

STUDY MATERIAL - 06

‘THE STORY OF MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH’ : PART 4- SUMMARY

Part 4, Chapter 1 Summary

"Love's Labour's Lost"?

- The British politician Joseph Chamberlain tells the Indians in South Africa he cannot help.
- He goes to the Transvaal, and Gandhi wants to follow him there and submit to him the case of the Indians in that region.
- With some difficulty, Mr. G secures a permit to travel to the Transvaal.

Part 4, Chapter 2 Summary

Autocrats from Asia

- The officers in the Transvaal don't like it at all when Gandhi shows up.
- One tells him the permit was issued by mistake and that he must leave. Gandhi says the officers are autocrats and not accountable to the people.

Part 4, Chapter 3 Summary

Pocketed the Insult

- Gandhi tells his allies to swallow the insult given by the officers.
- A replacement for him is found to meet with Chamberlain.
- Mr. G. goes to Johannesburg and begins professional work.

Part 4, Chapter 4 Summary

Quickened Spirit of Sacrifice

- Gandhi takes out a life insurance policy to benefit his family but comes to regret it since he sees that he should trust in God and count himself among the numberless poor.
- His religious discussions with theosophists have a positive effect, leading him to introspection.

Part 4, Chapter 5 Summary

Result of Introspection

- Gandhi helps his theosophist friends understand Hinduism. The result is that Gandhi spends time thinking on the meaning of the *Gita*.
- The *Gita* leads him to see that he must act as a trustee over possessions, not as someone who owns possessions. He must use his possessions for the benefit of the community.
- This new stance causes him to stop giving money to his brother and to give it to the community instead.
- His brother is upset, but at the end of his life, he sees that Gandhi's attitude is the correct one.

Part 4, Chapter 6 Summary

A Sacrifice to Vegetarianism

- Gandhi loans about £1,000 of a client's money to a vegetarian restaurant. He soon sees the money won't be recovered.
- He makes good the money to the client, but a friend advises him not to do this sort of thing again, lest he go into debt and have to give up public work.
- Gandhi appreciates the lesson.

Part 4, Chapter 7 Summary

Experiments in Earth and Water Treatment

- Time to continue the diet and medical experiments: Gandhi gives up breakfast in the morning and claims this makes his headaches go away.
- He also begins the earth and water treatment: rubbing mud on his stomach.
- This, he says, works well. Okay, Gandhi, whatever you say.

Part 4, Chapter 8 Summary

A Warning

- Gandhi talks about how, although he gave up milk, he once drank goat's milk while ill for strength. The letter of his vow is against cow's and buffalo's milk, but he says he violated the spirit of it by drinking goat's milk.
- He advises readers not to give up milk unless they benefit from it and asks readers to send him mail if they know of a nourishing, digestible, and vegetarian substitute for milk.

Part 4, Chapter 9 Summary

A Tussle with Power

- Some white officers are requiring bribes from Indians and Chinese. Gandhi convinces the police to take action against them, but the courts find them not guilty due to prejudice in their favor. But, they lose their jobs, and much of that particular corruption vanishes.
- Gandhi emphasizes that he doesn't have anything against these corrupt officers personally. Hate the sin and not the sinner is his advice.
- *Ahimsa*, or non-violence, means it's proper to attack a system but improper to attack a person because, as we're all children of the same creator, that's tantamount to attacking oneself.

Part 4, Chapter 10 Summary

A Sacred Recollection and Penance

- Gandhi talks about times when he's mistreated his wife and says she is of less intelligence and education than he is. Gee, that's just great.
- He says lust was often in the way of their marriage, and now that they don't lust after each other, they are free to be helpmates and partners.

Part 4, Chapter 11 Summary

Intimate European Contacts

- Time to take a break and ponder just what we're doing here: Gandhi wonders aloud if he should stop writing the autobiography. He sees clearly that its account of events might be inadequate. But, he continues since his inner voice doesn't tell him to stop.
- Gandhi discusses the challenges of living with English friends.
- They adopt the Indian style in many ways, but in some ways, they keep to the Western fashions.

Part 4, Chapter 12 Summary

European Contacts (Contd.)

- Mr. G heaps praise on two of his stenotypists, Miss Dick and Miss Schlesin.
- Both work well, and the latter manages the public work during the Satyagraha days when the leaders are in jail.

Part 4, Chapter 13 Summary

"Indian Opinion"

- In 1904, Gandhi, along with some others, starts a weekly journal called *Indian Opinion*. Every week he writes a column, often expounding upon the principles and practice of Satyagraha. He says the duty of a journalist is service.

Part 4, Chapter 14 Summary

Coolie Locations or Ghettoes?

- Indians in South Africa have acquired the derogatory name "coolies." So-called "coolie locations" are where they live, but the government dispossesses them.
- Gandhi represents many of the settlers in their cases for compensation, and of about 70 cases, only one is lost. He uses the income to run *Indian Opinion*.

Part 4, Chapter 15 Summary

The Black Plague—I

- The black plague strikes, and 23 Indians return to the location with it.
- Gandhi works with some others to tend to the patients.
- The emergency is dire.

Part 4, Chapter 16 Summary

The Black Plague—II

- Gandhi continues to help plague patients. He even gives them the earth and water treatment.
- Two survive, and the others die. Gandhi writes a letter to the press blaming the government for unsanitary conditions.
- This wins him friends, one of whom goes to work at *Indian Opinion*.

Part 4, Chapter 17 Summary

Location in Flames

- The government moves the Indians from the plague location to an open plain for three weeks. It then sets fire to the location, to cleanse it of the plague. Gandhi assists Indians in all this.

Part 4, Chapter 18 Summary

The Magic Spell of a Book

- Gandhi falls in love with the book *Unto This Last* by Ruskin.
- He reads it and becomes an instant convert to its message that the good of the individual is contained in the good of all, that all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work, and that a life of labor—tilling the soil and handicraft—is the best kind of life.
- He later translates the book into Gujarati.

Part 4, Chapter 19 Summary

The Phoenix Settlement

- Inspired by *Unto This Last*, Gandhi launches the Phoenix Settlement in 1904. That's where he and the others working on *Indian Opinion* will live, on an out-of-the-way farm, to maintain a simple life as the book recommends.

Part 4, Chapter 20 Summary

The First Night

- A breakdown of the oil engine that works the press almost stops Team Gandhi from printing the first issue of *Indian Opinion* from Phoenix on time, but they work overnight and an engineer manages to fix the engine.
- The paper is printed on schedule.

Part 4, Chapter 21 Summary

Polak Takes the Plunge

- Polak, the friend who loaned Gandhi *Unto This Last*, is delighted to hear of the Phoenix Settlement and moves onto the farm.
- Another person joins. The Phoenix experiment is growing.

Part 4, Chapter 22 Summary

Whom God Protects

- Gandhi has success applying the earth and water treatment and the fasting treatment to himself and others.
- He has quite a lot of faith in home remedies now, saying God protects him.
- He also takes interest in the lives of his friends, persuading them to marry and settle at Phoenix.

Part 4, Chapter 23 Summary

A Peep into the Household

- Gandhi talks about educating his children.
- He's a little defensive because his oldest son has criticized him in the press for not giving him enough literary training.
- What Gandhi does do is give his children instruction during long walks.
- He says he sacrifices some of their education to serving the community.

Part 4, Chapter 24 Summary

The Zulu "Rebellion"

- The so-called Zulu rebellion breaks out, and Gandhi, heeding his sense of patriotic duty, volunteers himself and a few other Indians as an ambulance corps.
- They're put to work nursing wounded Zulu friendlies and others.

Part 4, Chapter 25 Summary

Heart Searching

- In this chapter, Gandhi talks about his *brahmacharya* vow—giving up all sex.
- He says life without the vow seems insipid and animal-like, and he seeks to rid himself even of impure thoughts.
- Religion is the great aid in this task.

Part 4, Chapter 26 Summary

The Birth of Satyagraha

- Gandhi reveals the origin of the term "Satyagraha." The phrase "passive resistance" wasn't doing the job—seems to us like it sounded too much like "passive-aggressive"—so he organized a contest for a new word.
- Maganlal Gandhi comes up with "Sadagraha," meaning truth and firmness, and Gandhi tinkers with it a little until it is "Satyagraha."
- He points readers to his book on the Satyagraha struggle in South Africa for more info on the term and its history.

Part 4, Chapter 27 Summary

More Experiments in Dietetics

- Our Mr. G. elaborates on his experiments in fasting and dieting, which he's now conducting from the point of view of religion.
- He says you should eat just in order to keep your body going, not to please your taste buds.
- He's definitely not down with the bowl (and by "bowl," we mean "pint") of ice cream we're eating.

Part 4, Chapter 28 Summary

Kasturbai's Courage

- Kasturbai, Gandhi's wife, becomes terribly ill.
- The doctor deceives her and gives her beef tea for her health.
- She and Gandhi dislike this, and Kasturbai refuses to have any more beef tea.
- The doctor says he won't have her die under his roof, so Gandhi takes her home.
- Sticking to her traditional religion, she lives, refusing the advice of anyone telling her to eat meat.

Part 4, Chapter 29 Summary

Domestic Satyagraha

- Gandhi tells the story of a time when Kasturbai, his wife, became ill and he advised her to give up salt and pulses.
- She refuses and says he'd be unable to do that, at which point he immediately vows not to have any for a year.
- He finds the denial subdues his senses.
- All self-denial is morally good for the soul, he concludes.

Part 4, Chapter 30 Summary

Towards Self-Restraint

- More fun with dietary experiments.
- With his friend Mr. Kallenbach, Gandhi gives up milk and eats only fruit.
- He wants to live the poor life.
- Gandhi says the mind is the principal thing in self-restraint.
- Fasting is necessary to keep it in line.

Part 4, Chapter 31 Summary

Fasting

- Gandhi goes into detail about his fasting experiments. On Tolstoy Farm, another place Gandhi stays, the others experiment with fasting alongside him.
- The main idea is that fasting is good for self-restraint, but it must be accompanied by mental fasting, or you'll just pig out after the fast.

Part 4, Chapter 32 Summary

As Schoolmaster

- On Tolstoy Farm, Gandhi takes on the responsibility of educating the youngsters. He's eager to find out the best educational system. He thinks parents should be the teachers.
- The adults give the kids vocational training, such as shoemaking and carpentry, and only teach them things the teachers themselves know how to do.

Part 4, Chapter 33 Summary

Literary Training

- Gandhi describes the literary training he gives the youngsters at Tolstoy Farm.
- Basically, that means reading and writing. He instructs them in Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati, Urdu, English, and Sanskrit. We wish we knew so many languages.
- Gandhi says textbooks aren't all that necessary, and the true textbook is the teacher.

Part 4, Chapter 34 Summary

Training of the Spirit

- Think Gandhi wouldn't be a disciplinarian? You'd be wrong.
- In this chapter, he talks about both the spiritual training of the boys and their discipline.
- As for spiritual training, he teaches the kids through example.
- His self-restraint demonstrates to them the value of self-restraint; his truthfulness teaches them the value of truth. And so on.
- As for discipline, he once smacks a misbehaving boy with a ruler.
- He later doubts if this was necessary.
- He suggests better spiritual training might prevent the need for corporal punishment.

Part 4, Chapter 35 Summary

Tares Among the Wheat

- Mr. Kallenbach, Gandhi's friend, advises him to separate his own children from the rest of the misbehaving boys at Tolstoy Farm so that their bad discipline won't rub off on his own kids.
- But, Gandhi says all of the boys are effectively his children.
- He says his own children's successful growing up shows that good children may be raised with bad ones.

Part 4, Chapter 36 Summary

Fasting as Penance

- Two of Gandhi's followers at the ashram commit some sort of moral lapse, the nature of which he does not specify.
- Gandhi imposes on himself a fast as penance for their wrongdoing.
- He says teachers shouldn't undertake fasts for a pupil's delinquency unless the bond between them is close.
- He also advises drinking lots of water while fasting, even if it's nauseating to do so.

Part 4, Chapter 37 Summary

To Meet Gokhale

- Gandhi's old mentor Gokhale tells him to come to England. So, with his friend Mr. Kallenbach, he sets sail.
- On the way, Mr. Kallenbach is infatuated with a pair of expensive binoculars. They don't fit the two men's lives of simplicity.
- So, they decide to throw them overboard and actually do it.
- Gandhi gives some more helpful tips on fasting for those of you trying it at home.
- You have to ease your way out of it gradually, not eating or exercising too much immediately after.

Part 4, Chapter 38 Summary

My Part in the War

- World War I breaks out and separates Gandhi from Gokhale, who's in France.
- Disagreeing with some of his followers, Gandhi decides that Indians should not make the Brits' hour of need their opportunity for freedom but instead serve the British.

Part 4, Chapter 39 Summary

A Spiritual Dilemma

- Once again, Mr. G. volunteers himself plus other Indians as an ambulance corps.
- But his friend Mr. Polak questions how volunteering for war fits with Gandhi's *ahimsa*, or non-violence.
- Gandhi argues participation in war isn't consistent with *ahimsa*, but people have a duty, that they're always violating *ahimsa* to some extent (such as by accidentally stepping on bugs), and that the status of his people needs to be elevated in the British empire.
- He says the question is subtle, and many of his friends disagree.

Part 4, Chapter 40 Summary

Miniature Satyagraha

- The Indians enlist. But, the commanding officer insults their self-respect by bossing them around and giving them nonsense orders. The Indians appeal to Gandhi, who agrees to launch Satyagraha (a non-violent resistance campaign) against the officer until he allows new section leaders to be elected by the corps.
- The officer doesn't agree and causes division within Gandhi's followers.
- Some cave, but others agree to a compromise Gandhi formulates whereby they go serve another commanding officer.

Part 4, Chapter 41 Summary

Gokhale's Charity

- Gandhi is now suffering from pleurisy. As one of his diet experiments, he's not eating milk, cereals, pulses, and other things.
- His mentor Gokhale presses him to resume eating these things since the doctor wants him to. Gandhi thinks on it overnight and decides he must stick to his religious vow against milk or meat, but he resumes eating the other items.

Part 4, Chapter 42 Summary

Treatment of Pleurisy

- Dr. Allinson of vegetarian fame comes a-knockin' at Gandhi's request, to help with his pleurisy. The doc recommends some dietary changes, walking outside, opening the windows, and other tricks.
- Gandhi adopts some of these suggestions, and they help to a limited extent, but he feels he must go back to India to get well.

Part 4, Chapter 43 Summary

Homeward

- Gandhi returns to India after 10 years. His friend Mr. Kallenbach is unable to get a passport to come since Germans are under surveillance due to the war.
- On the ship, there is distance between the British and Indian passengers.
- Gandhi attributes this to the former feeling they belong to the ruling race and the latter feeling they belong to the subject race.
- He's eager to get off the boat and away from this atmosphere.

Part 4, Chapter 44 Summary

Some Reminiscences of the Bar

- Time for some recollections about lawyering.
- Gandhi emphasizes that though people say being a lawyer requires lying, it doesn't.
- On one occasion in particular, his client wins a large award, but a minor error in calculation means he receives more money than intended.
- Gandhi convinces the client to tell the court about the problem, the result of which Gandhi delays until the next chapter.

Part 4, Chapter 45 Summary

Sharp Practice?

- Gandhi points out to the court the error described in the previous chapter.
- One judge is startled and accuses Gandhi. He maintains his cool (of course) and explains the miscalculation.
- The judges take care of the error, and Gandhi feels this incident proves it's possible to be an honest lawyer.

Part 4, Chapter 46 Summary

Clients Turned Co-Workers

- Gandhi relates the story of a client he has who lies from the witness box. The lawyer immediately asks the judge to dismiss the case.
- The client isn't angry and understands.
- Such commitment to truth wins Gandhi the loyalty of many of his clients, who become his co-workers in his public work.

Part 4, Chapter 47 Summary

How a Client Was Saved

- Gandhi's client Parsi Rustomji is caught smuggling.
- He confesses to Gandhi, but our hero says he must confess to the government.
- Gandhi helps arrange for him to confess and pay a penalty out of court.
- The client is saved.
