CHAPTER III
LIFE AND CAREER OF MAHATMA GANDHI

I. Introduction

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was the preeminent leader of Indian independence movement in British-ruled India. Employing non-violent civil disobedience, Gandhi led India to independence and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world. The honorific Mahatma (“high-souled”, “venerable”1) was applied to him first in 1914 in South Africa,2 is now used worldwide. He is also called Bapu (“father”,3 “papa”4) in India.

II. Early Life of Gandhiji.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on 2 October 18695 in Porbandar (also known as Sudamapuri), a coastal town on the Kathiawar Peninsula and then part of the small princely state of Porbandar in the Kathiawar Agency of the British Indian Empire. His father, Karamchand Gandhi (1822–1885), served as the diwan (chief minister) of Porbander state. His mother, Putlibai, who was from a Pranami Vaishnava family,6,7 was Karamchand's fourth wife, the first three wives having apparently died in childbirth.8,9 M. K. Gandhi had two brothers and one sister. Mohandas was the youngest of them.
The Indian classics, especially the stories of Shravana and king Harishchandra, had a great impact on Gandhi in his childhood. In his autobiography, he admits that they left an indelible impression on his mind. He writes: “It haunted me and I must have acted Harishchandra to myself times without number.” Gandhi’s early self-identification with truth and love as supreme values is traceable to these epic characters.\textsuperscript{10,11}

In May 1883, the 13-year-old Mohandas was married to 14-year-old Kasturbai Makhanji Kapadia (her first name was usually shortened to “Kasturba”, and affectionately to ”Ba”) in an arranged child marriage, according to the custom of the region.\textsuperscript{12} In the process, he lost a year at school.\textsuperscript{13} Recalling the day of their marriage, he once said, “As we didn't know much about marriage, for us it meant only wearing new clothes, eating sweets and playing with relatives.” However, as was prevailing tradition, the adolescent bride was to spend much time at her parents' house, and away from her husband.\textsuperscript{14} In 1885, when Gandhi was 15, the couple's first child was born, but survived only a few days. Gandhi’s father, Karamchand Gandhi, had also died earlier that year.\textsuperscript{15} The religious background was eclectic. Gandhi’s father was Hindu\textsuperscript{16} Modh Baniya\textsuperscript{17} and his mother was from Pranami Vaishnava family. Religious figures were frequent visitors to the home.\textsuperscript{18}
Mohandas and Kasturba had four more children, all sons: Harilal, born in 1888; Manilal, born in 1892; Ramdas, born in 1897; and Devdas, born in 1900.\textsuperscript{19} At his middle school in Porbandar and high school in Rajkot, Gandhi remained a mediocre student. He shone neither in the classroom nor on the playing field. One of the terminal reports rated him as “good at English, fair in Arithmetic and weak in Geography; conduct very good, bad handwriting”. In 1887, he passed the matriculation exam at Samaldas College in Bhavnagar, Gujarat, with some difficulty. Gandhi’s family wanted him to be a barrister, as it would increase the prospects of succeeding to his father’s post.\textsuperscript{20}

In 1888, Gandhi travelled to London, England, where he studied law and jurisprudence and enrolled at the Inner Temple with the intention of becoming a barrister. His time in London was influenced by a vow he had made to his mother upon leaving India, in the presence of a Jain monk, to observe the precepts of sexual abstinence as well as abstinence from meat and alcohol.\textsuperscript{21} Gandhi tried to adopt “English” customs, including taking dancing lessons. However, he could not appreciate the bland vegetarian food offered by his landlady and was frequently hungry until he found one of London’s few vegetarian restaurants. Influenced by Henry Salt’s writing, he joined the Vegetarian Society, was elected to its executive committee,\textsuperscript{22} and started a local Bayswater chapter.\textsuperscript{23} Some of
the vegetarians he met were members of the Theosophical Society, which had been founded in 1875 to further universal brotherhood, and which was devoted to the study of Buddhist and Hindu literature. They encouraged Gandhi to join them in reading the *Bhagavad Gita* both in translation as well as in the original. Not having shown interest in religion before, he became interested in religious thought.

Gandhi was called to the bar in June 1891 and then left London for India, where he learnt that his mother had died while he was in London and that his family had hidden the news from him. His attempts at establishing a law practice in Bombay failed because he was psychologically unable to cross-question witnesses. He returned to Rajkot to make a modest living drafting petitions for litigants, but he was forced to stop when he ran afoul of a British officer. In 1893, he accepted a year-long contract from Dada Abdulla & Co., an Indian firm, to a post in the Colony of Natal, South Africa, a part of the British Empire.

III. PLUNGE INTO PUBLIC LIFE.

i. In South Africa.


When he arrived in South Africa Gandhi was 24 to work as a legal representative for the Muslim Indian Traders based in the city of Pretoria. He spent 21 years in South Africa, where he developed his political views, ethics and political leadership skills.
Indians in South Africa were led by wealthy Muslims, who employed Gandhi as a lawyer, and by impoverished Hindu indentured labourers with very limited rights. Gandhi considered them all to be Indians, taking a lifetime view that "Indianness" transcended religion and caste. He believed he could bridge historic differences, especially regarding religion, and he took that belief back to India where he tried to implement it. The South African experience exposed handicaps to Gandhi that he had not known about. He realised he was out of contact with the enormous complexities of religious and cultural life in India, and believed he understood India by getting to know and leading Indians in South Africa.³⁰

Gandhi had to face the discrimination directed at all coloured (black) people in South Africa. He was thrown out of a train at Pietermaritzburg after refusing to move from the first-class. He protested and was allowed on first class the next day.³¹ Travelling farther on by stagecoach, he was beaten by a driver for refusing to move to make room for a European passenger.³² He suffered other hardships on the journey as well, including being barred from several hotels. In another incident, the magistrate of a Durban court ordered Gandhi to remove his turban, which he refused to do.³³

These events were a turning point in Gandhi’s life and shaped his social activism and awakened him to social injustice. After witnessing
racism, prejudice and injustice against Indians in South Africa, Gandhi began to question his place in society and his people's standing in the British Empire.\textsuperscript{34}

Gandhi extended his original period of stay in South Africa to assist Indians in opposing a bill to deny them the right to vote. He asked Joseph Chamberlain, the British Colonial Secretary, to reconsider his position on this bill.\textsuperscript{35} Though unable to halt the bill's passage, his campaign was successful in drawing attention to the grievances of Indians in South Africa. He helped found the Natal Indian Congress in 1894,\textsuperscript{36} and through this organization, he moulded the Indian community of South Africa into a unified political force. In January 1897, when Gandhi landed in Durban, a mob of white settlers attacked him\textsuperscript{37} and he escaped only through the efforts of the wife of the police superintendent. However, he refused to press charges against any member of the mob, stating it was one of his principles not to seek redress for a personal wrong in a court of law.\textsuperscript{38}

In 1906, the Transvaal government promulgated a new Act compelling registration of the colony's Indian population. At a mass protest meeting held in Johannesburg on 11 September that year, Gandhi adopted his still evolving methodology of \textit{Satyagraha} (devotion to the truth), or nonviolent protest, for the first time.\textsuperscript{39} He urged Indians to defy the new law and to suffer the punishments for doing so. The community adopted this
plan, and during the ensuing seven-year struggle, thousands of Indians were jailed, logged, or shot for striking, refusing to register, for burning their registration cards or engaging in other forms of nonviolent resistance. The government successfully repressed the Indian protesters, but the public outcry over the harsh treatment of peaceful Indian protesters by the South African government forced South African leader Jan Christiaan Smuts, himself a philosopher, to negotiate a compromise with Gandhi. Gandhi's ideas took shape, and the concept of *Satyagraha* matured during this struggle.

2. **Gandhi and the Africans.**

Gandhi focused his attention on Indians while in South Africa and opposed the idea that Indians should be treated at the same level as native Africans while in South Africa. He also stated that he believed “that the white race of South Africa should be the predominating race.” After several treatments he received from Whites in South Africa, Gandhi began to change his thinking and apparently increased his interest in politics. White rule enforced strict segregation among all races and generated conflict between these communities. Bhana and Vahed argue that Gandhi, at first, shared racial notions prevalent of the times and that his experiences in jail sensitised him to the plight of South Africa's indigenous peoples.
During the Boer War, Gandhi volunteered in 1900 to form a group of ambulance drivers. He wanted to disprove the British idea that Hindus were not fit for "manly" activities involving danger and exertion. Gandhi raised eleven hundred Indian volunteers. They were trained and medically certified to serve on the front lines. At Spion Kop Gandhi and his bearers had to carry wounded soldiers for miles to a field hospital because the terrain was too rough for the ambulances. Gandhi was pleased when someone said that European ambulance corpsmen could not make the trip under the heat without food or water. General Redvers Buller mentioned the courage of the Indians in his dispatch. Gandhi and thirty-seven other Indians received the War Medal.  

In 1906, when the British declared war against the Zulu Kingdom in Natal, Gandhi encouraged the British to recruit Indians, he argued that Indians should support the war efforts to legitimise their claims to full citizenship. The British accepted Gandhi’s offer to let a detachment of 20 Indians volunteer as a stretcher-bearer corps to treat wounded British soldiers. This corps was commanded by Gandhi and operated for less than two months. The experience taught him it was hopeless to directly challenge the overwhelming military power of the British army—he decided it could only be resisted in nonviolent fashion by the pure of heart.
In 1910, Gandhi established an idealistic community called ‘Tolstoy Farm’ near Johannesburg, where he nurtured his policy of peaceful resistance.\(^{48}\)

After blacks gained the right to vote in South Africa, Gandhi was proclaimed a national hero with numerous monuments.\(^{49}\)

ii. Gandhiji in Struggle for Indian Independence.

Gandhi returned to India in 1915 at the request of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, conveyed to him by C.F. Andrews. He brought an international reputation as a leading Indian nationalist, theorist and organiser. He joined the Indian National Congress and was introduced to Indian issues, politics and the Indian people primarily by Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Gokhale was a key leader of the Congress Party best known for his restraint and moderation and his insistence on working inside the system. Gandhi took Gokhale’s liberal approach based on British Whiggish traditions and transformed it to make it look wholly Indian.\(^{50}\)

1. Gandhi’s Role during World War.

In April 1918, during the latter part of World War I, the Viceroy lord Chelmsfrd invited Gandhi to a War Conference in Delhi.\(^{51}\) Perhaps to show his support for the Empire and help his case for India’s independence,\(^{52}\) Gandhi agreed to actively recruit Indians for the war effort.\(^{53}\) In contrast to the Zulu War of 1906 and the outbreak of World War I in 1914, when he
recruited volunteers for the Ambulance Corps, this time Gandhi attempted to recruit combatants. In a June 1918 leaflet entitled “Appeal for Enlistment”, Gandhi wrote “To bring about such a state of things we should have the ability to defend ourselves, that is, the ability to bear arms and to use them...If we want to learn the use of arms with the greatest possible despatch, it is our duty to enlist ourselves in the army.”54 He did, however, stipulate in a letter to the Viceroy's private secretary that he “personally will not kill or injure anybody, friend or foe.”55

Gandhi’s war recruitment campaign brought into question his consistency on nonviolence. Gandhi’s private secretary noted that “The question of the consistency between his creed of 'Ahimsa' (nonviolence) and his recruiting campaign was raised not only then but has been discussed ever since.”56

3. Gandhi and Champaran and Kheda Agitations

Gandhi’s first major achievements came in 1918 with the Champaran and Kheda agitations of Bihar and Gujarat. The Champaran agitation pitted the local peasantry against their largely British landlords who were backed by the local administration. The peasantry was forced to grow Indigo, a cash crop whose demand had been declining over two decades, and were forced to sell their crops to the planters at a fixed price. Unhappy with this, the peasantry appealed to Gandhi at his ashram in Ahmedabad. Pursuing
a strategy of nonviolent protest, Gandhi took the administration by surprise and won concessions from the authorities.\textsuperscript{57}

In 1918, Kheda was hit by floods and famine and the peasantry was demanding relief from taxes. Gandhi moved his headquarters to Nadiad,\textsuperscript{58} organising scores of supporters and fresh volunteers from the region, the most notable being Vallabhbhai Patel.\textsuperscript{59} Using noncooperation as a technique, Gandhi initiated a signature campaign where peasants pledged non-payment of revenue even under the threat of confiscation of land. A social boycott of \textit{mamlatdars} and \textit{talatdars} (revenue officials within the district) accompanied the agitation. Gandhi worked hard to win public support for the agitation across the country. For five months, the administration refused but finally in end-May 1918, the Government gave way on important provisions and relaxed the conditions of payment of revenue tax until the famine ended. In Kheda, Vallabhbhai Patel represented the farmers in negotiations with the British, who suspended revenue collection and released all the prisoners.\textsuperscript{60}

4. Gandhi and the Khilafat movement

During 1919, with his weak position in Congress, Gandhi, decided to broaden his political base by increasing his appeal to Muslims. The opportunity came in the form of the Khilafat movement, a worldwide protest by Muslims against the collapsing status of the Caliph, the leader of their
religion. The Ottoman Empire had lost the First World War and was dismembered, as Muslims feared for the safety of the holy places and the prestige of their religion. Although Gandhi did not originate the All-India Muslim Conference, which directed the movement in India, he soon became its most prominent spokesman and attracted a strong base of Muslim support with local chapters in all Muslim centres in India. As a mark of solidarity with Indian Muslims he returned the medals that had been bestowed on him by the British government for his work in the Boer and Zulu Wars. He believed that the British government was not being honest in its dealings with Muslims on the Khilafat issue. His success made him India's first national leader with a multicultural base and facilitated his rise to power within Congress, which had previously been unable to influence many Indian Muslims. In 1920 Gandhi became a major leader in Congress. By the end of 1922 the Khilafat movement had collapsed.

Gandhi always fought against “communalism”, which pitted Muslims against Hindus in Indian politics, but he could not reverse the rapid growth of communalism after 1922. Deadly religious riots broke out in numerous cities, including 91 in Uttar Pradesh alone. At the leadership level, the proportion of Muslims among delegates to Congress fell sharply, from 11% in 1921 to under 4% in 1923.
5. **Gandhi and the Non co-operation Movement.**

With Congress now backing him in 1920, Gandhi had the base to employ noncooperation, nonviolence and peaceful resistance as his “weapons” in the struggle against the British Raj. His wide popularity among both Hindus and Muslims made his leadership possible; he even convinced the extreme faction of Muslims to support peaceful noncooperation.\(^7^0\) The spark that ignited a national protest was overwhelming anger at the Jallianwala Bagh massacre (or Amritsar massacre) of hundreds of peaceful civilians by British troops in Punjab. Many Britons celebrated the action as needed to prevent another violent uprising similar to the Rebellion of 1857, an attitude that caused many Indian leaders to decide the Raj was controlled by their enemies. Gandhi criticized both the actions of the British Raj and the retaliatory violence of Indians. He authored the resolution offering condolences to British civilian victims and condemning the riots, which after initial opposition in the party, was accepted following Gandhi's emotional speech advocating his principle that all violence was evil and could not be justified.\(^7^1\)

After the massacre and subsequent violence, Gandhi began to focus on winning complete self-government and control of all Indian government institutions, maturing soon into *Swaraj* or complete individual, spiritual, political independence.\(^7^2\) During this period, Gandhi claimed to be a “highly orthodox Hindu” and in January 1921 during a speech at a temple...
in Vadtal, he spoke of the relevance of non co-operation in Hindu Dharma, “At this holy place, I declare, if you want to protect your 'Hindu Dharma', non co-operation is first as well as the last lesson you must learn up.”

Gandhi was invested with executive authority on behalf of the Indian National Congress in December 1921. Under his leadership, the Congress was reorganized with a new constitution, with the goal of Swaraj. Membership in the party was opened to anyone prepared to pay a token fee. A hierarchy of committees was set up to improve discipline, transforming the party from an elite organisation to one of mass national appeal. Gandhi expanded his nonviolence platform to include the swadeshi policy—the boycott of foreign-made goods, especially British goods. Linked to this was his advocacy that khadi (homespun cloth) be worn by all Indians instead of British-made textiles. Gandhi exhorted Indian men and women, rich or poor, to spend time each day spinning khadi in support of the independence movement.

Gandhi even invented a small, portable spinning wheel that could be folded into the size of a small typewriter. This was a strategy to inculcate discipline and dedication to weeding out the unwilling and ambitious and to include women in the movement at a time when many thought that such activities were not respectable activities for women. In addition to boycotting British products, Gandhi urged the people to boycott British
educational institutions and law courts, to resign from government employment, and to forsake British titles and honours.\textsuperscript{76}

“Non-cooperation” enjoyed widespread appeal and success, increasing excitement and participation from all strata of Indian society. Yet, just as the movement reached its apex it ended abruptly as a result of a violent clash in the town of Chauri Chaura, Uttar Pradesh, in February 1922. Fearing that the movement was about to take a turn towards violence, and convinced that this would be the undoing of all his work, Gandhi called off the campaign of mass civil disobedience.\textsuperscript{77} This was the third time that Gandhi had called off a major campaign.\textsuperscript{78} Gandhi was arrested on 10 March 1922, tried for sedition, and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. He began his sentence on 18 March 1922. He was released in February 1924 for an appendicitis operation, having served only two years.\textsuperscript{79}

The Indian National Congress began to splinter without Gandhi's unifying personality, during his years in prison, splitting into two factions, one led by Chitta Ranjan Das and Motilal Nehru favoring party participation in the legislatures, and the other led by Chakravarti Rajagopalachari and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, opposing this move. Furthermore, cooperation among Hindus and Muslims, which had been strong at the height of the nonviolence campaign, was breaking down. Gandhi attempted to bridge
these differences through many means, including a three-week fast in the autumn of 1924, but with limited success. In this year, Gandhi was persuaded to preside over the Congress session to be held in Belgaum. Gandhi agreed to become president of the session on one condition: that Congressmen should take to wearing homespun khadi. In his long political career, this was the only time when he presided over a Congress session.

Thus, Gandhi took leadership of the Congress in 1920 and began escalating demands until on the 26th of January 1930 the Indian National Congress declared the independence of India. The British did not recognize the declaration but negotiations ensued, with the Congress taking a role in provincial government in the late 1930s. Gandhi and the Congress withdrew their support of the Raj when the Viceroy declared war on Germany in September 1939 without consultation. Tensions escalated until Gandhi demanded immediate independence in 1942 and the British responded by imprisoning him and tens of thousands of Congress leaders. Meanwhile the Muslim League did cooperate with Britain and moved, against Gandhi's strong opposition, to demands for a totally separate Muslim state of Pakistan. In August 1947 the British partitioned the land with India and Pakistan each achieving independence on terms that Gandhi disapproved.
It was after the 1920-22 Non co-operation that Gandhi evolved developed the term satyagraha and embarked on the British administration in national movement for till the independence of India on 15th August 1947. The origin, conception and practice of satyagraha from 1930 to the Indian independence by Gandhi is discussed in the proceeding chapter V entitled Mahatma Gandhiji’s Concept of Satyagraha

6. Assassination of Mahatma Gandhiji.

Gandhiji was assassinated in the garden of the former Birla House (now Gandhi Smriti) at 5:17 PM on 30 January 1948. Accompanied by his grandnieces, Gandhi was on his way to address a prayer meeting, when his assassin, Nathuram Godse, fired three bullets from a Beretta 9 mm pistol into his chest at point-blank range. Godse was a Hindu nationalist with links to the extremist Hindu Mahasabha, who held Gandhi guilty of favouring Pakistan and strongly opposed the doctrine of nonviolence. Godse and his co-conspirator were tried and executed in 1949. Gandhi’s memorial (or Samādhi) at Rāj Ghāt, New Delhi, bears the epigraph “Hē Ram” which may be translated as “Oh God.” These are widely believed to be Gandhi’s last words after he was shot, though the veracity of this statement has been disputed. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru addressed the nation through radio:

*Friends and comrades, the light has gone out of our lives, and there is darkness everywhere, and I do not quite know what to tell you or how to say it. Our beloved leader, Bapu as we called him,*
the father of the nation, is no more. Perhaps I am wrong to say that; nevertheless, we will not see him again, as we have seen him for these many years, we will not run to him for advice or seek solace from him, and that is a terrible blow, not only for me, but for millions and millions in this country.

-Jawaharlal Nehru's address to the nation

Gandhiji's death was mourned nationwide. Over two million people joined the five-mile long funeral procession that took over five hours to reach Raj Ghat from Birla house, where he was assassinated. Gandhi's body was transported on a weapons carrier, whose chassis was dismantled overnight to allow a high-floor to be installed so that people could catch a glimpse of his body. The engine of the vehicle was not used, instead four drag-ropes manned by 50 people each pulled the vehicle.

While India mourned and communal (inter-religious) violence escalated, there were calls for retaliation, and even an invasion of Pakistan by the Indian army. Nehru and Patel, the two strongest figures in the government and in Congress, had been pulling in opposite directions; the assassination pushed them together. They agreed the first objective must be to calm the hysteria. They called on Indians to honour Gandhi's memory and even more his ideals. They used the assassination to consolidate the authority of the new Indian state. The government made sure everyone knew the guilty party was not a Muslim. Congress tightly controlled the epic public displays of grief over a two week period - the funeral, mortuary rituals and distribution of the martyr's ashes - as millions participated and hundreds of millions watched.
By Hindu tradition the ashes were to be spread on a river. Gandhi's ashes were poured into urns which were sent across India for memorial services.\textsuperscript{92} Most were immersed at the Sangam at Allahabad on 12\textsuperscript{th} February 1948, but some were secretly taken away. In 1997, Tushar Gandhi immersed the contents of one urn, found in a bank vault and reclaimed through the courts, at the Sangam at Allahabad.\textsuperscript{93,94} Some of Gandhi's ashes were scattered at the source of the Nile River near Jinja, Uganda, and a memorial plaque marks the event. On 30\textsuperscript{th} January 2008, the contents of another urn were immersed at Girgaum Chowpatty. Another urn is at the palace of the Aga Khan in Pune\textsuperscript{95} (where Gandhi had been imprisoned from 1942 to 1944) and another in the Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine in Los Angeles.\textsuperscript{96}

\textbf{IV. Influences on Gandhiji.}

Gandhiji's thought evolved over time, with his early ideas becoming the core or scaffolding for his mature philosophy. In London he committed himself to truthfulness, temperance, chastity, and vegetarianism. His return to India to work as a lawyer was a failure, so he went to South Africa for a quarter century, where he absorbed ideas from many sources, most of them non-Indian.\textsuperscript{97} Gandhiji grew up in an eclectic religious atmosphere and throughout his life searched for insights from many religious traditions.\textsuperscript{98} He was exposed to Jain ideas through his mother who was in contact with Jain monks. Themes from Jainism that Gandhiji absorbed
included asceticism; compassion for all forms of life; the importance of vows for self-discipline; vegetarianism; fasting for self-purification; mutual tolerance among people of different creeds; and “syadvad”, the idea that all views of truth are partial, a doctrine that lies at the root of Satyagraha.\(^99\) He received much of his influence from Jainism particularly during his younger years.\(^{100}\)

London experience of Gandhiji provided him a solid philosophical base focused on truthfulness, temperance, chastity, and vegetarianism. When he returned to India in 1891, his outlook was parochial and he could not make a living as a lawyer. This challenged his belief that practicality and morality necessarily coincided. By moving in 1893 to South Africa he found a solution to this problem and developed the central concepts of his mature philosophy.\(^{101}\) N. A. Toothi felt that Gandhi was influenced by the reforms and teachings of Swaminarayan, stating “Close parallels do exist in programs of social reform based on to nonviolence, truth-telling, cleanliness, temperance and upliftment of the masses.”\(^{102}\) Vallabhbhai Patel, who grew up in a Swaminarayan household was attracted to Gandhi due to this aspect of Gandhi’s doctrine.\(^{103}\)

Gandhiji's ethical thinking was heavily influenced by a handful of books, which he repeatedly meditated upon. They included especially Plato's \textit{Apology} and John Ruskin's \textit{Unto this Last} (1862) (both of which he
translated into Gujarati); William Salter's *Ethical Religion* (1889); Henry David Thoreau's *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* (1849); and Leo Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* (1894). Ruskin inspired his decision to live an austere life on a commune, at first on the Phoenix Farm in Natal and then on the Tolstoy Farm just outside Johannesburg, South Africa.\textsuperscript{104}

Balkrishna Gokhale argues that Gandhi took his philosophy of history from Hinduism and Jainism, supplemented by selected Christian traditions and ideas of Tolstoy and Ruskin. Hinduism provided central concepts of God's role in history, of man as the battleground of forces of virtue and sin, and of the potential of love as an historical force. From Jainism, Gandhi took the idea of applying nonviolence to human situations and the theory that Absolute Reality can be comprehended only relatively in human affairs.\textsuperscript{105}

Historian Howard Spodek holds that some of Gandhi's most effective methods such as fasting, noncooperation and appeals to the justice and compassion of the rulers were learned as a youth in Gujarat. Later on, the financial, cultural, organizational and geographical support needed to bring his campaigns to a national audience were drawn from Ahmedabad and Gujarat, his Indian residence 1915–1930.\textsuperscript{106}
Along with the book mentioned above, in 1908 Leo Tolstoy wrote *A Letter to a Hindu*, which said that only by using love as a weapon through passive resistance could the Indian people overthrow colonial rule. In 1909, Gandhi wrote to Tolstoy seeking advice and permission to republish *A Letter to a Hindu* in Gujarati. Tolstoy responded and the two continued a correspondence until Tolstoy's death in 1910 (Tolstoy's last letter was to Gandhi). The letters concern practical and theological applications of nonviolence.\(^{107}\)

Gandhiji held himself a disciple of Tolstoy, for they agreed regarding opposition to state authority and colonialism; both hated violence and preached non-resistance. However, they differed sharply on political strategy. Gandhi called for political involvement; he was a nationalist and was prepared to use nonviolent force. He was also willing to compromise.\(^{108}\) It was at Tolstoy Farm where Gandhi and Hermann Kallenbach systematically trained their disciples in the philosophy of nonviolence.\(^{109}\)

V. Basic Principles of Gandhiji.

1. Truth and Satyagraha

Gandhi dedicated his life to the wider purpose of discovering truth, or *Satya*. He tried to achieve this by learning from his own mistakes and conducting experiments on himself. He called his autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*.\(^{110}\)
Bruce Watson argues that Gandhi based Satyagraha on the Vedantic ideal of self-realization, and notes it also contains Jain and Buddhist notions of nonviolence, vegetarianism, the avoidance of killing, and universal love. Gandhi also borrowed Christian-Islamic ideas of equality, the brotherhood of man, and the concept of turning the other cheek.111

Gandhi stated that the most important battle to fight was overcoming his own demons, fears, and insecurities. Gandhi summarized his beliefs first when he said "God is Truth". He would later change this statement to “Truth is God”. Thus, satya (truth) in Gandhi's philosophy is “God”.112 A detailed analysis of Gandhiji’s principles and thoughts on satyagraha will be made in separate chapter on satyagraha.

2. Gandhiji and Nonviolence.

Although Gandhi was not the originator of the principle of nonviolence, he was the first to apply it in the political field on a large scale.113 The concept of nonviolence (ahimsa) and nonresistance has a long history in Indian religious thought. Gandhi explains his philosophy and way of life in his autobiography The Story of My Experiments with Truth. Gandhi realised later that this level of nonviolence required incredible faith and courage, which he believed everyone did not possess. He therefore advised that everyone need not keep to nonviolence, especially if it were...
used as a cover for cowardice, saying, "where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence."\textsuperscript{114}

3. Gandhiji on Vegetarianism and food.

Gandhiji looked into numerous religious and intellectual currents during his stay in London. He especially appreciated how the theosophical movement encouraged a religious eclecticism and an antipathy to atheism. Hay says the vegetarian movement had the greatest impact for it was Gandhi’s point of entry into other reformist agendas of the time.\textsuperscript{115} The idea of vegetarianism is deeply ingrained in Hindu and Jain traditions in India, especially in his native Gujarat.\textsuperscript{116} Gandhi was close to the chairman of the London Vegetarian Society, Dr. Josiah Oldfield, and corresponded with Henry Stephens Salt, a vegetarian campaigner. Gandhi became a strict vegetarian. He wrote the book \textit{The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism} and wrote for the London Vegetarian Society's publication.\textsuperscript{117} Gandhi was somewhat of a food faddist taking his own goat to travels so he could always have fresh milk.\textsuperscript{118}

In \textit{The Story of My Experiments with Truth}, Gandhiji noted that vegetarianism was the beginning of his deep commitment to Brahmacharya; without total control of the palate, his success in following Brahmacharya would likely falter. “You wish to know what the marks of a man are who wants to realize Truth which is God”, he wrote.
“He must reduce himself to zero and have perfect control over all his senses—beginning with the palate or tongue.”\textsuperscript{119} Gandhi also stated that he followed a fruitarian diet for five years but discontinued it due to pleurisy and pressure from his doctor. He thereafter resumed a vegetarian diet.

4. Fasting.

Gandhiji used fasting as a political device, often threatening suicide unless demands were met. Congress publicised the fasts as a political action that generated widespread sympathy. In response the government tried to manipulate news coverage to minimise his challenge to the Raj. He fasted in 1932 to protest the voting scheme for separate political representation for Dalits; Gandhi did not want them segregated. The government stopped the London press from showing photographs of his emaciated body, because it would elicit sympathy. Gandhi's 1943 hunger strike took place during a two-year prison term for the anticolonial Quit India movement. The government called on nutritional experts to demystify his action, and again no photos were allowed. However, his final fast in 1948, after India was independent, was lauded by the British press and this time did include full-length photos.\textsuperscript{120}

Alter argues that Gandhi's fixation on diet and celibacy were much deeper than exercises in self-discipline. Rather, his beliefs regarding
health offered a critique of both the traditional Hindu system of ayurvedic medicine and Western concepts. This challenge was integral to his deeper challenge to tradition and modernity, as health and nonviolence became part of the same ethics.\footnote{121}

5. Basic education or Nai Talim.

Gandhiji's educational policies reflected \textit{Nai Talim} (‘Basic Education for all’), a spiritual principle which states that knowledge and work are not separate. It was a reaction against the British educational system and colonialism in general, which had the negative effect of making Indian children alienated and career-based; it promoted disdain for manual work, the development of a new elite class, and the increasing problems of industrialisation and urbanisation. The three pillars of Gandhi's pedagogy were its focus on the \textit{lifelong character} of education, its \textit{social character} and its form as a \textit{holistic process}. For Gandhiji, education is 'the moral development of the person', a process that is by definition 'lifelong'.\footnote{122}

Nai Talim evolved out of the spiritually oriented education program at Tolstoy Farm in South Africa, and Gandhiji's work at the ashram at Sevagram after 1937.\footnote{123} After 1947 the Nehru government's vision of an industrialized, centrally planned economy had scant place for Gandhi's village-oriented approach.\footnote{124}
VI. Gandhian economics.

For Gandhiji a free India meant the flourishing of thousands of self-sufficient small communities who rule themselves without hindering others. Gandhian economics focused on the need for economic self-sufficiency at the village level. His policy of “sarvodaya” called for ending poverty through improved agriculture and small-scale cottage industries in every village.\textsuperscript{125} Gandhi challenged Nehru and the modernizers in the late 1930s who called for rapid industrialisation on the Soviet model; Gandhiji denounced that as dehumanising and contrary to the needs of the villages where the great majority of the people lived.\textsuperscript{126}

VII. Literary Works of Gandhiji.

Gandhiji was a prolific writer. One of Gandhi’s earliest publications, \textit{Hind Swaraj}, published in Gujarati in 1909, is recognized as the intellectual blueprint of India’s independence movement. For decades he edited several newspapers including \textit{Harijan} in Gujarati, in Hindi and in the English language; \textit{Indian Opinion} while in South Africa and, \textit{Young India}, in English, and Navajivan, a Gujarati monthly, on his return to India. Later, Navajivan was also published in Hindi. In addition, he wrote letters almost every day to individuals and newspapers.

Gandhiji also wrote several books including his autobiography, \textit{The Story of My Experiments with Truth}, of which he bought the entire first
edition to make sure it was reprinted.\textsuperscript{127} His other autobiographies included: \textit{Satyagraha in South Africa} about his struggle there, \textit{Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule}, a political pamphlet, and a paraphrase in Gujarati of John Ruskin's \textit{Unto This Last}. This last essay can be considered his programme on economics. He also wrote extensively on vegetarianism, diet and health, religion, social reforms, etc. Gandhiji usually wrote in Gujarati, though he also revised the Hindi and English translations of his books.\textsuperscript{128} Gandhiji's complete works were published by the Indian government under the name \textit{The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi} in the 1960s. The writings comprise about 50,000 pages published in about a hundred volumes.
Notes and References.

1. McGregor, Ronald Stuart (1993), *The Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary*. p. 799. Retrieved 31 August 2013. Quote: *(mahā" =great, mighty, large,..., eminent" + ātmā =soul, spirit; the self, the individual; the mind, the heart")*: "high-souled, of noble nature; a noble or venerable man."

2. Gandhi, Rajmohan (2006), p. 172: "... Kasturba would accompany Gandhi on his departure from Cape Town for England in July 1914 *en route* to India. ... In different South African towns (Pretoria, Cape Town, Bloemfontein, Johannesburg, and the Natal cities of Durban and Verulam), the struggle's martyrs were honoured and the Gandhi's bade farewell. Addresses in Durban and Verulam referred to Gandhi as a 'Mahatma', 'great soul'. He was seen as a great soul because he had taken up the poor's cause. The whites too said good things about Gandhi, who predicted a future for the Empire if it respected justice." (p. 172).


10. Ibid.,


14. Ibid., Chapter "Playing the Husband".

15. Ibid., Chapter "My Father's Death and My Double Shame".


17. Renard, John (1999), *Responses to One Hundred and One Questions on Hinduism*, p. 139.


20. Gandhi (1940), Chapter "Preparation for England".


24. Brown, Judith Margaret, Ibid.

25. Ibid.

27. Ibid.


32. Gandhi (1940), THE STORY OF MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH, Chapter “More Hardships”.

33. Gandhi (1940), Ibid., Chapter “Some Experiences”.


37. The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi/Volume II /March 1897 Memorial, p.54.

38. Tendulkar, D. G. (1951), Ibid.


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47. Gandhi, Rajmohan (2006), Mohandas: A True Story of a Man, His People, and an Empire By Gandhi., pp. 108-09.


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75. Ibid.


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87. Ibid.


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92. Ramesh, Randeep (16 January 2008). “Gandhi's ashes to rest at sea, not in a museum”.

93. Ibid.


95. Ramesh, Randeep (16 January 2008), “Gandhi’s ashes to rest at sea, not in a museum”.


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127. Roberts, Andrew (26 March 2011). "Among the Hagiographers (A book review of "Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle With India".