FOREWORD

At its ninth session, which was held in New Delhi in November 1956, the Unesco General Conference adopted, on the proposal of the Delegation of Uruguay, a resolution authorizing 'the Director-General to arrange for the publication of a book containing selections from Gandhi's thoughts preceded by a study of his personality'.

The General Conference wished thus to provide an opportunity for Unesco to pay homage to both the person and the writings of a man whose spiritual influence has extended throughout the entire world.

The texts have been selected to appeal to a wide public and are intended to illustrate and make better known the different aspects of Gandhi's personality and writings.

H.E. Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of India, has kindly accepted to write a short introduction which describes the main features of the Mahatma's philosophy and his influence in furthering friendship and understanding between peoples.

Unesco is greatly indebted to H.E. Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan for his highly valuable cooperation, as well as to those Indian authorities who collaborated in the preparation of this book.

Special tribute is also paid to Sri K. R. Kripalani, Secretary of Sahitya Akademi, for his highly competent assistance.

It is planned that the present publication in English will be followed by French and Spanish editions.
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I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills.

M. K. GANDHI

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# INTRODUCTION

A great teacher appears once in a while. Several centuries may pass by without the advent of such a one. That by which he is known is his life. He first lives and then tells others how they may live likewise. Such a teacher was Gandhi. These Selections from his speeches and writings compiled with great care and discrimination by Sri Krishna Kripalani will give the reader some idea of the workings of Gandhi’s mind, the growth of his thoughts and the practical techniques which he adopted.

Gandhi’s life was rooted in India’s religious tradition with its emphasis on a passionate search for truth, a profound reverence for life, the ideal of nonattachment and the readiness to sacrifice all for the knowledge of God. He lived his whole life in the perpetual quest of truth: ‘I live and move and have my being in the pursuit of this goal.’

A life which has no roots, which is lacking in depth of background is a superficial one. There are some who assume that when we see what is right we will do it. It is not so. Even when we know what is right it does not follow that we will choose and do right. We are overborne by powerful impulses and do wrong and betray the light in us. ‘In our present state we are, according to the Hindu doctrine, only partly human; the lower part of us is still animal; only the conquest of our lower instincts by love can slay the animal in us.’ It is by a process of trial and error, self-search and austere discipline that the human being moves step by painful step along the road to fulfilment.
Gandhi’s religion was a rational and ethical one. He would not accept any belief which did not appeal to his reason or any injunction which did not commend to his conscience.

If we believe in God, not merely with our intellect but with our whole being, we will love all mankind without any distinction of race or class, nation or religion. We will work for the unity of mankind. ‘All my actions have their rise in my inalienable love of mankind.’ ‘I have known no distinction between relatives and strangers, countrymen and foreigners, white and coloured, Hindus and Indians of other faiths whether Mussulmans, Parsees, Christians or Jews. I may say that my heart has been incapable of making any such distinctions.’ ‘By a long process of prayerful discipline I have ceased for over forty years to hate anybody.’ All men are brothers and no human being should be a stranger to another. The welfare of all, sarvodaya, should be our aim. God is the common bond that unites all human beings. To break this bond even with our greatest enemy is to tear God himself to pieces. ¹

This view leads naturally to the adoption of non-violence as the best means for solving all problems, national and international. Gandhi affirmed that he was not a visionary but a practical idealist. Non-violence is meant not merely for saints and sages but for the common people also. ‘Non-violence is the law of our species, as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law -- to the strength of the spirit.’

Gandhi was the first in human history to extend the principle of nonviolence from the individual to the social and political plane. He entered politics for the purpose of experimenting with non-violence and establishing its validity.

‘Some friends have told me that truth and non-violence have no place in politics and worldly affairs. I do not agree. I have no use for them as a means of individual salvation. Their introduction and application in everyday life has been my experiment all along.’ ‘For me, politics bereft of religion are absolute dirt, ever to be shunned. Politics concerns nations and that which concerns the welfare of nations must be one of the concerns of a man who is religiously inclined, in other words, a seeker after God and Truth. For me God and Truth are convertible terms, and if any one told me that God was a God of untruth or a God of torture I would decline to worship Him. Therefore, in politics also we have to establish the Kingdom of Heaven.’

²See: Mahā-bhārata: asādhuṣ caiva puruso labhate śilam ekadā, xii.259.11.

In the struggle for India’s independence, he insisted that we should adopt civilized methods of non-violence and suffering. His stand for the freedom of India was not based on any hatred for Britain. We must hate the sin but not the sinner. ‘For me patriotism is the same as humanity. I am patriotic because I am human and humane. I will not hurt England or Germany to serve India.’ He believed that he rendered a service to the British in helping them to do the right thing by India. The result was not only the liberation of the Indian people but an increase in the moral resources of mankind.

In the present nuclear context, if we wish to save the world, we should adopt the principles of non-violence. Gandhi said: I did not move a muscle, when I first heard that an atom bomb had wiped out Hiroshima. On the contrary I said to myself: “unless now the world adopts non-violence, it will spell certain suicide for mankind.” In any future conflict we cannot be certain that neither side will deliberately use nuclear weapons. We have the power to destroy in one blinding flash all that we have carefully built up across the centuries by our endeavour and sacrifice. By a campaign of propaganda we condition men’s minds for nuclear warfare. Provocative remarks fly about freely. We use aggression even in words; harsh judgements, ill-will, anger, are all insidious forms of violence.

In the present predicament when we are not able to adjust ourselves to the new conditions which science has brought about, it is not easy to adopt the principles of non-violence, truth and...
understanding. But on that ground we should not give up the effort. While the obstinacy of the political leaders puts fear into our hearts, the common sense and conscience of the peoples of the world give us hope.

With the increased velocity of modern changes we do not know what the world will be a hundred years hence. We cannot anticipate the future currents of thought and feeling. But years may go their way, yet the great principles of satya and ahimsa, truth and non-violence, are there to guide us. They are the silent stars keeping holy vigil above a tired and turbulent world. Like Gandhi we may be firm in our conviction that the sun shines above the drifting clouds.

We live in an age which is aware of its own defeat and moral coarsening, an age in which old certainties are breaking down, the familiar patterns are tilting and cracking. There is increasing intolerance and embitterment. The creative flame that kindled the great human society is languishing. The human mind in all its baffling strangeness and variety produces contrary types, a Buddha or a Gandhi, a Nero or a Hitler. It is our pride that one of the greatest figures of history lived in our generation, walked with us, spoke to us, taught us the way of civilized living. He who wrongs no one fears no one. He has nothing to hide and so is fearless. He looks everyone in the face. His step is firm, his body upright, and his words are direct and straight. Plato said long ago: 'There always are in the world a few inspired men whose acquaintance is beyond price.'

15 August 1958 S. RADHAKRISHNAN

Portrait of Gandhi (Henri Cartier-Bresson, Magnum, 1946)
CHAPTER I
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

It is not my purpose to attempt a real autobiography. I simply want to tell the story of my numerous experiments with truth, and as my life consists of nothing but those experiments, it is true that the story will take the shape of an autobiography. But I shall not mind, if every page of it speaks only of my experiments.

My experiments in the political field are now known, not only to India, but to a certain extent to the 'civilized' world. For me, they have not much value; and the title of 'Mahatma' that they have won for me has, therefore, even less. Often the title has deeply pained me; and there is not a moment I can recall when it may be said to have tickled me. But I should certainly like to narrate my experiments in the spiritual field which are known only to myself, and from which I have derived such power as I possess for working in the political field. If the experiments are really spiritual, then there can be no room for self-praise. They can only add to my humility. The more I reflect and look back on the past, the more vividly do I feel my limitations.

What I want to achieve -- what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years -- is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain Moksha. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to this same end. But as I have all along believed that what is possible for one is possible for all, my experiments have not been conducted in the closet, but in the open; and I do not think that this fact detracts from their spiritual value. There are some things which are known only to oneself and one's Maker. These are clearly incomunicable. The experiments I am about to relate are not such. But they are spiritual, or rather moral; for the essence of religion is morality.

Far be it from me to claim any degree of perfection for these experiments. I claim for them nothing more than does a scientist who, though he conducts his experiments with the utmost accuracy, forethought and minuteness, never claims any finality about his conclusions, but keeps an open mind regarding them. I have gone through deep self-introspection, searched myself through and through, and examined and analysed every psychological situation. Yet I am far from claiming any finality or infallibility about my conclusions. One claim I do indeed make and it is this. For me they appear to be absolutely correct, and seem for the time being to be final. For if they were not, I should base no action on them. But at every step I have carried out the process of acceptance or rejection and acted accordingly.

My life is one indivisible whole, and all my activities run into one another, and they all have their rise in my insatiable love of mankind.

The Gandhis belong to the Baniā caste and seem to have been originally grocers. But for three generations, from my grandfather, they have been prime ministers in several Kathiawad States.... My grandfather must have been a man of principle. State intrigues compelled him to leave
Porbandar, where he was Diwān, and to seek refuge in Junagadh. There he saluted the Nawāb with the left hand. Someone, noticing the apparent discourtesy, asked for an explanation, which was given thus: ‘The right hand is already pledged to Porbandar.’ 6

My father was a lover of his clan, truthful, brave and generous, but short-tempered. To a certain extent he might have been even given to carnal pleasures. For he married for the fourth time when he was over forty. But he was incorruptible and had earned a name for strict impartiality in his family as well as outside 7

The outstanding impression my mother has left on my memory is that of saintliness. She was deeply religious. She would not think of taking her meals without her daily prayers.... She would take the hardest vows and keep them without flinching. Illness was no excuse for relaxing them. 8

Of these parents I was born at Porbandar.... I passed my childhood in Porbandar. I recollect having been put to school. It was with some difficulty that I got through the multiplication tables. The fact that I recollect nothing more of those days than having learnt, in company with other boys, to call our teacher all kinds of names, would strongly suggest that my intellect must have been sluggish, and my memory raw. 9

I used to be very shy and avoided all company. My books and my lessons were my sole companions. To be at school at the stroke of the hour and to run back home as soon as the school closed -- that was my daily habit. I literally ran back, because I could not bear to talk to anybody. I was even afraid lest anyone should poke fun at me. 10

There is an incident which occurred at the examination during my first year at the high school and which is worth recording. Mr. Giles, the Educational Inspector, had come on a visit of inspection. He had set us five words to write as a spelling exercise. One of the words was 'kettle'. I had mis-spelt it. The teacher tried to prompt me with the point of his boot, but I would not be prompted. It was beyond me to see that he wanted me to copy the spelling from my neighbour's slate, for I had thought that the teacher was there to supervise us against copying. The result was that all the boys, except myself, were found to have spelt every word correctly. Only I had been stupid. The teacher tried later to bring this stupidity home to me, but without effect. I never could learn the art of 'copying'. 11

It is my painful duty to have to record here my marriage at the age of thirteen. As I see the youngsters of the same age about me who are under my care, and think of my own marriage, I am inclined to pity myself and to congratulate them on having escaped my lot. I can see no moral argument in support of such a preposterously early marriage. 12

I do not think it [marriage] meant to me anything more than the prospect of good clothes to wear, drum beating, marriage processions, rich dinners and a strange girl to play with. The carnal desire came later. 13

And oh! that first night. Two innocent children all unwittingly hurled themselves into the ocean of life. My brother's wife had thoroughly coached me about my behaviour on the first night. I do not know who had coached my wife. I have never asked her about it, nor am I inclined to do so now. The reader may be sure that we were too nervous to face each other. We were certainly too shy. How was I to talk to her, and what was I to say? The coaching could not carry me far. But no coaching is really necessary in such matters.... We gradually began to know each other, and to speak freely together. We were the same age. But I took no time in assuming the authority of a husband. 14

I must say I was passionately fond of her. Even at school I used to think of her, and the thought of nightfall and our subsequent meeting was ever haunting me. Separation was unbearable. I used to keep her awake till late in the night with my idle talk. If with this devouring passion there had not been in me a burning attachment to duty, I should either have fallen a prey to disease and
premature death, or have sunk into a burdensome existence. But the appointed tasks had to be
gone through every morning, and lying to anyone was out of the question. It was this last thing
that saved me from many a pitfall.  

I had not any high, regard for my ability. I used to be astonished whenever I won prizes and
scholarships. But I very jealously guarded my character. The least little blemish drew tears from
my eyes. When I merited, or seemed to the teacher to merit, a rebuke, it was unbearable for me. I
remember having once received corporal punishment. I did not so much mind the punishment, as
the fact that it was considered my desert. I wept piteously.  

Amongst my few friends at the high school I had, at different times, two who might be called
intimate. One of these friendships...I regard as a tragedy in my life. It lasted long. I formed it in
the spirit of a reformer. 

I have seen since that I had calculated wrongly. A reformer cannot afford to have close intimacy
with him whom he seeks to reform. True friendship is an identity of souls rarely to be found in
this world. Only between like natures can friendship be altogether worthy and enduring. Friends react
on one another. Hence in friendship there is very little scope for reform. I am of opinion that all
exclusive intimacies are to be avoided; for man takes in vice far more readily than virtue. And he
who would be friends with God must remain alone., or make the whole world his friend. I may be
wrong, but my effort to cultivate an intimate friendship proved a failure.  

This friend's exploits cast a spell over me. He could run long distances and extraordinarily fast. He
was an adept in high and long jumping. He could put up with any amount of corporal punishment.
He would often display his exploits to me and, as one is always dazzled when he sees in others the
qualities that he lacks himself, I was dazzled by this friend's exploits. This was followed by a strong
desire to be like him. I could hardly jump or run. Why should not I also be as strong as he?  

I was a coward. I used to be haunted by the fear of thieves, ghosts, and serpents. I did not dare to
stir out of doors at night. Darkness was a terror to me. It was almost impossible for
me to sleep in
the dark, as I would imagine ghosts coming from one direction, thieves from another and serpents
from a third. I could not therefore bear to sleep without a light in the room.  

My friend knew all these weaknesses of mine. He would tell me that he could hold in his hand live
serpents, could defy thieves and did not believe in ghosts. And all this was, of course, the result of
eating meat.  

All this had its due effect on me.... It began to grow on me that meat-eating was good, that it would
make me strong and daring, and that, if the whole country took to meat-eating, the English could
be overcome.  

Whenever I had occasion to indulge in these surreptitious feasts, dinner at home was out of the
question. My mother would naturally ask me to come

and take my food and want to know the reason why I did not wish to eat. I would say to her 'I
have no appetite today; there is something wrong with my digestion'. It was not without
compunction that I devised these pretexts. I knew I was lying, and lying to my mother. I also knew
that, if my mother and father came to know of my having become a meat-eater, they would be
deeply shocked. This knowledge was gnawing at my heart.  

Therefore I said to myself: Though it is essential to eat meat, and also essential to take up food
'reform' in the country, yet deceiving and lying to one's father and mother is worse than not eating
meat. In their lifetime, therefore, meat-eating must be out of the question. When they are no more
and I have found my freedom, I will eat meat openly, but until that moment arrives I will abstain
from it.
This decision I communicated to my friend, and I have never since gone back to meat. 23

My friend once took me to a brothel. He sent me in with the necessary instructions. It was all pre-arranged. The bill had already been paid. I went into the jaws of sin, but God in His infinite mercy protected me against myself. I was almost struck blind and dumb in this den of vice. I sat near the woman on her bed, but I was tongue-tied. She naturally lost patience with me, and showed me the door, with abuses and insults. I then felt as though my manhood had been injured, and wished to sink into the ground for shame. But I have ever since given thanks to God for having saved me. I can recall four more similar incidents in my life, and in most of them my good fortune, rather than any effort on my part, saved me. From a strictly ethical point of view, all these occasions must be regarded as moral lapses; for the carnal desire was there, and it was as good as the act. But from the ordinary point of view, a man who is saved from physically committing sin is regarded as saved. And I was saved only in that sense. 24

As we know that a man often succumbs to temptation, however much he may resist it, we also know that Providence often intercedes and saves him in spite of himself. How all this happens -- how far a man is free and how far a creature of circumstances -- how far free-will comes into play and where fate enters on the scene -- all this is a mystery and will remain a mystery. 25

One of the reasons of my differences with my wife was undoubtedly the company of this friend. I was both a devoted and a jealous husband, and this friend fanned the flame of my suspicions about my wife. I never could doubt his veracity. And I have never forgiven myself the violence of which I have been guilty in often having pained my wife by acting on his information. Perhaps only a Hindu wife could tolerate these hardships, and that is why I have regarded woman as an incarnation of tolerance. 26

The canker of suspicion was rooted out only when I understood ahimsā in all its bearings. I saw then the glory of brabmacharya and realized that the wife is not the husband's bondslave, but his companion and his helpmate, and an equal partner in all his joys and sorrows -- as free as the husband to choose her own path. Whenever I think of those dark days of doubts and suspicions, I am filled with loathing of my folly and my lustful cruelty, and I deplore my blind devotion to my friend. 27

From my sixth or seventh year up to my sixteenth I was at school, being taught all sorts of things except religion. I may say that I failed to get from the teachers what they could have given me without any effort on their part. And yet I kept on picking up things here and there from my surroundings. The term 'religion' I am using in its broadest sense, meaning thereby self-realization or knowledge of self. 28

But one thing took deep root in me -- the conviction that morality is the basis of things, and that truth is the substance of all morality. Truth became my sole objective. It began to grow in magnitude every day, and my definition of it also has been ever widening. 29

I regard untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism. This idea was not brought home to me by my bitter experiences during the South African struggle. It is not due to the fact that I was once an agnostic. It is equally wrong to think that I have taken my views from my study of Christian religious literature. These views date as far back as the time when I was neither enamoured of, nor was acquainted with, the Bible or the followers of the Bible.

I was hardly yet twelve when this idea had dawned on me. A scavenger named Uka, an untouchable, used to attend our house for cleaning latrines. Often I would ask my mother why it was wrong to touch him, why I was forbidden to touch him. If I accidentally touched Uka, I was asked to perform the ablutions, and though I naturally obeyed, it was not without smilingly protesting that untouchability was not sanctioned by religion, that it was impossible that it should be so. I was a very dutiful and obedient child and so far as it was consistent with respect
for parents, I often had tussles with them on this matter. I told my mother that she was entirely wrong in considering physical contact with Uka as sinful. 30

I passed the matriculation examination in 1887. 31

My elders wanted me to pursue my studies at college after the matriculation. There was a college in Bhavnagar as well as in Bombay, and as the former was cheaper, I decided to go there and join the Samaldas College. I went, but found myself entirely at sea. Everything was difficult. I could not follow, let alone taking interest in, the professors' lectures. It was no fault of theirs. The professors in that college were regarded as first-rate. But I was so raw. At the end of the first term, I returned home. 32

A shrewd and learned Brahmin, an old friend and adviser of the family... happened to visit us during my vacation. In conversation with my mother and elder brother, he inquired about my studies. Learning that I was at Samaldas College, he said: 'The times are changed.... I would far rather that you sent him to England. My son Kevalram says it is very easy to become a barrister. In three years' time he will return. Also expenses will not exceed four to five thousand rupees. Think of that barrister who has just come back from England. How stylishly he lives! He could get the diwanship for the asking. I would strongly advise you to send Mohandas to England this very year.' 33

My mother was sorely perplexed.... Someone had told her that young men got lost in England. Someone else had said that they took to meat; and yet another that they could not live there without liquor. 'How about all this ?' she asked me. I said: 'Will you not trust me? I shall not lie to you. I swear that I shall not touch any of those things. If there were any such danger, would Joshiji let me go?'...I vowed not to touch wine, woman and meat. This done, my mother gave her permission. 34

Before the intention of coming to London for the sake of study was actually formed, I had a secret design in my mind of coming here to satisfy my curiosity of knowing what London was. 35

At the age of eighteen I went to England.... Everything was strange -the people, their ways, and even their dwellings. I was a complete novice in the matter of English etiquette and continually had to be on my guard. There was the additional inconvenience of the vegetarian vow. Even the dishes that I could eat were tasteless and insipid. I thus found myself between Scylla and Charybdis. England I could not bear, but to return to India was not to be thought of. Now that I had come, I must finish the three years, said the inner voice. 36

The landlady was at a loss to know what to prepare for me.... The friend continually reasoned with me to eat meat, but I always pleaded my vow and then remained silent.... One day the friend began to read to me Bentham Theory of Utility. I was at my wits' end. The language was too difficult for me to understand. He began to expound it. I said: 'Pray excuse me. These abstruse things are beyond me. I admit it is necessary to eat meat. But I cannot break my vow. I cannot argue about it.' 37

I would trot ten or twelve miles each day, go into a cheap restaurant and eat my fill of bread, but would never be satisfied. During these wanderings I once hit on a vegetarian restaurant in Farrington Street. The sight of it filled me with the same joy that a child feels on getting a thing after its own heart. Before I entered I noticed books for sale exhibited under a glass window near the door. I saw among them Salt Plea for Vegetarianism. This I purchased for a shilling and went straight to the dining room. This was my first hearty meal since my arrival in England. God had come to my aid.

I read Salt's book from cover to cover and was very much impressed

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1 A gentleman with whom he stayed in Richmond for a month.
by it. From the date of reading this book, I may claim to have become a vegetarian by choice. I blessed the day on which I had taken the vow before my mother. I had allog abstained from meat in the interests of truth and of the vow I had taken, but had wished at the same time that every Indian should be a meat-eater, and had looked forward to being one myself freely and openly some day, and to enlisting others in the cause. The choice was now made in favour of vegetarianism, the spread of which henceforth became my mission. 38

A convert's enthusiasm for his new religion is greater than that of a person who is born in it. Vegetarianism was then a new cult in England, and likewise for me, because, as we have seen, I had gone there a convinced meat-eater, and was intellectually converted to vegetarianism later. Full of the neophyte's zeal for vegetarianism, I decided to start a vegetarian club in my locality, Bayswater. I invited Sir Edwin Arnold, who lived there, to be vice-president. Dr. Oldfield who was editor of The Vegetarian became president. I myself became the secretary. 39

I was elected to the Executive Committee of the Vegetarian Society, and made it a point to attend every one of its meetings, but I always felt tongue-tied.... Not that I never felt tempted to speak. But I was at a loss to know how to express myself.... This shyness I retained throughout my stay in England. Even when I paid a social call the presence of half a dozen or more people would strike me dumb. 40

I must say that, beyond occasionally exposing me to laughter, my constitutional shyness has been no disadvantage whatever. In fact I can see that, on the contrary, it has been all to my advantage. My hesitancy in speech, which was once an annoyance, is now a pleasure. Its greatest benefit has been that it has taught me the economy of words. 41

There was a great exhibition at Paris in 1890. I had read about its elaborate preparation, and I also had a keen desire to see Paris. So I thought I had better combine two things in one and go there at this juncture. A particular attraction of the exhibition was the Eiffel Tower, constructed entirely of iron, and nearly 1,000 feet high. There were of course many other things of interest, but the tower was the chief one, inasmuch as it had been supposed till then that a structure of that height could not safely stand. 42

I remember nothing of the exhibition excepting its magnitude and variety. I have fair recollection of the Eiffel Tower as I ascended it twice or thrice. There was a restaurant on the first platform, and just for the satisfaction of being able to say that I had had my lunch at a great height, I threw away seven shillings on it.

The ancient churches of Paris are still in my memory. Their grandeur and their peacefulness are unforgettable. The wonderful construction of Notre Dame and the elaborate decoration of the interior with its beautiful sculptures cannot be forgotten. I felt then that those who expended millions on such divine cathedrals could not but have the love of God in their hearts. 43

I must say a word about the Eiffel Tower. I do not know what purpose it serves today. But I then heard it greatly disparaged as well as praised. I remember that Tolstoy was the chief among those who disparaged it. He said that the Eiffel Tower was a monument of man's folly, not of his wisdom. Tobacco, he argued, was the worst of all intoxicants, inasmuch as a man addicted to it was tempted to commit crimes which a drunkard never dared to do; liquor made a man mad, but tobacco clouded his intellect and made him build castles in the air. The Eiffel Tower was one of the creations of a man under such influence. There is no art about the Eiffel Tower. In no way can it be said to have contributed to the real beauty of the exhibition. Men flocked to see it and ascended it as it was a novelty and of unique dimensions. It was the toy of the exhibition. So long as we are children we are attracted by toys, and the tower was a good demonstration of the fact that we are all children attracted by trinkets. That may be claimed to be the purpose served by the Eiffel Tower. 44
I passed my examinations, was called to the Bar on the tenth of June 1891 and enrolled in the High Court on the eleventh. On the twelth I sailed for home. 45

My elder brother had built high hopes on me. The desire for wealth and name and fame was great in him. He had a big heart, generous to a fault. This, combined with his simple nature, had attracted to him many friends, and through them he expected to get me briefs. He had also assumed that I should have a swinging practice and had, in that expectation, allowed the household expenses to become top-heavy. He had also left no stone unturned in preparing the field for my practice. 46

But it was impossible for me to get along in Bombay for more than four or five months, there being no income to square with the ever-increasing expenditure.

This was how I began life. I found the barrister's profession a bad job—much show and little knowledge. I felt a crushing sense of my responsibility. 47

Disappointed, I left Bombay and went to Rajkot where I set up my own office. Here I got along moderately well. Drafting applications and memorials brought me in on an average Rs.300 a month. 48

In the meantime a Meman firm from Porbandar wrote to my brother making the following offer: 'We have business in South Africa. Ours is a big firm, and we have a big case there in the Court, our claim being £40,000. It has been going on for a long time. We have engaged the services of the best vakils and barristers. If you sent your brother there, he would be useful to us and also to himself. He would be able to instruct our counsel better than ourselves. And he would have the advantage of seeing a new part of the world, and of making new acquaintances.' 49

This was hardly going there as a barrister. It was going as a servant of the firm. But I wanted somehow to leave India. There was also the tempting opportunity of seeing a new country, and of having new experience. Also I could send V105 to my brother and help in the expenses of the household. I closed with the offer without any higgling, and got ready to go to South Africa. 50

When starting for South Africa I did not feel the wrench of separation which I had experienced when leaving for England. My mother was now no more. I had gained some knowledge of the world and of travel abroad, and going from Rajkot to Bombay was no unusual affair.

This time I only felt the pang of parting with my wife. Another baby had been born to us since my return from England. Our love could not yet be called free from lust, but it was getting gradually purer. Since my return from Europe, we had lived very little together; and as I had now become her teacher, however indifferent, and helped her to make certain reforms we both felt the necessity of being more together, if only to continue the reforms. But the attraction of South Africa rendered the separation bearable. 51

The port of Natal is Durban also known as Port Natal. Abdulla Sheth was there to receive me. As the ship arrived at the quay and I watched the people coming on board to meet their friends, I observed that the Indians were not held in much respect. I could not fail to notice a sort of snobbishness about the manner in which those who knew Abdulla Sheth behaved towards him, and it stung me. Abdulla Sheth had got used to it. Those who looked at me did so with a certain amount of curiosity. My dress marked me out from other Indians. I had a frockcoat and a turban. 52

On the second or third day of my arrival, he took me to see the Durban court. There he introduced me to several people and seated me next to his attorney. The magistrate kept staring at me and finally asked me to take off my turban. This I refused to do and left the court. 53
On the seventh or eighth day after my arrival, I left Durban (for Pretoria). A first class seat was booked for me.... The train reached Maritzburg, the capital of Natal, at about 9 p.m. Beddings used to be provided at this station. A railway servant came and asked me if I wanted one. 'No,' said I, 'I have one with me.' He went away. But a passenger came next, and looked me up and down. He saw that I was a 'coloured' man. This disturbed him. Out he went and came in again with one or two officials. They all kept quiet, when another official came to me and said, 'Come along, you must go to the van compartment'.

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

'That doesn't matter,' rejoined the other. 'I tell you, you must go to the van compartment.'

'I tell you, I was permitted to travel in this compartment at Durban, and I insist on going on in it.'

'No, you won't,' said the official. 'You must leave this compartment, or else I shall have to call a police constable to push you out.'

'Yes, you may. I refuse to get out voluntarily.'

The constable came. He took me by the hand and pushed me out. My luggage was also taken out. I refused to go to the other compartment and the train steamed away. I went and sat in the waiting room, keeping my hand-bag with me, and leaving the other luggage where it was. The railway authorities had taken charge of it.

It was winter, and winter in the higher regions of South Africa is severely cold. Maritzburg being at a high altitude, the cold was extremely bitter. My overcoat was in my luggage, but I did not dare to ask for it lest I should be insulted again, so I sat and shivered. There was no light in the room. A passenger came in at about midnight and possibly wanted to talk to me. But I was in no mood to talk.

I began to think of my duty. Should I fight for my rights or go back to India, or should I go on to Pretoria without minding the insults, or return to India after finishing the case? It would be cowardice to run back to India without fulfilling my obligation. The hardship to which I was subjected was superficial -- only a symptom of the deep disease of colour prejudice. I should try, if possible, to root out the disease and suffer hardships in the process. Redress for wrongs I should seek only to the extent that would be necessary for the removal of the colour prejudice.

So I decided to take the next available train to Pretoria. 54

My first step was to call a meeting of all the Indians in Pretoria and to present to them a picture of their condition in the Transvaal. 55

My speech at this meeting may be said to have been the first public speech in my life. I went fairly prepared with my subject, which was about observing truthfulness in business. I had always heard the merchants say that truth was not possible in business. I did not think so then, nor do I now. Even today there are merchant friends who contend that truth is inconsistent with business. Business, they say, is a very practical affair, and truth a matter of religion; and they argue that practical affairs are one thing, while