

# Ashram Observance in action

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Price: Rs. 15/-

**Printed & Published by:**

**Navajivan Publishing House**

**Ahmedabad 380 014 (INDIA)**

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## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Gandhiji believed that character building on the part of every single individual is the only sure foundation for nation building. Students of his philosophy of life who would like to have an idea of his Rule for self-culture would do well first of all to read Appendices A and B in this book (pages 65-88). They should then pass on to a study of *From Yeravda Mandir – Ashram Observances* and of the present volume, and at last dip into Appendix C (pages 89-92), which is Gandhiji's last will and testament in so far as Ashram life is concerned.

It is a remarkable coincidence that like *From Yeravda Mandir* this book shares with *The Pilgrim's Progress* the rare distinction of having been written in prison.

V. G. D.

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## INTRODUCTION

(Begun on April 5, 1932)

Ashram here means a community of men of religion. Looking at the past in the light of the present, I feel that an ashram was a necessary of life for me. As soon as I had a house of my own, my house was an ashram in this sense, for my life as a householder was not one of enjoyment but of duty discharged from day to day. Again besides the members of my family I always had some friends or others living with me, whose relation with me was spiritual from the first or became such later on. This went on unconsciously till 1904 when I read Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, which made a deep impression on me. I determined to take *Indian Opinion* into a forest where I should live with the workers as members of my family. I purchased 100 acres of land and founded Phoenix Settlement, which neither we nor anyone else called an ashram. It had a religious basis, but the visible object was purity of body and mind as well as economic equality. I did not then consider *brahmacharya* (chastity) to be essential; on the other hand it was expected that co-workers would live as family men and have children. A brief account of Phoenix will be found in *Satyagraha in South Africa*.

This was the first step.

The second step was taken in 1906. I learnt in the school of experience that *brahmacharya* was a *sine qua non* for a life devoted to service. From this time onward I looked upon Phoenix deliberately as a religious institution. The same year witnessed the advent of Satyagraha which was based on religion and implied an unshakable faith in the God of Truth. Religion here should not be understood in a narrow sense, but as that which acts as a link between different religions and realizes their essential unity.

This went on till 1911. All these years the Phoenix Settlement was progressing as an ashram though we did not call it by that name.

We took the third step in 1911. So far only those people lived at Phoenix who were working in the press and the paper. But now as a part of the Satyagraha movement we felt the need of an ashram where Satyagrahi families could live and lead a religious life. I had already come in contact with my German friend Kallenbach. Both of us were living a sort of ashram life. I was a barrister and Kallenbach an architect. However we led a comparatively very simple life in the sparsely populated country, and were religiously minded. We might commit mistakes out of ignorance, but we were trying to seek the root of every activity in religion. Kallenbach purchased a farm of 1,100 acres and the Satyagrahi families settled there. Religious problems confronted us now at every step and the whole institution was managed from a religious standpoint. Among the settlers there were Hindus, Musalmans, Christians and Parsis. But I do not remember that they ever quarrelled with one another, though each was staunch in his own faith. We respected one another's religion and tried to help everybody to follow his own faith and thus to make spiritual progress.

This institution was not known as Satyagraha Ashram but as Tolstoy Farm. Kallenbach and I were followers of Tolstoy and endeavoured to practise much of his doctrine. Tolstoy Farm was closed in 1912 and the Farmers were sent to Phoenix. The history of Tolstoy Farm will also be found in *Satyagraha in South Africa*.

Phoenix now was no longer meant for the workers of *Indian Opinion* only; it was a Satyagraha institution. That was only to be expected, for *Indian Opinion* owed its very existence to Satyagraha. Still it was a great change. The even tenor of the lives of the settlers at Phoenix was disturbed, and they had now to discern certainty in the midst of uncertainty like the Satyagrahis. But they were equal to the new demands made upon them. As at Tolstoy Farm, so also at Phoenix I established a common kitchen which some joined while others had private kitchens of their own. The congregational prayer in the evening played a large part in our lives. And the final Satyagraha campaign was started by the inmates of Phoenix Settlement in 1913. The struggle ended in 1914. I left South Africa in July that year. It was decided that all settlers who wanted to go to India should

be enabled to go there. Before going to India I had to meet Gokhale in England. The idea was to found a new institution in India for those who went there from Phoenix. And the communal life commenced in South Africa was to be continued in India. I reached India early in 1915 with a view to establish an ashram though I was still unaware that I would call it by that name.

I toured all parts of India for a year, and visited some institutions from which I had much to learn. I was invited by several cities to establish the ashram in their neighbourhood with a promise of assistance in various ways. Ahmedabad was selected at last. This was the fourth, and I imagine the last step. Whether or not it will always be the last is something of which no forecast is possible. How was the new institution to be named? What should be its rules and regulations? On these points I had full discussions and correspondence with friends, as a result of which we decided to call the institution Satyagraha Ashram. It is an appropriate name if we take its object into consideration. My life is devoted to the quest of truth. I would live and if need be, die in prosecuting it, and of course I would take with me as many fellow-pilgrims as I could get.

The Ashram was established in a rented house at Kochrab on May 25, 1915. Some citizens of Ahmedabad undertook to finance it. At the beginning there were about 20 inmates, most of them from South Africa. Of these again the large majority spoke Tamil or Telugu. The chief activity in the Ashram at this time was teaching Sanskrit, Hindi and Tamil to the old as well as the young, who also received some general education. Hand-weaving was the principal industry with some carpentry as accessory to it. No servants were engaged; therefore cooking, sanitation, fetching water, – everything was attended to by the Ashramites. Truth and other observances were obligatory on them all. Distinctions of caste were not observed. Untouchability had not only no place in the Ashram, but its eradication from Hindu society was one of our principal objectives. Emancipation of women from some customary bonds was insisted upon from the first. Therefore women in the Ashram enjoy full freedom. Then

again it was an Ashram rule that persons following a particular faith should have the same feeling for followers of other faiths as for their co-religionists.

But for one thing I was solely responsible, and I am indebted to the West for it. I refer to my dietetic experiments, which commenced in 1888 when I went to England for studies. I always invite members of my family and other co-workers to join in. The experiments were designed to achieve three objects, viz. (1) to acquire control over the palate as a part of self-control in general; (2) to find out which diet was the simplest and the cheapest so that by adopting it we might identify ourselves with the poor; and (3) to discover which diet was necessary for perfect health, as maintenance of health is largely dependent upon correct diet.

If in England I had not been under a vow to be a vegetarian, I might perhaps never have undertaken experiments in diet. But once I began to experiment, these three objectives took me into deeper waters, and I was led to make various kinds of experiments. And the Ashram too joined in, though these experiments were not a part of Ashram discipline.

The reader has perhaps now seen that the Ashram set out to remedy what it thought were defects in our national life from the religious, economic and political standpoints. As we gathered new experiences we undertook fresh activities. Even now I cannot say that the Ashram has embarked on all possible activities that I can think of. There have been two limitations. First, we were sure we must cut our coat according to our cloth, that is, we must manage with what funds were placed at our disposal by friends without any special effort in collection. Secondly we should not go in search of new spheres of activity, but if any activity naturally suggested itself to our minds, we should go in for it without counting the cost.

These two limitations spring from a religious attitude. This implies faith in God, that is doing everything in dependence upon and under the inspiration of God. The man of religion conducts such activities as are sent by God with such resources as God places at his disposal. He never lets us see that He Himself does anything : He achieves His aims through men inspired by Him. When help

was received from unexpected quarters or from friends without our asking for it, my faith led me to believe that it was sent by God. Similarly when some activity came to us unsought so that not to take it up would have been sheer cowardice, laziness or the like, I thought it was a Godsend.

The same principle applies to coworkers as to material resources and to activities. We may have the funds and know how they are to be used, but we can do nothing in the absence of co-workers. Co-workers also should come unsought. We did not merely imagine but had a living faith that the Ashram was God's. If therefore He wished to make the Ashram His instrument as regards any activity, it was for Him to place the requisite men and munitions at the Ashram's disposal. Phoenix, Tolstoy Farm and Sabarmati Ashram have all been conducted more or less according to these principles consciously or unconsciously. Ashram rules were observed at first with some laxity, but the observance has become stricter from day to day.

The Ashram population doubled itself in a few months. Again the Kochrab bungalow was a hardly suitable building for an ashram. It would do for one well-to-do family, but not for sixty men, women and children engaged in various activities and observing *brahmacharya* and other vows. However we had to manage with what building was available. But very soon it became impossible to live in it for a number of reasons. As if God wanted to drive us out of it, we had suddenly to go out in search of a new site and to vacate the bungalow. The curious will look up the *Autobiography*<sup>1</sup> for an account of these events. There was one defect in the Ashram at Kochrab which was remedied after we had removed to Sabarmati. An Ashram without orchard, farm or cattle would not be a complete unit. At Sabarmati we had cultivable land and therefore went in for agriculture at once.

Such is the prehistory and history of the Ashram. I now propose to deal with its observances and activities in so far as I remember them. My diary is not at hand. Even if it is, it takes no note of the personal history of the Ashramites. I therefore depend upon the memory alone. This is nothing new for me, as *Satyagraha in South Africa* and the *Autobiography* were written in the same

manner. The reader will please bear this limitation in mind, as he goes through these pages.

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1 Part Five, Chapters IX and XXI. V. G. D.



## I. TRUTH

Whenever someone was found telling a lie in the Ashram, effective steps were taken to deal with the situation as symptomatic of a serious disease. The Ashram does not believe in punishing wrongdoers, so much so that hesitation is felt even in asking them to leave the institution. Three lines of preventive action were therefore adopted.

The first thing attended to was the purity of the principal workers in charge, the idea being that if they were free from fault, the atmosphere about them was bound to be affected by their innocence. Untruth cannot stand before truth like darkness before the light of the sun.

Secondly, we had recourse to confession. If someone was found practising untruth, the fact was brought to the notice of the congregation. This is a very useful measure if it is judiciously adopted. But one has to be careful about two things. The public confession must not be tainted by even a trace of force; and the confession should not lead to the person confessing taking leave of all sense of shame. If he comes to believe that mere confession has washed off his sin, he is no longer ashamed of it at all. There should be an ever present consciousness of the fact that the least little untruth is a dangerous thing.

Thirdly, the worker in charge of the Ashram as well as the wrongdoer would fast as a matter of penance. Of course it is a matter for the wrongdoer himself to decide whether or not he should undertake a fast. But as for the worker in charge, he is clearly responsible for intentional and unintentional wrongdoing in his institution. Untruth is more poisonous and more subtle than any poison gas whatever, but it dare not enter where the head of the institution is wide awake and has a spiritual outlook on life. Still if it is found to have effected an entrance, it is a warning to the principal worker, who may be sure that he must bear his share of responsibility for this infection. I for one believe that spiritual acts have clearly defined results precisely like combinations or processes in the natural sciences. Only as we have no such means of measurement in the former case as in the latter, we are not ready to believe or we only halfheartedly

believe in the spiritual influences. Again, we are inclined to be lenient to ourselves with the result that our experiments are unsuccessful and we tend to move only in a circle like the oil-miller's bullock. Thus untruth gets a long lease of life, and at last we reach the melancholy conclusion that it is unavoidable. And what is unavoidable easily becomes necessary, so that not truth but untruth increases its own prestige.

When therefore untruth was discovered in the Ashram, I readily pleaded guilty for it myself. That is to say, I have not still attained truth as defined by me. It may be due to ignorance, but it is clear that I have not fully understood truth and therefore neither even thought it out nor declared it, still less practised it. But granting all this, was I to leave the Ashram, and resort to some Himalayan cave and impose silence upon myself? That would be sheer cowardice. The quest of truth cannot be prosecuted in a cave. Silence makes no sense where it is necessary to speak. One may live in a cave in certain circumstances, but the common man can be tested only in society.

What then is the remedy to be tried to get rid of untruth? The only answer which suggests itself to me is bodily penance, that is fasting and the like. Bodily penance has a threefold influence, first over the penitent, secondly over the wrongdoer and thirdly over the congregation. The penitent becomes more alert, examines the innermost recesses of his own heart and takes steps to deal with any personal weakness that he may discover. If the wrongdoer has any pity, he becomes conscious of his own fault, is ashamed of it and resolves never to sin any more in the future. The congregation takes a course of self-introspection.

But bodily penance is only a means to an end, not an end in itself. By itself it cannot bring an erring person to the right path. It is profitable only if it is accompanied by a certain line of thinking, which is as follows:

Man tends to become a slave of his own body, and engages in many activities and commits many sins for the sake of physical enjoyment. He should therefore mortify the flesh whenever there is an occasion of sin. A man given to physical enjoyment is subject to delusion. Even a slight renunciation of enjoyment in

the shape of food will probably be helpful in breaking the power of that delusion. Fasting in order to produce this effect must be taken in its widest sense as the exercise of control over all the organs of sense with a view to the purification of oneself or others. Merely giving up food does not amount to a fast. And fasting for health is no fasting at all in this sense.

I have also found that frequent fasting tends to rob it of its efficacy, for then it becomes almost a mechanical process without any background of thought. Every fast therefore should be undertaken after due deliberation.

I have noted one special effect of fasting in my own case. I have fasted frequently; therefore my co-workers are nervous and are afraid that a fresh fast may place my life in danger. This fear makes them observe certain rules. I consider this an undesirable consequence of fasting. I do not however think that self-control practised on account of such fear does any harm. This fear is inspired by love, and therefore it is a good thing if a person steers clear of wrongdoing even under the influence of such fear. Deliberate and voluntary reformation is of course very desirable, but it is only to be welcomed if a person avoids sin because he is afraid of causing pain to elders, as it involves no use of brute force. There are many cases of reformation undertaken primarily only to please one's dear ones becoming a permanent feature of men's lives.

One painful consequence of fasting must be taken into account. People sometimes do not avoid sin but only try to hide it for fear that someone else may fast if he comes to know of it.

I hold that penance is necessary in certain cases and it has benefited the Ashram on the whole. But one who undertakes it must possess certain qualifications:

1. The wrongdoer should have love for the penitent. The penitent may have love for the wrongdoer; but if the wrongdoer is unaware of it or adopts an inimical attitude towards the penitent, penance for him is out of the question. As he regards himself as an enemy of the penitent, he hates the latter. There is therefore a possibility of the fast affecting him in a manner contrary to all expectations, or acting as brute force employed against him

and thus regarded by him as a form of coercion. Moreover, if everyone is supposed to be entitled to undertake penance for the failings of others who do not stand in a special relation to him, there would be no end to the programme of penance. Penance for the sins of the whole world might befit a mahatma (great soul), but here we are concerned with the common man.

2. The penitent himself must be one of the parties wronged. That is to say, one should not do penance for a failing with which he is not in any way concerned. Thus, suppose A and B are friends. B is a member of the Ashram, but A has nothing to do with it. B has wronged the Ashram. Here A has neither the duty nor the right to undertake a penance for B's fault. His interference might even complicate the situation both for the Ashram and B. He may not even possess the necessary material to pronounce a judgment on B's conduct. By agreeing to B's admission to the Ashram, A must be regarded as having transferred to the Ashram his responsibility for B's good conduct.
3. A penitent for another's wrongdoing must himself be guiltless of similar misconduct. "The pot may not call the kettle black."
4. The penitent must otherwise also be a man of purity and appear such to the wrongdoer. Penance for another's wrongdoing presupposes purity; and if the guilty man has no respect for the penitent, the latter's fast might easily have an unhealthy effect upon him.
5. The penitent must not have any personal interest to serve. Thus, if A has promised to pay B ten rupees, nonpayment of it is a fault. But B may not perform penance for A's failure to redeem his promise.
6. The penitent must not have any anger in him. If a father commences a fast in anger for a fault of his son, that is not penance. There should be nothing but compassion in penance, the object being the purification of oneself as well as of the guilty person.
7. The Wrong act must be patent, accepted as such by all and spiritually harmful, and the doer must be aware of its nature. There should be no penance for inferential guilt, as it might at times have dangerous

consequences. There should be no room for doubt as regards the fault. Moreover, one should not do penance for an act which he alone regards as wrong. It is possible that what one holds to be wrong today he might regard as innocent tomorrow. So the wrong must be one that is accepted as such by society. For instance, I might regard the non-wearing of khadi to be very wrong. But my co-worker might see nothing wrong in it, or might not attach much importance to it, and so might or might not wear it as he wishes. If I regard this as a wrong and fast for it, that is not penance but coercion. There can be no penance also where the wrongdoer is not conscious of having done anything wrong.

The discussion of this topic is necessary for an institution in which there is no place for punishment or which always strives to act in a religious spirit. In such institutions the penance on the part of the heads of the Ashram takes the place of penal measures. It would be impossible to maintain its purity in any other way. Punishment and disciplinary action might make for an outer show of orderliness and progress, but that is all. On the other hand penance preserves the institution both internally and externally and makes the institution firmer day by day. Hence the necessity for some such rules as those given above.

Fasts and such other penance have been undertaken in the Ashram. Still it is far, far indeed, from its ideal of truth, and- therefore, as we shall see later on, we now call it by the name of Udyoga Mandir (Temple of Industry). But we can certainly say that the men in charge of the Ashram are wide awake, fully conscious of their imperfections and constantly trying to make sure that untruth does not find a foothold anywhere. But in an institution to which new members are being admitted from time to time, and that too only on trust, and which is frequented by men from all provinces of India and some foreign countries, it is no easy thing to keep all of them on the straight and narrow path. But if only the men at the top are true to themselves, the Ashram is sure to stand the test, no matter how hard it is. There is no limit to the potency of truth, as there is a limit to the power of an individual seeker. But if he is wide awake and is striving constantly, there is no limit to his power as well.

## II. PRAYER

### (i)

If insistence on truth constitutes the root of the Ashram, prayer is the principal feeder of that root. The social (as distinguished from the individual) activities of the Ashram commence every day with the congregational morning worship at 4:15 to 4: 45 a.m. and close with the evening prayer at 7 to 7: 30 p.m. Ever since the Ashram was founded, not a single day has passed to my knowledge without this worship. I know of several occasions when owing to the rains only one responsible person was present on the prayer ground. All inmates are expected to attend the worship except in the case of illness or similar compelling reason for absence. This expectation has been fairly well fulfilled at the evening prayer, but not in the morning.

The time for morning worship was as a matter of experiment fixed at 4, 5, 6 and 7 a.m., one after another. But on account of my persistently strong attitude on the subject, it has been fixed at last at 4: 20 a.m. With the first bell at 4 every one rises from bed and after a wash reaches the prayer ground by 4: 20.

I believe that in a country like India the sooner a man rises from bed the better. Indeed millions must necessarily rise early. If the peasant is a late riser, his crops will suffer damage. Cattle are attended to and cows are milked early in the morning. Such being the case, seekers of saving truth, servants of the people or monks may well be up at 2 or 3: it would be surprising if they are not. In all countries of the world devotees of God and tillers of the soil rise early. Devotees take the name of God and peasants work in their fields serving the world as well as themselves. To my mind both are worshippers. Devotees are deliberately such while cultivators by their industry worship God unawares, as it helps to sustain the world. If instead of working in the fields, they took to religious meditation, they would be failing in their duty and involving themselves and the world in ruin.

We may or may not look upon the cultivator as a devotee, but where peasants, labourers and other people have willy nilly to rise early, how can a worshipper of Truth or servant of the people be a late riser? Again in the Ashram we are trying to co-ordinate work and worship. Therefore I am definitely of opinion that all able-bodied people in the Ashram must rise early even at the cost of inconvenience. Four a.m. is not early but the latest time when we must be up and doing.

Then again we had to take a decision on certain questions. Where should the prayers be offered? Should we erect a temple or meet in the open air? Then again, should we raise a platform or sit in the sands or the dust? Should there be any images? At last we decided to sit on the sands under the canopy of the sky and not to install any image. Poverty is an Ashram observance. The Ashram exists in order to serve the starving millions. The poor have a place in it no less than others. It receives with open arms all who are willing to keep the rules. In such an institution the house of worship cannot be built with bricks and mortar, the sky must suffice for roof and the quarters for walls and pillars. A platform was planned but discarded later on, as its size would depend upon the indeterminate number of worshippers. And a big one would cost a large sum of money. Experience has shown the soundness of the decision not to build a house or even a platform. People from outside also attend the Ashram prayers, so that at times the multitude present cannot be accommodated on the biggest of platforms.

Again as the Ashram prayers are being increasingly imitated elsewhere, the sky-roofed temple has proved its utility. Morning and evening prayers are held wherever I go. Then there is such large attendance, especially in the evening, that prayers are possible only on open grounds. And if I had been in the habit of worshipping in a prayer hall only, I might perhaps never have thought of public prayers during my tours.

Then again all religions are accorded equal respect in the Ashram. Followers of all faiths are welcome there; they may or may not believe in the worship of images. No image is kept at the congregational worship of the Ashram in order

to avoid hurting anybody's feelings. But if an Ashramite wishes to keep an image in his room, he is free to do so.

(ii)

At the morning prayer we first recite the *shlokas* (verses) printed in *Ashram Bhajanavali* (hymnal), and then sing one *bhajan* (hymn) followed by *Ramadhun* (repetition of Ramanama) and *gitapath* (recitation of the Gita). In the evening we have recitation of the last 19 verses of the second chapter of the Gita, one *bhajan* and *Ramadhun* and then read some portion of a sacred book.

The *shlokas* were selected by Shri Kaka Kalelkar who has been in the Ashram since its foundation. Shri Maganlal Gandhi met him in Shantiniketan, when he and the children of the Phoenix Settlement went there from South Africa while I was still in England. Dinabandhu Andrews and the late Mr. Pearson were then in Shantiniketan. I had advised Maganlal to stay at some place selected by Andrews. And Andrews selected Shantiniketan for the party. Kaka was a teacher there and came into close contact with Maganlal. Maganlal had been feeling the want of a Sanskrit teacher which was supplied by Kaka. Chintamani Shastri assisted him in the work. Kaka taught the children how to recite the verses repeated in prayer. Some of these verses were omitted in the Ashram prayer in order to save time. Such is the history of the verses recited at the morning prayer all these days.

The recitation of these verses has often been objected to on the ground of saving time or because it appeared to some people that they could not well be recited by a worshipper of truth or by a non-Hindu. There is no doubt that these verses are recited only in Hindu society, but I cannot see why a non-Hindu may not join in or be present at the recitation. Muslim and Christian friends who have heard the verses have not raised any objection. Indeed they need not cause annoyance to anyone who respects other faiths as much as he respects his own. They do not contain any reflection on other people. Hindus being in an overwhelming majority in the Ashram, the verses must be selected from the sacred books of the Hindus. Not that nothing is sung or recited from



non-Hindu scriptures. Indeed there were occasions on which Imam saheb recited verses from the <sup>1</sup>Koran. Muslim and Christian hymns are often sung.

But the verses were strongly attacked from the standpoint of truth. An Ashramite modestly but firmly argued that the worship of Sarasvati, Ganesh and the like was violence done to truth; for no such divinities really existed as Sarasvati seated on a lotus with a *vina* (kind of musical instrument) in her hands, or as Ganesh with a big belly and an elephant's trunk. To this argument I replied as follows:

'I claim to be a votary of truth, and yet I do not mind reciting these verses or teaching them to the children. If we condemn some *shlokas* on the strength of this argument, it would be tantamount to an attack on the very basis of Hinduism. Not that we may not condemn anything in Hinduism which is fit for condemnation, no matter how ancient it is. But I do not believe that this is a weak or vulnerable point of Hinduism. On the other hand I hold that it is perhaps characteristic of our faith. Sarasvati and Ganesh are not independent entities. They are all descriptive names of one God. Devoted poets have given a local habitation and a name to His countless attributes. They have done nothing wrong. Such verses worshippers nor others. When a human being praises God he imagines Him to be such as he thinks fit. The God of his imagination is there for him. Even when we pray to a God devoid of form and attributes we do in fact endow Him with attributes. And attributes too are form. Fundamentally God is indescribable in words. We mortals must of necessity depend upon the imagination which makes and sometimes mars us too. The qualities we attribute to God with the purest of motives are true for us but fundamentally false, because all attempts at describing Him must be unsuccessful. I am intellectually conscious of this and still I cannot help dwelling upon the attributes of God. My intellect can exercise no influence over my heart. I am prepared to admit that my heart in its weakness hankers after a God with attributes. The *shlokas* which I have been reciting every day for the last fifteen years give me peace and hold good for me. In them I find beauty as well as poetry. Learned men tell many stories about Sarasvati,

Ganesh and the like, which have their own use. I do not know their deeper meaning, as I have not gone into it finding it unnecessary for me. It may be that my ignorance is my salvation. I did not see that I needed to go deep into this as a part of my quest of truth. It is enough that I know my God, and although I have still to realize His living presence, I am on the right path to my destination.'

I could hardly expect that the objectors should be satisfied with this reply. An *ad hoc* committee examined the whole question fully and finally recommended that the *shlokas* should remain as they were, for every possible selection would be viewed with disfavour by someone or other.

(iii)

A hymn was sung after the *shlokas*. Indeed singing hymns was the only item of the prayers in South Africa. The *shlokas* were added in India. Maganlal Gandhi was our leader in song. But we felt that the arrangement was unsatisfactory. We should have an expert singer for the purpose, and that singer should be one who would observe the Ashram rules. One such was found in Narayan Moreshvar Khare, a pupil of Pandit Vishnu Digambar, whom the master kindly sent to the Ashram. Pandit Khare gave us full satisfaction and is now a full member of the Ashram. He made hymn-singing interesting, and the *Ashram Bhajanavali* (hymnal) which is now read by thousands was in the main compiled by him. He introduced *Ramadhun*, the third item of our prayers.

The fourth item is recitation of verses from the Gita. The Gita has for years been an authoritative guide to belief and conduct for the Satyagraha Ashram. It has provided us with a test with which to determine the correctness or otherwise of ideas and courses of conduct in question. Therefore we wished that all Ashramites should understand the meaning of the Gita and if possible commit it to memory. If this last was not possible, we wished that they should at least read the original Sanskrit with correct pronunciation. With this end in view we began to recite part of the Gita every day. We would recite a few verses every day and continue the recitation until we had learnt them by heart. From this we proceeded to the *parayan*. And the recitation is now so arranged

that the whole of the Gita is finished in fourteen days, and everybody knows what verses will be recited on any particular day. The first chapter is recited on every alternate Friday, and we shall come to it on Friday next (June 10, 1932). The seventh and eighth, the twelfth and thirteenth, the fourteenth and fifteenth, and the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters are recited on the same day in order to finish 18 chapters in 14 days.<sup>2</sup>

At the evening prayer we recite the last 19 verses of the second chapter of the Gita as well as sing a hymn and repeat *Ramanama*. These verses describe the characteristics of the *sthitaprajna* (the man of stable understanding), which a Satyagrahi too must acquire, and are recited in order that he may constantly bear them in mind.

Repeating the same thing at prayer from day to day is objected to on the ground that it thus becomes mechanical and tends to be ineffective. It is true that the prayer becomes mechanical. We ourselves are machines, and if we believe God to be our mover, we must behave like machines in His hands. If the sun and other heavenly bodies did not work like machines, the universe would come to a standstill. But in behaving like machines, we must not behave like inert matter. We are intelligent beings and must observe rules as such. The point is not whether the contents of the prayer are always the same or differ from day to day. Even if they are full of variety, it is possible that they will become ineffective. The Gayatri verse among Hindus, the confession of faith (*kalma*) among Musalmans, the typical Christian prayer in the Sermon on the Mount have been recited by millions for centuries every day; and yet their power has not diminished but is ever on the increase. It all depends upon the spirit behind the recitation. If an unbeliever or a parrot repeats these potent words, they will fall quite flat. On the other hand when a believer utters them always, their influence grows from day to day. Our staple food is the same. The wheat-eater will take other things besides wheat, and these additional things may differ from time to time, but the wheat bread will always be there on the dining table. It is the eater's staff of life, and he will never weary of it. If he conceives a dislike for it, that is a sign of the approaching dissolution of his

body. The same is the case with prayer. Its principal contents must be always the same. If the soul hungers after them, she will not quarrel with the monotony of the prayer but will derive nourishment from it. She will have a sense of deprivation on the day that it has not been possible to offer prayer. She will be more downcast than one who observes a physical fast. Giving up food may now and then be beneficial for the body; indigestion of prayer for the soul is something never heard of.

The fact is that many of us offer prayer without our soul being hungry for it. It is a fashion to believe that there is a soul; so we believe that she exists. Such is the sorry plight of many among us. Some are intellectually convinced that there is a soul, but they have not grasped that truth with the heart; therefore they do not feel the need for prayer. Many offer prayer because they live in society and think they must participate in its activities. No wonder they hanker after variety. As a matter of fact however they do not *attend* prayer. They want to enjoy the music or are merely curious or wish to listen to the sermon. They are not there to be one with God.

(iv)

*Prarthana* (Gujarati word for prayer) literally means to ask for something, that is, to ask God for something in a spirit of humility. Here it is not used in that sense, but in the sense of praising or worshipping God, meditation and self-purification.

But who is God ? God is not some person outside ourselves or away from the universe. He pervades everything, and is omniscient as well as omnipotent. He does not need any praise or petitions. Being immanent in all beings, He hears everything and reads our innermost thoughts. He abides in our hearts and is nearer to us than the nails are to the fingers. What is the use of telling Him anything?

It is in view of this\* difficulty that *prarthana* is further paraphrased as self-purification. When we speak out aloud at prayer time, our speech is addressed not to God but to ourselves, and is intended to shake off our torpor. Some of us are intellectually aware of God, while others are afflicted by doubt. None has

seen Him face to face. We desire to recognise and realize Him, to become one with Him, and seek to gratify that desire through prayer.

This God whom we seek to realize is Truth. Or to put it in another way Truth is God. This Truth is not merely the truth we are expected to speak. It is that which alone is, which constitutes the stuff of which all things are made, which subsists by virtue of its own power, which is not supported by anything else but supports everything that exists. Truth alone is eternal, everything else is momentary. It need not assume shape or form. It is pure intelligence as well as pure bliss. We call it *Ishvara* because everything is regulated by Its will. It and the law It promulgates are one. Therefore it is not a blind law. It governs the entire universe. To propitiate this Truth is *prarthana* which in effect means an earnest desire to be filled with the spirit of Truth. This desire should be present all the twenty-four hours. But our souls are too dull to have this awareness day and night. Therefore we offer prayers for a short time in the hope that a time will come when all our conduct will be one continuously sustained prayer.

Such is the ideal of prayer for the Ashram, which at present is far, far away from it. The detailed programme outlined above is something external, but the idea is to make our very hearts prayerful. If the Ashram prayers are not still attractive, if even the inmates of the Ashram attend them under compulsion of a sort, it only means that none of us is still a man of prayer in the real sense of the term.

In heartfelt prayer the worshipper's attention is concentrated on the object of worship so much so that he is not conscious of anything else besides. The worshipper has well been compared to a lover. The lover forgets the whole world and even himself in the presence of the beloved. The identification of the worshipper with God should be closer still. It comes only after much striving, self-suffering (*tapas*) and self-discipline. In a place which such a worshipper sanctifies by his presence, no inducements need be offered to people for attending prayers, as they are drawn to the house of prayer by the force of his devotion.

We have dealt so far with congregational prayer, but great stress is also laid in the Ashram on individual and solitary prayer. One who never prays by himself may attend congregational prayers but will not derive much advantage from them. They are absolutely necessary for a congregation, but as a congregation is made up of individuals, they are fruitless without individual prayers. Every member of the Ashram is therefore reminded now and then that he should of his own accord give himself up to self-introspection at all times of the day. No watch can be kept that he does this, and no account can be maintained of such silent prayer. I cannot say how far it prevails in the Ashram, but I believe that some are making more or less effort in that direction.

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1 Recitation of short passages from the Koran has since been made an integral part of the Ashram prayer. V. G. D

2 Later on the Gita recitation was finished every seven instead of every fourteen days, and the chapters were distributed among the days as follows: Friday, 1 and 2; Saturday, 3. 4 and 5; Sunday, 6, 7 and 8; Monday, 9. 10, 11 and 12; Tuesday. 13. 14 and 15, Wednesday, 16 and 17; Thursday, 18. V. G. D.

### III. AHIMSA OR LOVE

The greatest difficulties perhaps were encountered as regards the observance of *ahimsa*. There are problems of Truth, but it is not very hard to understand what Truth is. But in understanding *ahimsa* we every now and then find ourselves out of our depth. *Ahimsa* was discussed in the Ashram at greater length than any other subject. Even now the question often arises whether a particular act is violent or non-violent. And even if we know the distinction between violence and non-violence, we are often unable to satisfy the demand of non-violence on account of weakness which cannot easily be overcome.

*Ahimsa* means not to hurt any living creature by thought, word or deed, even for the supposed benefit of that creature. To observe this principle fully is impossible for men, who kill a number of living beings large and small as they breathe or blink or till the land. We catch and hurt snakes or scorpions for fear of being bitten and leave them in some out-of-the-way place if we do not kill them. Hurting them in this way may be unavoidable, but is clearly *himsa* as defined above.

If I save the food I eat or the clothes I wear or the space I occupy, it is obvious that these can be utilized by someone else whose need is greater than mine. As my selfishness prevents him from using these things, my physical enjoyment involves violence to my poorer neighbour. When I eat cereals and vegetables in order to support life, that means violence done to vegetable life.

Surrounded thus as I am by violence on all sides, how am I to observe non-violence? Fresh difficulties are bound to rise at every step as I try to do so.

The violence described above is easily recognised as such. But what about our being angry with one another? A teacher inflicting corporal punishment on his pupils, a mother taking her children to task, a man losing his temper in his intercourse with equals, all these are guilty of violence, and violence of a bad type, which is not easy to tackle. Violence is there where there is attachment on the one hand and dislike on the other. How are we to get rid of it?

The first lesson therefore that we in the Ashram must learn is that although to sever some person's head from his body for the sake of the country or the family or oneself is indeed a violent act, the subtle violence involved in injuring the feelings of other people day in and day out is possibly very much worse than that. Murders committed in the world will seem to be numerous when considered by themselves and not so numerous when compared with the number of deaths due to other causes; but the subtle violence involved in daily loss of temper and the like defies all attempts at calculation.

We are constantly striving in the Ashram to deal with all these kinds of violence. All of us realize our own weakness. All of us including myself are afraid of snakes for instance. We therefore as a rule catch them and put them out of harm's way. But if someone kills a snake out of fear, he is not taken to task. There was once a snake in the cowshed, and it was impossible to catch it where it was. It was a risky thing to keep the cattle there; the men also were afraid of working thereabouts. Maganlal Gandhi felt helpless and permitted them to kill that snake. I approved of his action when he told me about it. I believe that even if I had been there on the spot, I could not have done anything other than what he did. My intellect tells me that I must treat even a snake as my kinsman and at the risk of losing my life I must hold the snake in my hands and take it away from those who are afraid of it. But in my heart I do not harbour the necessary love, fearlessness and readiness to die of snakebite. I am trying to cultivate all these qualities but have not still succeeded in the attempt. It is possible that if I am attacked by a snake, I may neither resist nor kill it. But I am not willing to place anyone else's life in danger.

Once in the Ashram the monkeys made a terrible nuisance of themselves and did extensive damage to the crops. The watchman tried to frighten them by making a show of hurling stones from a sling but in vain. He then actually threw stones and injured and crippled one of the monkeys. I thought this even worse than killing it. I therefore held discussions with co-workers in the Ashram, and finally we took the decision that if we could not get rid of the monkeys by gentle means short of wounding them, we must kill one or two of them and end



the nuisance. Before this decision was taken there was a public discussion in the columns of *Navajivan*<sup>1</sup> which may be consulted by the curious.

No one outside India thinks that one should not kill even a violent animal. Some individuals like St. Francis observed this rule, but the common people did not, so far as I am aware. The Ashram believes in the principle, but it is a pity that we have not succeeded in putting it into practice. We have not still acquired the art of doing this. It is possible that many men will have to lay down their lives before this art is mastered. For the present it is only a consummation devoutly to be wished for. The principle has long been accepted in India but the practice is very imperfect on account of our laziness and self-deception.

Mad dogs are killed in the Ashram, the idea being that they die after much suffering and never recover. Our people torture mad dogs instead of killing them and deceive themselves into thinking that they observe non-violence. As a matter of fact they only indulge in greater violence.

Non-violence sometimes call's upon us to put an end to the life of a living being. For instance a calf in the Ashram dairy was lame and had developed terrible sores; it could not eat and breathed with difficulty. After three days' argument with myself and my co-workers I had poison injected into its body and thus put an end to its life. That action was nonviolent, because it was wholly unselfish inasmuch as the sole purpose was to achieve the calf's relief from pain. It was a surgical operation, and I should do exactly the same thing with my child, if he were in the same predicament.

Many Hindus were shocked at this, but their reaction to the incident only betrays their ignorance of the nature of *ahimsa*, which has for us long ceased to be a living faith, and has been degraded into formalities complied with when not very inconvenient.

Here we must take leave of the Ashram experiments with *ahimsa* as regards subhuman species.

*Ahimsa* as regards sub-human life is from the Ashram point of view an important aspect but still only one aspect of this comprehensive principle. Our

dealings with our fellowmen are still more important than that. The commonest form of human intercourse is either violent or non-violent. Fortunately for humanity non-violence pervades human life and is observed by men without special effort. If we had not borne with one another, mankind would have been destroyed long ago. *Ahimsa* would thus appear to be the law of life, but we are not thus far entitled to any credit for observing it.

Whenever there is a clash of ephemeral interests, men tend to resort to violence. But with a deliberate observance of non-violence a person experiences a second birth or 'conversion'. We in the Ashram are out to observe *ahimsa* intelligently. In so doing we meet with numerous obstacles, disappointments and trials of faith. We may not be satisfied with observing *ahimsa* in deed only. Not to think badly of anyone, not to wish ill to him though we have suffered at his hands, not to hurt him even in thought, – this is an uphill task, but therein lies the acid test of our *ahimsa*.

Thieves have visited the Ashram from outside, and there have been thieves in the Ashram itself. But we do not believe in inflicting punishment on them. We do not inform the police; we put up with the losses as best we may. This rule has been infringed at times. A thief was once caught red-handed by day. The Ashramite who caught him bound him with a rope and treated him contemptuously. I was in the Ashram at the time. I went to the thief, rebuked him and set him free. But as a matter of fact *ahimsa* demands from us something more than this. We must find out and apply methods which would put a stop to thieving altogether. For one thing we must diminish the number of our 'possessions' so as not to tempt others. Secondly we must bring about a reformation in the surrounding villages. And thirdly the Ashram ministry should be extended in scope so that the bad as well as the good would learn to look upon the settlement as their own.

We thus find that it is impossible for a man with 'possessions' to observe *ahimsa* even in the gross meaning of that term. A man of property must adopt measures for its security involving the punishment of whoever tries to steal it. Only he can observe *ahimsa* who holds nothing as his own and works away in a

spirit of total detachment. If there are many such individuals and organizations in society, violence will not be much in evidence. As gunpowder has a large place in a society based on violence and a soldier who can handle it with skill becomes entitled to honour and rewards, even so in a non-violent society self-suffering and self-control are its 'munitions of war' and persons endowed with these qualities are its natural protectors. The world at large has not still accepted *ahimsa* in this sense. India has accepted it more or less but not in a comprehensive manner. The Ashram holds that *ahimsa* should be universal in scope, and that society can be built up on the foundations of *ahimsa*. It conducts experiments with this end in view, but these have not been very successful. I have been unable to cite in this chapter much that would hearten the votary of *ahimsa*. This does not apply of course to *ahimsa* as applied to politics, to which I propose to devote a separate<sup>2</sup> chapter.

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1 Since reprinted in *Ahimsa*, p. 123 ff. V. G. D.

2 This chapter was never written. V. G. D.

#### IV. BRAHMACHARYA OR CHASTITY

This observance does not give rise to ever so many problems and dilemmas as *ahimsa* does. Its meaning is generally well understood, but understanding it is one thing: practising it is quite another thing and calls forth all our powers. Many of us put forth a great effort but without making any progress. Some of us even lost ground previously won. None has reached perfection. But everyone realizes its supreme importance. My striving in this direction began before 1906 when I took the vow. There were many ups and downs. It was only after I had burnt my fingers at times that I realized the deeper meaning of *brahmacharya*. And then I found that expositions made in books cannot be understood without actual experience, and wear a fresh aspect in the light of it. Even in the case of a simple machine like the spinning-wheel, it is one thing to read the directions for plying it, and it is another thing to put the directions into practice. New light dawns upon us as soon as we commence our practice. And what is true of simple tangible things like the wheel is still more true of spiritual slates.

A *brahmachari* is one who controls his organs of sense in thought, word and deed. The meaning of this definition became somewhat clear after I had kept the observance for some time, but it is not quite clear even now, for I do not claim to be a perfect *brahmachari*, evil thoughts having been held in restraint but not eradicated. When they are eradicated, I will discover further implications of the definition.

Ordinary *brahmacharya* is not so difficult as it is supposed to be. We have made it difficult by understanding the term in a narrow sense. Many of us play with *brahmacharya* like fools who put their hands in the fire and still expect to escape being burnt. Very few realize that a *brahmachari* has to control not one but all the organs of sense. He is no *brahmachari* who thinks that mere control of animal passion is the be-all and end-all of *brahmacharya*. No wonder if he finds it very difficult. He who attempts to control only one organ and allows all the others free play must not expect to achieve success. He might as well deliberately descend into a well and expect to keep his body dry. Those who

would achieve an easy conquest of animal passion must give up all unnecessary things which stimulate it. They must control their palate and cease to read suggestive literature and to enjoy all luxuries. I have not the shadow of a doubt that they will find *brahmacharya* easy enough after such renunciation.

Some people think that it is not a breach of *brahmacharya* to cast a lascivious look at one's own or another's wife or to touch her in the same manner; but nothing could be farther from the truth. Such behaviour constitutes a direct breach of *brahmacluuya* in the grosser sense of the term. Men and women who indulge in it deceive themselves and the world, and growing weaker day by day, make themselves easily susceptible to disease. If they stop short of a full satisfaction of desire, the credit for it is due to circumstances and not to themselves. They are bound to fall at the very first opportunity.

In *brahmachaiya* as conceived by the Ashram those who are married behave as if they were not married. Married people do well to renounce gratification outside the marital bond; theirs is a limited *brahmacharya*. But to look upon them as *brahmacharis* is to do violence to that glorious term.

Such is the complete Ashram definition of *brahmacharya*. However there are men as well as women in the Ashram who enjoy considerable freedom in meeting one another. The ideal is that one Ashramite should have the same freedom in meeting another as is enjoyed by a son in meeting his mother or by a brother in meeting his sister. That is to say, the restrictions that are generally imposed for the protection of *brahmacharya* are lifted in the Satyagraha Ashram, where we believe that *brahmacharya* which ever stands in need of such adventitious support is no *brahmacharya* at all. The restrictions may be necessary at first but must wither away in time. Their disappearance does not mean that a *brahmachari* goes about seeking the company of women, but it does mean that if there is an occasion for him to minister to a woman, he may not refuse such ministry under the impression that it is forbidden to him.

Woman for a *brahmachari* is not the 'doorkeeper of hell' but is an incarnation of our Mother who is in Heaven. He is no *brahmachari* at all whose mind is disturbed if he happens to see a woman or if he has to touch her in order to

render service. A *brahmachari's* reaction to a living image and to a bronze statue is one and the same. But a man who is perturbed at the very mention of woman and who is desirous of observing *brahmacharya*, must fly even from a figurine made of metal.

An Ashram, where men and women thus live and work together, serve one another and try to observe *brahmacharya*, is exposed to many perils. Its arrangements involve to a certain extent a deliberate imitation of life in the West. I have grave doubts about my competence to undertake such an experiment. But this applies to all my experiments. It is on account of these doubts that I do not look upon anyone else as my disciple. Those who have joined the Ashram after due deliberation have joined me as co-workers, fully conscious of all the risks involved therein. As for the young boys and girls, I look upon them as my own children, and as such they are automatically drawn within the pale of my experiments. These experiments are undertaken in the name of the God of Truth. He is the Master Potter while we are mere clay in His all-powerful hands.

My experience of the Ashram so far has taught me that there is no ground for disappointment as regards the results of this pursuit of *brahmacharya* under difficulties. Men as well as women have on the whole derived benefit from it, but the greatest benefit has in my opinion accrued to women. Some of us have fallen, some have risen after sustaining a fall. The possibility of stumbling is implicit in all such experimentation. Where there is cent per cent success, it is not an experiment but a characteristic of omniscience.

I now come to a point of vital importance which I have reserved for treatment towards the end of the discussion. We are told in the Bhagavadgita (II : 59) that 'when a man starves his senses, the objects of those senses disappear from him, but not the yearning for them; the yearning too departs when he beholds the Supreme,' that is to say, the Truth or *Brahma* (God). The whole truth of the matter has here been set forth by the experienced Krishna. Fasting and all other forms of discipline are ineffective without the grace of God. What is the vision of the Truth or God ? It does not mean seeing something with the physical

eye or witnessing a miracle. Seeing God means realization of the fact that God abides in one's heart. The yearning must persist until one has attained this realization, and will vanish upon realization. It is with this end in view that we keep observances, and engage ourselves in spiritual endeavour at the Ashram. Realization is the final fruit of constant effort. The human lover sacrifices his all for his beloved, but his sacrifice is fruitless inasmuch as it is offered for the sake of momentary pleasure. But the quest of Truth calls for even greater concentration than that of the human beloved. There is joy ineffable in store for the aspirant at the end of the quest. Still very few of us are as earnest as even the human lover. Such being the facts of the case, what is the use of complaining that the quest of truth is an uphill task? The human beloved may be at a distance of several thousand miles; God is there in the tabernacle of the human heart, nearer to us than the finger nails are to the fingers. But what is to be done with a man who wanders all over the wide world in search of treasure which as a matter of fact is buried under his very feet ?

The *brahmachaiya* observed by a self-restraining person is not something to be despised. It certainly serves to weaken the force of the yearning for the 'fleshpots of Egypt.' One may keep fasts or adopt various other methods of mortifying the flesh, but the objects of sense must be compelled to disappear. The yearning will get itself in readiness to go as this process is on. Then the seeker will have the beatific vision, and that will be the signal for the yearning to make its final exit. The treasure supposed to be lost will be recovered. He who has not put all his strength into his effort has no right to complain that he has not 'seen' *Brahma*. Observing *brahmacharya* is one of the means to the end which is seeing *Brahma*. Without *brahmacharya* no one may expect to see Him, and without seeing Him one cannot observe *brahmacharya* to perfection. The verse therefore does not rale out self-discipline but only indicates its limitations.

All members of the Ashram, young as well as old, married as well as unmarried, try to observe *brahmacharya*, but only a few will observe it for life. When the young people come to years of discretion, they are told that they are not bound

to observe *brahmachaiya* any longer against their will, and that whoever feels that he is unable to put forth the requisite effort has a right to marry. And when he makes the request, the Ashram helps him in finding out a suitable partner in life. This position is very well understood, and the results have been uniformly good. The young men have persisted in larger numbers. The girls too have done pretty well. None of them married before she was fifteen, and many married only after they were nineteen.

Those who wish to marry with Ashram assistance must rest satisfied with the simplest of religious ceremonies. There are no dinners, no guests invited from outside, no beating of drums. Both bride and bridegroom are dressed in handspun and hand woven khadi. There are no ornaments in gold or silver. There is no marriage settlement and no dowry except a few clothes and a spinning-wheel. The function hardly costs even ten rupees, and takes not more than one hour. The bride and bridegroom recite in their own language the *mantras* (Vedic verses) of the Saptapadi the purport of which has already been explained to them. On the day fixed for the marriage, the bride and bridegroom keep a fast, water trees, clean the cowshed and the Ashram well and read the Gita before the ceremony. Those who give away the bride also fast until they have made the gift. We now insist that the Ashram will not help to arrange a marriage between members of the same sub-caste, and everyone is encouraged to seek his mate outside his own subcaste.<sup>1</sup>

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1. This was written in 1932. In 1948 Gandhiji said a marriage could be celebrated in his presence only if one of the parties was a Harijan and the other a caste Hindu. V. G. D.



## V. NON-STEALING, AND NON-POSSESSION OR POVERTY

These two, along with *truth*, *ahimsa* and *brahmacharya* that have gone before, constitute the five *mahavratas* (primary observances) of old and have been included in the Ashram observances as they are necessary for one who seeks self-realization. But they do not call for any lengthy discussion.

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### 1. NON-STEALING

To take something from another without his permission is theft of course. But it is also theft to use a thing for a purpose different from the one intended by the lender or to use it for a period longer than that which has been fixed with him. The profound truth upon which this observance is based is that God never creates more than what is strictly needed for the moment. Therefore whoever appropriates more than the minimum that is really necessary for him is guilty of theft.

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### 2. NON-POSSESSION OR POVERTY

This is covered by Non-stealing. We may neither take nor keep a superfluous thing. It is therefore a breach of this observance to possess food or furniture which we do not really need. He who can do without chairs will not keep them in his house. The seeker will deliberately and voluntarily reduce his wants and cultivate progressively simple habits.

Non-stealing and Non-possession are mental states only. No human being can keep these observances to perfection. The body too is a possession, and so long as it is there, it calls for other possessions in its train. But the seeker will cultivate the spirit of detachment and give up one possession after another. Every one cannot be judged by the same standard. An ant may fall from grace if it stores two grains instead of one. An elephant on the other hand will have a lot of grass heaped before itself and yet it cannot be charged with having 'great possessions'.

These difficulties appear to have given rise to the current conception of *sannyasa* (renunciation of the world), which is not accepted by the Ashram. Such *sannyasa* may be necessary for some rare spirit who has the power of conferring benefits upon the world by only thinking good thoughts in a cave. But the world would be ruined if everyone became a cave-dweller. Ordinary men and women can only cultivate mental detachment. Whoever lives in the world and lives in it only for serving it is a *sannyasi*.

We of the Ashram hope to become *sannvasis* in this sense. We may keep necessary things but should be ready to give up everything including our bodies. The loss of nothing whatever should worry us at all. So long as we are alive, we should render such service as we are capable of. It is a good thing if we get food to eat and clothes to wear; it is also a good thing if we don't. We should so train our minds that no Ashramite will fail to give a good account of himself when testing time comes.

## VI. BREAD LABOUR

The Ashram holds that every man and woman must work in order to live. This principle came home to me upon reading one of Tolstoy's essays. Referring to the Russian writer Bondaref, Tolstoy observes that his discovery of the vital importance of bread labour is one of the most remarkable discoveries of modern times. The idea is that every healthy individual must labour enough for his food, and his intellectual faculties must be exercised not in order to obtain a living or amass a fortune but only in the service of mankind. If this principle is observed everywhere, all men would be equal, none would starve and the world would be saved from many a sin.

It is possible that this golden rule will never be observed by the whole world. Millions observe it in spite of themselves without understanding it. But their mind is working in a contrary direction, so that they are unhappy themselves and their labour is not as fruitful as it should be. This state of things serves as an incentive to those who understand and seek to practise the rule. By rendering a willing obedience to it they enjoy good health as well as perfect peace and develop their capacity for service.

Tolstoy made a deep impression on my mind, and even in South Africa I began to observe the rule to the best of my ability. And ever since the Ashram was founded, bread labour has been perhaps its most characteristic feature.

In my opinion the same principle has been set forth in the third chapter of the Gita. I do not go so far as to say that the word *yajna* (sacrifice) there means body-labour. But when the Gita says that 'rain comes from sacrifice' (verse 14), I think it indicates the necessity of bodily labour. The 'residue of sacrifice' (verse 13) is the bread that we have won in the sweat of our brow. Labouring enough for one's food has been classed in the Gita as a *yajna*. Whoever eats more than is enough for sustaining the body is a thief, for most of us hardly perform labour enough to maintain themselves. I believe that a man has no right to receive anything more than his keep, and that everyone who labours is entitled to a living wage.

This does not rule out the division of labour. The manufacture of everything needed to satisfy essential human wants involves bodily labour, so that labour in all essential occupations counts as bread labour. But as many of us do not perform such labour, they have to take exercise in order to preserve their health. A cultivator working on his farm from day to day has not to take breathing exercise or stretch his muscles. Indeed if he observes the other laws of health, he will never be afflicted with illness.

God never creates more than what is strictly needed for the moment, with the result that if anyone appropriates more than he really needs, he reduces his neighbour to destitution. The starvation of people in several parts of the world is due to many of us seizing very much more than they need. We may utilize the gifts of nature just as we choose, but in her books the debits are always equal to the credits. There is no balance in either column.

This law is not invalidated by the fact that men raise bigger crops by mechanizing agriculture and using artificial fertilizers, and similarly increase the industrial output. This only means a transformation of natural energy. Try as we might, the balance is always nil.

Be that as it may, the observance best kept in the Ashram is that of bread labour, and no wonder. Its fulfillment is easy with ordinary care. For certain hours in the day, there is nothing to be done but work. Work is therefore bound to be put in. A worker may be lazy, inefficient or inattentive, but he works for a number of hours all the same. Again certain kinds of labour are capable of yielding an immediate product and the worker cannot idle away a considerable amount of his time. In an institution where body labour plays a prominent part there are few servants. Drawing water, splitting firewood, cleaning and filling lamps with oil, sanitary service, sweeping the roads and houses, washing one's clothes, cooking, – all these tasks must always be performed.

Besides this there are various activities carried on in the Ashram as a result of and in order to help fulfillment of the observances, such as agriculture, dairying, weaving, carpentry, tanning and the like which must be attended to by many members of the Ashram.

All these activities may be deemed sufficient for keeping the observance of bread labour, .but another essential feature of *yajna* (sacrifice) is the idea of serving others, and the Ashram will perhaps be found wanting from this latter standpoint. The Ashram ideal is to live to serve. In such an institution there is no room for idleness or shirking duty, and everything should be done with right goodwill. If this were actually the case, the Ashram ministry would be more fruitful than it is. But we are still very far from such a happy condition. Therefore although in a sense every activity in the Ashram is of the nature of *yajna*, it is compulsory for all to spin for at least one hour in the name of God incarnated as the Poor (*Daridranarayan*).

People often say that in an institution like the Ashram where body labour is given pride of place there is no scope for intellectual development, but my experience is just the reverse. Everyone who has been to the Ashram has made intellectual progress as well; I know of none who was the worse on account of a sojourn in the Ashram.

Intellectual development is often supposed to mean a knowledge of facts concerning the universe. I freely admit that such knowledge is not laboriously imparted to the students in the Ashram. But if intellectual progress spells understanding and discrimination, there is adequate provision for it in the Ashram. Where body labour is performed for mere wages, it is possible that the labourer becomes dull and listless. No one tells him how and why things are done; he himself has no curiosity and takes no interest in his work. But such is not the case in the Ashram. Everything including sanitary service must be done intelligently, enthusiastically and for the love of God. Thus there is scope for intellectual development in all departments of Ashram activity. Everyone is encouraged to acquire full knowledge of his own subject. Anyone who neglects to do this must answer for it. Everyone in the Ashram is a labourer; none is a wage-slave.

It is a gross superstition to imagine that knowledge is acquired only through books. We must discard this error. Reading books has a place in life, but is useful only in its own place. If book-knowledge is cultivated at the cost of body

labour, we must raise a revolt against it. Most of our time must be devoted to body labour, and only a little to reading. As in India, today the rich and the so-called higher classes despise body labour, it is very necessary to insist on the dignity of labour. Even for real intellectual development one should engage in some useful bodily activity.

It is desirable if at all possible that the Ashram should give the workers some more time for reading. It is also desirable that illiterate Ashramites should have a teacher to help them in their studies. But it appears that time for reading and the like cannot be given at the cost of any of the present activities of the Ashram. Nor can we engage paid teachers, and so long as the Ashram cannot attract more men who are capable of teaching ordinary school subjects, we have to manage with as many such as we have got in our midst. The school- and college-educated men who are in the Ashram have not still fully acquired the skill of correlating the three R's with body labour. This is a new experiment for all of us. But we shall learn from experience, and those of us who have received ordinary education will by and by find out ways and means of imparting their knowledge to others.

## VII. SWADESHI

At the Ashram we hold that Swadeshi is a universal law. A man's first duty is to his neighbour. This does not imply hatred for the foreigner or partiality for the fellow- countryman. Our capacity for service has obvious limits. We can serve even our neighbour with some difficulty. If everyone of us duly performed his duty to his neighbour, no one in the world who needed assistance would be left unattended. Therefore one who serves his neighbour serves all the world. As a matter of fact there is in Swadeshi no room for distinction between one's own and other people. To serve one's neighbour is to serve the world. Indeed it is the only way open to us of serving the world. One to whom the whole world is as his family should have the power of serving the universe without moving from his place. He can exercise this power only through service rendered to his neighbour. Tolstoy goes further and says that at present we are riding on other people's backs; it is enough only if we get down. This is another way of putting the same thing. No one can serve others without serving himself. And whoever tries to achieve his private ends without serving others harms himself as well as the world at large. The reason is obvious. All living beings are members one of another so that a person's every act has a beneficial or harmful influence on the whole world. We cannot see this, nearsighted as we are. The influence of a single act of an individual on the world may be negligible. But that influence is there all the same, and an awareness of this truth should make us realize our responsibility.

Swadeshi therefore does not involve any disservice to the foreigner. Still Swadeshi does not reach everywhere, for that is impossible in the very nature of things. In trying to serve the world, one does not serve the world and fails to serve even the neighbour. In serving the neighbour one in effect serves the world. Only he who has performed his duty to his neighbour has the right to say, 'All are akin to me.' But if a person says, 'AH are akin to me,' and neglecting his neighbour gives himself up to self-indulgence, he lives to himself alone.

We find some good men who leave their own place and move all over the world serving non-neighbours. They do nothing wrong, and their activity is not an exception to the law of Swadeshi. Only their capacity for service is greater. To one man, only he who lives next door to him is his neighbour. For a second man his neighbourhood is coextensive with his village and for a third with ten surrounding villages. Thus every one serves according to his capacity. A common man cannot do uncommon work. Definitions are framed with an eye to him alone, and imply everything which is not contrary to their spirit. When he observes the law of Swadeshi, the ordinary man does not think that he is doing service to any others. He deals with the neighbouring producer, as it is convenient for him. But an occasion may arise when this is inconvenient. One who knows that Swadeshi is the law of life will observe it even on such occasions. Many of us at present are not satisfied with the quality of goods made in India, and are tempted to buy foreign goods. It is therefore necessary to point out that Swadeshi does not simply minister to our convenience but is a rule of life. Swadeshi has nothing to do with hatred of the foreigner. It can never be one's duty to wish or to do ill to others.

Khadi has been conceived as the image of Swadeshi, because India has committed a heinous sin by giving it up and thus failing in the discharge of her natural duty.

The importance of khadi and the spinning-wheel first dawned on me in 1908, when I had no idea of what the wheel was like and did not even know the difference between the wheel and the loom. I had only a vague idea of the condition of India's villages, but still I clearly saw that the chief cause of their pauperization was the destruction of the spinning-wheel, and resolved that I would try to revive it when I returned to India.

I returned in 1915 with my mind full of these ideas. Swadeshi was one of the observances ever since the Ashram was started. But none of us knew how to spin. We therefore rested content with setting up a hand loom. Some of us still retained a liking for fine cloth. No Swadeshi yarn of the requisite fineness for women's *sadis* was available in the market. For a very short time therefore



they were woven with foreign yarn. But we were soon able to obtain fine yarn from Indian mills.

It was no easy job even to set up the handloom at the Ashram. None of us had the least idea of weaving. We obtained a loom and a weaver through friends. Maganlal Gandhi undertook to learn weaving.

I conducted experiments at the Ashram and at the same time carried on Swadeshi propaganda in the country. But it was like *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark so long as we could not spin yarn. At last however I discovered the spinning-wheel, found out spinners and introduced the wheel in the Ashram. The whole story has been unfolded in the *Autobiography*.<sup>1</sup>

But that did not mean that our difficulties were at an end. On the other hand they increased, as such of them as were hidden till now became manifest.

Touring in the country I saw that people would not take to the spinning-wheel as soon as they were told about it. I knew that not much money could be made by spinning, but I had no idea of how little it was. Then again the yarn that was spun would not at once be uniform as well as fine. Many could spin only coarse and weak yarn. Not all kinds of cotton were suitable for spinning. The cotton must be carded and made into slivers, and in carding much depended upon the condition of the cotton. Any and every spinning-wheel would not do. To revive the spinning-wheel thus meant the launching of a big scheme. Money alone could not do the trick. As for manpower too hundreds of workers would be needed, and these men should be ready to learn a new art, to be satisfied with a small salary and to live out their lives in villages. But even that was not enough. The rural atmosphere was surcharged with idleness and lack of faith and hope. The wheel could make no headway if this did not improve. Thus a successful revival of the wheel could be brought about only with an army of single-minded men and women equipped with infinite patience and strong faith.

At first I was alone in having this faith. Faith indeed was the only capital that I had, but I saw that if there is faith, everything else is added unto it. Faith enlightens the intellect and induces habits of industry. It was clear that all

experiments should be conducted at and through the Ashram which indeed existed for that very purpose. I realized that spinning should be the principal physical activity of the Ashram. Thus only could it be reduced to a science. Therefore spinning was at last recognised as a *mahayajna* (primary sacrifice), and everyone who joined the Ashram had to learn spinning and to spin regularly everyday.

But *yajna* implies skill in action (कर्मसु कौशलम्।). To spin some yarn somehow cannot be called a *yajna*. At first the rule was that the members should spin for at least half an hour everyday. But it was soon found that if the spinning- wheel went out of order, one could not spin even a couple of yards in half an hour. Therefore the rule was modified and members were asked to spin at least 160 rounds, one round being equal to 4 feet. Again yarn was no good if it was not uniform as well as strong. Tests of strength and uniformity were therefore devised, and we have now made such progress that spinning yarn coarser than 20s does not count as *yajna*.

But granted that good yarn is spun, who would make use of it? I was sure from the first that the person who did spinning as a sacrament must not use his own yarn, but I was unable to carry conviction to others. Where was the harm if the spinner paid the wages and purchased his yarn for himself ? I deceived myself and agreed that one who paid the wages and brought his own yarn should be considered a spinning-sacrificer. This error has not still been fully rectified. Errors not dealt with with a strong hand at their first appearance tend to become permanent, and are difficult to eradicate like chronic diseases.

As a consequence of this *yajna* spinning has made great strides in India, but it has still to take root in each of our villages. The reason is obvious. My faith was not coupled with knowledge. Some knowledge was acquired after mistakes had been committed. Co-workers have joined me, but are too few for the great task in hand. There are hundreds of workers, but perhaps they have not in them the requisite faith and knowledge. The root being thus weak, one may not expect to enjoy the ripest fruit.

But for this I cannot find fault with anybody. The work is new and wide as the ocean and it bristles with difficulties. Therefore though the result of our activity is not gratifying, it is still sufficient for sustaining our faith. We have every right to hope for complete success. Faithful workers, men as well as women, have joined in adequate numbers and have accumulated a fund of valuable experience, so that this movement is certainly destined not to perish.

Khadi has given rise to quite a number of other activities at the Ashram as well as elsewhere in the country which cannot here be dealt with at any length. Suffice it to say that cotton crops are raised, spinning-wheels are made, cloth is dyed, and simple hand-operated machines are manufactured for all the processes from ginning to weaving. These machines are being improved from time to time. The progress made in producing a more efficient type of spinning-wheel is a piece of poetry to my mind.

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1. Part Five, Chapter XXXIX. V. G. D.

## VIII. REMOVAL OF UNTOUCH ABILITY

The Ashram was founded in order to serve and if necessary to die in the service of Truth. If therefore while holding that untouchability is a sinful thing, it did not do something positive in order to end it, it could hardly deserve the name of Satyagraha (adherence to Truth) Ashram. Even in South Africa we recognised untouchability as a sin. When the Ashram therefore was founded in India, removal of untouchability easily became one of its major activities.

Within a month of the foundation of the Ashram, Dudabhai applied for admission along with his family. I had no idea that the testing time of the Ashram would arrive so soon. Dudabhai's application was supported by Shri Amritlal Thakkar. I felt bound to admit a family which was recommended by him.

The arrival of Dudabhai was the signal for a storm breaking upon the placid atmosphere of the Ashram, Kasturba, Maganlal Gandhi and Mrs Mlaganlal had each of them some scruples in living with so-called untouchables. Things came to such a pass that Kasturba should either observe Ashram rules or else leave the Ashram. But the argument that a woman in following in her husband's footsteps incurs no sin appealed to her and she quieted down. I do not hold that a wife is bound to follow her husband in what she considers sinful. But I welcomed my wife's attitude in the present case, because I looked upon the removal of untouchability as a meritorious thing. No one could uphold untouchability and still lives in the Ashram. It would have been extremely painful to me if my wife had had to leave the Ashram, seeing that she had been my companion all these days at the cost of great suffering. It was hard to be separated from her, but ones must put up with every hardship that comes his way in the discharge of his duty. I had therefore no hesitation in accepting my wife's denunciation of untouchability not as an independent person but only as a faithful wife.

Maganlal Gandhi's case was harder than mine. He packed up his things and came to me to told goodbye. But who was I to bid him goodbye? I put him on

his guard. 1 told him that the Ashram was his creation as much as mine, and would be destroyed if he left it. But he certainly did not want that it should perish. He did not need to seek my permission to leave an institution which he himself had brought into existence. But to leave the Ashram should be something unthinkable for him. This appeal did not fall on deaf ears. Perhaps Maganlal had thought of Heaving in order to give me a free hand. I could endure to be separated from all the world besides but not from Maganlal. I therefore suggested that he should go to Madras with family. He and his wife would learn more of weaving there and would have more time to ponder over the situation that had developed. So they went and lived in Madras for six months. They mastered the art of weaving and after mature consideration also washed their hearts clean of untouchability.

The internal storm thus blew over. But there was a storm outside the Ashram too. The chief person who financed the Ashram discontinued his assistance. There was even a possibility that the Ashramites would not be allowed any more to draw water from the neighbour's well. But all difficulties were surmounted by and by. As regards finance, something happened which was not unlike Narasinha Mehta's *hundi* (bill of exchange) being honoured at Dvaravati. A sum of thirteen thousand rupees was received from an unexpected source. Thus the Ashram ordeal in keeping Dudabhai at any cost was not so severe as it might well have been. The Ashram passed the test as regards its opposition to untouchability. 'Untouchable' families come to the Ashram freely and live in it. Dudabhai's daughter Lakshmi has become a full member of the family.

Three callings followed by the so-called untouchables are practised in the Ashram, and improved methods are devised in each. Everyone in the Ashram has in turns to do sanitary service, which is looked upon not as a special calling but a universal duty. No outside labour is engaged for this work, which is carried on lines suggested by Dr Poore. Nightsoil is buried in shallow trenches and is thus converted into manure in only a few days. Dr Poore says that the soil is living up to a depth of twelve inches. Millions of bacteria are there to

clean up dirt. Sunlight and air penetrate the ground to that depth. Therefore nightsoil buried in the upper layer readily combines with the earth.

Closets are so constructed that they are free from smell and there is no difficulty in cleaning them. Everyone who visits them covers the nightsoil with plenty of dry earth, so that the top is always dry.

Then again we have handloom weaving. Coarse khadi was manufactured in Gujarat by Harijan weavers only. The industry was almost on the verge of destruction, and many weavers were compelled to take up scavenging for a living. But now there has been a revival of this handicraft.

Thirdly we have tanning. We shall deal with it in the chapter on the Ashram dairy.

The Ashram does not believe in subcastes. There are no restrictions on inter-dining and all Ashramites sit to dinner in the same line. But no propaganda in favour of inter-dining is carried on outside the Ashram, as it is unnecessary for the removal of untouchability, which implies the lifting of bans imposed on Harijans in public institutions and discarding the superstition that a man is polluted by the touch of certain persons by reason of their birth in a particular caste. This disability can also be removed by legislation. Inter-dining and intermarriage are reforms of a different type which cannot be promoted by legislation or social pressure. The Ashramites therefore feel themselves free to take permitted food with everyone else but do not carry on any such propaganda.

Schools are established and wells sunk for Harijans through the Ashram which chiefly finds the finance for such activities. The real anti-untouchability work carried on in the Ashram is the reformed conduct of the Ashramites. There is no room in the Ashram for any ideas of high and low.

However the Ashram believes that *varnas* and *ashramas* are essential elements of Hinduism. Only it puts a different interpretation on these time-honoured terms. Four *varnas* and four *ashramas* are an arrangement not peculiar to Hinduism but capable of world-wide application, and a universal rule, the

breach of which has involved humanity in numerous disasters. The four *ashramas* are *brahmacharya*, *garhasthya*, *vanaprasthya* and *sannyasa*. *Brahmacharya* is the stage during which men as well as women prosecute their studies, and should not only observe *brahmacharya* but should also be free from any other burden except that of studies. This lasts till at least the twenty-fifth year, when the student becomes a householder if he wishes. Almost all the students thus become householders. But this stage should close at the age of fifty. During that period the householder enjoys the pleasures of life, makes money, practises a profession and rears a family. From fifty to seventy-five wife and husband should live apart and wholly devote themselves to the service of the people. They must leave their families and try to look upon the world as a big family. During the last 25 years they should become *sannyasis*, live apart, set to the people an example of ideal religious life and maintain themselves with whatever the people choose to give them. It is clear that society as a whole would be elevated if many carried out this scheme in their lives.

So far as I am aware, the *ashrama* arrangement is unknown outside India, but even in India it has practically disappeared at present. There is no such thing now as] *brahmacharya*, which is intended to be the foundation of life. For the rest we have *sannyasis*, most of them such only in name, with nothing of *sannyasa* about them except the orange robe. Many of them are ignorant, and some who have acquired learning are not knowers of *brahma* but fanatics.

There are some honourable exceptions but even these well- conducted monks lack the lustre we love to associate with *sannyasa*. It is possible that some real *sannyasis* lead a solitary life. But it is obvious that *sannyasa* as a stage in life has fallen into desuetude. A society which is served by able *sannyasis* would not be poor in spirit, unprovided even with the necessaries of life, and politically dependent\* as Hindu society is at present. If *sannyasa* were with us a living thing, it would exert a powerful influence on neighbouring faiths, for the *sannyasi* is a servant not only of Hinduism but of all the faiths of mankind.

But we can never hope to see such *sannyasis* unless *brahmacharya* is observed in the country. As for *vanaprasthya*, there is no trace of it. The last stage we

have to consider is that of the householder. But our householders are given to unregulated self-indulgence. Householders in the absence of the three other *ashramas* live like brutes. Self-restraint is the one thing which differentiates man from beast, but it is practised no longer.

The Ashram is engaged in the great endeavour to resuscitate the four *ashramas*. It is like an ant trying to lift a bag of sugar. This effort though apparently ridiculous is part of the Ashram quest of truth. All the inmates of the Ashram therefore observe *brahmacharya*. Permanent members must observe it for life. All the inmates are not members in this sense. Only a few are members, the rest are students. If this effort is crowned with success, we may hope to see a revival of the *ashrama* scheme of life. The sixteen years during which the Ashram has functioned are not a sufficiently long period for the assessment of results. I have no idea of the time when such assessment will be possible. I can only say that there is nothing like dissatisfaction with the progress achieved up to date.

If the *ashrama* scheme has broken down, the plight of the *varnas* is equally bad. At first there were four *varnas* (classes); but now there are innumerable sections or only one. If we take it that there are as many *varnas* as there are castes and subcastes, their name is legion; on the other hand if as I think *varnas* have nothing to do with caste, there is only a single *varna* left and that is the Shudra. We are here not finding fault with anybody but only stating the facts of the case. Shudras are those who serve and are dependent upon others. India is a dependency<sup>1</sup>; therefore every Indian is a Shudra. The cultivator does not own his land, the merchant his merchandise. There is hardly a Kshatriya or a Brahman who possesses the virtues which the Shastras attribute to his *varna*.

My impression is that there was no idea of high and low when the *varna* system was discovered. No one is high and no one is low in this world; therefore he who thinks he belongs to a high class is never high-class, and he who believes himself to be low is merely the victim of ignorance. He has been taught by his masters that he is low. If a Brahman has knowledge, those who are without it will respect him as a matter of course. But if he is puffed up by the respect



thus shown to him and imagines himself to belong to a high class, he directly ceases to be a Brahman. Virtue will always command respect, but when the man of virtue thinks much of himself, his virtue ceases to have any significance for the world. Talents of all kinds are a trust and must be utilized for the benefit of society. The individual has no right to live unto himself. Indeed it is impossible to live unto oneself. We fully live unto ourselves when we live unto society.

No matter what was the position in ancient times, no one can nowadays go through life claiming to belong to a high class. Society will not willingly admit any such claim to superiority, but only under duress. The world is now wide awake. This awakening has perhaps given rise to some licence, but even so public opinion is not now prepared to accept any distinctions of high and low, which are being attacked on all sides. There is ever increasing realization that all are equal as human souls. The fact that we are all the creatures of one God rules out all ideas of high and low. When we say that no one is high-born or low-born, it does not mean that all have or ought to have equal talents. All have not equal talents, equal property or equal opportunities. Still all are equal like brothers and sisters of different dispositions, abilities and ages.

If therefore the *varna* system is a spiritual arrangement, there cannot be any place in it for high and low.

Thus there are four *varnas*, all equal in status, and they are determined by birth. They can be changed by a person choosing another profession, but if *varnas* are not as a rule determined by birth, they tend to lose all meaning.

The *varna* system is ethical as well as economic. It recognises the influence of previous lives and of heredity. All are not born with equal powers and similar tendencies. Neither the parents nor the state can measure the intelligence of each child. But there would be no difficulty if each child is prepared for the profession indicated by heredity, environment and the influence of former lives; no time would be lost in fruitless experimentation, there would be no soul-killing competition, a spirit of contentment would pervade society and there would be no struggle for existence.

The *varna* system implies the obliteration of all distinctions of high and low. If the carpenter is held to be superior to the shoemaker and the pleader or doctor is superior to both of them, no one would willingly become a shoemaker or carpenter and all would try to become pleaders or doctors. They would be entitled to do so and to be praised for doing so. That is to say, the *varna* system would be looked upon as an evil and abolished as such.

But when it is suggested that everyone should practise his father's profession, the suggestion is coupled with the condition that the practitioner of every profession will earn only a living wage and no more. If the carpenter earns more than a shoemaker and the pleader or doctor more than both, everyone would become a lawyer or doctor. Such is the case at present with the result that hatred has increased and there are more lawyers and doctors than are necessary. It may be that society needs the lawyer or doctor even as it needs the shoemaker and the carpenter. These four professions are here taken only as illustrations and for comparison. It would be irrelevant to stop to consider whether society has particular need or no need at all for this, that or the other profession.

This principle then is an integral part of the *varna* system that learning is not a trade and may not be used in order to amass riches. Therefore in so far as his ministrations may be necessary, the lawyer or doctor ought by practising his profession to earn only a living wage. And such was actually the case formerly. The village *vaidya* (physician) did not earn more than the carpenter but only a living wage. In short the emoluments of all crafts and professions should be equal and amount to a living wage. The number of *varnas* has no sanctity about it; their value is due to the fact that they define the duties of man. *Varnas* may be supposed to be one or more just as we like. The scriptures enumerate four of them. But when once we have assigned equal status to all, it makes little difference whether we think that there are four of them or that there is only one.

Such is the *varna* system which the Ashram is trying to resuscitate. It is like Dame Partington with her mop, trying to push back the Atlantic Ocean. I have

already mentioned its two fundamental principles, namely that there are no high and low, and everyone is entitled to a living wage, the living wage being the same for all. In so far as these principles win acceptance, they will render a positive service to society.

It may be objected that if such a plan is accepted there will be no incentive for the acquisition of knowledge. But the object with which knowledge is acquired nowadays tends to corrupt it, and therefore the absence of an incentive will be entirely beneficial. Knowledge truly so called is intended for one's salvation, that is to say, service of mankind. Whoever has a desire to render service will certainly try to equip himself with the requisite knowledge, and his knowledge will be an ornament to himself as well as to society. Again when the temptation to amass riches is removed, there will be a change for the better in the curriculum of studies as well as in the methods of education. There is much misuse of knowledge at present. This misuse will be reduced to the minimum in the 'new order'.

Even then there will be scope for competition in trying to be good and helpful. And there will be no discontent or disorder as all will receive a living wage.

*Varna* is wrongly understood today. That wrong understanding must make way for the principles outlined above. Untouchability must go, and *varnas* should have nothing to do with inter-dining or intermarriage. A person will dine with and marry whom he likes. But as a rule he will marry someone who belongs to the same *varna* as himself. But if he marries a person belonging to another *varna*, his act will not count as a sin. A person will be boycotted not by the *varna* but by society at large when his conduct justifies such a measure. Society will be better constituted than it is at present, and the impurity and hypocrisy which infest it now will be dislodged.

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1. Written in 1932. V. G. D.

2. Written in 1932. V. G. D.

## IX. AGRICULTURE

This department of Ashram activities owes its existence to Maganlal Gandhi. But for him I would not have had the courage to take up agriculture at all, although an Ashram without it would be something like *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark. For we had not the requisite skill and environment for it as I thought Agriculture is a very big undertaking and would call for a lot of land, money and manpower. I was afraid that it would distract our attention from other necessary things which could be done and would not wait. But Maganlal was insistent and I yielded to him. 'Let me do it,' he said, 'if only for my own diversion.' Maganlal hardly ever argued with me. He thought it his duty to carry out my ideas. If he did not understand them or if he disagreed, he would tell me so. If even then I stuck to my may be susceptible of some slight improvement, but nothing definite can be said about it, as the Ashram has not the time to apply its mind to the subject.

## X. DAIRY

The Ashram ideal is to do without milk, as it holds that the milk of animals like meat is no food for mankind. For a year and more no milk or *ghi* was used in the Ashram, but as the health of the children as well as the adults suffered under this regime, first *ghi* and then milk had to be added to the Ashram dietary. And when this was done, it was clear that we must keep cattle in the Ashram.

The Ashram believes in *goraksha* (cow protection) as a religious duty. But the word *goraksha* savours of pride. Man is incompetent to 'protect' animals, being himself in need of protection from God who is the protector of all life. The word *goraksha* was therefore replaced by *goseva* (cow service). But as the experiment of doing without milk or *ghi* and thus serving the cow without any selfish considerations did not succeed, cattle were kept in the Ashram. We had buffaloes as well as cows and bullocks at first, as we had not yet realized that it was our duty to keep cows and bullocks only to the exclusion of the buffalo.

But it became clear day by day that cow service alone at present stood for the service of all sub-human life. It is the first step beyond which we have not the resources to go for the time being. Again cow slaughter is very often the cause of Hindu-Muslim tension. The Ashram believes that it is not the duty of a Hindu, nor has he the right to take away a Muslim's cow by force. There is no service to or protection of the cow in trying to save her by force; on the other hand it only expedites slaughter. Hindus can save the cow and her progeny only by doing their duty to her and thus making her slaughter a costly act which no one can afford to do. Hindu society does not discharge this duty at present. The cow suffers from neglect. The buffalo gives more and richer milk than the cow, and keeping a buffalo costs less than keeping a cow. Again if the buffalo brings forth a bull calf, people do not care what becomes of him because buffalo 'protection' or 'service' is not a religious duty for them. Hindu society has thus been short-sighted, cowardly, ignorant and selfish enough to neglect the cow and has installed the buffalo in her place, injuring both of them in the

process. The buffalo's interest is not served by our keeping her, but is in her freedom. To keep the buffalo means torturing its bull calf to death. This is not the case in all the provinces, but where the buffalo bull is useless for agricultural purposes as in Gujarat for instance, it is doomed to a premature death.

On account of these considerations, buffaloes were disposed of and the Ashram now insists on keeping cows and bullocks only. Improvement of breed, increasing the quantity and enriching the quality of milk by giving various feeds, the art of preserving milk and extracting butter from it more easily, least painful methods of castrating bull calves, – all these things are attended to. It is in an experimental stage, but the Ashram does believe that the cow will pay for its keep if she is well treated and all her products are fully utilized.

Many perhaps are not aware that a man cannot simply afford to keep a cow and slaughter is inevitable so long as that is the case. Mankind is not so benevolent that it will die to save the cow or allow it to live on itself as a parasite. The cattle population at present is so large that if it is well fed, the human population will not have enough food left for itself. We must therefore prove the proposition that the cow if well kept is capable of greater production.

If this proposition is to be proved, Hindu society must discard some superstitions masquerading as religion. Hindus do not utilize the bones etc. of dead cows; they do not care what becomes of cattle when they are dead. Instead of looking upon the occupation of a tanner as sacred, they think it unclean. Emaciated cattle are exported to and slaughtered in Australia where their bones are converted into manure, their flesh into meat extract and their hides into boots and shoes. The meat extract, the manure and the shoes are then re-exported to India and used without any compunction.

This stupidity makes for the destruction of the cow, and puts the country to huge economic losses. This is not religion but the very negation of it. Tanning has therefore been introduced in the Ashram. None of us is still a skilled tanner. No tanner from outside who would keep the Ashram rules has been available. But all the same tanning is an integral part of Ashram industry, and

we have every hope that it will be developed and propagated like spinning. The cow will cease to be a burden to the country only if dead cattle are fully utilized. Even then there will not be any profits. Religion is never opposed to economics, but it is always ranged in opposition to profits. If the cow is to pay for its keep, dead cattle should not be allowed to go to waste or to swell the profits of large-scale tanneries. This cannot be done by force. But Hindu society should keep the cow, treat her and her progeny well so long as they are alive, cherish them in their old age, and fully utilize their carcasses when they are dead. Thus alone can the cow be saved, and in saving her we shall perhaps learn how to save the rest of the sub-human creation. Thanks to our ignorance, laziness and hatred, the cow today is hastening to her destruction. As for the other cattle, the less said about them, the better.

The Ashram suggests that all *goshalas* and *panjrapoles* should be organized religiously and scientifically. The rich should have their own *goshalas* and insist on using cow's milk and *ghi* only. Trading in cow's milk should be looked upon as a sin, and the well-to-do should manage public *goshalas* so as to make both ends meet. The cow would then soon be saved.

The Ashram at present has a limited object in view: to conduct a model *goshala* at the Ashram, to breed good cows and bullocks, to utilize their carcasses fully when they are dead so as to show that cowkeeping is an economic proposition, to train workers and provide for their employment upon the completion of their training. This work is going on at present. There are many difficulties, but we are fully confident of success.

## XI. EDUCATION

This word is here used in a special as well as the current sense. The Ashram experiment in education was a trial for us as nothing else was.

We saw at once that the women and children in the Ashram should be taught to read and write, and a little later on that there should be similar facilities for even the illiterate men that came to the Ashram. Those who had already joined the Ashram could not undertake to teach. If capable teachers were to be attracted to the Ashram, the rule of *brahmacharya* had to be relaxed in their case. The Ashram was therefore divided into two sections, the teachers' quarters and the Ashram proper.

Human beings cannot overcome their weakness all at once. As soon as the two sections came into being, a feeling of superiority and inferiority poisoned the Ashram atmosphere in spite of all our efforts to scotch it. The Ashramites developed spiritual pride, which the teachers could not tolerate. This pride was an obstacle in the attainment of the Ashram ideal and therefore an aspect of untruth as well. If *brahmacharya* was to be observed in its perfection, the division was inevitable. But the *brahmacharis* had no reason to think too highly of themselves. It may be that the *brahmacharis* who sinned mentally in spite of themselves were retrogressing while those who did not claim to be *brahmacharis* but liked *bralimacharya* were making progress. This was clear to the intellect but it was not easy for all of us to put it into practice.

Then again there were differences of opinion as regards the method of education which gave rise to difficulties in administration. There were bitter discussions, but at last all calmed down and learned the lesson of forbearance. This was in my view a triumph of truth, the goal of all Ashram endeavour. Those who held divergent views harboured no evil intentions in their minds, and were indeed grieved at the divergence. They wished to practise truth as they saw it. Their partiality for their own standpoint came in the way of their giving due weight to the arguments of their opponents. Hence the quarrels which put our charity to a severe test.



I have my own perhaps peculiar views on education which have not been accepted by my colleagues in full, and here they are:

1. Young boys and girls should have co-education till they are eight years of age.
2. Their education should mainly consist in manual training under the supervision of an educationist.
3. The special aptitudes of each child should be recognised in determining the kind of work he or she should do.
4. The reasons for every process should be explained when the process is being carried on.
5. General knowledge should be imparted to each child as he begins to understand things. Learning to read or write should come later.
6. The child should first be taught to draw simple geometrical figures, and when he has learnt to draw these with ease, he should be taught to write the alphabet. If this is done, he will write a good hand from the very first.
7. Reading should come before writing. The letters should be treated as pictures to be recognised and later on to be copied.
8. A child taught on these lines will have acquired considerable knowledge according to his capacity by the time he is eight.
9. Nothing should be taught to a child by force.
10. He should be interested in everything taught to him.
11. Education should appear to the child like play. Play is an essential part of education.
12. All education should be imparted through the mother- tongue.
13. The child should be taught Hindi-Urdu as the national language, before he learns letters.
14. Religious education is indispensable and the child should get it by watching the teacher's conduct and by hearing him talk about it.
15. Nine to sixteen constitutes the second stage in the child's education.
16. It is desirable that boys and girls should have coeducation during the second stage also as far as possible.
17. Hindu children should now be taught Sanskrit, and Muslim children Arabic.

18. Manual training should be continued during the second stage. Literary education should be allotted more time as is necessary.
19. The boys during this stage should be taught their parents' vocation in such a way that they will by their own choice obtain their livelihood by practising the hereditary craft. This does not apply to the girls.
20. During this stage the child should acquire a general knowledge of world history and geography, botany, astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, and algebra.
21. Each child should now be taught to sew and to cook.
22. Sixteen to twenty-five is the third stage, during which every young person should have an education according to his or her wishes and circumstances.
23. During the second stage (9-16) education should be self-supporting; that is, the child, all the time that he is learning, is working upon some industry, the proceeds of which will meet the expenditure of the school.
24. Production starts from the very beginning, but during the first stage it does not still catch up with the expenditure.
25. Teachers should be paid not very high salaries but only a living wage. They should be inspired by a spirit of service. It is a despicable thing to take any Tom, Dick or Harry as a teacher in the primary stage. All teachers should be men of character.
26. Big and expensive buildings are not necessary for educational institutions.
27. English should be taught only as one of several languages. As Hindi is the national language, English is to be used in dealing with other nations and international commerce.

As for women's education I am not sure whether it should be different from men's and when it should begin. But I am strongly of opinion that women should have the same facilities as men and even special facilities where necessary.

There should be night schools for illiterate adults. But I do not think that they must be taught the three R's; they must be helped to acquire general

knowledge through lectures etc., and if they wish, we should arrange to teach them the three R's also.

Experiments in the Ashram have convinced us of one thing, viz. that industry in general and spinning in particular should have pride of place in education, which must be largely self-supporting as well as related to and tending to the betterment of rural life.

In these experiments we have achieved the largest measure of success with the women who have imbibed the spirit of freedom and self-confidence as no other class of women have done to my knowledge. This success is due to the Ashram atmosphere. Women in the Ashram are not subject to any restraint, which is not imposed on the men as well. They are placed on a footing of absolute equality with the men in all activities. Not a single Ashram task is assigned to the women, to the exclusion of the men. Cooking is attended to by both. Women are of course exempted from work which is beyond their strength; otherwise men and women work together everywhere. There is no such thing as *pardah* or *laj* in the Ashram. No matter from where she has come, a woman, as soon as she enters the Ashram, breathes the air of freedom and casts out all fear from her mind. And I believe that the Ashram observance of *brahmacharya* has made a big contribution to this state of things. Adult girls live in the Ashram as virgins. We are aware that this experiment is fraught with risk, but we feel that no awakening among women is possible without incurring it.

Women cannot make any progress so long as there are child marriages. All girls are supposed to be in duty bound to marry and that too before menstruation commences, and widow remarriage is not permitted. Women, therefore, when they join the Ashram, are told that these social customs are wrong and irreligious. But they are not shocked as they find the Ashram practising what it preaches.

Not much of what is usually called education will be observed in the Ashram. Still we find that the old as well as the young, women as well as men are eager to acquire knowledge and complain that they have no time for it. This is a good sign. Many who join the Ashram are not educated or even interested in

education. Some of them can hardly read or write. They had no desire for progress so long as they had not joined the Ashram. But when they have lived in the Ashram for a little while, they conceive a desire for increasing their knowledge. This is a great thing, as to create a desire for knowledge is very often the first step to be taken. But I do not regret it very much that there are insufficient facilities in the Ashram calculated to satisfy this desire. The observances kept in the Ashram will perhaps prevent a sufficient number of qualified teachers from joining it. We must therefore rest satisfied with such Ashramites as can be trained to teach. The numerous activities of the Ashram may come in the way of their acquiring the requisite qualifications at all or at an early date. But it does not matter much, as the desire for knowledge can be satisfied later as well as sooner, being independent of a time limit. Real education begins after a child has left school. One who has appreciated the value of studies is a student all his life. His knowledge must increase from day to day while he is discharging his duty in a conscientious manner. And this is well understood in the Ashram.

The superstition that no education is possible without a teacher is an obstacle in the path of educational progress. A man's real teacher is himself. And now-a-days there are numerous aids available for self-education. A diligent person can easily acquire knowledge about many things by himself and obtain the assistance of a teacher when it is needed. Experience is the biggest of all schools. Quite a number of crafts cannot be learnt at school but only in the workshop. Knowledge of these acquired at school is often only parrot-like. Other subjects can be learnt with the help of books. Therefore what adults need is not so much a school as a thirst for knowledge, diligence and self-confidence.

The education of children is primarily a duty to be discharged by the parents. Therefore the creation of a vital educational atmosphere is more important than the foundation of numerous schools. When once this atmosphere has been established on a firm footing, the schools will come in due course.

This is the Ashram ideal of education which has been realized to some extent, as every department of Ashram activity is a veritable school.

## **XII. SATYAGRAHA**

[This section Gandhiji had proposed to devote to Satyagraha as the golden sword to be wielded against 'co-workers, relatives, society, the state or the world". But the manuscript ends here on July 11, 1932. V. G. D.]

## APPENDIX A

### SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM

Founded on Vaishakha Shudi 11, Samvat 1971, – May 25, 1915 – at Kochrab, Ahmedabad and since removed to Sabarmati, a junction station near Ahmedabad.

#### Object

The object of this Ashram is that its members should qualify themselves for, and make a constant endeavour towards, the service of the country, not inconsistent with the universal welfare.

#### Observances

The following observances are essential for the fulfillment of the above object:

##### 1. Truth

Truth is not fulfilled by mere abstinence from telling or practising an untruth in ordinary relations with fellow-men. But Truth is God, the one and only Reality. All other observances take their rise from the quest for, and the worship of, Truth. Worshippers of Truth must not resort to untruth, even for what they may believe to be the good of the country, and they may be required, like Prahlad, civilly to disobey the orders even of parents and elders in virtue of their paramount loyalty to Truth.

##### 2. Non-violence or Love

Mere non-killing is not enough. The active part of Non-violence is Love. The law of Love requires equal consideration for all life from the tiniest insect to the highest man. One who follows this law must not be angry even with the perpetrator of the greatest imaginable wrong, but must love him, wish him well and serve him. Although he must thus love the wrong-doer, he must never submit to his wrong or his injustice, but must oppose it with all his might, and must patiently and without resentment suffer all the hardships to which the wrong-doer may subject him in punishment for his opposition.

### 3. Chastity (Brahmacharya)

Observance of the foregoing principles is impossible without the observance of celibacy. It is not enough that one should not look upon any woman or man with a lustful eye; animal passion must be so controlled as to be excluded even from the mind. If married, one must not have a carnal mind regarding one's wife or husband, but must consider her or him as one's lifelong friend, and establish relationship of perfect purity. A sinful touch, gesture or word is a direct breach of this principle.

### 4. Control of the Palate

The observance of *brahmacharya* has been found, from experience, to be extremely difficult so long as one has not acquired mastery over taste. Control of the palate has therefore been placed as a principle by itself. Eating is necessary only for sustaining the body and keeping it a fit instrument for service, and must never be practised for self-indulgence. Food must therefore be taken, like medicine, under proper restraint. In pursuance of this principle one must eschew exciting foods, such as spices and condiments. Meat, liquor, tobacco, *bhang* etc. are excluded from the Ashram. This principle requires abstinence from feasts or dinners which have pleasure as their object.

### 5. Non-stealing

It is not enough not to take another's property without his permission. One becomes guilty of theft even by using differently anything which one has received in trust for use in a particular way, as well as by using a thing longer than the period for which it has been lent. It is also theft if one receives anything which he does not really need. The fine truth at the bottom of this principle is that Nature provides just enough and no more, for our daily need.

### 6. Non-possession or Poverty

This principle is really a part of No. V. Just as one must not receive, so must one not possess anything which one does not really need. It would be a breach of this principle to possess unnecessary foodstuffs, clothing, or furniture. For



instance one must not keep a chair if one can do without it. In observing this principle one is led to a progressive simplification of one's own life.

### **7. Physical Labour**

Physical labour is essential for the observance of Non-stealing and Non-possession. Man can be saved from injuring society, as well as himself, only if he sustains his physical existence by physical labour. Able-bodied adults must do all their personal work themselves, and must not be served by others, except for proper reasons. But they must at the same time remember, that service of children, as well as of the disabled, the old and the sick, is a duty incumbent on every person who has the required strength.

### **8. Swadeshi**

Man is not omnipotent. He therefore serves the world best by first serving his neighbour. This is Swadeshi, a principle which is broken when one professes to serve those who are more remote in preference to those who are near.

Observance of Swadeshi makes for order in the world ; the breach of it leads to chaos. Following this principle, one must as far as possible purchase one's requirements locally and not buy things imported from foreign lands, which can easily be manufactured in the country. There is no place for self-interest in Swadeshi, which enjoins the sacrifice of oneself for the family, of the family for the village, of the village for the country, and of the country for humanity.

### **9. Fearlessness**

One cannot follow Truth or Love so long as one is subject to fear. As there is at present a reign\* of fear in the country, meditation on and cultivation of fearlessness have a particular importance. Hence its separate mention as an observance. A seeker after Truth must give up the fear of parents, caste, government, robbers etc., and he must not be frightened by poverty or death.

### **10. Removal of Untouchability**

Untouchability, which has taken such deep root in Hinduism, is altogether irreligious. Its removal has therefore been treated as an independent principle.

The so-called untouchables have an equal place in the Ashram with other classes. The Ashram does not believe in caste which, it considers, has injured Hinduism, because its implications of superior and inferior status, and of pollution by contact are contrary to the law of Love. The Ashram however believes in *varnashrama dharma*. The division of *varncis* is based upon occupation, and therefore, a person should maintain himself by following the hereditary occupation, not inconsistent with fundamental morals, and should devote all his spare time and energy to the acquisition and advancement of true knowledge. The *ashramas* (the four stages) spoken of in the *smritis* are conducive to the welfare of mankind. Though, therefore, the Ashram believes in *varnashrama dharma*. there is no place in it for distinction of *varnas* as the Ashram life is conceived in the light of the comprehensive and non-formal *sannyasa* of the Bhagavadgita.

## 11. Tolerance

The Ashram believes that the principal faiths of the world constitute a revelation of Truth, but as they have all been outlined by imperfect man, they have been affected by imperfections and alloyed with untruth. One must therefore entertain the same respect for the religious faiths of others as one accords to one's own. Where such tolerance becomes a law of life, conflict between different faiths .becomes impossible, and so does all effort to convert other people to one's own faith. One can only pray that the defects in the various faiths may be overcome, and that they may advance, side by side, towards perfection.

### Activities

As a result of and in order to help fulfillment of these observances, the following activities are carried on in the Ashram:

#### I. Worship

The social (as distinguished from the individual) activities of the Ashram commence every day with the congregational morning worship at 4: 15 to 4: 45 and close with the evening prayer at 7 to 7: 30. All inmates are expected to

attend the worship. This worship has been conceived as an aid to self-purification and dedication of one's all to God.

## **II. Sanitary Service**

This is an essential and sacred service and yet it is looked down upon in society, with the result that it is generally neglected and affords considerable scope for improvement. The Ashram, therefore, lays special stress upon engaging no outside labour for this work. The members themselves attend in turns to the whole of the sanitation. New entrants are generally first of all attached to this department. Trenches are sunk to the depth of nine inches, and the nightsoil is buried in them and covered with the excavated earth. It thus becomes converted into valuable manure. Calls of nature are attended to only at places assigned for the purpose. Care is taken that the roads and paths should not be spoiled by spitting or otherwise.

## **III. Sacrificial Spinning**

Today Indians most urgent problem is the growing starvation of her millions, which is chiefly due to the deliberate destruction, by alien rule, of her principal auxiliary industry of hand-spinning. With a view to its rehabilitation in national life, spinning has been made the central activity of the Ashram, and is compulsory for all members as a national sacrifice. The following are the various branches of work in this department:

- I. Cotton cultivation
- II. Workshop for making and repairing spinning wheels, spindles, carding bows et cetera;
- III. Ginning;
- IV. Carding;
- V. Spinning;
- VI. Weaving cloth, carpets, tape, rope, et cetera ;
- VII. Dyeing and printing.

#### **IV. Agriculture**

Cotton for the khadi work and fodder crops for the cattle are the chief activities of this department. Vegetables fruit are also grown in order to make the Ashram as far as possible self-contained.

#### **V. Dairy**

An attempt is being made to convert into a model dairy the Ashram dairy which supplies milk to the inmates. Since last year this dairy is being carried on in consonance with the principles of and with the pecuniary help of the All-India Cow Protection Association, but as an integral part of the Ashram itself. There are at present 27 cows, 47 calves and young stock, 10 bullocks and 4 bulls. The average daily output of milk is 200 pounds.

#### **VI. Tannery**

At the instance and with the help of the All-India Cow Protection Association, a tannery has been established for the tanning of dead-cattle hides. There is attached to it a sandal and shoe-making department. The dairy and tannery have been established because the Ashram believes, in spite of the claim Hindus make to the protection of the cow, that Indian cattle will further and further deteriorate and ultimately die out, carrying man along with them, unless vigorous attention is paid to cattle-breeding, cattle-feeding and the utilization in the country of dead-cattle hides.

#### **VII. National Education**

An attempt is made in the Ashram to import such education as is conducive to national welfare. In order that spiritual, intellectual and physical development may proceed side by side, an atmosphere of industry has been created, and letters are not given more than their due importance. Character building is attended to in the smallest detail. 'Untouchable' children are freely admitted. Women are given special attention with a view to improving their status, and they are accorded the same opportunities for self-culture as the men. The Ashram accepts the following principles of the Gujarat Vidyapith:

1. The principal object of the Vidyapith shall be to prepare workers of character, ability, education and conscientiousness, necessary for the conduct of the movements connected with the attainment of Swaraj.
2. All the institutions conducted by and affiliated to the Vidyapith shall be fully non-co-operating and shall therefore have nothing to do with any help from Government.\*
3. Whereas the Vidyapith has come into being in connection with the Swaraj movement, and non-violent non-co-operation as a means thereof, its teachers and trustees shall restrict themselves to those means only which are not inconsistent with truth and non-violence and shall consciously strive to carry them out.
4. The teachers and the trustees of the Vidyapith, as also all the institutions affiliated to it, shall regard untouchability as a blot on Hinduism, shall strive to the best of their power for its removal, and shall not exclude a boy or girl for reason of his or her untouchability nor shall give him or her differential treatment having once accorded admission to him or her.
5. The teachers and the trustees of, and all the institutions affiliated to, the Vidyapith shall regard hand spinning as an essential part of the Swaraj movement and shall therefore spin regularly, except when disabled, and shall habitually wear Khadi.
6. The language of the province shall have the principal place in the Vidyapith and shall be the medium of instruction.

Explanation : Languages other than Gujarati may be taught by direct method.

7. The teaching of Hindi-Hindustani shall be compulsory in the curricula of the Vidyapith.
8. Manual training shall receive the same importance as intellectual training and only such occupations as are useful for the life of the nation shall be taught.
9. Whereas the growth of the nation depends not on its cities but its villages, the bulk of the funds of the Vidyapith and a majority of the teachers of

the Vidyapith shall be employed in the propagation of education conducive to the welfare of the villages.

10. In laying down the curricula, the needs of village dwellers shall have principal consideration.
11. There shall be complete toleration of all established religions in all institutions conducted by and affiliated to the Vidyapith; and for the spiritual development of the pupils, religious instruction shall be imparted in consonance with truth and non-violence.
12. For the physical development of the nation physical exercise and physical training shall be compulsory in all the institutions conducted by and affiliated to the Vidyapith.

*Note* : Hindi-Hindustani means the language commonly spoken by the masses of the North – both Hindu and Musalman – and written in the Devanagari or the Arabic script.

### **VIII. 8. Khadi Technical School**

A separate technical school is conducted, which prepares candidates for the Khadi Service on behalf of the All-India Spinners' Association. . . . The curriculum is as follows :

21 weeks spinning...

7 weeks carding...

2 weeks ginning...

Handloom weaving...

Carpentry...

The average monthly food bill per student amounts to about 12 rupees. . . .

## Daily Routine

4 a.m.	Rising from bed
4:15 to 4.45	Morning prayer
5 to 6:10	Bath, exercise, study
6:10 to 6:30	Breakfast
6.30 to 7	Women's prayer class
7 to 10:30	Body labour, education and sanitation
10:45 to 11:15	Dinner
11:15 to 12	Rest
12 to 4:30	Body labour including classes
4.30 to 5:30	Recreation
5:30 to 6	Supper
6 to 7	Recreation
7 to 7:30	Common worship
7.30 to 9	Recreation
9	Retiring bell

*Note* : These hours are subject to change whenever necessary.

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1. A reference to British rule in India. V. G. D.

2. Refers to the British Government. V. G. D.

## APPENDIX B

### GANDHIJI ON THE OBSERVANCES

To many of the students who came here last year to converse with me, I said I was about to establish an institution – *ashram* – somewhere in India, and it is about that place that I am going to talk to you this morning\*. I feel and I have felt during the whole of my public life that what we need, what a nation needs, but we perhaps of all the nations of the world need just now, is nothing else and nothing less than character-building. And this is the view propounded by that great patriot, Mr Gokhale (cheers). As you know, in many of his speeches he used to say that we would get nothing, we would deserve nothing, unless we had character to back what we wished for. Hence his founding of the great body, the Servants of India Society. And as you know, in the prospectus that has been issued in connection with the Society, Mr Gokhale has deliberately stated that it is necessary to spiritualize the political life of the country. You know also that he used to say often that our average was less than the average of so many European nations. I do not know whether that statement by him, whom with pride I consider my political guru, has foundation in fact, but I do believe that there is much to be said to justify it in so far as educated India is concerned; not because we, the educated portion of the community, have blundered, but because we have been creatures of circumstances. Be that as it may, this is the maxim of life which I have accepted, namely, that no work done by any man, no matter how great he is, will really prosper unless he has a religious backing. But what is religion? – the question will be immediately asked. I for one would answer: Not the religion which you will get after reading all the scriptures of the world; it is not really a grasp by the brain, but it is a heart-grasp. It is a thing which is not alien to us, but which has to be evolved out of us. It is always within us, with some consciously so, with others quite unconsciously. But it is there; and whether we wake up this religious instinct in us through outside assistance or by inward growth, no matter how it is done, it



has got to be done if we want to do anything in the right manner and anything that is going to persist.

Our scriptures have laid down certain rules as maxims of life and as axioms which we have to take for granted as self-evident truths. The *shastras* tell us that without living according to these maxims, we are incapable even of having a reasonable perception of religion. Believing in these implicitly for all these long years and having actually endeavoured to reduce to practice these injunctions of the *shastras*, I have deemed it necessary to seek the association of those who think with me in founding this institution. And I shall venture this morning to place before you the rules that have been drawn up and that have to be observed by everyone who seeks to be a member of that *ashram*.

Five of these are known as *yamas*, and the first and foremost is Truth.

### Truth

Not truth simply as we ordinarily understand it, that as far as possible we ought not to resort to a lie; that is to say, not truth which merely answers the saying "Honesty is the best policy" implying that if it is not the *best* policy, we may depart from it. But Truth, as it is conceived here, means that we have to rule our life by this law of Truth at any cost. In order to clarify the definition, I have drawn upon the celebrated illustration of the life of Prahlad. For the sake of Truth, he dared to oppose his own father, and he defended himself, not by retaliation, by paying his father back in his own coin, but in defence of Truth as he knew it, he was prepared to die without caring to return the blows that he received from his father or from those who were charged with his father's instructions. Not only that; he would not even parry the blows. On the contrary, with a smile on his lips, he underwent the innumerable tortures to which he was subjected, with the result that at last Truth rose triumphant. Not that Prahlad suffered the tortures because he knew that some day or other in his very lifetime he would be able to demonstrate the infallibility of the law of Truth. The fact was there; but if he had died in the midst of tortures, he would still have adhered to Truth. That is the Truth which I would like to follow. There was an incident I noticed yesterday. It was a trifling incident, but I think

these trifling incidents are like straws which show which way the wind is blowing. It happened like this. I was talking to a friend who wanted to talk to me aside, and we were engaged in a private conversation. Another friend dropped in, and he politely asked whether he was intruding. The friend to whom I was talking said: "Oh, no; there is nothing private here." I felt taken aback a little, because as I was taken aside, I knew that so far as this friend was concerned, the conversation was private. But he immediately out of politeness, I would call it over-politeness, said that there was no private conversation and that he (the other friend) could join. I suggest to you that this is a departure from my definition of Truth. I think that the friend should have, in the gentlest manner possible, but still openly and frankly said, "Yes, just now, as you rightly say, you would be intruding," without giving the slightest offence to the person if he was himself a gentleman – and we are bound to consider everybody a gentleman unless he proves to be otherwise. But I may be told that the incident, after all, proves the gentility of the nation. I think that it is over-proving the case. If we continue to say these things out of politeness, we really become a nation of hypocrites. I recall a conversation I had with an English friend. He was comparatively a stranger. He is principal of a college and has been in India for several years. He was comparing notes with me, and he asked me whether I would admit that we, unlike most Englishmen, would not dare to say no when it was not that we meant. And I must confess that I immediately said yes; I agreed with that statement. We do hesitate to say no frankly and boldly, when we want to pay undue regard to the sentiment of the person whom we are addressing. In this Ashram we make it a rule that we must say no when we mean no, regardless of consequences. This then is the first rule. Then we come to *ahimsa*.

### Ahimsa

Literally *ahimsa* means non-killing. But to me it has a world of meaning and takes me into realms much higher, infinitely higher, than the realm to which I would go if I merely understood by *ahimsa* non-killing. *Ahimsa* really means that you may not offend anybody, you may not harbour an uncharitable thought

even in connection with one who may consider himself to be your enemy. Pray notice the guarded nature of this thought. I do not say "whom you consider your enemy," but "who may consider himself your enemy." For one who follows the doctrine of *ahimsa* there is no room for an enemy; he denies the existence of an enemy. But there are people who consider themselves to be his enemies, and he cannot help it. So it is held that we may not harbour an evil thought even in connection with such persons. If we return blow for blow, we depart from the doctrine of *ahimsa*. But I go further. If we resent a friend's action or the so-called enemy's action, we still fall short of this doctrine. But when I say we should not resent, I do not say that we should acquiesce. By resenting I mean wishing that some harm should be done to the enemy, or that he should be put out of the way, not even by any action of ours, but by the action of somebody else, or say by divine agency. If we harbour even this thought, we commit a breach of *ahimsa*. Those who join the Ashram have literally to accept that meaning. That does not mean that we practise this doctrine in its entirety. Far from it. It is an ideal which we have to reach, and it is an ideal to be reached even at this very moment if we were capable of doing so. But it is not a proposition in geometry to be learnt by heart; it is not even like solving difficult problems in higher mathematics; it is infinitely more difficult than that. Many of you have burnt the midnight oil in solving those problems. If you want to follow out this doctrine, you will have to do much more than burn the midnight oil. You will have to pass many a sleepless night, and go through many a mental torture and agony before you can reach, before you can even be within measurable distance of this goal. It is the goal, and nothing less than that, you and I have to reach, if we want to understand what religious life means. I will not say more on this doctrine than this; that a "man who believes in the efficacy of this doctrine finds, in the ultimate stage when he is about to reach the goal, the whole world at his feet. Not that he wants the whole world at his feet, but it must be so. If you express your love — *ahimsa* — in such a manner that it impresses itself indelibly upon your so-called enemy, he must return that love. Another thought which comes out of this is that under this rule there is no room for organized assassinations, and there is no room for

murders even openly committed, and there is no room for any violence even for the sake of your country, and even for guarding the honour of precious ones that may be in your charge. After all that would be a poor defence of honour. This doctrine of *ahimsa* tells us that we may guard the honour of those who are in our charge by delivering ourselves into the hands of the man who would commit the sacrilege. And that requires far greater physical and mental courage than the delivering of blows. You may have some degree of physical power, – I do not say courage, – and you may use that power. But after that is expended, what happens? The other man is filled with wrath and indignation, and you have made him more angry by matching your violence against his ; and when he has done you to death, the rest of his violence is delivered against your charge. But if you do not retaliate but stand your ground between your charge and the opponent, simply receiving the blows without retaliating, what happens? I give you my promise that the whole of his violence will be expended on you and your charge will be left unscathed. Under this plan of life there is no conception of patriotism which justifies such wars as you witness today in Europe.

Then there is celibacy.

### **Celibacy**

Those who want to perform national service, or those who want to have a glimpse of real religious life, must lead a celibate life, no matter whether married or unmarried. Marriage but brings a woman closer to the man. and they become friends in a special sense, never to be parted either in this life or in the lives that are to come. I do not think, that in our conception of marriage, our lust should necessarily enter. Be that as it may, this is what is placed before those who come to the Ashram.

Then we have control of the palate.

### **Control of the Palate**

A man who wants to control animal passion does so more easily if he controls his palate. I am afraid this is a rather difficult observance. I am just now

coming after having inspected the Victoria hostel. I saw there not to my dismay, – though it should be to my dismay, – but I am used to it now, that there are so many kitchens, not kitchens that are established in order to serve caste restrictions but kitchens that have become necessary in order that people can have the condiments and the exact weight of the condiments to which they are accustomed in the places from which they have come. And therefore we find that for the Brahmans themselves there are different compartments and different kitchens catering for the delicate tastes of all those different groups. I suggest that this is simply slavery to the palate, rather than mastery over it. I may say this. Unless we take our minds off from this habit, unless we shut our eyes to the tea shops and coffee shops and all these kitchens, unless we are satisfied with foods that are necessary for the maintenance of health, and unless we are prepared to rid ourselves of stimulating, heating and exciting condiments that we mix with our food, we shall certainly not be able to control the overabundant and unnecessary stimulation that we may have. If we do not do that, the result naturally is that we abuse ourselves and we abuse even the sacred trust given to us, and we become inferior to animals. Eating, drinking and indulging in passion we share in common with the animals; but have you ever seen a horse or a cow indulging in the abuse of the palate as we do? Do you suppose that it is a sign of civilization, a sign of real life that we should multiply our eatables so far that we do not even know where we are and seek dish after dish until at last we have become absolutely mad and run after the newspaper sheets which give us advertisements about these dishes?

Then we have Non-stealing.

### **Non-stealing**

I suggest that we are thieves in a way. If I take anything that I do not need for my own immediate use and keep it, I steal it from somebody else. I venture to suggest that it is the fundamental law of Nature without exception, that she produces enough for our wants from day to day, and if everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism, there would be no man dying of starvation in this world. But so long as we have got this

inequality, so long we are stealing. I am no socialist, and I do not want to dispossess those who have got possessions; but I do say that those of us who want to see light out of darkness have to follow this rule in their own lives. I do not want to dispossess anybody, for J should then be departing from the rule of *ahimsa*. If somebody else possesses more than I do, let him. But so far as my own life has to be regulated. I do say that I dare not possess anything which I do not need. In India we have got millions of people living on one meal a day, and that meal consisting of a *chapati* with no fat spread on it and a pinch of salt. You and I have no right to anything more until these millions are clothed and fed better. You and I, who ought to know better, must adjust our wants, and even undergo voluntary starvation, in order that they may be fed and clothed.

Then there is Non-possession which follows as a matter of course.

Next is Swadeshi.

### Swadeshi

Swadeshi is an essential observance. I suggest that we are departing from one of the sacred laws of our being when we leave our neighbour and go out somewhere else in order to satisfy our wants. If a man comes from Bombay here and offers you wares, you are not justified in supporting the Bombay merchant so long as you have got a merchant at your very door, born and bred in Madras. That is my view of Swadeshi. In your village, so long as you have got your village barber, you are bound to support him to the exclusion of the finished barber who may come to you from Madras. If you find it necessary that your village barber should reach the attainments of the barber from Madras, you may train him to that. Send him to Madras by all means, if you wish, in order that he may learn his calling. Until you do that you are not justified in going to another barber. That is Swadeshi. So when we find that there are many things that we cannot get in India, we must try to do without them. We have to do without many things which we may consider necessary; but believe me, when you are in that frame of mind, you will find a great burden taken off your shoulders, even as the Pilgrim did in the inimitable book, *The Pilgrim's*

*Progress.* There came a time when the mighty burden that the Pilgrim was carrying on his shoulders dropped from him, and he felt a freer man than he was when he started on the journey. So will you feel freer men than you are now, immediately you adopt Swadeshi.

We then have Fearlessness.

### **Fearlessness**

I found throughout my wanderings in India, that India, educated India is seized with a paralysing fear. We may not open our lips in public; we may not declare our confirmed opinions in public; we may hold those opinions and may talk about them secretly, but they are not for public consumption. If we had taken a vow of silence, I would have nothing to say. But when we open our lips in public, we say things we do not really believe in. I do not know whether this is not true of almost every public man who speaks in India. I then suggest to you that there is only one Being, – if Being is the proper term to be used, – whom we have to fear, and that is God. When we fear God, we shall fear no man, no matter how highly placed he may be. And if you want to follow the vow of Truth in any shape or form, you must be fearless. And so you find, in the Bhagavadgita, fearlessness is designated the first essential quality of a good man. We fear consequences, and therefore we are afraid to tell the truth. A man who fears God will certainly not fear any earthly consequence. Before we can aspire to understand what religion is, and before we can aspire to guide the destinies of India, do you not see that we should adopt this habit of fearlessness? Or shall we overawe our countrymen, even as we are overawed? We thus see how important fearlessness is.

Then we come to the removal of untouchability.

### **Removing Untouchability**

Untouchability is a blot that Hinduism today carries with it. I decline to believe that it has been handed to us from immemorial times. I think that this miserable, wretched, enslaving spirit of untouchability must have come to us when we were in the cycle of our lives at our lowest ebb, and that evil has still

stuck to us and it still remains with us. It is to my mind a curse, that has come to us, and as long as that curse remains with us, so long I think we are bound to hold that every affliction that we labour under in this sacred land is a fit and proper punishment for this great crime that we are committing. That any person should be considered untouchable because of his calling passes one's comprehension; and you, the student world who receive all this modern education, if you become a party to this crime, it were better that you received no education whatsoever.

Of course, we are labouring under a very heavy handicap. Although you may realize that there cannot be a single human being on this earth who should be considered untouchable, you cannot react upon your families, you cannot react upon your surroundings, because all your thought is conceived in a foreign tongue, and all your energy is devoted to it. Therefore we have also introduced a rule in this Ashram, that the medium of instruction shall be the mother tongue.

### **Education through the Mother Tongue**

In Europe every cultured man learns, not only his language, but also other languages, sometimes three or four. And even as they do in Europe, in order to solve the problem of language in India, we in this Ashram make it a point to learn as many Indian languages as we can. And I assure you that the trouble of learning these languages is nothing compared with the trouble that we have to take in mastering English. Indeed we never master English: with some exceptions it has not been possible for us to do so: we can never express ourselves as clearly in English as in the mother tongue. How dare we rub out of our memory all the years of our infancy? But that is precisely what we do, when we commence our higher education, as we call it, through the medium of a foreign tongue. This creates a breach in our life, for which we shall have to pay dearly and heavily. And you will see now the connection between these two things, — education and untouchability — this persistence of the spirit of untouchability even at this time of the day in spite of the spread of education. Education has enabled us to see the horrible crime. But we are seized with fear



and therefore we cannot take this doctrine to our homes. And we have got a superstitious veneration for our family traditions and for the members of our family. You say, "My parents will die if I tell them that I at least can no longer participate in this crime." I say that Prahlad never feared that his father would die if he took the holy name of Vishnu. On the contrary, he made the whole house ring from one corner to another, by repeating that name even in the sacred presence of his father. And so you and I may do this thing in the presence of our parents. If, after receiving this rude shock, some of them expire, I think that would be no calamity. It may be that some rude shocks of this kind might have to be delivered. So long as we persist in these things which have been handed down to us for generations, these incidents may happen. But there is a higher law of Nature, and in due obedience to that higher law, my parents and myself should make that sacrifice.

And next we come to hand weaving.

### **Hand Weaving**

You may ask: "Why should we use our hands?" and say, "Manual work must be done by those who are illiterate. I can only occupy myself with reading literature and political essays." But I think we have to realize the dignity of labour. If a barber or shoe-maker attends a college, he ought not to abandon the profession of barber or shoe-maker. I hold that a barber's profession is just as good for instance as that of medicine.

### **Politics**

Last of all, when you have observed these rules, think that then, and not till then, you may come to politics and dabble in them to your heart's content, and certainly you will then never go wrong. Politics, divorced of religion, has absolutely no meaning. If the student world crowd the political platforms of this country, to my mind it is not necessarily a healthy sign of national growth. But that does not mean that you, in your student life, ought not to study politics. Politics are a part of our being; we ought to understand our national institutions, and we ought to understand our national growth and all those things. We may do it from our infancy. So, in our Ashram, every child is taught

to understand the political institutions of our country, and to know how the country is vibrating with new emotions, with new aspirations, with a new life. But we want also the steady light, the infallible light, of religious faith, not a faith which appeals to the intelligence, but a faith which is indelibly inscribed on the heart. First, we want to realize that religious consciousness; and once we have done that, I think all departments of life are open to us and it should then be a sacred privilege of students as well as others, to participate in the whole of life, so that when they grow to manhood and when they leave their colleges, they may do so as men properly equipped for the battle of life. Today what happens is this. Much of the political life is confined to student life; immediately the students leave their colleges and cease to be students, they sink into oblivion, they seek miserable employment, carrying miserable emoluments, rising no higher in their aspirations, knowing nothing of God, knowing nothing of fresh air or bright light, and nothing of the real vigorous independence that comes out of obedience to these laws that I have ventured to place before you.

[This address has been reported very badly, but the report has been passed with only some essential corrections, as the discerning reader will not find it difficult to understand what Gandhiji meant to say.

V. G. D.]

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1. Address delivered at the Y. M. C. A. Auditorium, Madras, on February 6, 1916 (*Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*. Natesan, Madras).

## APPENDIX C

### RULES FOR SEVAGRAM ASHRAM

Life members of the Ashram are those who believe in the necessity of keeping the eleven observances, and endeavour to do so to the best of their ability, and who will stay in the Ashram even after Gandhiji's death and render lifelong service through the activities of the Ashram.

The names of those who come under this category should be placed on record. They should sign the following pledge:

"We the undersigned believe in the necessity of keeping the eleven observances, and will endeavour to do so to the best of our ability. We will live in the Ashram till death even when Gandhiji is no longer with us in the flesh and will perform the duties assigned to us."

The second class of inmates is those who have joined the Ashram for service. They are non-permanent members. And the third class is visitors and guests who come to the Ashram for a short time.

One of the life members shall be the manager. He will be selected by Gandhiji. After his [Gandhiji's] death, and on the manager ceasing for some reason to hold that office, the life members shall elect a new manager.

The manager shall have charge of the entire administration of the Ashram and assign to the inmates their respective duties. As far as possible, the manager will try to obtain the consent of the life members in doing this.

The Ashram accounts shall be duly kept, and audited once a year. The statement of accounts shall be sent to the trustees of the Ashram and to the President of the Gandhi Seva Sangh.

The rules deducible from the observances and essential for a well-regulated Ashram life are as follows:

All members – whether permanent or otherwise – will turn every minute of their time to good account. They will take part in every corporate activity of

the Ashram. When free from Ashram work they will spin or carry out some other process connected with cotton. They will prosecute their private studies from 8 to 9 p.m., or during daytime, when they have no Ashram work to do and have spun for at least one hour.

They may not spin when they are ill or otherwise unable to spin owing to circumstances beyond their control.

No one should talk idly or in a loud voice. The Ashram must bear the impress of perfect peace as well as of truth. Our relations with one another must be characterized by affection and restraint and with guests and visitors by courtesy. Whether a visitor is dressed in rags or in gorgeous robes, we should treat him with uniform respect. We must not make any distinction between the rich and the poor, the noble and the simple. This does not mean that we may expect a delicately nurtured guest to live as simply as ourselves. That is to say, in waiting upon guests, we must always take into consideration their habitual mode of life. This is true courtesy. If an unknown visitor arrives at the Ashram we must ask him the purpose of his visit, and if necessary, take him to the manager.

Our every word and every act should be well thought out. Whatever we do we must do with a will and complete identification with what we are doing at the moment. For instance we must not talk at meals or while cutting vegetables.

Food must be taken like medicine, under proper restraint, only for sustaining the body and keeping it a fit instrument for service. We must therefore take food in moderation or even abstemiously. We must be content with what food we get. If it is insufficiently or badly cooked, we must not talk about it at meals, but courteously speak about it later to the manager of the kitchen. Bad or imperfectly cooked food should not be eaten.

We must not smack the lips while eating. We must eat our food slowly, decorously and neatly in a spirit of thankfulness to God.

Everyone must wash his own dish thoroughly and keep it in its place.

Guests and visitors are requested to bring their own plate, drinking pot, bowls and spoon, as well as lantern, bedding, mosquito net and napkins. They must not have more clothes than necessary. Their clothes should be made of khadi. Other things must be as far as possible village-made or at least Swadeshi.

Everything must be kept in its proper place. All refuse must be put into the dustbin.

Water must not be wasted. Boiled water is used for drinking purposes. Pots and pans are finally washed with boiled water. Unboiled water of the Ashram wells is not safe to drink. It is necessary to learn the distinction between boiling water and hot water. Boiling water is that with which pulses are cooked, and which gives out lots of steam. No one can drink boiling water.

We should not spit or clean the nose on the road, but only in an out of the way place where no one is likely to walk.

Nature's needs must be attended to only at the appointed place. It is necessary to clean oneself after answering both the calls of nature. The receptacle for the solid contents is, as it should always be, different from that for the liquid contents of latrines. After a visit to the latrine, we must wash our hands with pure earth and pure water and wipe them with a clean napkin. The night soil must be fully covered with dry earth so as not to attract flies and in such a way that nothing but dry earth is visible.

One must sit carefully on the latrine seat, so that the seat does not get dirty. A lantern must be carried if it is dark.

Everything which can attract the fly should be properly covered.

The teeth must be cleaned with care at the proper place. The end of the twig must be well chewed into a soft brush, and the teeth and the gums must be brushed with it both ways. The saliva discharged during brushing, must be spitted out. After the teeth are well brushed, the twig must be split into two to clean the tongue with- Then the mouth should be carefully washed. The split twigs should be washed well, and collected in a pot. When they dry up, they

should be used for starting a fire, the idea being that nothing which can be used should be thrown away.

Waste paper, which cannot be used for writing on the other side, should be burned. Nothing else should be mixed with it.

The fragments of vegetables must be kept separate and converted into manure.

Broken glass should be thrown into a pit at a safe distance from houses.

(Translated from Gandhiji's original hindustani)

*Harijan*, October 31. 1948