

“મગુ લીંદે હે મગુ મદદ્દાગુદ”



MOHANDAS K. GANDHI
October 2, 1869 - January 30, 1948

Quotations from Gandhiji

“For me, Truth is the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles. This truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truth in thought also, and not only relative truth of our conception, but the Absolute Truth, the Eternal Principle, that is God.”

“I do believe nonviolence is infinitely superior to violence.”

“Not to hurt any living thing is no doubt a part of *Ahimsa* (nonviolence); 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.”

“Means and ends are convertible terms in my philosophy of life.”

“Democracy must in essence mean the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of the common good of all.”

“Mankind is one....Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads as long as we reach the same goal? In reality there are as many religions as there are individuals.”

“I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible, but I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.”

“In times to come the people will not judge us by the creed we profess or the label we wear or the slogans we shout but by our work, industry, sacrifice, honesty and purity.”

“Character cannot be built with mortar and stone. It cannot be built by other hands than your own. The principal and the professor cannot give you character from the pages of books. Character-building comes from your very own lives, and, really speaking, it must come from within yourselves.”

—*Mahatma Gandhi*



Gandhi

Long after the names of great conquerers have faded, the world will remember a moment in time when a man named Gandhi, called the Mahatma, conceived and practiced successfully a new method of solving disputes between man: by understanding and love, instead of by hatred.

To India at the time, nonviolence was not just a passive creed. It gave courage and hope to the people and, above all, a voice. Like the light at dawn, Gandhi awoke a vast, slumbering nation.

What was he like, this great little man with the indomitable spirit?

He was a gentle man, with a faith that could and did move mountains.



His beginnings were unremarkable. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in 1869 in a conservative Hindu family in Porbandar, Gujarat. He was, by his own standards, a 'mediocre' student who did not shine in any particular field. His religious tolerance found its beginnings in his childhood, for his father had a wide circle of friends

of other faiths, and the child Gandhi listened attentively to their discussions. These early impressions took firm hold on his eager mind and lasted his life.

In the practice of those days he was married young. His wife, Kasturba, simple and unassuming, was silently to take upon herself a large measure of the strain of his turbulent life.

After a three-year course in England, where he trained for the Bar, the young Gandhi began his legal career in Durban, Natal, on a brief from merchants of his native Gujarat. South Africa was the background for Gandhi's first attempts at social protest.



When Gandhi returned to India in 1914, he was little known outside the urban areas. It was at this time that he founded his *ashram*, his retreat, at Ahmedabad on the banks of the Sabarmati.

As always, the poor and the oppressed drew him. A humble peasant's plea took him right across the country to Bihar. Here he took up the cause of the poor indigo sharecroppers who had long been exploited by wealthy estate owners. Civil disobedience won its first victory in India in Champaran.

Gandhi now immersed himself in the work of the Indian National Congress and introduced a new element to Indian politics—*Satyagraha* or nonviolent noncooperation. This revolutionary concept did not depend on money or arms for its fulfillment. It was a weapon which Gandhi placed in the hands of his countrymen to stir them to action. His faith in its effectiveness inspired the movement toward self-rule.

Gandhi was an exacting leader; not all his followers understood his insistence on nonviolence. If violence broke out, Gandhi would immediately call off the agitation and go on a fast of self-purification.

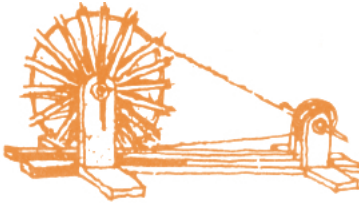
The historic Dandi march in 1930 was in peaceful defiance of the British Government's monopoly on salt. Gandhi led a group of volunteers from his Sabarmati ashram on a 24-day trek to the coast and made salt from the sea at Dandi.



The Dandi march had a startling effect. Hundreds of people all along the coast followed Gandhi's example. The law breakers remained peaceful but not the keepers of the law. Mass arrests were made. Gandhi was arrested once again. But civil disobedience had proved its validity, had won a great moral victory in the cause of freedom.

Gandhi advised India's politicians to go out among the people, to learn their language, work among them. He urged them to revive spinning and weaving, the long forgotten crafts of the peasant. And he took the method of nonviolent noncooperation into the field of economics.

'Boycott all foreign goods.' 'Buy only that which is made in India—Swadeshi,' he appealed to the people. He knew that, if carried out widely, this could slow down the wheels of British industry, and would give tremendous courage to Indian manufacturers.



Gandhi himself sat at the spinning wheel every day to demonstrate his identification with the simple peasant. He wore home-spun, handwoven *khadi* and gave self-respect to the poor by being one with them in dress and living. To Gandhi, India owes the splendid revival of her village industries and the growth of handicrafts.

His entire method of teaching was through example. Nowhere was this demonstrated more clearly than in his bold attempt to reform untouchability. He led his followers in doing work once reserved for the untouchables. He lived with them in their colonies so that all who wished to see him were forced to break conventions.

As a social reformer, Gandhi made women proud of their role in the making of a new India, an India where democracy would begin with the people, with each village completely self-governed—*panchayatraj*.

Gandhi was a practical politician too. As the spokesman of his people he worked out the terms of India's freedom with British viceroy and Cabinet missions.



The decision to partition the country grieved Gandhi. The end of British rule saw riots in many parts of the country. Gandhi spent the cold winter months of 1946/47 [he was seventy-seven] walking barefoot from village to village, dispelling hate with love, reminding people that they belonged together and were one in the sight of God. Once more, he was trying to demonstrate the power of love.



In January 1948, Gandhi went on his last fast in Delhi. Even though violence in the capital had ceased, he wanted a solemn pledge that no man would raise his arm against another.

But there were extremists who were infuriated by Gandhi's preaching of tolerance. On the way to his evening prayer meeting on January 30, 1948, he was fatally shot by a militant young man.

By his life and death, Gandhi demonstrated the moral force of a man whose desire to serve his fellowmen was greater than his attachment to life. And Gandhi, as much as his ideas, does not belong to India alone. He belongs to the world, to history.

In an age and in a country where communications were not always easy, when millions did not know how to read or write, Gandhi was able to reach out to the common man. Wherever he went, people flocked around the slender figure in the rough, home-spun 'dhoti,' with the kindly smile and the ready ear. He was known and loved by the millions in his country who called him 'Bapu,' the simple word for 'father.'

All across the world today, it is evident that Gandhi's message lives eternally.



Tributes to the Mahatma

“Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth.”

—*Albert Einstein*

“Mahatma Gandhi was the spokesman for the conscience of all mankind.”

—*George C. Marshall*
United States Secretary of State

“In a real sense Mahatma Gandhi embodied in his life certain universal principles that are inherent in the moral structure of the universe. These principles are as inescapable as the law of gravitation and if this age is to survive it must follow the way of love and nonviolence that he so nobly illustrated in his life.”

—*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

“...We were beginning to look towards Gandhi as the man who was right. Our newspapers recognized this new force. India won much by this. We were all moved by the struggle led by Gandhi for a peaceful way of settling differences between nations.”

—*Pearl S. Buck*

“For the light [of Mahatma Gandhi] that shone in this country was no ordinary light. The light that has illumined this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years, and a thousand years later that light will be seen in this country, and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts...”

—*Jawaharlal Nehru*



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