

STUDY MATERIAL - 04

'THE STORY OF MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH' : PART 2- SUMMARY

Part 2, Chapter 1 Summary

Raychandbhai

- Gandhi returns home to India to find that his mother has died. He also has some discussions about religion with someone named Raychandbhai but cannot make him his guru.
- Gandhi says he believes in the Hindu theory that true knowledge requires a guru, but he hasn't ever found one.

Part 2, Chapter 2 Summary

How I Began Life

- Here we are, back in India. Gandhi's caste splits into two camps, one that re-admits him upon his return and one that does not.
- He wishes to educate his wife, but lust is in his way. He still has problems with jealousy.
- Gandhi goes to Bombay to gain legal experience, but he's unable to make any money. He does, however, befriend his cook.

Part 2, Chapter 3 Summary

The First Case

- In Bombay, Gandhi studies Indian law and finally gets a case. But, nervous and shy, he can't bring himself to speak in the courtroom. He hands the case over to another lawyer. Aww.
- As expenses are mounting without income, Gandhi tries to find other work but fails and returns to Rajkot.
- He puts in a little advice for the reader: taking long walks is beneficial for health.

Part 2, Chapter 4 Summary

The First Shock

- In Rajkot, Gandhi drafts applications and memorials for his brother's poor clients.
- His brother has some trouble with a British officer whom Gandhi knew in England, so the brother asks our hero to go to the officer and put in a good word.
- Gandhi feels it is wrong to do so because he barely knew this officer guy in England, but he does so to help his brother anyway.
- The officer throws him out. From this experience, Gandhi learns not to abuse an acquaintance.

Part 2, Chapter 5 Summary

Preparing for South Africa

- The meanie officer from the last chapter has influence over the court where Gandhi would practice, so the young lawyer worries he won't be able to work.
- Another officer he has to deal with is similarly arrogant and unhelpful. The place is corrupt, and he can't find any work.
- But, a firm in South Africa makes an offer for Gandhi to come work for them, possibly for a certain big case. Even though the pay is low, Gandhi is eager to see a new country and decides to go.

Part 2, Chapter 6 Summary

Arrival in Natal

- In April 1893, Gandhi sets sail for South Africa. Bon voyage, Gandhi.
- He stays with and befriends the captain of the ship, who teaches him to play chess. But, he also takes Gandhi to a prostitute.
- Our hero enters her room but feels horrified, so he doesn't do anything with her. He says God saved him.

Part 2, Chapter 7 Summary

Some Experiences

- Abdulla Sheth from the firm meets Gandhi in South Africa but doesn't know if he can trust the new arrival. They have good conversations about religion, and Sheth takes Gandhi to the court.
- At the court, Gandhi is instructed to remove his turban. He refuses to do so and writes to the press about it, defending himself.
- Here's the deal with that: classes are divided up something serious in South Africa, with different religions, ethnicities, and workers forming different groups.
- Gandhi wearing the turban marks him as resistant to the stratification of people.

Part 2, Chapter 8 Summary

On the Way to Pretoria

- The law firm decides to send Gandhi to Pretoria to work on that big case.
- On the train, he's asked to change compartments due to being Indian.
- He refuses to budge and is forced to move by police.
- He takes the next train and decides he'll fight colour prejudice, as he calls it.

Part 2, Chapter 9 Summary

More Hardships

- Gandhi continues on his journey to Pretoria, encountering more prejudice along the way regarding train compartments and a hotel stay.
- He stands up for himself and is assaulted. But he keeps standing up for himself. Go, Gandhi!

Part 2, Chapter 10 Summary

First Day in Pretoria

- In Pretoria, Gandhi finds his way to a hotel. The owner first wants him to eat in his room but soon changes his mind and lets him eat with the others.
- It seems like colour prejudice is everywhere.
- Gandhi meets the lawyer, who explains what work is needed.
- They also discuss religion, and our hero muses on what he should study of different religions.

Part 2, Chapter 11 Summary

Christian Contacts

- Gandhi studies Christianity with the lawyer's prayer group. He isn't convinced by any of the Christian books he reads.
- One Christian argues that Jesus will free him from atoning for his sins, from their consequences, but Gandhi wishes to free himself from even the thought of sin.

Part 2, Chapter 12 Summary

Seeking Touch with Indians

- In Pretoria, Gandhi calls a meeting of all the Indians. He makes his first public speech to them. He says truthfulness is possible in business and that they should be truthful.
- He says they should abandon their differences and join together in an association to present their hardships to the authorities. The speech comes off well.
- He tells the railway authorities about the injustices, but their reply isn't satisfactory.

Part 2, Chapter 13 Summary

What It Is to Be a "Coolie"

- Gandhi gives some background on the discrimination and prejudice against Indians in South Africa, telling readers to go to his book *History of Satyagraha in South Africa* for the full story.
- He continues to experience the prejudice firsthand.
- A guard kicks him without warning. Though Gandhi has a witness, he declines to pursue a case against the guard, already having forgiven him.
- But, Gandhi is more and more driven to solve the problem.

Part 2, Chapter 14 Summary

Preparation for the Case

- Although he's doing public work (what we might call activism) and studying religion, Gandhi's primary interest is the big case. He studies the facts in depth, heeding the maxim that facts make up the majority of the law.
- However, Gandhi manages to bring the two opposing parties together for arbitration.
- He also manages to get the victor to allow the loser to pay in instalments, thus saving him from the disgrace of bankruptcy.
- Gandhi decides this is the true purpose of the law: to unite parties who have been driven apart.

Part 2, Chapter 15 Summary

Religious Ferment

- Our hero continues to meet with his Christian friends but is unswayed by their arguments. He doesn't agree that Jesus is the only son of God or the most perfect man ever.
- But, he also sees defects in Hinduism and corresponds with religious authorities in India about them.
- He reads books they recommend and is also moved by books on other religions.
- Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* particularly moves him.

Part 2, Chapter 16 Summary

Man Proposes, God Disposes

- With the case concluded, Gandhi feels ready to zip back home to India.
- But, pending legislation seeks to deprive Indians of their right to elect members to the Natal Legislative Assembly.
- Friends ask Gandhi to lead them in working against the proposed law.
- He agrees.

Part 2, Chapter 17 Summary

Settled in Natal

- The Franchise Bill is passed, but Gandhi and his volunteers feel encouraged by the solidarity they have formed in opposing it.
- They decide to submit a huge petition for voting rights to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, with copies sent to the press.
- They accomplish this task.
- The volunteers wish to pay Gandhi for his public work, but he refuses and gets legal work from them instead to support himself.

Part 2, Chapter 18 Summary

Colour Bar

- Gandhi applies for admission to the Supreme Court as a lawyer, but he is opposed by the Law Society on the grounds that he's a coloured person.
- He meets with the opposition's lawyer, who requests proof of his background. He objects but provides the document and is admitted.
- After Gandhi takes the oath, the Chief Justice tells him to take off his turban. He complies and later tells his friends, "When at Rome, do as the Romans do."
- He also says the insistence on truth requires seeing a thing from a different standpoint in different circumstances.

Part 2, Chapter 19 Summary

Natal Indian Congress

- The petition isn't enough, so Team Gandhi decides a permanent organization needs to be set up. They launch the Natal Indian Congress.
- Gandhi goes into detail about the organization's finances, saying that frugality and carefully kept accounts are necessary for maintaining truth.

Part 2, Chapter 20 Summary

Balasundaram

- After his master beats him, an indentured worker named Balasundaram comes to Gandhi for help. Our hero succeeds in getting Balasundaram's indenture transferred to a new master.
- This makes other indentured workers come to Gandhi for help. He sees it as an opportunity for the Natal Indian Congress to serve the poor.

Part 2, Chapter 21 Summary

The £3 Tax

- Now, Gandhi and the Natal Indian Congress oppose a proposed tax of £25 on indentured Indians. He believes their fierce opposition contributed to the tax being lowered to £3.
- But, it's another 20 years before all Indians in South Africa work together to end the tax entirely.

Part 2, Chapter 22 Summary

Comparative Study of Religions

- Gandhi continues studying religions by reading books and attending services.
- He finds Christianity lacking, saying that you fail to notice the love for all living beings in the life of Jesus.
- He steers the son of a Christian family toward vegetarianism, and the mother is dismayed by this.
- As a result, they decide he should stop visiting their house. (Harsh.)

Part 2, Chapter 23 Summary

As a Householder

- Our hero sets up an expensive household in Natal. It's expensive so as to suit his prestige and occupation as a lawyer—basically, it's a vanity project.
- But, there's some drama between the employees of the household, which makes our hero realize that the ends don't necessarily justify the means.

Part 2, Chapter 24 Summary

Homeward

- Gandhi decides to head home to India so he can retrieve his wife and children and bring them to South Africa.
- He describes his voyage home; he plays chess and studies foreign languages.
- He also has religious discussions with the captain, who basically believes Christianity means it's okay to sin because you'll be forgiven for it.
- Gandhi says the conversations confirm his opinion that religion and morality are synonymous.

Part 2, Chapter 25 Summary

In India

- In Rajkot, Gandhi writes a document that comes to be called the Green Pamphlet. It describes the condition of Indians in South Africa.
- In Bombay, a plague breaks out, and Gandhi helps the government by conducting an inspection of sanitary conditions.
- But, many areas are unhygienic, including a place of worship. He's pained to see the lack of cleanliness.

Part 2, Chapter 26 Summary

Two Passions

- Gandhi discusses his passions for loyalty and nursing. However, he's reticent to sing lines from the Anthem that describe so-called enemies as knavish.
- His philosophy of *ahimsa*, or non-violence, requires treating opponents with compassion and understanding their point of view.
- He also meets some famous people in connection with his public work and *totally* name-drops.

Part 2, Chapter 27 Summary

The Bombay Meeting

- Gandhi gives a speech—he doesn't say what about—and meets with a vegetarian who's at work on a Gujarati dictionary.
- Yup, typical Gandhi activities.

Part 2, Chapter 28 Summary

Poona and Madras

- The one and only Gandhi travels to both Poona and Madras to gather support for Indians in South Africa.
- He meets with prestigious people for this and has pleasant encounters. He says there's no barrier that love cannot break.

Part 2, Chapter 29 Summary

"Return Soon"

- Next, Gandhi meets with newspaper editors in Calcutta, still seeking support for Indians in South Africa. Some can't help him, and others can.
- Gandhi gives one editor a statement about the conditions in South Africa, taking care to render justice to the opposing side.
- He says doing that is the quickest way to win justice.