

THE
COLLECTED
WORKS
OF
MAHATMA
GANDHI

VOLUME THIRTEEN



THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

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GANDHI

XIII
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SUBSIDIARY OBSERVANCES

Two other vows follow from the foregoing.¹

1. VOW OF SWADESHI

The person who has taken the vow of Swadeshi will never use articles which conceivably involve violation of truth in their manufacture or on the part of their manufacturers. It follows, for instance, that a votary of truth will not use articles manufactured in the mills of Manchester, Germany or India, for he cannot be sure that they involve no such violation of truth. Moreover, labourers suffer much in the mills. The generation of tremendous heat causes enormous destruction of life. Besides, the loss of workers' lives in the manufacture of machines and of other creatures through excessive heat is something impossible to describe. Foreign cloth and cloth made by means of machinery are, therefore, tabooed to a votary of non-violence as they involve triple violence. Further reflection will show that the use of foreign cloth can be held to involve a breach of the vows of non-stealing and non-possession. We follow custom and, for better appearance, wear foreign cloth in preference to the cloth made on our own handlooms with so little effort. Artificial beautifying of the body is a hindrance to a *brahmachari* and so, even from the point of view of that vow, machine-made cloth is taboo. Therefore, the vow of Swadeshi requires the use of simple clothing made on simple handlooms and stitched in simple style, foreign buttons, cuts, etc., being avoided. The same line of reasoning may be applied to all other articles.

2. VOW OF FEARLESSNESS

He who is acted upon by fear can hardly observe the vows of truth, etc. The Controllers will, therefore, constantly endeavour to be free from the fear of kings or society, one's caste or family, thieves, robbers, ferocious animals such as tigers, and even of death. One who observes the vow of fearlessness will defend himself or others by truth-force or soul-force.

3. VOW AGAINST UNTOUCHABILITY²

According to Hindu religion as traditionally practised, communities such as *Dhed*, *Bhangi*, etc., known by the names of *Antyaj*, *Pancham*, *Achhut* and so on, are looked upon as untouchable. Hindus belonging to other communities believe that they will be defiled if they touch a member of any of the said communities and, if anyone

¹ Omitted in the third edition

² This and the paragraph on *Varnashram* were added in the third edition.

does so accidentally, he thinks that he has committed a sin. The founders of the Ashram believe that this practice is a blot on Hindu religion. Themselves staunch Hindus, they believe that the Hindu race will continue to add to its load of sin so long as it regards a single community as untouchable. Some of the consequences of this practice have been terrible. In order to be free from this sin, the Ashram inmates are under a vow to regard the untouchable communities as touchable; actually one *Dhed* family was staying in the Ashram, and it is still there, when the third edition of these rules was being drawn up. It lives exactly in the same condition as others in the Ashram do. This vow does not extend to association for purpose of eating. All that is desired is the eradication of the evil of untouchability.

VARNASHRAM¹

The Ashram does not follow the *varnashram* dharma. Where those in control of the Ashram will take the place of the pupils' parents and where life-long vows of celibacy, non-hoarding, etc., are to be observed, *varnashram* dharma has no scope. The Ashram inmates will be in the stage of *sanyasis*² and so it is not necessary for them to follow the rules of this dharma. Apart from this, the Ashram has a firm belief in the *varnashram* dharma. The discipline of caste seems to have done no harm to the country; on the contrary, rather. There is no reason to believe that eating in company promotes brotherhood ever so slightly. In order that the *varnashram* dharma and caste discipline might in no way be undermined, the Ashram inmates are under obligation, whenever they stir out, to subsist on fruits if they cannot cook their own food.

MOTHER TONGUE

It is the belief of the Controllers that no nation or any group thereof can make real progress by abandoning its own language; they will, therefore, use their own language. As they desire to be on terms of intimacy with their brethren from all parts of India, they will also learn the chief Indian languages; as Sanskrit is a key to Indian languages, they will learn that too.

MANUAL WORK

The Controllers believe that body labour is a duty imposed by nature upon mankind. Such labour is the only means by which

¹ The organisation of society into four castes, each with a distinctive function, and the division of life into four stages

² Those who, in the last stage of life, have renounced the world

man may sustain himself; his mental and spiritual powers should be used for the common good only. As the vast majority in the world live on agriculture, the Controllers will always devote some part of their time to working on the land; when that is not possible, they will perform some other bodily labour.

WEAVING

The Controllers believe that one of the chief causes of poverty in the land is the virtual disappearance of spinning-wheels and handlooms. They will, therefore, make every effort to revive this industry by themselves weaving cloth on handlooms.

POLITICS

Politics, economic progress, etc., are not unconnected matters; knowing that they are all rooted in religion, the Controllers will make an effort to learn and teach politics, economics, social reform, etc., in a religious spirit and work in these fields with all the zeal that they can command.

(2) NOVITIATES

Those who are desirous of following the foregoing programme but are not able immediately to take the necessary vows may be admitted as Novitiates. It is obligatory upon them to conform to all the observances which are followed by Controllers the while that they are in the Ashram. They will acquire the status of Controllers when they are able to take the necessary vows for life.

(3) STUDENTS

- 1 Any children, whether boys or girls, from four years and upwards may be admitted with the consent of their parents.¹
- 2 Parents will have to surrender all control over their children.
- 3 Children will not be permitted to visit their parents for any reason until the whole course of study is finished.
- 4 Students will be taught to observe all the vows intended for the Controllers.
- 5 They will receive instruction in religion, agriculture, handloom-weaving and letters.
- 6 Instruction in letters will be through the students' own languages and will include History, Geography, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Economics, etc., the learning of Sanskrit, Hindi and at least one Dravidian language being obligatory.

¹ This was replaced in the third edition by: "Boys and girls under twelve years of age will not be admitted if their parents do not join at the same time."

- 7 English will be taught as a second language.
- 8 Urdu, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Devnagari and Gujarati scripts will be taught to all.
- 9 The Controllers believe that the whole course will be completed in ten years.¹ Upon reaching the age of majority, students will be given the option of taking the vows or retiring from the Ashram. This will make it possible for those to whom the programme has not commended itself to leave the Ashram.
- 10 They will exercise this option at an age when they will require no assistance from their parents or guardians.
- 11 Every endeavour will be made from the very beginning to see that, when they leave, they will be strong enough to have no fear what they would do for their maintenancce.
- 12 Grown-up persons also may be admitted as students.
- 13 As a rule, everyone will wear the simplest and a uniform style of dress.
- 14 Food will be simple. Chillies will be excluded altogether and generally no condiments will be used excepting salt, pepper and turmeric. Milk, ghce and other milk products being a hindrance to a celibate life and milk being often a cause of tuberculosis and having the same stimulating qualities as meat, they will be most sparingly used, if at all. Meals will be served thrice a day and will include dried and fresh fruits in liberal quantities. All inmates of the Ashram will be taught the general principles of hygiene.
- 15 No holidays will be observed in this Ashram but, for one and a half days every week, the ordinary routine will be altered and everyone will have some time to attend to his private work.
- 16 During three months in the year, those whose health permits it will be taken on a tour, on foot for the most part, of India.
- 17 Nothing will be charged either from Students or Novitiates towards their monthly expenditure, but parents or the members themselves will be expected to contribute whatever they can towards the expenses of the Ashram.

MISCELLANEOUS

Administration of the Ashram will rest with a body of Controllers. The Chief Controller will have the right to decide whom to admit and to which category.

The expenses of the Ashram are being met from moneys already received by the Chief Controller or to be received from friends who may have some faith in the Ashram.

¹ This sentence was omitted in the third edition.



WITH YAKUB HASAN AND G. A. NATESAN

2208-1
31 मई बाद
मोह ह्युके 2
Phoenix, Nest

महात्माजी,

उड़के सब गुरु कुंठ से
आने के बाद से सब व्यवस्था
करने की गंगा न से पड़ जा
दुख लीये आप को से पाल
अच्छा ही न लीये सब कडको
पर आपने जो वेग बतलाया
है वह वे कभी भूल नहि सकने
है मेरे उड़की और साथीओ
को आश्रम देकर मुझको आपका
कर्म बनाया है

अगला बाद में हाल तो आश्रम
स्विकृत किया है उर की विषय न ली
दिदि में व न रही है तैयार लेने से
आपका अविधाव को लीये भेजी

जाय जा

इरिजा में कर आकर आपकी
साथ कुछ दिन रहने की बात
में वी न कूले शूला नहि दुं
पुखत मीने से से न रु
प से पुं जा

आपको कृपा की है
तो इन कारणादि
के बंदे गान हम्

The Ashram is accommodated in two houses on the banks of the Sabarmati, Ahmedabad, on the road to Sarakhej across the Ellis Bridge.

It is expected that in a few months, about 250 acres of land will be acquired in the vicinity of Ahmedabad and the Ashram located thereon.

A REQUEST

Visitors are requested to observe all the Ashram rules during their stay there. Every endeavour will be made to make them comfortable; but the management will be thankful to them if they bring with them their bedding and utensils for meals, as the Ashram rules permit the stocking of only a minimum of articles.

Those parents who intend sending their children to the Ashram are advised to pay a visit to the Ashram. No boy or girl will be admitted before he or she has been duly tested.

DAILY ROUTINE¹

(1) An effort is being made to see that everyone in the Ashram gets up at 4 o'clock. The first bell rings at 4.

(2) It is obligatory on all, except those who are ill, to get up at 4.30. Everyone finishes bathing by 5.

(3) 5 to 5.30 : Prayers and readings from holy books.

(4) 5.30 to 7 : Breakfast of fruits, such as bananas.

(5) 7 to 8.30 : Manual work. This includes drawing water, grinding, sweeping, weaving, cooking, etc.

(6) 8.30 to 10 : School work.

(7) 10 to 12 : Meal and cleaning of utensils. The meal consists of dal, rice, vegetables and *rotlis* for five days. On two days, there are *rotlis* and fruits.

(8) 12 to 3 : School work.

(9) 3 to 5 : Work, as in the morning.

(10) 5 to 6 : Meal and cleaning of utensils. The meal mostly follows the same pattern as in the morning.

(11) 6.30 to 7 : Prayers, as in the morning.

(12) 7 to 9 : Study, receiving visitors, etc.

Before nine, all children go to bed. At ten the lights are put out.

For school work, the subjects of study at present are Sanskrit, Gujarati, Tamil, Hindi and Arithmetic. Study of History and Geography is included in that of languages.

No paid teachers or servants are employed in the Ashram.

¹ Added in the third edition

In all, the Ashram has at present 35 inmates. Four of them live with their families. There are five teachers to look after teaching. Permanent members of the Ashram include two from North India, nine from Madras Presidency and the rest are from Gujarat and Kathiawar.

[From Gujarati]

From photostats of printed leaflets: S.N. 6187 and S.N. 6189

86. *LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI*

AHMEDABAD,
May 20 [1915]¹

DEAR MR. SHASTRIAR,

I have just returned from a brief domestic visit to Rajkot to find your two letters. If I may suggest, I think that you should respond to Sir William's call. Sir Pherozeshaw is likely to take the same view that Mrs. Besant does. To me it is enough that Sir William wants you, and that you know the subject you are expected to handle. Your credentials as President of the Society are and ought to be sufficient to give you the status and authority you will need in your mission.

And if you go, I suppose you will not need to do so for two months. Will you not then during the time get rid of your disease so as to enable you the more effectively to do your work?

Naiker and Sundaram seem to be doing very well.

I am settling down here for the time being at any rate.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

The pamphlet I have sent you is not the last word.

From a photostat of the original in Gandhiji's hand: G.N. 6289

¹ The reference to Sir Pherozeshah Mehta (who died in November 1915) fixes the year as 1915.