving the people. He disliked losing an opportunity to serve a patient even when there were important national tasks on hand. The brothers and sisters who were fortunate enough to be served and taken care by Gandhiji were not able to forget it ever in their lives.

29. SEEING THE PENNILESS

While traveling around the country Gandhiji once went to Orissa state.

Could its poverty be described in words? Our country - India, is one of the poor countries in the world and Orissa is the poorest of all the states in India. There are no living people, rather there are skeletons only. The famines won't spare them. People hardly get to eat both the times. Why to talk about clothing in such a condition?

Gandhiji had heard about those conditions but now he saw it for himself.

Gandhiji visited the villages of that poor state. Some of the villages were deserted. The huts were shattered. The people in some of those huts were hungry, thirsty and pale. The women had barely covered their bodies with rags. Even they were not sufficient. They had barely enough rags to wrap around their waists but nothing to cover the upper part.

This scene broke him down with sorrow. Oh God! Such extreme poverty in my country? Can't I do anything to abolish it?

He thought this was what is called poverty!

Gandhiji had very soft feelings for Orissa compared to other states.

30. A SHORT DHOTI

Gandhiji wanted to abolish the tradition of bonded labour from Champaran. So he went to stay there and serve the people.

Once he went to a village and saw that the womenfolk were quite dirty and untidy. Gandhiji asked Kasturba to teach them to bathe everyday and wear clean clothes.

Kasturba went to the women and said, "Ladies! You must wash your clothes. Don't be lazy!"

Those untidy ladies kept staring at her. Later, one of those ladies said, "Ba, come to my hut and see for yourself!"

She took Kasturba into her hut and said, "Ba, look around my hut. Do you see any suitcases or almirahs full of clothes? I have only this saree I am wearing. Tell me Ba, how am I to wash this and what should I wear then? You ask Mahatmaji to give me another saree so that I can wash it everyday."

Gandhiji had seen the poverty in his country but listening to this incident he realised its gravity very deeply.

How can this poverty be abolished? Was it sufficient to give that woman a spare saree? There were innumerable women like her in the country!

So, gaining independence was the only solution! While striving for independence Gandhiji always remembered those poor women.

Gandhiji had begun the movement and it was going on quite well. A major incident happened one day. The government imprisoned his friend Maulana Mohmed Ali.

This grave situation again reminded him of those poor, untidy women. He vowed then and there only, "I won't wear a three piece costume until I liberate my country and my motherland (the womenfolk in the country) get enough clothes to clad their bodies. A short dhoti is enough for modesty."

31. THE COMPARTMENT IS HOME, THE COMPARTMENT IS ASHRAM!

The Gaikwad King of Baroda had it inscribed on their flag - 'The saddle is our home, the saddle is our throne!' The Maratha Sardars used to be very proud that their horses were always ready with the saddles on.

In the same way the third class compartment of train had become the home and Ashram for Gandhiji. He used to travel along the country to spread his message. He used to travel so much that it was hard to say where did he spend most of his time, in the Ashram or in the railway compartment. So, what is wrong in calling the railway compartment his home and ashram?

Gandhiji used the compartment just like his home. He performed all his tasks there. There he would spin the yarn, pray in the morning and evening, look after his correspondence and meet people.

Gandhiji always traveled in third class compartment. Sometimes he had to travel in the upper class due to ill health but he would be very sorry to do so. He would think, "The people I want to serve travel in third class and tolerate a lot of discomfort. Then why should I enjoy the luxury of a higher class?" Such thoughts made him uneasy.

The miserable state of third class compartment in our country is well known but he would be content to experience the misery with other people. He had a lot of such opportunities to taste the miseries when he was not known as Mahatma. Many a times he had to travel standing all the way and bear the jostling too. How could there be any possibility of sleeping or working?

In those days the leaders used to maintain a distance from the poor, untidy countrymen. They felt ashamed of them. They traveled in the upper class just like higher officers. A barrister who had come from South Africa traveling in the third class astonished people.

Once Gandhiji had stayed at Gokhale's house in Calcutta (Kolkata). While returning Gokhaleji went to see him off. Gandhiji requested him not to go through all that trouble but he did not listen to him. He said, "If you were traveling in the upper class just like others I wouldn't have come. But since you are going in the third class, I must see you off."

People like Gokhale who appreciated Gandhiji so much, were very rare in those days. Generally, people would laugh at it.

Gandhiji got an opportunity to know his poor countrymen while going through the suffering of the third class. Due to this only he could know their nature, their habits and so many other things about them. No other leader in the country knew the countrymen so well as Gandhiji did. That is how he became the saviour of the country and the people followed him with faith. The people were devoted to him.

32. THE JAIL PALACE

Gandhiji called the jail a palace. Many people are afraid of even mentioning its name. The jail means the high walls, the big gates, the fearsome guards, the handcuffs and noisy chains! Besides this a prisoner had to work on a big hand mill, draw water from the well and work on the oil mill too. In spite of this no one could escape the stick of the inspector.

Once imprisoned no one could escape. There was nothing to see and nothing to listen to.

The thieves used to shake with fear at the mention of jail. But it never seemed horrifying to Gandhiji, instead it seemed like a palace to him. He had enjoyed its hospitality so many times. Similarly he had opened its gates for so many satyagrahis.

He would say, "Why to have fear of going to jail while serving your country?" On the contrary, it was only a pleasure.

In fact, you don't have to worry about anything once you enter the jail. The meal is ready on time, you get clothes to wear, you even have a room and when there is some work to do, a guard is always there for your safety. In addition, after the hard work of the day, one gets a sound sleep at night.

Even a king might not enjoy such luxury in his palace. He can't enjoy the meals properly because of the worries and is unable to sleep comfortably.

Gandhiji had been in South African jail too. In India, he was frequently sent to Yerawada and Sabarmati jail.

The jail employees felt very awkward when they had to imprison him.

33. THREE VOWS

Mohandas came of age.

Mavji Dave, an old friend and advisor of the family would say, "Send Mohandas to Europe to be a barrister so that he would be able to look after his father's affairs."

It was not easy to go abroad. His father had been a 'deewan' (chief manager) but did not leave much money behind. They tried to get help from the state but in vain. But his elder brother was generous. He vowed to collect the money anyhow.

But there was another obstacle too. If he goes abroad, then what about the religion? What to answer the people of the caste?

Mother Putlibai said, "No, no! He will get defiled (polluted) there. He will eat flesh, drink alcohol and would behave immorally. It's better not to send him there."

Then one Sadhu (a saintly man) suggested a solution. He said, "Would it not be better if we ask him to take a vow?"

Mother said, "Yes! I won't object to it then."

The Sadhu said to Mohandas, "Make three promises to your mother and vow to keep them. Then you will be allowed to go."

"What promises?"

"The first would be not to drink alcohol. Secondly, you promise not to touch non-vegetarian food. The last promise would be that you would treat all other women as your mother or sister. Are you willing to take the vows?"

"Yes, I would be glad to do that!"

"Mother, I bow at your feet and promise that I won't eat flesh, won't drink alcohol and look upon other women as my mother or sister!"

Gandhiji considered these vows of utmost importance in his life. A vow is a symbol of a person's self-confidence and only it can save a person in case of weakness.

He had this belief right from his childhood.

34. A COOLIE (LABOURER) BARRISTER

After becoming a Barrister from Europe he went to South Africa to find a job. He went there with a Muslim businessman as his servant.

Did anyone know that he was going to earn something unique from that unknown country?

Right from the moment he set his foot on the soil of South Africa he had a feeling of suffocation. There he found the Indians being insulted all the time.

Elders and young ones were treated alike.

A lot of Hindu people had gone there as labourers or coolies. That is why the white people called all of them as labourers. A businessman was called a labourer businessman. An advocate was called a labourer advocate and Gandhiji was called a labourer barrister.

Like this the Britishers looked down upon the Hindi people. They felt insulted in keeping contact with the Indians. They would not allow Indians to travel with them on trams, railways or in a coach. They were not allowed to enter the cafeterias. They even hated the labourers walking on the streets. Then how could they be invited to a programme?

The learned and rich Hindi people also had to bear such insult. They thought that it was no use in making an issue of this treatment in a foreign country. They decided that they would keep mum about it so as to earn money and get respect in their own country. All of them thought like this.

But Gandhiji could not tolerate this. He too was insulted there time and again. But, instead of pocketing insults silently like other Indians residing in South Africa, he tried to resist. He was abused, called names and pushed also. He never retorted or behaved like them but all the same, he would not be afraid or even surrender. It was unbearable.

He had come there with a barrister to practice his occupation. So the man took Gandhiji to the court in Durban.

Although Gandhiji wore western outfit, he wore the Indian turban on his head. When he went to the courtroom to sit with the pleaders he had the turban on his head.

The judge was amazed to look at this new barrister. He considered Gandhiji's wearing a turban as an insult to the court.

He stared at him for some time and then asked him to take off the turban.

Gandhiji could not bear the insult. He thought that it was better to be beheaded than to take the turban off his head.

He did not remove the turban and left the court.

35. FORCED TO GET DOWN

Gandhiji boarded a train to travel from Durban to Pritoria. He had a ticket to the first class compartment.

At home, the people had cautioned him, "Gandhibhai, this is not India. These people won't let us travel in the first class with them." But Gandhiji did not listen to them. He thought that being a barrister he was entitled to it.

Nothing happened in the beginning. The train reached Morrisberg station at 9 O'clock in the night. A British man alighted the train and came to his compartment.

"My goodness! Why is this coolie traveling in the first class compartment?"

He did not utter a word but went down and brought an officer along with him. The officer too kept staring. Nobody dared say anything. At last the officer said, "Hey man! Come here. You will have to go to the last compartment!"

Gandhiji told him, "I have a ticket to the first class."

"Don't worry! I am asking you to shift to the last compartment."

"Listen, I have been given this seat from Durban and I would travel in this compartment only."

This answer stunned the man. How could a labourer talk like this to a British officer? He ordered, "This is not possible! You will have to get down or you will be thrown out by the guard!"

Gandhiji replied firmly, "Well then! Let the guard do it! I won't get down myself!"

The officer got angry and called the guard. The guard clutched Gandhiji's hand and pushing him down the train threw his baggage too.

Gandhiji neither went to another compartment nor did he touch his baggage. The insult vexed him very much. He stood there and the train departed.

He stayed on the platform all night. The weather was chilling. He had an overcoat in his luggage but he didn't wish to look at it. What if he went to fetch it from the baggage and someone insulted him again? He preferred to shiver all night.

While shivering he had a lot of thoughts. "Why should I continue to travel on this train and get insulted again? Should I go back?"

"No! How could I leave my job unfinished? It's better to return to India than to stay here to earn money!"

"No! I must help my friend in his job. Should I rather file a case against that British officer and the guard?"

"But what would I achieve? Would it help the Indians not being called 'labourers'?"

This thought made him forget the insult.

36. MISERY OF THE COACH

Gandhiji had to face yet another difficulty while going to Pritoria. In those days there was no railway from Charleston to Johannessberg. One had to travel by a horse driven coach.

He got a ticket and was about to get on the coach when the coachman stopped him saying, "I cannot let you get in. Your ticket was for yesterday!"

Thinking that Gandhiji must be new to that place, he was making an excuse. Actually he did not want this black labourer to travel in his coach along with the Britishers. Gandhiji was not going to listen to him. At last he agreed to let Gandhiji travel with him but not inside the coach. He offered him a seat in the front near the coachman.

In spite of this insult Gandhiji accepted the seat offered to him.

After traveling some distance one of the Britishers wished to sit near the coachman and smoke a cigarette. He wanted to enjoy fresh air too. He took a dirty cloth from the coachman and spreading it on the foothold asked Gandhiji, "Hey Swami! You shift there. I want to sit near the coachman."

This insult made Gandhiji very angry. The white man was quite strong. Gandhiji was not only weak but lonely too. Yet, how could he ignore such insult?

He said, "You asked me to sit here. I ignored the insult. Now you want to smoke the cigarette and wish me to sit at your feet. I would rather sit inside the coach than at your feet."

Listening to this the white man slapped him and tried to pull him down the coach. Gandhiji firmly took hold of the iron rod near the seat. He decided that he wouldn't let it go even if his wrists got fractured.

The white man was abusing and pulling him. Gandhiji kept silent but held on firmly and did not leave the seat. At last, other passengers interfered. They scolded the coachman and freed Gandhiji.

37. THE PUSH

In Pretoria, Gandhiji used to go for a walk every evening.

He used to walk along the footpath. President Kruger's home was there on the same road. It was a simple house. The guard only indicated that the house belonged to some officer.

Gandhiji walked by the same road every day. He used to walk in front of the house daily and the guard would see him doing so. No one said anything to him.

One day, the guard might have been changed. Seeing Gandhiji, he thought, "Why should this black labourer walk along this footpath and that too in front of the President's house? He has to be scolded."

Without saying or asking anything he went to Gandhiji and pushing him kicked him down the footpath.

Gandhiji was dumbfounded by this attack. He got up and was about to talk to the guard when a horse rider came there and said, "Gandhiji, I have seen everything. If you want to complain against him, I will bear a witness."

The horse rider was an Englishman and Gandhiji's friend.

Gandhiji replied, "No brother! It will be of no use! He is treating me the same way he treats my other countrymen."

The friend said, "No, no! We should teach such people a lesson!"

Gandhiji said, "All Englishmen insult us by calling labourers! Why should this ignorant guard be blamed?"

Then the Britisher admonished the guard and made him say sorry to Gandhiji.

38. BACKLASH FROM A FRIEND

A Pathan named Mir Alam used to live in Africa. He used to make and sell mattresses for a livelihood.

He knew Gandhiji. He respected Gandhiji and sought his advice when needed. When Gandhiji started Satyagraha movement in South Africa, he took part in it.

Once it so happened, that Gandhiji and many other Indians were sent to jail for taking part in this movement. After some time the government and the satyagrahis agreed to compromise. There were many who did not like this. Mir Alam too did not prefer this. He was quite angry with Gandhiji.

There was a very inhuman and insulting rule in that country. Our people had to seek permission of the government to stay there and had to register their fingerprints. They also had to carry them wherever they went.

Anyone who did not carry those prints was punished. Such was the law. The Indian there had launched satyagraha against this law. The compromise offered these people an option. It said that, those who were willing to have the fingerprints registered at their will, could do so; those who did not want could be excused.

The satyagraha was successful and Gandhiji was released from jail. The other satyagrahis were also released. A meeting was called to celebrate the success.

During the meeting Mir Alam stood up and said, "How can we call it a success? In any case we will have to seek the permission to stay!"

Gandhiji tried to explain, "People who don't wish to do so would be excused. You don't have to go for it."

"And what about you?" he asked.

"I will be the first one to do so and I will have the fingerprints taken" Gandhiji said.

"People have a doubt that you were bribed by the government," he said.

Gandhiji said, "No one will believe it."

"It's all right but now I take an oath that I will kill the person whoever goes to seek the permission."

Gandhiji said, "I would happily die at the hands of a friend but in no case I would leave the path of truth."

Three months passed by after this incident. The date for seeking the permission was fixed. Gandhiji and other leaders decided to go there ahead of others.

Mir Alam had not forgotten his oath. He thought, "I will see how does he seek the permission!" Then taking a few friends along with him he blocked the road.

The Pathans did not greet Gandhiji when he came there so he greeted them. He asked Mir Alam, "How do you do?"

"I am fine!" he replied angrily.

On scheduled time the group started out to seek the permission. Mir Alam and his friends followed them. When the office was at a short distance, Mir Alam came to Gandhiji and asked, "Where are you going?"

"To register my fingerprints and get the permission. You too can come along if you wish. Although you need not have your fingerprints registered."

Gandhiji was about to finish his sentence when someone struck his head with a stick. Gandhiji lost consciousness at the very first stroke but the Pathans kept on beating him.

The other leaders accompanying Gandhiji tried to save him but they were also beaten up by the Pathans.

The Pathans tried to run away after beating these people but the people around caught them and handed them over to the police.

Gandhiji was unconscious when people carried him to a neighbouring house. There they treated him for the wounds. His lips had ruptured, the teeth were shaken and his ribs were aching.

When he regained consciousness, the first thing Gandhiji asked was, "Where is Mir Alam?"

The people taking care of him asked him to rest and told that the police had caught him and his friends.

He said, "No, no! I must get them out!" Then he wrote a letter to the senior Police officer that he did not wish that his Pathan friends be punished and requested him to release them.

Accepting this request the police released them. But many Britishers objected to it so they had to arrest them again. Then they were sentenced to six months of custody.

Gandhiji lost his front teeth because of this beating. The gap is like an adornment to his face, which he received for his truthfulness. This gift from a friend was received lovingly.

39. MIR ALAM BECAME A DEVOTEE

The important part of this story begins now. The South African government did not keep its promise. Hence, Gandhiji started his movement again.

He informed people that the government had deceived them. So they would have to start the Satyagraha again. People had willingly sought the permission to live there. Now they were going to burn the permissions. Those who were willing to take part in the movement, had to send in their permissions.

People took up the challenge. Gandhiji received heaps of permission papers.

A day was fixed for the bon-fire. A meeting was called and the people heaped up their permission papers in the center.

Gandhiji asked the people if they had given their permissions willingly. The people said 'yes'. He asked to take them back if someone wished so. But the people did not take them back.

Gandhiji warned them that it was not an easy task and they might have to go to prison. But the people didn't care and asked him to burn them.

Suddenly, a Pathan got up and coming to Gandhiji he said, "Gandhiji, take my papers too and excuse my follies. I could not understand and follow you. You are very brave."

Gandhiji shook hands with him. The people kept on clapping loudly and the fire was burned.

Since then Mir Alam became a staunch follower of Gandhiji. He served as his bodyguard even though Gandhiji did not ask him to do so.

40. A VIOLENT STORM

Gandhiji stayed in India for a few days and then got on a ship to return to South Africa. This was his second trip to that country. He had Kasturba and the children with him this time. After some days a violent storm started in the ocean. The passengers suffered from severe nausea. They could not eat at all. They were frightened yet happy because Gandhiji was with them. Gandhiji took care of all of them and assured them too that every thing will be all right. But a real storm was awaiting them at Durban.

The Britishers at Durban had received the news that Gandhiji was returning to South Africa. They thought, "He is coming here again? He has defamed us in India and in rest of the world. No! He should be sent back!"

Some said, "This Gandhi fellow won't let us live peacefully. He encourages those 'labourers' to rebel against us. We won't allow him to step down on this land."

Another said, "I heard that this time he is bringing his family along with him. He wants to stay here. Let us see how dare he come here!"

One of them shouted, "Do you know he is not coming alone. He is bringing two ship loads of labourers with him."

"It's enough! Don't let him come here!"

"Ask the government to refuse him permission to enter."

"If the government won't listen to us, we will throw him into the ocean."

The White people had heard a lot of rumors about Gandhiji and were very much excited.

Gandhiji had no idea at all about all this when the boat reached Durban.

The officers on the dock said, "Go, go away! You cannot get down here. Plague has broken out in your country. You will have to stay in quarantine."

"But no one is ill on this boat!"

"Don't argue! You will have to stay in quarantine."

"For how many days?"

"For twenty three days."

Gandhiji was astounded. He could not understand the officers' behaviour. As the time passed he came to know what was happening. Those stories unfolded the mystery of the officers' behaviour.

Someone would shout at the passengers, "Go, go back or you will be drowned in the sea."

Someone would threaten the owner of the ship, "Take your ship back to India or you will have to die."

But none of them paid heed to those threats and stayed where they were.

They spent twenty-three days on the ship quite comfortably. The quarantine was over. All of them got down courageously. The Britishers kept staring at them.

Just then an officer sent a message asking Gandhiji not to get down during daytime or else his life would be in danger.

A friend asked, "Gandhi! Are you afraid?"

"No! I am not afraid of anything."

"It's better then. We will get down during the daytime only. I will accompany you. We are not thieves to move out in the night!"

Gandhiji sent away his family in a vehicle and he himself walked to the town with that friend.

No one noticed them for some time. Then someone recognised him. Some British children passing from there also noticed him. Gandhiji was the only person in that country to wear a turban. So he was recognised easily.

As soon as the children saw him they started shouting, " Gandhi! Gandhi!"

"Thrash him! Beat him!"

"Catch him!"

At first they kept shouting only. Then they started throwing stones at him.

His friend said, "Now we must get away from here. Come, we will catch a rickshaw and go!"

Gandhiji said, "Catch a rickshaw? I hate going in a rickshaw pulled by a human being!"

The friend said, "There is no time to think about your likes and dislikes! We must get away before they catch us."

Unwillingly, Gandhiji was about to get on the rickshaw when the crowd caught the rickshaw driver.

Beware! Dare you get him in your rickshaw! We will break it down and beat you as well!"

The poor Blackman was helpless.

He shouted "No" in his native language and ran away.

Gandhiji kept going ahead. A big crowd kept following him.

A strong, hefty boy from the crowd took the lead and separated Gandhiji from his friend.

Then they started calling names and throwing stones at him. One of them snatched his turban and threw it, another one slapped and kicked him. Now Gandhiji was helpless. He was about to faint when he caught the iron rod of the neighboring house. He got the support to stand. Then he went ahead.

A courageous White woman was passing by from there at this critical time. She was the wife of a British Officer. She knew Gandhiji. She ran towards him and holding her umbrella on his head kept walking along with him. Seeing this woman the crowd set back, still someone would come and slap him once in a while.

The police arrived there in the mean time. They scattered the violent crowd. Then they escorted Gandhiji to his friend and the famous businessman of Durban, Rustomji's home.

Although the crowd dispersed at that time, they again gathered there in the night and started shouting.

They shouted, "Hand him over to us or we will burn down the house."

But Rustomji was not afraid of them.

This time the Durban Police officer acted wisely. He sent one of his faithful subordinates inside the house to ask Gandhiji to disguise and get away secretly. Then he went to the crowd and kept them engaged.

The officer kept a table in front of Parsi Rustomji's door. He climbed on the table and kept the people busy with his talk. He started singing a song...

Come let us hang Gandhi,

On a mango tree!

Come let us hang Gandhi!

Thus the crowd got busy singing the song. The officer thought to himself, "Keep shouting, kids! But I am holding the door! During all this confusion, the policeman inside the house was helping Gandhiji wear the uniform of a policeman. Gandhiji disliked doing so, yet he had to do it. Then both of them went to the neighboring warehouse and mixed with the crowd. No one noticed them!

The people were busy singing the song!

Come, let us hang Gandhi,

Come, let us hang Gandhi,

On a mango tree!

Come let us hang Gandhi!

When he learned that Gandhiji had escaped safely, the officer stopped singing. Then he said, "It's enough now! Go home!"

The people said, "No, bring Gandhi, bring Gandhi here!"

The officer smiled and said, "What if your prey has escaped?"

"How can he escape? Aren't all of us watching the door?"

"But I am telling you that he has escaped!"

"No, it's not true! We don't believe this!"

"If you can't believe this old officer you may check the house! If you form a committee of a few people, I will allow you to do so."

The crowd sent a few people to check it. They confirmed that Gandhiji had escaped from there. Then the officer told the crowd, "You did not listen to your police officers so they played a trick with you. We are public servants and we have to do our duty. You may please leave now. The police have won over you."

The angry crowd now started laughing and then left. So many days passed by. Gandhiji got well. The rioting White men calmed down and got busy with their work.

The White men thought that the labourer barrister won't forget the beating and would file a case against them. Then they would be punished.

The government was also waiting for Gandhiji to file a case. But Gandhiji's way of thinking was quite different. He had pardoned those strange men.

One day, a senior officer sent for Gandhiji and said, "We are very sorry that you were hurt. We will catch the guilty and punish them even if they are the White people. The government wants you to identify them."

Gandhiji replied calmly, "I am obliged for your concern but I don't have ill feelings for anybody."

"But won't you be able to identify them?"

"I may identify one or two of them but I don't think that they should be blamed.

"Why, Gandhiji? Those cruel people hurt you!"

Gandhiji told him straight away, "People like you encourage them to do so. You are the real culprits. Why should I wish them to be punished?"

41. THE RESULT OF OUR SINS

We felt so bad when the White people called us labourers.

Can you Imagine what the Harijans might be feeling when we call them Bhangi (the scavengers)!

How badly and often we insult them? We don't touch them; we don't allow them to live inside the village. Whenever they have to cross the village they have to keep shouting...

Keep away, my lords!

Don't touch us, our lords!

We are your scavengers, my lords!

Such extreme insult!

They would die for want of water but we won't let them take it from our wells!

All the children from the village come to study in the school but their children won't be allowed or made to sit at a distance.

Everybody would be allowed to travel by the train, but as soon as they come, people will call out, "There's no seat vacant!"

All would be allowed to visit the temples but they are banned to do so!

Is it not miserable?

They clean our courtyards and our towns and cities. They weave clothes for us, but we don't care at all. What do we pay them for all these services? We throw the leftover food at them.

There is no limit to the sins we commit. Why wouldn't the foreigners look down upon us? Gandhiji believed that god is punishing us for our sins. That is why he served Harijans. He used to say that serving them is not a sin but a noble deed!

42. HARIJAN FIRST

A meeting was called in a town and Gandhiji was going to address it.

Who wouldn't want to listen to him? The businessmen, the Brahmins, the Patels, the Rajputs, the blacksmiths as well as the carpenters, the Telis and the cobblers, all of them started going towards the meeting place.

The people from the Bhangi hutments said, "Come, let us also attend the meeting. Our Bapuji is coming. Shouldn't we go to listen to him?"

They also went there!

The meeting organizers recognised them, "Oh! They are the Bhangis! Oh no! Not here! Go back! What are you doing here? You have nothing to do with the meeting!"

"Our lords! Please let us stay here! Bapuji belongs to us also!"

Then someone had mercy on them and he asked the organisers to let them stay there and arranged a place for them in a corner. "You can sit here but don't come and touch anybody!"

"No my lord, we won't go near anybody!"

The meeting place was over crowded. As soon as Gandhiji came there people called out, "Vande Mataram! (Our respect to the mother!) Mahatma Gandhi ki jay!" All the people hailed out loudly.

Gandhiji went to the dais and looked around; he immediately spotted the Harijans sitting in the corner, away from others.

He enquired about it, "Why are those people sitting there?"

"Mahatmaji they are the Harijans!"

"Ask them to sit along with others!"

The organisers got confused.

Gandhiji said, "If you won't allow them to sit with other people, I will go to them."

And then he went to his beloved Harijans. Some people dared go along with him. The Harijans were overjoyed to have Gandhiji among them. They blessed him heartily. "Long live Gandhiji! May our Bapu live long!"

43. HARIJANS IN THE ASHRAM

When Gandhiji established his Ashram on the banks of Sabarmati he declared that if a deserving Harijan came to him, he would be allowed to stay there.

People were doubtful that any Harijan would come there. So people didn't pay attention to it and kept helping Gandhiji in the establishment. They never let Gandhiji worry about money.

After a few days, a Harijan family really came there. The husband, wife and their child came there. Thakkar Bappa sent them there.

Gandhiji thought that God was trying to test him. He asked the Harijan man if he knew the rules of the Ashram.

"Yes," he said.

"Would you be able to follow them?"

"Yes."

"Then you are welcome! Feel at home here!"

In this way the Harijan family started living there. They lived there with others. They worked with them and ate with them too.

But all the inmates of the Ashram were not understanding enough. Many of them were disturbed by this incident. So Gandhiji told them clearly, "I want them here! Those who don't want to follow the rules may leave. Rules won't change even if it's my wife or children."

The news spread out in the town that Gandhiji has allowed a Harijan to stay in the Ashram.

People thought, "He did what he declared. Why should we help his corrupt deeds?" The orthodox businessmen then stopped donating money to the Ashram.

Maganlal Gandhi used to look after the management of the Ashram. He told Bapuji, "The store room is empty now. What would we do next month?"

Gandhiji assured him, "Have faith in God! When nothing remains, we will go to the Harijan colony and work for earning our livelihood. But we will still not leave the path of truth!"

44. TWO HISTORICAL MARCHES

Gandhiji often used to plan a march during his Satyagraha movement. He had arranged one such movement in South Africa and another one in India, which is known as Dandi March.

When the South African government imposed several taxes on the public, Gandhiji asked the thousands of labourers to take part in his movement. The labourers answered his call and leaving the factories and fields, took part in his movement.

Gandhiji started thinking about doing something, which would make the government arrest all of them.

An idea came to his mind. He thought that he would arrange a long march with those thousands of labourers to the Transwall and break the rules for the permission to stay there.

He asked them to march with him. He had 2211 people with him along with 127 women. The labourers had brought their children and belongings with them.

They crossed the boundary to disobey the law. No one arrested them. They spent the night there. The police arrested Gandhiji alone while all of them were sleeping.

The crowd came to know about this in the morning. Now they got deeply involved in the march. The next day Gandhiji was released on bail. His return spread a wave of enthusiasm among them.

Gandhiji was arrested again the next day and then released on bail. He returned to his followers. All of them were happy to have him back.

The crowd kept marching ahead. Someone's child died of illness but the march went on.

The march used to halt at some place. Then there would be hustle and bustle for erecting the tents, making meals and then cleaning everything.

The businessmen from those places would lovingly offer them food.

At last Gandhiji was arrested for the third time. He was sentenced and then sent to jail.

At the next stop the crowd was detained and then sent back in two special trains.

Who doesn't know the story of Dandi March?

Gandhiji decided that he would struggle for total independence.

He then tried to find out a way to disobey the law, which would send him to jail. Finally he decided on disobeying the law of salt!

He then arranged Dandi March for this purpose. He vowed, "I would cross the desert, I would die of a dog's death but I would not return to the Ashram until I get Independence for my country!" He took the oath and set out.

He decided that he would start his march from Sabarmati Ashram. Then he would walk through Gujarat state to reach Dandi, at the far end of it and then disobey the law of salt by preparing the salt himself.

He set out for the march with eighty Ashram inmates. They would halt in some village or town in the noon and in the night at some other place on the way. There they would have their meals, spin yarn and then Gandhiji would address the people to spread his message about the movement. Thousands of people would come to see the march.

Every day, the people would expect to be arrested, but the government let the march reach its destination. At the end of the march Gandhiji took bath on the beautiful seashore and then prepared salt from the seawater.

After this incident, people started looting salt everywhere in the country.

The government had planned not to arrest Gandhiji and to carry out atrocities on the people everywhere in the country. The stories of their tyranny consisted of beating the women with sticks. The news used to disturb Gandhiji. He would say, "They should strike my head with a stick. What should I do so that they would do it?"

At last he decided to rob the salt-pits of Dharasana but he was arrested on the night prior to the march ahead while all others were asleep.

45. NATIONAL FAST

The motherland had been severely insulted in Punjab. The insult caused pain to everyone. The country decided to do Satyagraha.

The point was how to initiate such a big movement? Calling meetings in the villages and towns was not a big task but it would not satisfy Gandhiji.

People arranged meetings everywhere but Gandhiji expected much more than that.

At last, it was decided that the whole country would observe a twenty-four hour fast on the same day.

The day was 6th April 1919. Gandhiji's message about keeping fast had reached everywhere.

People from one end of the country to the other, kept fast. On this day the country did not have thirty crore people but a single person with thirty crore heads and sixty crore hands!

That day of the national fast became immortal in the history.

46. FAST FOR LOVE

All the students, boys and girls, knew that Gandhiji always taught not to beat or hurt anybody.

Because of this students had no fear of beating in his National (Rashtriya) School. If at all some teacher dared to beat a student, he was able to question the teacher.

Gandhiji never used to beat any student if he was at fault. He would never insult him for his mistakes. But very often when the students committed mistakes he himself would keep fast.

In this way, once he had to keep fast for a week. He used to say, "How can I be angry with them for their mistakes? My fault must have been responsible for their misdeeds. If I am pure enough, how could the child living with me be wrong? If I were a truthful follower of 'Ahimsa', the child would not be afraid of accepting his misdeed."

This thought always inspired him to keep fast.

Was there a child who could not be impressed by such love?

47. A BIG FAST

Gandhiji always tried to keep peace between the Hindus and the Muslims, but they kept fighting.

He would tell them that we are the children of the same motherland, but the fights went on.

"Think of our ancestors living peacefully together," yet the fighting would go on.

"Fighting doesn't display anybody's virtues, so be together." But who would think of values if they were enjoying the fights?

"You can't be independent if you don't stay united!" But how could they follow this while they were still angry at each other. "Keep in mind that your fights are going to benefit someone else."

But how could anyone think clearly if their mind was full of anger?

At last when Gandhiji was tired of all this he declared that he would keep fast for twenty-one days.

The place chosen for the fast was Mr. Ansari's house in Delhi. Gandhiji would happily tolerate the pangs of hunger and Mr. Ansari would lovingly take care of him.

48. THE INDEPENDENCE

Dadabhai Navaraji, the grandfather of Hind (India), uttered the 'mantra' of independence for us.

Lokmanya Tilak spread it among the people. Gandhiji lit the fire for independence and spread it among the households of India.

The grandfather had read a lot of books. He had learned that hunger was the most deadly diseases of all.

Lokmanya Tilak served six years' sentence and found out that getting independence could only satisfy hunger.

Gandhiji worked hard to teach us many other things. Such as, "This disease can only be cured by independence. We can become independent only by weaving Khadi on our own and by being self sufficient."

Don't think that only warriors can fight for liberty. A child can also fight for this cause. If you wish to fight, get ready and be a part of it.

Give up wearing imported clothes. Start wearing Khadi instead.

Spin yarn everyday for your nation. Don't learn things, which would teach you to be slaves. Instead, learn to be patriots!

Learn well your mother tongue and the national language. Don't learn English only. It would be like getting nourished by stepmother.

"Hindustan" is made of thousands of poor, penniless villages. So, be affectionate to them. Go and live with the villagers. Use the things produced by them and be proud of it.

Love the Harijan children and let them sit beside you in the schools. If we want to enjoy freedom, we must get liberated from our own traditions. Give them 'Swaraj' first.

49. TO THE BRITISHERS

Gandhiji wrote a book named 'Hind Swaraj'. He has described in detail his idea of independence in this book. The book is written in the form of conversation between the master and the reader.

The reader asks: "What would you say about Britishers?"

Even we would like to ask the same question!

Gandhiji, in the role of the master, answers it as follows. It will help us know Gandhiji's feelings.

Master -I will tell them, I do accept that you are the king! I don't want to discuss whether you are here at your own will or mine. I don't think that it is necessary. You may stay in my country I don't mind it. But you will still have to obey our orders even though you are our masters presently.

You may keep all our wealth you have carried away to your country, but you won't be allowed to do so in future.

If you want to stay here as soldiers, you may do so. You won't be allowed to do business with us and earn profit.

The changes you have introduced are not at all useful for us. Instead, the change we want to bring in will be better for us. It will be better for you to try to understand this. Even if you don't understand this we will let you stay here. But you will have to become and behave like one of us.

You should not try to harm our religious notions. Being our masters, it would be your duty to give up eating beef and pork for the sake of Hindus and Muslims. We were not able to resist you until now because we were suppressed. That doesn't mean that we were not hurt. We might have been held up by our selfishness or fear, but now we consider it our duty to remind you of it.

We insist that the courthouses and the schools you have established here are useless to us. We want our own honest courthouses and schools.

Hindi is our national language and not English! You will have to learn it. This way we will be able to deal with you in our own language.

We know that you spend a lot of money on railways and the army. We would not need to do so. You are afraid of Russia we are not. We will deal with them if they come. If you are still here at that time, we will deal with them together.

We don't need your western fabrics. We will be happy with the things made in our own country. You are trying to help develop Manchester by using us. Now you will not be allowed to do so.

We can be friends if we have the same aim. We don't wish to humiliate you. You have enough armed forces and weaponry. You have enough naval forces too. We will not be able to fight against you with same strength as yours. But if you don't agree with us, there cannot be any dealing between us. You can slaughter us if you wish or shoot us. But we won't let you do what we don't like. Rather you won't be able to do anything without our help.

You might ignore these things due to pride and power but it won't help you at all. When we will show our strength, you will realise that your pride is in vain and that your laughter a sign of your foolishness.

We think that you are religious people. Our nation, our land is a pilgrimage for us. It's no use discussing how we came together. Still, both of us can use this relationship in a better way. We don't consider the Britishers who have come here as the true representatives of British people. Similarly, we, the partly Westernised Indians too are not the real representatives of Indians. If the British public comes to know the reality they will also oppose you. The Hindi people already keep at a distance from you.

The changes you are making for our betterment are not actually helpful. Consult your religious books and you will find that our demands are proper. So you will have to accept them if you want to stay here.

If it happens so, we will learn so many things from you and you too will learn a lot of things from us. Both of us can benefit from such give and take. The rest of the world can also have its benefits. But this can happen only if we respect and keep our relationship within the religious framework!

50. LOVE

Do we all honestly love Gandhiji? We do because he loved all of us from the bottom of his heart. Do you know why no one had feelings of enmity for Gandhiji?

It is so for the same reason! Gandhiji did not feel enmity for anyone!

Although Gandhiji was fighting against the tyranny of the British government, a lot of White men loved him. It was because Gandhiji loved them too and had no ill feeling for any one of them.

Punishing someone angrily for his bad deeds is behaving like animals. It's only human to pardon such deeds and love the person.

Due to this belief he had no ill feeling for anyone. That is why he had no enemy! All of us loved him because he loved us!

51. NON-VIOLENCE OF GANDHIJI

What do you mean by non-violence?

"Don't be violent to anyone; don't hurt anyone!"

Being angry with someone is also violence. Even such violence is not advisable. Then only it can be called true non-violence.

"But if someone hurts us, how can we be non-violent?"

That is the test of non-violence in true sense! Then no one will dare hurt us, nor make us angry. Even animals remain non-violent in such case!

"Won't people call us coward if we let others beat us?"

"Why would they call us cowards? We are not afraid of the beating! We don't even run away due to fear and we don't express grief for being hurt! We don't get angry because of love we have for all. Why would we be called coward just because we don't hurt anyone?"

"It is rather difficult not to slap anyone even though one hurts you! Loving such person is difficult too! In fact, slapping the person in return is very easy!"

It's true that being non-violent is not so easy! Only the brave ones can practice non-violence; the cowards cannot do so!

Gandhiji practiced such non-violence and advised us to do so!

52. SOUL FORCE

The rowdy people keep shouting. They say, "This man didn't salute me! Let us kill him!"

Gandhiji always asked us not to mix with such people or behave like them. He also asked us not to be afraid of such people. He asked us to practice non-violence. He said that when these people will get tired of fighting, they would learn non-violence from us.

"Don't be afraid of getting killed by the shouting crowd while you are trying to be non-violent. You have fear because you don't know the strength of non-violence. In fact, non-violence can even win the enemy."

The people, all over the world, don't believe this.

At some place, they raise an army of thousand men. At another place they raise an army of five thousand men.

The third one has ten lakh men.

A nation builds hundred fighter planes. Another one gets a thousand. Yet another gets ten thousand fighter planes.

Those who have less fighter planes cannot sleep peacefully. They are always anxious to get more and more planes.

The fighter planes cannot be made without money. One has to pay millions of Pounds for them.

And what is a 'Pound'?

A 'Pound' is earned by shedding the people's sweat, by using their energy.

The weapons of non-violence, which Gandhiji gave us, can earn a 'Pound'.

Those weapons are Satyagraha, non-cooperation, and tolerance.

Looking at the tolerant public, the tyrant feels ashamed of himself. See, he is loosing his strength!

Now tell me, which weapon is powerful? The cannon or the non-violence? Which strength is more effective, the strength of the cannon or the soul force?

Gandhiji doesn't preach things he read somewhere. He has earned this gem of non-violence through a lot of hardship.

Remember, India is hailed throughout the world just because of 'non-violence'!

* * *

POEMS

1. HIS NAME IS BAPU

I love the man called Bapu,
His heart is ruled by Lord Raghu!

He walks straight wearing a cloak,
He gathers all with compassion and love!

Every low and high he takes along,
To Lord Krishna he lets his soul belong!

Lovingly he takes the old and small,
The strings of his wheel offer food to all!

He bears their sorrows and makes them laugh,
And recites for them the story of Pralhad!

2. OUR COUNTRY

Among all countries of the world,
Our country is the best!

You may make mistakes though,
Our country is the best!

We have the mountains graceful,
Our rivers too are beautiful!

There is always flowers fest,
Our country is the best!

A variety of birds and animals,
Dwell here and rest!

Various crops you can test,
Our country is the best!

A lot of pious women are here,
And saintly men too;

We have everything that is best,
Our country is the best!

We are thankful to the Providence,
That He let us be born here and rest;

We can always proudly announce,
That our country is the best!

Fest = Festival. Providence = God. Rest = Live.

3. HYMN OF GANDHI

His life is an endless penance,
Bapu will live among us forever
Spinning wheel is his chord of life,
Let it continue forever in India

In our hearts and in our life,
Its flame may always remain bright!
The monster of weakness that makes us lame,
Be burned off by his soul's pious flame!

May the Sun of truth always shine,
And burn off disappointment and sin!
In the flood of his non-violence and love,
May our nation's miseries dissolve!

He worshipped Ram all his life,
And chanting his name he took our leave!
This small man of greatness high,
Shed his blood and said good-bye!

Penance - Voluntary suffering.

Strife - Conflict for success.

4. GANDHI CAME TO GUJARAT

Now Gandhi has come to Gujarat, hey!

His weak body looks like a stick,

But his energy has no match!

Now Gandhi ...

He sent his wheel in every home,

He is spinning independence along with the yarn!

Now Gandhi ...

He taught us to be simple,

And asked to give up tea and alcohol!

Now Gandhi...

People are awaiting this God,

He might have reached!

Now Gandhi ...

He has gratified Life,

And has gratified his mother too!

Now Gandhi ...

People eagerly obey his commands,

They are hailing India's freedom!

Now Gandhi ...

5. TAKE SHELTER WITH GANDHI

Take shelter at Gandhi's feet,
Sing hymns of his virtues.
He gave up all that was Western,
And held the spinning wheel!
He gave up alcohol and liquor,
Now, you drink milk and buttermilk!
He gave up meat and fish,
Now, you eat roti with jaggery!
Leave aside witches and demons,
Now, you worship Lord Ram!
He gave up envy and enmity,
Now, you love and care for all!
Deceit and cheating he doesn't like,
On the path of truth he does strive!
..Mind, this is the last chance!!!

* * *