Ahimsa Center- K-12 Teacher Institute Lesson Plan

**Title of Lesson:** Gandhi’s 12 Vows: Training Warriors of Non-violence (Satyagrahis)

**Lesson By:** Quetzal Aztlan Roura

<table>
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<th>Grade Level/Subject Areas:</th>
<th>Class Size:</th>
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<tr>
<td>10th Grade World History</td>
<td>30-40 students</td>
<td>2 days (50-minute class periods)</td>
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<td>Or 11th Grade American History</td>
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**Goals/Objectives of Lesson:**
Students will be able to
- Understand basic biographical information about Mohandas Gandhi’s life and essential principles of Gandhi’s non-violent activist philosophy called satyagraha.
- Describe 12 Vows Gandhi required of all people who wanted to be trained in the philosophy of satyagraha in order to become warriors of nonviolence called satyagrahis;
- Students will evaluate how each of the 12 Vows might or might not help train people to be effective satyagrahis (warriors of nonviolence).
- Demonstrate their understanding of the above objectives by completing an Ashram Vows Response Grid and by completing two written response questions which evaluate Gandhi’s methods.

**Lesson Abstract:**
The class will jigsaw primary source excerpts from Gandhi’s Ashram Observances using the “Walk n Talk” strategy in order to understand Mahatma Gandhi’s methods of nonviolence (satyagraha). Students will evaluate how effective Gandhi’s methods are for training effective non-violent warriors (satyagrahis) who are equipped to make effective revolution.

**California World History Standards:**
10.4 Students analyze patterns of global change in the era of New Imperialism in at least two of the following regions or countries: Africa, Southeast Asia, China, India, Latin America, and the Philippines.

3. Explain imperialism from the perspective of the colonizers and the colonized and the varied immediate and long-term responses by the people under colonial rule.
4. Describe the independence struggles of the colonized regions of the world, including the roles of leaders, such as Sun Yat-sen in China, and the roles of ideology and religion.

**Lesson Content:**
Mohandas K. Gandhi (October 2, 1869 – January 30, 1948) is most well known around the world as an Indian nationalist leader who set India free from British colonial rule in the early 1940s through his methods of non-violent activism. Gandhi is indeed the first great visionary and effective championed of the social activist methods we know today as non-violent resistance. Countless activists throughout the globe have adopted Gandhi’s methods, most notably in America. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez practiced with great success Gandhi’s methods of proactive non-violence to achieve a revolution of civil rights for ethnic minorities in America. Gandhi is the ideological architect and spiritual father of what we know today as non-violent resistance. Later in his life, Mohandas Gandhi was given the spiritual title Mahatma Gandhi, or “great soul” Gandhi, because of the honor given him for his spiritual and social leadership.

Building on moral principles from Hindu, Christian, and Muslim traditions, as well as European counter cultural philosophers such as Tolstoy and Ruskin, Gandhi gave birth to a comprehensive resistance philosophy of non-violence called satyagraha. Satyagraha, literally translates into “truth-force”. And those who practiced non-violence were called satyagrahis, or warriors of truth-force. For
Gandhi, satyagraha was more than a mere method for fighting the power to achieving a particular social aim. Satyagraha was a way of life. Satyagrahis are individuals who have vowed to live disciplined lives of absolute love, equality, and non-violence in thought, word, and deed. Gandhi called this kind of life a life of *ahimsa*.

A non-violent campaign was called satyagraha. A satyagraha can materialize in any form of non-violent resistance, from peaceful protest, boycotts, or fasts, to civil disobedience. However the satyagrahi remains non-violent no matter what, even if it means enduring harsh suffering like hunger, beatings, imprisonment, or even death. Satyagrahis *forcefully* press for the moral *truth* in the conflict with absolute love for everyone in the conflict weather they are victim or wrongdoer. Indeed a satyagrahi must learn to love his or her enemies as they love themselves, realizing that they really are not actually enemies, not even merely brothers, they are in a way the same person within the soul of humanity. Therefore, the goal of satyagraha is not to defeat your enemy, nor shame your enemy, nor even to coerce your enemy to give in to your demands. The goal is to convert your enemy to the side of moral truth. The satyagraha will help the wrongdoers within a conflict to realize their wrongdoings, and will inspire their moral conscience to welled up from within their souls. Wrongdoers will repent from wrongs. Thus, satyagraha produces a moral elevation of the soul for all who are involved in a satyagraha conflict.

Gandhi’s vision for the world was that everyone in society will be trained to be Satyagrahi’s, this is the only way for society to truly transform. However, Gandhi knew society couldn’t be changed over night, so he created a home base for training people to be effective warriors of non-violence. The home base for training satyagrahi’s was a rural communally run community called an ashram, located in Sabermati, India. Traditionally ashrams were rural retreat centers in India, used primarily as a center spiritual development. However, Gandhi re-invented the ashram to make it a spiritual training ground for non-violent warriors. Gandhi was willing to accept virtually anyone in his ashram, as long as he/she was willing to take 12 vows: 1) Truth (satya), 2) Love (Ahimsa), 3) Chastity (Brahmacharya), 4) Control of Palate, 5) Non-Stealing, 6) Non-Possession, 7) Fearlessness, 8) Bread Labor (Khaddar), 9) No One is Untouchable, 10) Tolerance: Equality of Religions, 11) Humility, 12) Sacrifice (Yanja). For Gandhi, vows were essential. They took on a spiritual quality, since these vows were made between the Satyagrahi and god. A vow is a commitment to a principle eternal Truth in order to conform the body, mind, and soul, to that Truth. Gandhi believed that living in a tightly knit community where everyone strives daily to live out these vows, it will produce a sort of moral boot camp. Satyagrahis will develop their character, their wisdom, their courage, and their unfailing love.

This community was unmistakably spiritual, as well as communalistic. Every morning would begin with the communal singing of spiritual as hymns, prayers, and members would take meditative walks. Gandhi did not discriminate against women, religion, or caste. Anyone could take the vows and join the community: women, men, Muslims, Hindus, Jains, the untouchable castes, the young, the old, etc. Gandhi was revolutionary in how inclusive and non-discriminating his ashram community was. The ashram was not just a place for adults, it was a community of families: children of Satyagrahis were raised up in the values of non-violence, they were taught by adults in the community, and they adhered to the 13 vows. Everyone contributed to the production of the community as much as they could so that the ashram could be as self sustaining as possible: members spun their own cloth, farmed, shared in janitorial duties, etc. Everyone took responsibility for everyone else in the community: all adults took on the responsibility of raising the children; when a member of the community became ill or injured everyone would take care of everyone else. Traditional marital family structures largely dissolved into the larger family of the community of the ashram; everyone became brothers and sisters in the ashram family.

Gandhi ashram community was actually more than merely a boot camp for Satyagraha. Gandhi wanted the ashram to become the model community for Indians to replicate throughout the nation. The principles that that found Gandhi’s ashram should be used to reinvasion Indian communities throughout India. This is how Gandhi thought Indian culture could evolve to fully adopt satyagraha. Gandhi knew that his vision for India’s future was not the only vision laid before Indian, a much louder and coercive force leading India into the future was the British imperial rulers.

In fact, Gandhi’s vision for India’s future, a vision based on ashram communities, was an intentional rejection of the direction Britain was steering India. By the early 1900s, the British imperial
machine held India tightly in its jaws, securing India as not just any colony, but the “crown jewel” of the British Empire. The English industrial system flooded India with English factory products, offering Indians trinkets but in so doing destroyed the livelihood of thousands of Indians who made their livings producing goods traditionally. These unemployed Indians often went to work for English-owned factories, railroads, and service-sector jobs for low wages, or they joined the growing masses living under poverty. The Indian upper and middle castes often grew in local wealth and power by adapting to the English capitalist system, some became merchants, managers, and lawyers trained in English law.

Gandhi grew up in this India, dominated by the long arm of England stretching into every facet of traditional Indian culture, economy, and society. Even though England sucked out vast profits from India’s natural resources, labor, and markets, the English were also able to brand their culture and intellectual traditions as superior to any other in the world. Indian colonial subjects sometimes bought into this making them feel that their own traditional Indian ways were inferior. As a young man Gandhi himself bought into this English system many ways: he traveled to London in 1888 for training as an attorney, he learned English, he read western books, and he wore English clothing even after his return to India to practice law in 1891.

However, as Gandhi ripened into mature adulthood he would grow to reject much of western capitalist-imperialist system. He realized that British system had serious flaws that caused suffering to vast sectors of peoples, but more importantly, it harmed the souls of both colonizers and the colonized. He first saw this when he lived in South Africa to practice law from 1893-1914. There Gandhi realized that Indians and Blacks there were treated as inferior by the European colonizers, they were denied basic civil rights and respect, kept politically powerless by laws that systematically disenfranchised Indians and subjected many to cycles of generational poverty; most disturbing to Gandhi was that the majority of Indian in South Africa were indentured servants who were treated as virtual slaves in European homes, mines, and factories. As a response to oppression and suffering brought on through the system of British Imperial rule, Gandhi sought out to envision effective and moral methods to resist to oppression and create proactive change.

Gandhi experimented with non-violent methods through numerous social campaigns. He organized the Indians there into the Indian National Congress of South Africa, he defended abused indentured servants in court, he developed non-violent strategies for civil disobedience, such as burning registration cards, and non-violent labor strikes for fair legal reform.

Also, Gandhi would begin to envision an alternative to British rule and economic structures, outlining his views in his book, *Hind Swaraj* (“Indian Self-Rule”). Gandhi came to believe that greed is the primary reason England was able to colonize India. Indians fell in love with England products, becoming materialistic believing that material possessions would make them happy. Indians became dependent on English products and capitalism. As a result, Indians freely handed control of the Indian economy to England. It wasn’t long before England expanded from control over the economy to control over politics and military. For Gandhi, greed not force colonized India: British greed and Indian greed. Thus, the only way to free Indians from British rule was to free Indians from their dependence on English capitalism. Gandhi’s ashram community was his revolutionary alternative vision for Indian society.

Upon returning to India in 1914, Gandhi continued to develop methods of satyagraha to rectify injustices in the Indian colony. Gandhi established his ashram at Sabermati, where he trained ashram residence to be fearless Satyagrahis, warriors of non-violence. Through numerous satyagraha campaigns and his spiritual leadership Gandhi grew to national fame, earning him the honorary title ‘Mahatma”, or “great soul”. Gandhi rose to lead the Indian National Congress, which was the driving force for Indian national independence. Through years of commitment training satyagrahis in his ashram in Sabermati, and through years of strategic campaigns of satyagraha, Gandhi helped galvanized the Indian populace against British rule, winning India independence in 1947. However, Gandhi’s unwavering commitment to non-violent philosophy earned him some enemies. Gandhi was assassinated by an Indian Hindu extremist on January 30, 1948. Gandhi was on his way to an evening prayer meeting.

**Guiding Questions:**
- Is satyagraha, or non-violence, the best form of revolutionary activism.
- What does it take to be a long lasting revolutionary.
- Why did Mohandas Gandhi believe *satyagraha* was a necessary and effective force to free India from British rule?
- How were Indians being treated by the British under colonialism?

**Materials Needed:**
1) Computer, LCD projector, Computer Speakers OR T.V. & DVD player
2) Download or stream from the video file from the Ahimsa website: *Ashram Vows*, by Quetzal Roura
3) Handouts:
   - Mahatma Gandhi and Non-Violent Resistance (*Option 1 World History & Option 2 US History*)
   - Gandhi’s 12 Vows: Training Warriors of Non-violence (Satyagrahis)
   - Ashram Vows Excerpts: Group #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
   - Ashram Vows Response Grid

**Lesson Context:**

This lesson is meant to be used in the second half of an Age of New Imperialism unit (but it can all fit well at the beginning of an American history civil rights unit, or any lesson on non-violent resistance). Before this lesson is taught, world history students learn about how and why Western Europeans colonized peoples throughout the world. Students have also learned about the living and working conditions of colonized peoples, and about various failed attempts at violent resistance by colonized peoples against their Western colonizers: for example, China’s Opium War and Boxer Rebellion, India’s Sepoy Rebellion, failed African tribal rebellions with the notable exception of Ethiopia against Italy (but of course Ethiopia would eventually fall to Italy later).

The second half of this Imperialism unit focuses on Gandhi’s successful nonviolent methods of resistance to the British colonizers, which ultimately won India its independence. This lesson is the first lesson of a series of these lessons on Gandhi and nonviolence. For the next lesson in the sequence see Simulation: Gandhi’s Salt March.

**Teaching Activities:** Ashram Vows lesson

1) Introduction:
   a. Starter Questions (3-5 minutes): What were some of the problems faced by people colonized by the British Empire?
   b. If you were colonized, like the Indians or Africans, what would you do?
   c. What did the Chinese do in the Opium war (China was defeated militarily)? What did the Africans do to resist colonization (some resisted, but they were usually killed and virtually enslaved, except Ethiopia)? What did the Indians try to do (remind them of the Sepoy rebellion, which ended in military defeat of the Indian Sepoys and austere measures towards Indans)?
   d. Has violence worked? No. Can violence work? Is there any other way?

2) Read Handout: *Mahatma Gandhi and Non-Violent Resistance* (*Bio Option 1* is written for World History, *Bio Option 2* is written for US History)
   a. As students read each belief of Gandhi’s, have students mark a plus “+” beside the beliefs they think will work, and a minus “−” beside the beliefs they think won’t work. Discuss with Class.
   b. Watch video clip showing an example of satyagraha that works/ Or read a story form Gandhi’s biography showing how it works.

3) Hand out *Ashram Vows Excerpts* and *Ashram Vows Response Grid* (or have students copy the grid on lined paper). The class will jigsaw the Ashram Vows: divide the class into 6 groups, hand out a stack of “**Group 1**” hand outs to the first group, a stack of “**Group 2**” handouts to the second group, and so on to all six groups.
4) Each person will be responsible for reading excerpts of one vow. They must understand their excerpts so much that they are the experts on that section. Fill in the chart only for the particular vow they were assigned, they must answer the questions in the columns above.

5) Options: student groups can make class presentations and write their answers on poster paper. I prefer using the method called a “Walk n’ Talk” because it is fast, and it forces all students in the class to participate in such a way that helps them clarify their understanding. It is a bit difficult to get students on board the first few time you do this activity, but usually by the third time students follow directions without much monitoring.

6) In a walk n talk, students get up out of their seats and find a partner in the class who read a different section. The student spends a few minutes describing the answer of question #1 in the first column (describing the main points of the reading section), meanwhile her partner will be filling in the information on their own chart. Then her partner will take a turn describing his answer for questions #1, while the first student fills in her chart. After both partners have shared their sections, they part ways and each finds a new partner that has read a different section. Repeat the process where each student shares his/her section. Students must continue fill in their own charts until they have question one answered on their charts for every vow. At the end student teams re-converge and answer question #2 as a group.
   a. Walk n’ Talk Rules:
      i. EVERYONE must get out of their seats; ABSOLUTELY NO ONE is allowed to sit down (Sitting students encourage other students to sit an do no work, I threaten to fail students for this assignment if they break the rules.).
      ii. No one is allowed to look at anyone else’s paper. Students are only allowed to communicate information through talking to each other. (This accesses multiple forms of learning, talking, listening, writing; rather than thoughtless copying)
      iii. You can only have one partner at a time. You can’t talk to a group of students while they copy the information. You can’t get information from someone when they are already working with a partner.
      iv. Students must work quickly. (Only give students the minimum amount of time needed, otherwise students socialize or procrastinate).

7) Students Answer the Following Evaluation Questions: if time runs out this could be homework:
   Assignment: Answer Discussion Questions (1-2 paragraphs each)
   1) Which is the most important for being an effective revolutionary leader.
   2) Would this train you to be an effective leader? How could this train you to be an effective leader?

Assessment/ Evaluation:
Students will complete an Ashram Vows Response Grid which requires students to summarize each of Gandhi’s arguments for each of the 12 vows, and it requires students envision how each of these vows could help train an effective satyagrahi.

Students will completing two written response questions which require students to evaluate the effectiveness of Gandhi’s vows for training satyagrahis.

Extension Activities/ Enrichment:
Students can look for ways to defuse violent tensions in the community nonviolently. Or students may choose to practice some of the vows and encourage others to practice the vows.

Students may want to read the full text of Gandhi’s book, Ashram Observances.
Bibliography:


Appendix 1
Mahatma Gandhi and Non-Violent Resistance

Satyagraha: “TRUTH FORCE”

Biography:
Mohandas K. Gandhi was born in India to a vegetarian Hindu family in 1869 during England’s colonial rule. When he was 18 he began study in Law School in England. But when Gandhi returned to India in 1891 he was an unsuccessful lawyer because he was too embarrassed to speak in public. Gandhi then traveled to South Africa hoping he would be a better lawyer there. Like India, South Africa was one of England major colonies. When Gandhi arrived in South Africa he was dumbfounded by how badly the Europeans treated the Indians and Africans living there. Many Indians living there worked as indentured servants and were as badly as slaves. They beaten, over-worked, and malnourished. Even worse, Indians and Africans faced horrible racism from Whites. Indians and Africans couldn’t ride on the same train cars and carriages as Whites, nor were they allowed out in the streets after dark unless they were given written permission by a White. Gandhi was angry and humiliated the first time he was kicked off a train car because White passenger didn’t want to sit with a dirty Indian! Since Gandhi was highly influenced by teachings from religions such as Christianity, Hinduism, Jainism, and Islam, and he believed that the unjust treatments was a moral sin against god. That’s why Gandhi believed it was his moral duty to help change the wrong conditions.

Therefore, Gandhi developed a new revolutionary philosophy for fighting unjust treatment. Gandhi’s philosophy was based on complete love for everyone, even your enemies. Therefore, Gandhi believed you should never use violence when fighting for a better life; even if they beat you, or torture you, or put you in prison. Violence only brings more violence; so you should endure the suffering without ever fighting back. You should only use non-violent methods such as boycotts, labor strikes, protests, civil disobedience, and non-cooperation. Eventually, if you keep pushing for justice showing pure love for your enemy, your enemy will have a change of heart. Your enemy will see that he is wrong and feel ashamed of himself. Your enemy will make things right, apologize, and make friendship with you. This is the only way to make society better; in the long run violence will never work. Gandhi called his new revolutionary philosophy satyagraha. Satya means “truth”, and graha means “force” because you are supposed to force your enemy to see truth by through love. A person who practices the philosophy of satyagraha is called a satyagrahi, or warrior of nonviolence.

Principles of Satyagraha

1) For Gandhi, satyagraha was more than a mere strategy for fighting. Satyagraha was a way of life. Satyagrahis vow to practice absolute love always, love with every thought, word, and action. Gandhi called this way of life ahimsa.

2) During a satyagraha campaign, the warrior of nonviolence, the satyagrahi, will remain non-violent no matter what, even if it means enduring harsh suffering like hunger, beatings, imprisonment, or even death.

3) A satyagrahi must learn to love his or her enemy in the same way they love their own lives. They realize that their enemy actually in not an enemy, instead they are both apart of gods human family.

4) The goal of satyagraha campaign is not to defeat your enemy, nor shame your enemy, nor even to pressure your enemy to give in to your demands. The goal is convert your enemy to your side, the side of moral truth. By loving your enemy, he will eventually have a change of heart your enemy will begin to love you back. The enemy will no longer be your enemy, so he will do the right thing; he will give you what you want because he wants to, not because you forced him to.

5) Satyagraha campaigns increase everyone’s moral righteousness in the end, both people who were the victims or the victimizers.
Mohandas K. Gandhi (October 2, 1869 – January 30, 1948) is famous throughout the world today because he developed a special non-violent form of revolutionary activism called satyagraha. He proved to the world that his special way of fighting works because he used his method to free India from the most powerful Empire in the world, England. Satyagraha does not use any violence at all to fight, instead satyagraha uses only the weapon of love. Gandhi believed that using violence to achieve your goals will always backfire. Violence only leads to more violence, as well as, hate, revenge, and suffering. Gandhi believed that with non-violent resistance you could fight for people’s rights successfully. Only through non-violent methods will you achieve long term peace after the battle. Countless activists throughout the globe have adopted Gandhi’s methods, most notably in America Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar E. Chavez practiced with great success Gandhi’s methods of non-violence to achieve civil rights for ethnic minorities in America. Gandhi is the father of what we know today as non-violent resistance. Later in his life, Mohandas Gandhi was given the spiritual title Mahatma Gandhi, or “great soul” Gandhi, because his spiritual and social leadership.

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Gandhi’s 12 Vows:
Training Warriors of Non-violence (Satyagrahis)

Gandhi’s vision for the world was that everyone in society will be trained to be warriors of nonviolence, called satyagrahi’s. Gandhi set out to train the next generation of courageous soldiers who only use nonviolent methods (satyagraha). However, Gandhi knew society couldn’t be changed over night, so he started a special spiritual community in India called an ashram where Gandhi trained people to be satyagrahis—warriors of nonviolence. Everyone who wanted to be a satyagrahi moved into the ashram with Gandhi’s family and the family of all the other satyagrahis. The ashram was not only his base camp for training up new satyagrahis, it was also his headquarters for mounting nonviolent campaigns of satyagraha; such as strikes or protests.

Gandhi did not discriminate, anyone who sincerely wanted to be a satyagrahi could join Gandhi’s ashram: men or women, young or old, Christian, Hindu, or Muslim. But joining the ashram was a huge commitment! Not only would you move into the community and share in all the responsibilities of cooking and cleaning, you had to take 12 vows, promising to follow everyone of them with all of your strength. If you were not willing to follow every single vow, Gandhi turned you away. However, Gandhi knew that the only way for you to be trained as a warrior of nonviolence was to take these vows. If you live by them you will develop self-discipline, strength, courage, and the skills needed to fight using nonviolence.

The commitment is difficult but necessary! Are you willing to do what it takes to be a satyagrahi? Are you willing to take the vows?
Appendix 2
Group 1

Vows to join the
Satyagraha Ashram
TRUTH AND LOVE

1. Truth (“Satya”)

*   *   *

The word Satya (Truth) is derived from Sat, which means 'being'. Nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. That is why Sat or Truth is perhaps the most important name of God. In fact it is more correct to say that Truth is God, than to say that God is Truth...

And where there is Truth, there also is knowledge... And where there is true knowledge, there is always bliss (Ananda). There sorrow has no place. And even as Truth is eternal, so is the bliss derived from it.

*   *   *

All our activities should be centered in Truth. Truth should be the very breath of our life. When once this stage... is reached, all other rules of correct living will come without effort, and obedience to them will be instinctive. But without Truth it is impossible to observe any principles or rules in life.

Generally speaking, observation of the law of Truth is understood merely to mean that we must speak the truth. But we in the Ashram (revolutionary community) should understand the word Satya or Truth in a much wider sense. There should be Truth in thought, Truth in speech, and Truth in action.

*   *   *

But how is one to realize this Truth...? By single-minded devotion...and indifference to all other interests in life. For the quest of Truth involves tapas—self-suffering, sometimes even unto death. ...the pursuit of Truth is true bhakti (devotion). It is the path that leads to God. There is no place in it for cowardice, no place for defeat.

How beautiful it would be, if all of us, young and old, men and women, devoted ourselves wholly to Truth in all that we might do in our waking hours, whether working, eating, drinking or playing...

2. Ahimsa, Love

*   *   *

We saw last week how the path of Truth is as narrow as it is straight. Even so is that of ahimsa. It is like balancing oneself on the edge of a sword. By concentration an acrobat can walk on a rope. But the concentration required to tread the path of Truth and ahimsa is far greater. The slightest inattention brings one tumbling to the ground. One can realize Truth and ahimsa only by ceaseless striving.

*   *   *

We punish thieves, because we think they harass us... By enduring them we realize that thieves are not different from ourselves, they are our brethren, our friends, and may not be punished... Since we regard the thieves as our kith and kin, they must be made to realize the kinship. And so we must take pains to devise ways and means of winning them over. This is the path of ahimsa. It may entail continuous suffering and the cultivating of endless patience. Given these two conditions, the thief is bound in the end to turn away from his evil ways.

*   *   *

Ahimsa is not the crude thing it has been made to appear. Not to hurt any living thing is no doubt a part of ahimsa. But it is its least expression. The principle of ahimsa is hurt by every evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody.

Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle... and separate them. They are like the two sides of a coin...

...If we look at it from the standpoint of ahimsa (non-violence), we find that the fulfillment of ahimsa is impossible without utter selflessness. Ahimsa means Universal Love.
Group 2

Vows to join the Satyagraha Ashram

CONTROL OF THE SENSES: Celibacy & Strict Eating Habits

The purpose of vows #3 and #4 is to train revolutionaries to have develop complete self-control over their bodies. When you have complete control over the bodies desires, Gandhi believed that you won’t be distracted from your goal of revolution.

3. Brahmacharya (Celibacy: “a life without sex or marriage ”)

* * *

If a man gives his love to one woman, or a woman to one man, what is there left for all the world besides? As a faithful wife must be prepared to sacrifice her all for the sake of her husband, and a faithful husband for the sake of his wife, it is clear that such persons cannot rise to the height of Universal Love, or look upon all mankind as kith and kin. For they have created a boundary wall round their love. The larger their family, the farther are they from Universal Love. Hence one who would obey the law of ahimsa cannot marry...

* * *

Then what about people who are already married? Will they never be able to realize Truth? Can they never offer up their all at the altar of humanity? There is a way out for them. They can behave as if they were not married. Those who have enjoyed this happy condition will be able to bear me out. Many have to my knowledge successfully tried the experiment. If the married couple can think of each other as brother and sister, they are freed for universal service. The very thought that all the women in the world are his sisters, mothers or daughters will at once ennoble a man and snap his chains. The husband and wife do not lose anything here, but only add to their resources and even to their family. Their love becomes free from the impurity of lust and so grows stronger. With the disappearance of this impurity, they can serve each other better, and the occasions for quarrelling become fewer. There are more occasions for quarrelling where the love is selfish and bounded...

* * *

Mere control of animal passion has been thought to be tantamount to observing brahmacharya. I feel, that this conception is incomplete and wrong. Brahmacharya means control of all the organs of sense. He who attempts to control only one organ, and allows all the others free play, is bound to find his effort futile. To hear suggestive stories with the ears, to see suggestive sights with the eyes, to taste simulating food with the tongue, to touch exciting things with the hands, and then at the same time to expect to control the only remaining organ is like putting one's hands in the fire, and expecting to escape being burnt...

* * *

Let us remember the root meaning of brahmacharya. Charya means course of conduct; brahmacharya conduct adapted to the search of Brahma, i.e., Truth. From this etymological meaning arises the special meaning, viz. control of all the senses.
4. Control of the Palate (strict eating habits)

palate- refers to a person's appetite, what they eat.
organs- refers to body organs like the stomach, kidneys, or the lungs.

* * *

Control of the palate is very closely connected with the observance of brahmacharya. I have found from experience that the observance of celibacy becomes comparatively easy, if one acquires mastery over the palate...

Food has to be taken as we take medicine, that is, without thinking whether it is palatable or otherwise, and only in quantities limited to the needs of the body. Just as medicine taken in too small a dose does not take effect or the full effect, and as too large a dose injures the system, so it is with food. It is therefore a breach of this observance to take anything just for its pleasant taste. It is equally a breach to take too much of what one finds to one's taste. From this it follows, that to put salt in one's food, in order to increase or modify its flavor ... is a breach of the observance. But the addition is not a breach, if it is considered necessary for health to have a certain proportion of salt with food.

* * *

Developing along these lines we find we have to give up many things that we have been enjoying, as they are not needed for nutrition. And one who thus gives up a multitude of eatables will acquire self-control in the natural course of things...

Parents, out of false affection, give their children a variety of foods, ruin their constitution (body), and create in them artificial tastes. When they grow up, they have diseased bodies and perverted tastes. ...we waste much money and fall an easy prey to the medicine man.

* * *

Most of us, instead of keeping the organs of sense under control, become their slaves. An experienced physician once observed that he had never seen a healthy man. The body is injured every time that one over-eats, and the injury can be partially repaired only by fasting...

We must not be thinking of food all the twenty-four hours of the day...
Group 3

Vows to join the Satyagraha Ashram

NO DESIRE FOR STEALING OR FOR POSSESSIONS

5. Non-Stealing

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It is impossible that a person should steal, and simultaneously claim to know Truth or cherish Love. Yet every one of us is consciously or unconsciously more or less guilty of theft. We may steal not only what belongs to others, but also what belongs to ourselves, as is done, for instance, by a father who eats something secretly, keeping his children in the dark about it. The Ashram kitchen stores are our common property, but one who secretly removes a single crystal of sugar from it stamps himself a thief. It is theft to take anything belonging to another without his permission, even if it be with his knowledge. It is equally theft to take something in the belief that it is nobody's property. Things found on the roadside belong to the ruler or the local authority. Anything found near the Ashram must be handed over to the secretary, who in his turn will pass it on to the police if it is not Ashram property.

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Thus far it is pretty smooth sailing. But the observance of Non-stealing goes very much farther. It is theft to take something from another even with his permission if we have no real need of it. We should not receive any single thing that we do not need...It is theft for me to take any fruit that I do not need, or to take it in a larger quantity than is necessary. We are not always aware of our real needs, and most of us improperly multiply our wants, and thus unconsciously make thieves of ourselves. If we devote some thought to the subject, we shall find that we can get rid of quite a number of our wants. One who follows the observance of Non-stealing will bring about a progressive reduction of his own wants. Much of the distressing poverty in this world has arisen out of breaches of the principle of Non-stealing.

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Theft, thus far considered, may be termed external or physical theft. There is besides another kind of theft subtler and far more degrading to the human spirit. It is theft mentally to desire acquisition of anything belonging to others, or to cast a greedy eye on it...

One, who observes the principle of Non-stealing, will refuse to bother himself about things to be acquired in the future. This evil anxiety for the future will be found at the root of many a theft. Today we only desire possession of a thing; tomorrow we shall begin to adopt measures, straight if possible, crooked when thought necessary, to acquire its possession.

One who takes up the observance of Non-stealing has therefore to be humble, thoughtful, vigilant and in habits simple.
6. Non-Possession, or Poverty

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Non-possession is allied to Non-stealing. A thing not originally stolen must nevertheless be classified as stolen property, if we possess it without needing it. Possession implies provision for the future...God never stores for the morrow; He never creates more than what is strictly needed for the moment... ...He will give us every day our daily bread...

* * *

The rich have a superfluous store of things which they do not need, and which are therefore neglected and wasted; while millions are starved to death for want of sustenance. If each retained possession only of what he needed, no one would be in want, and all would live in contentment. As it is, the rich are discontented no less than the poor. The poor man would fain become a millionaire, and the millionaire a multi-millionaire...

Perfect fulfilment of the ideal of Non-possession requires that man should, like the birds, have no roof over his head, no clothing and no stock of food for the morrow. He will indeed need his daily bread, but it will be God's business, and not his, to provide it...

* * *

We thus arrive at the ideal of total renunciation, and learn to use the body for the purpose of service so long as it exists, so much so that service, and not bread, becomes with us the staff of life. We eat and drink, sleep and wake, for service alone. Such an attitude of mind brings us real happiness...

One who has consecrated his life to service cannot be idle for a single moment. But we have to learn to distinguish between good activity and evil activity. This discernment goes naturally with a single-minded devotion to service.
Vows to join the Satyagraha Ashram

Fearlessness

7. Fearlessness

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...the brave are those armed with fearlessness, not with the sword, the rifle and the like. These are taken up only by those who are possessed by fear.

Fearlessness connotes freedom from all external fear,—fear of disease, bodily injury, and death, of dispossession, of losing one's nearest and dearest, of losing reputation or giving offence, and so on... The seeker after Truth must conquer all these fears. He should be ready to sacrifice his all in the quest of Truth...

* * *

Perfect fearlessness can be attained only by him who has realized the Supreme, as it implies freedom from delusions. One can always progress towards this goal by determined and constant endeavour, and by cultivating self-confidence.

* * *

... Fear has no place in our hearts, when we have shaken off attachment for wealth, for family and for the body... Wealth, family and body will be there, just the same; we have only to change our attitude towards them. All these are not ours, but God's. Nothing whatever in this world is ours. Even we ourselves are His. Why then should we entertain any fears ? ... When we thus cease to be masters, and reduce ourselves to the rank of servants, humbler than the very dust under our feet, all fears will roll away like mists; we shall attain ineffable peace, and see Satyanarayan (the God of Truth) face to face.

8. Bread-Labor

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The divine law, that man must earn his bread by labouring with his own hands... ...How can a man, who does not do body labour, have the right to eat? ...A millionaire cannot carry on for long, and will soon get tired of his life, if he rolls in his bed all day long, and is even helped to his food. He therefore induces hunger by exercise, and helps himself to the food he eats. If every one, whether rich or poor, has thus to take exercise in some shape or form, why should it not assume the form of productive, i.e, Bread labour ?

* * *

...And more than nine tenths of humanity lives by tilling the soil. How much happier, healthier and more peaceful would the world become, if the remaining tenth followed the example of the overwhelming majority, at least to the extent of labouring enough for their food!

...If all worked for their bread distinctions of rank would be obliterated; the rich would still be there, but they would deem themselves only trustees of their property and would use it mainly in the public interest.

* * *

This labour can truly be related to agriculture alone. But at present at any rate, everybody is not in a position to take to it. A person can therefore spin or weave, or take up carpentry or smithery, instead of tilling the soil, always regarding agriculture however to be the ideal.
Group 5

Vows to join the
Satyagraha Ashram
Tolerance

9. Removal of Untouchability

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Untouchability means pollution by the touch of certain persons by reason of their birth in a particular state or family...

None can be born untouchable, as all are sparks of one and the same Fire. It is wrong to treat certain human beings as untouchables from birth...

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But Bhangis, Dhedhs, Chamars and the like are contemptuously looked down upon as untouchables from birth. They may bathe for years with any amount of soap, dress well and wear the marks of Vaishnavas, read the Gita every day and follow a learned profession, and yet they remain untouchables. This is rank irreligion fit only to be destroyed. By treating removal of untouchability as an Ashram observance, we assert our belief, that untouchability is not only not a part and parcel of Hinduism, but a plague, which it is the bounden duty of every Hindu to combat. Every Hindu, therefore, who considers it a sin, should atone for it by fraternizing with untouchables, associating with them in a spirit of love and service, deeming himself purified by such acts, redressing their grievances, helping them patiently to overcome ignorance and other evils due to the slavery of ages, and inspiring other Hindus to do likewise.

* * *

This observance, therefore, is not fulfilled, merely by making friends with 'untouchables', but by loving all life as our own selves. Removal of untouchability means love for, and service of, the whole world, and thus merges into ahimsa. Removal of untouchability spells the breaking down of barriers between man and man, and between the various orders of Being.
10. Tolerance- Equality of Religion

...ahimsa teaches us to entertain the same respect for the religious faiths of others as we accord to our own... ...If we had attained the full vision of Truth, we would no longer be mere seekers, but would have become one with God, for Truth is God. But being only seekers, we prosecute our quest, and are conscious of our imperfection. And if we are imperfect ourselves, religion as conceived by us must also be imperfect. We have not realized religion in its perfection, even as we have not realized God. Religion of our conception, being thus imperfect, is always subject to a process of evolution and re-interpretation. Progress towards Truth, towards God, is possible only because of such evolution.

And if all faiths outlined by men are imperfect, the question of comparative merit does not arise. All faiths constitute a revelation of Truth, but all are imperfect and liable to error. Reverence for other faiths need not blind us to their faults. We must be keenly alive to the defects of our faith also, yet not leave it on that account, but try to overcome those defects. Looking at all religions with an equal eye, we would not only not hesitate, but would think it our duty, to blend into our faith every acceptable feature of other faiths.

The question then arises: Why should there be so many different faiths? ...Even as a tree has a single trunk, but many branches and leaves, so is there one true and perfect Religion, but it becomes many, as it passes through the human medium. The one Religion is beyond all speech. Imperfect men put it into such language as they can command, and their words are interpreted by other men equally imperfect.

Whose interpretation is to be held to be the right one? Everybody is right from his own standpoint, but it is not impossible that everybody is wrong. Hence the necessity for tolerance, which does not mean indifference towards one's own faith, but a more intelligent and purer love for it... True knowledge of religion breaks down the barriers between faith and faith. Cultivation of tolerance for other faiths will impart to us a truer understanding of our own.

Tolerance obviously does not disturb the distinction between right and wrong, or good and evil. The reference here throughout is naturally to the principal faiths of the world. They are all based on common fundamentals. They have all produced great saints.

When I was turning over the pages of the sacred books of different faiths for my own satisfaction, I became sufficiently familiar for my purpose with Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Hinduism. In reading these texts, I can say, that I was equimindedness (equal-minded) towards all these faiths, although perhaps I was not then conscious of it. Refreshing my memory of those days, I do not find I ever had the slightest desire to criticize any of those religions merely because they were not my own, but read each sacred book in a spirit of reverence, and found the same fundamental morality in each.
(Humility) has never come to any one by practice. Truth can be cultivated as well as Love. But to cultivate humility is tantamount to cultivating hypocrisy.

A humble person is not himself conscious of his humility... If a man who keeps observances is proud of keeping them, they will lose much, if not all of their value. And a man who is proud of his virtue often becomes a curse to society...

Humility should make the possessor realize, that he is as nothing...Only a little thought will suffice to convince us, that all creatures are nothing more than a mere atom in this universe. Our existence as embodied beings is purely momentary; what are a hundred years in eternity? ...To feel that we are something is to set up a barrier between God and ourselves; to cease feeling that we are something is to become one with God.

*A * * *

A life of service must be one of humility. He who would sacrifice his life for others has hardly time to reserve for himself a place in the sun. ...True humility means most strenuous and constant endeavour entirely directed towards the service of humanity. God is continuously in action without resting for a single moment. If we would serve Him or become one with Him, our activity must be as unwearied as His.

*A * * *

As soon as we become one with...God, there is no more rest for us, nor indeed do we need rest any longer. Our very sleep is action. For we sleep with the thought of God in our hearts. This restlessness constitutes true rest. This never-ceasing agitation holds the key to peace ineffable. This supreme state of total surrender is difficult to describe, but not beyond the bounds of human experience. It has been attained by many dedicated souls, and may be attained by ourselves as well. This is the goal which we of the Satyagraha Ashram have set before ourselves; all our observances and activities are calculated to assist us in reaching it.
12. Sacrifice or “Yajna”

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Yajna means an act directed to the welfare of others, done without desiring any return for it... It will not therefore, be a yajna...to do ill to any one else, even in order to serve a so-called higher interest. And...all action that cannot come under the category of yajna promotes bondage...

The world cannot subsist for a single moment without yajna, yajna came with the Creation itself. This body therefore has been given us, only in order that we may serve all Creation with it... Every single act of one who would lead a life of purity should be in the nature of yajna. Yajna having come to us with our birth, we are debtors all our lives, and thus for ever bound to serve the universe. ...Yajna is duty to be performed, or service to be rendered, all the twenty-four hours of the day...

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...We do indeed need strong faith, if we would experience this supreme bliss. "Do not worry in the least about yourself, leave all worry to God,"—this appears to be the commandment in all religions. This need not frighten any one. He who devotes himself to service with a clear conscience will... continually grow richer in faith.

The path of service can hardly be trodden by one, who is not prepared to renounce self-interest... If we cultivate the habit of doing this service deliberately, our desire for service will steadily grow stronger, and will make not only for our own happiness but that of the world at large.

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Yajna is not yajna if one feels it to be burdensome or annoying...One who would serve will not waste a thought upon his own comforts, which he leaves to be attended to or neglected by his Master on high. He will not therefore encumber himself with everything that comes his way; he will take only what he strictly needs and leave the rest. He will be calm, free from anger and unruffled in mind even if he finds himself inconvenienced. His service, like virtue, is its own reward, and he will rest content with it.

Voluntary service of others demands the best of which one is capable, and must take precedence over service of self. In fact, the pure devotee consecrates himself to the service of humanity without any reservation whatever.

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(EXTRA CREDIT)

A merchant, who operates in the sacrificial spirit... will therefore not cheat or speculate, will lead a simple life, will not injure a living soul and will lose millions rather than harm anybody. Let no one run away with the idea that this type of merchant exists only in my imagination. Fortunately for the world, it does exist in the West as well as in the East... And if we go deeply into the matter, we shall come across men in every walk of life, who lead dedicated lives. No doubt these sacrificers obtain their livelihood by their work. But livelihood is not their objective, but only a by-product of their vocation. Motilal was a tailor at first, and continued as tailor afterwards. But his spirit was changed, and his work was transmuted into worship. He began to think about the welfare of others, and his life became artistic in the real sense of the term. A life of sacrifice is the pinnacle of art, and is full of true joy.