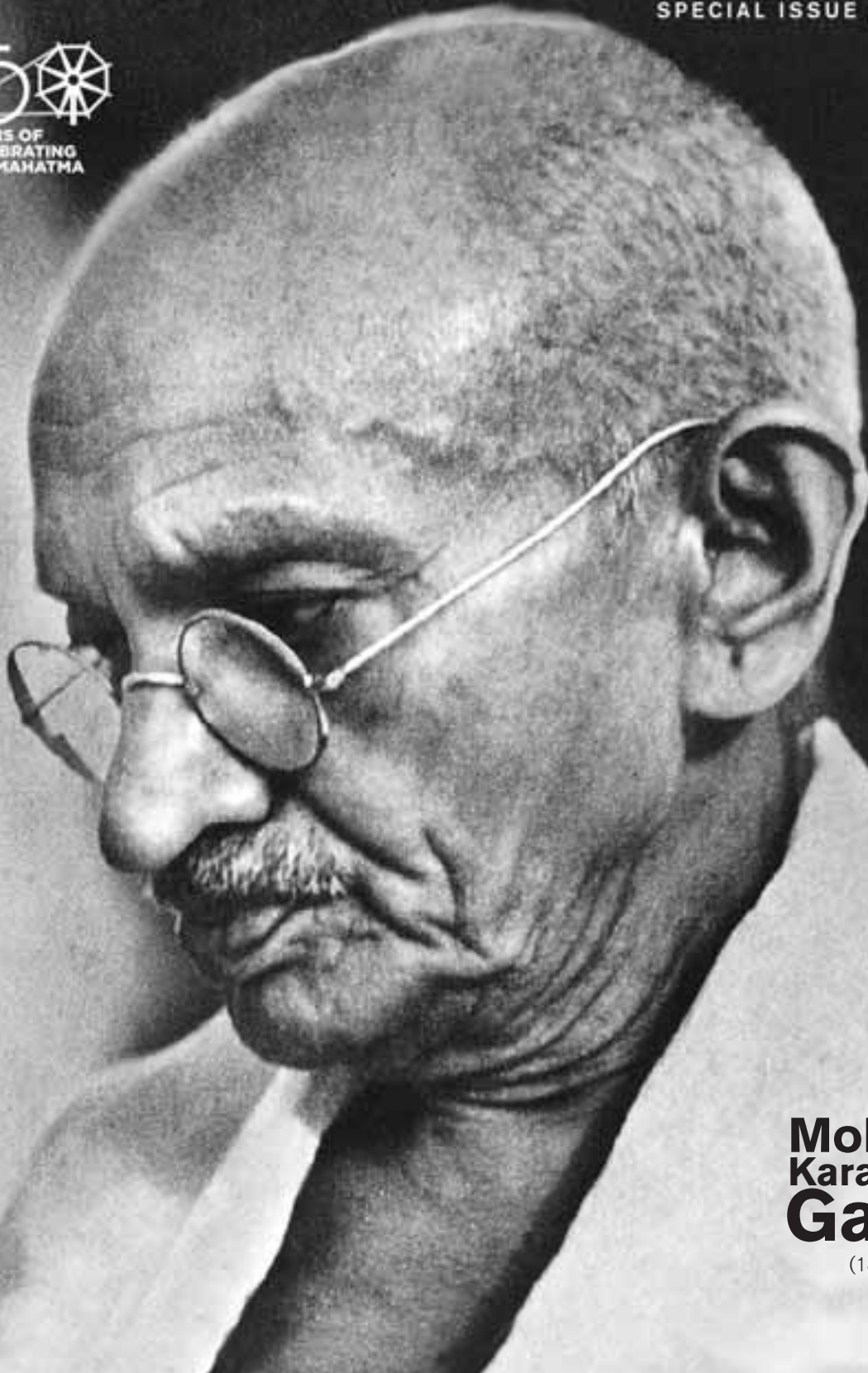


REVISITING THE ROOTS

POTPURRI

SPECIAL ISSUE | VOL. 3 | 2020



Mohandas
Karamchand
Gandhi

(1869 - 1948)



“There is no principle worth the name if it is not wholly good. I swear by nonviolence because I know that it alone conduces to the highest good of mankind ”

Mahatma Gandhi

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE



Harshavardhan Neotia
Chairman, Ambuja Neotia

Mahatma Gandhi was neither a commander of great armies nor a ruler of vast kingdoms; he could boast of no scientific achievements, no artistic gift. Yet men, governments and dignitaries from all over the world have joined hands today to pay homage to this little man in a loincloth who led his country to freedom. Indeed, his life is an inspiring example of his heroic effort to establish values like truth and nonviolence in human life. In pursuing this objective, Gandhiji became a Mahatma from a mere mortal – a messenger of peace and justice for the people of the world.

Today, seventy-one years after his death, Gandhiji's political thoughts resonate again. One of the greatest political and spiritual leaders applauded globally, Gandhiji will remain in his sublime individuality an illuminating guide in our hours of darkness. He was not one of those saints who are marked out by their phenomenal piety from childhood, nor one who forsakes the world to look for spiritual salvation. He lived his life in the midst of his countrymen, fully aware of the turbulence the country was passing through, and taking up the challenge to confront British might through peaceful resistance to oppression. He described nonviolence as 'the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.'

This special issue of Potpurri is our humble effort to pay tribute to the Father of the Nation.

Harshavardhan Neotia

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Potpourri is traditionally a mixture of dried petals and spices often placed in beautiful bowls to perfume a room. When the fragrance spreads, it encompasses, most magically, a medley of emotions. We have given this name our special twist and believe that the pages of Potpurri will bring for our readers interesting and diverse reading material with aplomb.

EDITOR'S NOTE



Jayabrato Chatterjee
Managing Editor

What a privilege it has been to put together this special issue on Mahatma Gandhi!

Like the limitless ocean, Gandhiji's life touched all those who knew him but few are aware today of the enormous impact he left on the lives of several women who had the privilege to serve him and further his cause. Along with other articles, this issue highlights their contribution to India's freedom struggle.

Had a racist railway ticket collector in South Africa not thrown him out from a first class compartment to accommodate a boorish British passenger, Gandhiji may well have remained a successful lawyer with a degree from London's Inner Temple, attired in Bond Street suits and a top hat, who had made valiant attempts to master Latin and French, play the violin and learn ballroom dancing. But all that changed in an instant on a cold winter night at the railway station in Pietermaritzburg.

This issue of Potpurri celebrates Gandhiji and the spirit of Satyagraha. As the Mahatma said, 'When I despair, I remember that all through history the ways of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time they can seem invincible, but in the end they always fall.'

I am happy to acknowledge that the cover photograph of our last issue on Balkrishna Doshiji was taken by Vinay Panjwani who has helped us enormously to celebrate the eminent architect's life.



**“ Truth never damages
a cause that is just ”**

Mahatma Gandhi

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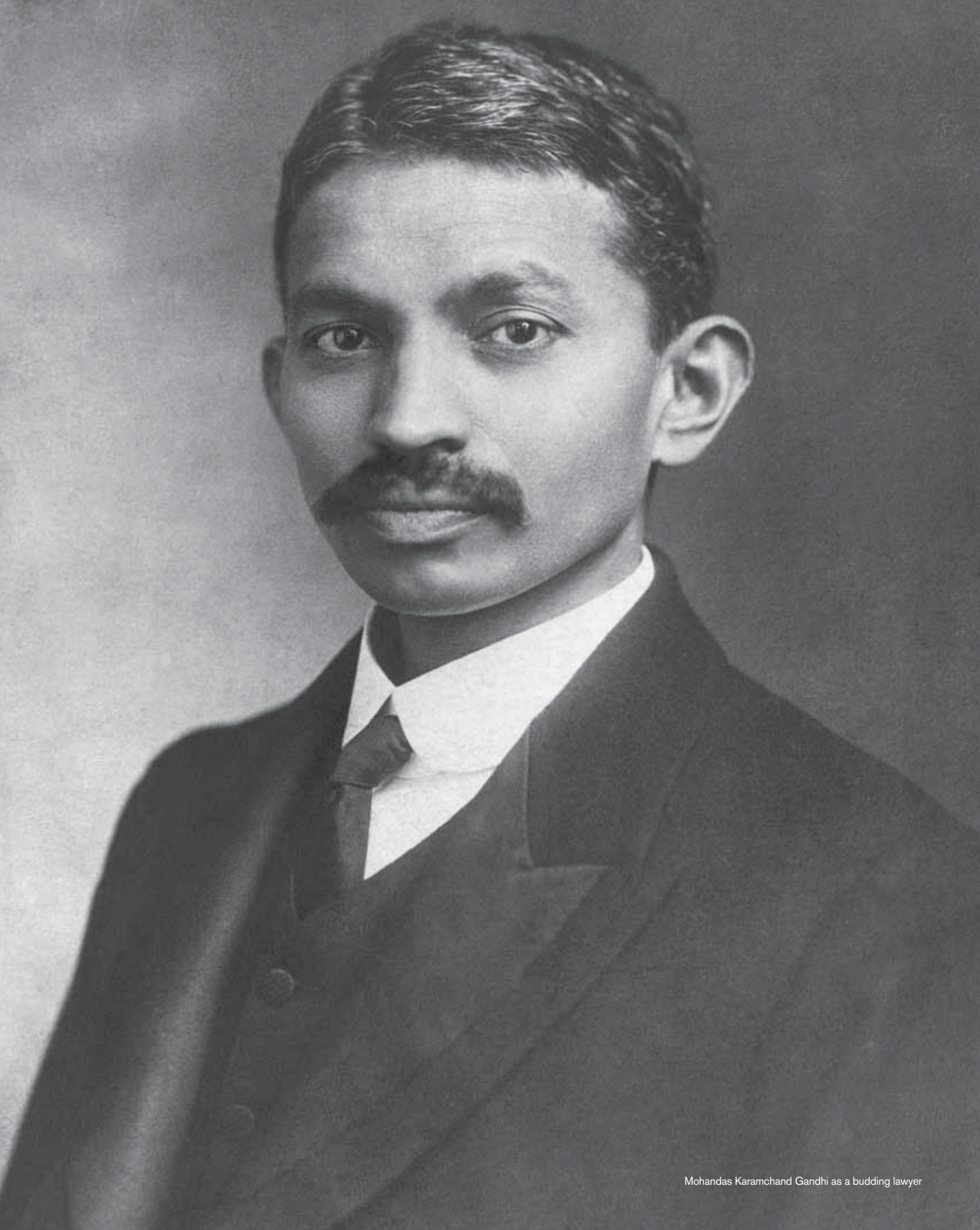
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Young Mohandas Gandhi (middle row 5th from left) with the Natal Indian Ambulance Corp

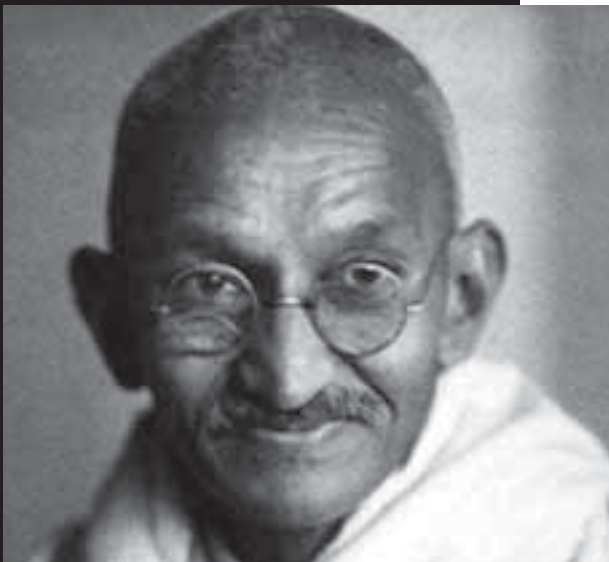


Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi as a budding lawyer

THE MAKING OF THE MAHATMA

'You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty'

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi



Today, seventy-one years after his assassination, Gandhiji remains an iconic global leader whose life has become a message to the world – the message of truth and freedom through nonviolence. His every breath was dedicated to the pursuit of integrity in its most pristine manifestation, justice and liberty for mankind. Revered the world over for his nonviolent philosophy of passive resistance, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was known to his countless followers as 'Mahatma' or the messiah. History books tell us today that India's Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore had, in 1915, bestowed the title of 'Mahatma' on Gandhiji while writing his autobiography, after Gandhi had called him 'Gurudev.' And it was Subhas Chandra Bose who had christened him 'Father of the Nation' from Berlin in Germany in a condolence message on Kasturba Gandhi's death while addressing the Indian legion over Azad Hind Radio.

Yet the once fashionable lawyer, always nattily dressed in Bond Street suits, who had left home when he was barely nineteen years old to study law in London at the Inner Temple, had hardly anticipated that he would have to disrobe himself and remain covered for most of his later life in a humble length of white Khaddar to fight for the liberation of his country. In any event, the British attitude towards Gandhiji by and large was

one of reluctant admiration mixed with large doses of utter amusement, total bewilderment, suspicion and resentment. Except for a tiny minority of faithful Christian missionaries and a bunch of radical socialists in South Africa led by people like Mr A W Baker, Miss Harris, Miss Gabb and Mr Coates, and later, by the English clergyman Charles Freer Andrews and the German architect, Hermann Kallenbach, the British tended to see him at best as a utopian visionary and at worst as a cunning hypocrite whose confessions of friendship for the British race were a mask for subversion of the mighty British Raj. Gandhiji was always conscious of the sad existence of that wall of prejudice and it was part of his strategy of Satyagraha to penetrate it deeply.

The real story of Gandhiji started in 1893, when a twenty-five year old barrister began a consistent struggle against racial discrimination in South Africa. But the makings of the Mahatma had commenced much before that at the port town of Porbandar in Gujarat where his father, Karamchand, was the Dewan, an important government official and administrator.

Born on 2nd October 1869, Gandhiji was his father's last child from his fourth wife, Putlibai. His father belonged to the merchant caste and Gandhiji's early schooling was in nearby Rajkot. Gandhiji

was influenced as much by his father's strict sense of justice as by his mother's unwavering religious beliefs ensconced in the tenets of Vaishnavism that propagated self-discipline and nonviolence. His experiments with truth reflect his early upbringing. Mundane incidents that would otherwise have been relegated to posterity are the foundation of his future trials. Thus, meat-eating soon became sacrilegious for him after having tasted it on the sly for almost a year. Similarly, his confession of smoking a few cigarettes or pilfering a few annas from a maidservant, his refusal to cheat in his exams and his trying to reform his school friends are evidences of a young mind facing several personal and moral dilemmas. However, the incident which haunted his entire life

“Winston Churchill had mocked and called him ‘half-naked’ and a ‘seditious fakir’ but it was the tenacity and willpower of this man that guided India to the path of liberation from British rule”

was his inability to be present at his father's deathbed – a privilege which he felt he had lost owing to his carnal feelings towards his young wife. 'It is a blot,' he writes in his autobiography, *The Story Of My Experiments With Truth*, 'that I have never been able to efface and forget, and I have always thought that although my devotion to my parents knew no bounds and I would have given up anything for it, yet it was weighed and found unpardonably wanting because my mind was at the same moment in the grip of lust... It took me long to get free from the shackles of



Kasturba with her children in South Africa

lust, and I had to pass through many ordeals before I could overcome it.'

At thirteen, young Gandhi was married to Kasturba who was as old as him. Over the years she became completely devoted to his cause and his closest companion. She bore him four sons – Harilal, Manilal, Ramdas and Devdas. In September 1888, Gandhiji set sail for England to pursue a degree in law, leaving behind his wife and his infant son, Harilal, then just a few months old. Being an earnest student, he took his studies seriously and tried brushing up on his English, French and Latin by taking the University of London's matriculation examination. Yet his main preoccupation was with personal and moral issues rather than with academic ambitions. The transition from the semi-rural atmosphere of Rajkot to the cosmopolitan life of London was not easy for him. As he struggled painfully to adapt himself to Western food, dress and etiquette, he often felt awkward. As he says in his autobiography, 'The clothes after the Bombay



Young Gandhi in England

cut that I was wearing were, I thought, unsuitable for English society, and I got new ones at the Army and Navy Stores. I also went in for a chimney-pot hat costing nineteen shillings – an excessive price in those days. Not content with these I wasted ten pounds on an evening suit made in Bond Street, the centre of fashionable life in London; and got my good and noble-hearted brother to send me a double watch-chain of gold.'

Gandhiji spent three years in London, where he became deeply interested in vegetarianism and the study of different faiths. In London, often hungry, he managed to find and sign up with the Vegetarian Society and his newfound pursuit now provided varied opportunities for widening his horizons to a better understanding of religions and cultures. Through meeting local vegetarians he also developed a keen interest in books on philosophy, particularly those by Leo Tolstoy, John Ruskin and Henry David Thoreau. Gandhiji also devoured theosophical and mystical works. He read the Koran, the Old and New Testaments and several Indian religious texts, of which the Bhagvad Gita, which he read for the first time in its English translation by Sir Edwin

Arnold, was to have a profound influence on his life, his moral discourses and the practice of yoga. The missionary zeal he developed for vegetarianism helped to draw the pitifully shy youth out of his shell and gave him a new poise. Once he was accepted as a member of the executive committee of the London Vegetarian Society, he attended several of its conferences and contributed articles to its journal. This was the beginning of his experimenting with diet—fruitarian, veganism, intermittent fasting, and more.

The English vegetarians were certainly a motley crowd!

They included socialists and humanitarians such as Edward Carpenter, 'the British Thoreau'; Fabians like George Bernard Shaw, the celebrated playwright; and Theosophists such as Annie Besant who had transformed from a militant suffragette to an ardent devotee of Madam Blavatsky. Most of them were idealists. Quite a few were rebels who rejected the prevailing values of the late-Victorian establishment, denounced the evils of the capitalist and industrial society and stressed the superiority of moral over material values, and of cooperation above conflict. These ideas were to contribute

substantially to the shaping of Gandhiji's personality and, eventually, to his politics.

“ South Africa was to present to Gandhiji umpteen challenges and many opportunities that he could hardly have conceived ”

After successfully completing his degree at the Inner Temple, Gandhiji was called to the Bar on 10th June 1891. He enrolled in the High Court of London but later that year, turning homesick, left for India. Painful surprises were in store for him. His mother had died in his absence and he discovered to his dismay that his barrister's degree was no real guarantee to a lucrative career. The legal profession was already beginning to be overcrowded and Gandhiji was much too diffident to elbow his way into its morass. For the next two years, he attempted as best he could to practice law in Bombay.

Unfortunately, he found that he lacked both knowledge of Indian jurisprudence and self-confidence at the trials. In the very first brief he argued in an Indian court, he cut a sorry figure.

Soon his practice collapsed and he was turned down even for the part-time job of a teacher in a Bombay high school. Thoroughly disheartened, he returned home to Rajkot. Here he tried to make a modest living by drafting petitions for litigants but, alas, even that employment was suddenly closed to him when he incurred the displeasure of a local British officer. While he was contemplating his seemingly bleak future, it was with some relief that in 1893 he accepted the none-too-attractive offer of a year's contract from an Indian firm that was situated in the Transvaal.

He was to work in South Africa for a period of twelve months for a modest fee of £105.00.

Here, he was quickly exposed to the racial discrimination practiced in the local courts of law. In 1893, Gandhiji had



The making of the Mahatma in South Africa



Gandhi in London (seated right in the 1st row) with members of the Vegetarian Society

arrived in Durban to serve as legal counsel to Dada Abdulla, an important local merchant originally from Porbandar. The day after his arrival, on 23rd May 1893, in a Durban court he was summarily asked by the European magistrate to take off his turban; he refused and, instead, left the courtroom, much to the consternation of the local Indians. *The Natal Advertiser* wrote about this confrontation the following day in a sardonic little article. Gandhiji immediately shot off a letter to the newspaper, the first of dozens he would write to deflate white sentiments.

That year in June, Dada Abdulla requested him to undertake a rail trip to Pretoria on a legal assignment. Gandhiji was seated in a first-class compartment, having purchased a first-class ticket. A burly white man, who entered the coach, hastened to summon the railway officials, objecting to having to share the space with a 'coolie.' After a heated argument, most unceremoniously, he had Gandhiji thrown out along with his luggage. Left shivering and brooding at the rail station in Pietermaritzburg, Gandhiji saw the train steam away.

'It was to write several years calamity, 'and extremely belongings overcoat were but I did not lest I should be so I sat and further course journey, he mercilessly rebuked by the a stagecoach,

“ His own hardship was superficial as he wrote later; it was ‘only a symptom of the deep disease of colour prejudice’ ”

was winter,' he in his memoir, after the ugly the cold was bitter... All my and my warm in my luggage, dare to ask for it insulted again; shivered.' In the of that very was once again beaten up and white driver of only because

he refused to travel on the footboard to make room for a European passenger who wanted to smoke. Calling him a 'Sammy', a derisive South African epithet for Indians, he was kicked and punched in the face till other travellers protested. And finally, he was barred from hotels reserved 'for Europeans only.' These humiliations were the daily lot of Indian traders and labourers in Natal who had learned to pocket them with the same resignation with which they pocketed their meager earnings. What was new was not Gandhiji's experience but his reaction. He began to think of his duty: ought he to stay back and fight for his rights or should he return to India? His own hardship was superficial as he wrote later; it was 'only a symptom of the deep disease of colour prejudice.' Gandhiji had so far not been conspicuous for self-assertion or aggressiveness. But something happened to him as he smarted under these constant insults heaped on a daily basis. In retrospect, the journey from Durban to Pretoria struck him as one of the most important experiences of his life; henceforth he would not accept injustice as part of the natural order in South Africa; he would defend his dignity as an Indian and as a man. It was Gandhiji's singular moment of truth.





Gandhi (seated 3rd from left) with his Indian supporters in South Africa

EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH

'Satyagraha is a weapon of the strong; it admits of no violence under any circumstance whatsoever; and it ever insists upon truth'

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi



Satyagraha, according to Gandhiji, was a unique weapon to fight injustice; a novel method of mass agitation. It stressed on the principles of truth, nonviolence, tolerance and peaceful protests.

The intrinsic connection between Ahimsa and Satyagraha lay in the very foundation of such a unique civic disobedience movement. And over the years it swelled to free India from the hegemony of imperialists in 1947. Gandhiji had always believed that 'without Ahimsa it is not possible to seek and find Truth. Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them.'

Gandhiji's experiments with Satyagraha began early, when he was a young lawyer in South Africa. The position of Indians in the Transvaal was worse than in Natal. They were compelled to pay a poll tax of £3 and not allowed to own land, except in specially allotted ghettos; they had no franchise, and were prohibited from walking on the pavement or moving out of doors after 9 pm without a special permit. One day, when Gandhiji, who had received from the State Attorney a letter authorizing him to be out of doors at all hours, was passing near President Kruger's house, the policeman on duty suddenly and without any provocation roughed him up and kicked him off the footpath. An English Quaker by the name of Coates, who knew Gandhiji, happened to pass

by and saw the dreadful incident. He immediately advised young Gandhi to proceed against the man and proffered himself as witness. But Gandhiji declined the offer, saying that he had made it a rule not to go to court in respect of a personal grievance. However, he firmly believed that he would ensure that his fellow Indians would resist such treatment. Soon enough, Gandhiji was asked to address a meeting to awaken Indian residents to a sense of the oppression they were under. He immediately took up the tricky issue of Indians travelling in first-class railway compartments, having suffered a while ago deep personal humiliation during a train journey. As a result, an assurance was given that first and second-class tickets would be issued to all Indians 'who were properly dressed.' This was a partial victory and similar incidents led him to further develop his concept of Satyagraha.

Having finally completed his work in Pretoria, Gandhiji returned to Durban and was preparing to sail home to India for good. At a farewell dinner given in his honour in April 1894, a guest showed him a news item in the *Natal Mercury* that reiterated the Natal Government's proposal to introduce a bill that would disfranchise Indians. Gandhiji immediately understood the ominous implications of this bill which, as he said, 'is the first nail into our coffin' and advised his compatriots to resist through Satyagraha. They, in turn, pleaded their helplessness without him and begged him to stay on for another month. Gandhiji agreed, little realizing that this one month would grow into twenty long years.

Straightaway turning the farewell dinner into an official meeting, Gandhiji helped in the formation of an action committee. This committee then drafted a petition to the Natal Legislative Assembly, receiving tremendous favourable publicity in the press the following morning.

The bill was, nevertheless, passed. Undeterred, Gandhiji set to work on another petition addressed to Lord Ripon, the Secretary of State for Colonies. Within a month, the mammoth petition with ten thousand signatures was sent to Lord Ripon and a thousand copies printed for distribution. Even *The Times* admitted that the Indian claim for justice was legitimate and for the first time people in India came to know of the oppressive lot of their compatriots in South Africa. Thus began Gandhiji's journey to self-realization and his fight for liberty and equality.

By 1896, Gandhiji had established himself as a political leader in South Africa. His voice was being heard and he had managed to embarrass the British Government enough to cause it

to block the Franchise Bill in an unprecedented move, which resulted in generating anti-Indian feelings.

“Gandhiji had always believed that ‘without Ahimsa it is not possible to seek and find Truth. Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them’”

During this period Gandhiji did return to India shortly, only to rush back again to his job, this time with his wife and children. It was during this second period in South Africa that he underwent a gradual change.

While in India, an urgent telegram from community in Natal had obliged him short his stay. Very soon he for Durban at once with family but did not realize while he had been away, pamphlet pointing out grievances, known as the Pamphlet, had been exaggerated and distorted. When the ship finally reached Durban harbour, it was willfully held up for twenty-three days in quarantine. The European public, wild with anger, threatened to drown the ship with all the passengers, misled by garbled versions of Gandhiji's activities in India and by a rumour that he was bringing shiploads of Indians to settle in Natal. News of this cowardly assault received wide publicity and Joseph Chamberlain, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, cabled an order to Natal to prosecute all those who were responsible for the attempted lynching. However, Gandhiji refused to identify and accuse his assailants, saying that they were misled and that he was sure when they came to know the truth they would be sorry for what they had done.

Though he stayed on specifically to challenge White arrogance and resist injustice, Gandhiji harboured no hatred in his heart and was, in fact, always ready to help when the British were in distress. It was this rare combination of his readiness to resist wrong and the capacity to

the Indian to cut set sail his that his Indian Green

love his opponent which baffled his enemies and compelled their admiration. Previously, he had been anxious to maintain the standards of a traditional English barrister. But now, during his second phase in South Africa, Gandhiji began to methodically reduce his wants and his expenses, do his own laundry and clean out not only his own chamber-pots but often those of his guests as well. Not satisfied with self-help, he volunteered, despite his busy practice as a lawyer and demands of public work, his free service for two hours a day at a charitable hospital. He also undertook the responsibility to educate his two sons and a nephew at home. He read books on nursing and midwifery and, in fact, served as midwife when his fourth and last son, Devdas was born in Natal.

The first time Gandhiji officially used Satyagraha in South Africa was in 1907, when he organised a resistance march against the Black Act to the Asiatic Registration Law Office. Earlier that year, the Black Act had been summarily passed, requiring all Indians – young and old, men and women – to get fingerprinted and keep registration documents on their persons at all times. Gandhiji advised the Indian community to refuse to submit to this indignity and to court imprisonment by defying the law. Indians, thus, declined to get fingerprinted and picketed the documentation offices. Many Mass protests were organised, miners went on strike, and multitudes of Indians travelled, illegally, from Natal to the Transvaal in complete opposition to the Black Act. Many of the protesters were mercilessly beaten up and arrested. In January 1908, Gandhiji was also detained and immediately sentenced to two months' simple imprisonment. He was followed by several other ardent Satyagrahis.



Early days of Satyagraha: Gandhi and Kasturba

This was the first of his several jail sentences and it took seven years of endless protests before the Black Act was repealed in June 1914.

Much before his first arrest, Gandhiji had been inspired to establish an Indian ashram-like commune called Phoenix Settlement just outside of Durban in June 1904. Some years later, another similar hermitage, Tolstoy Farm, was also set up by him with the help of his Jewish friend from Germany, Hermann Kallenbach, an architect raised and educated in East Prussia, a lifetime bachelor, gymnast and bodybuilder. Tolstoy Farm was so named by Kallenbach himself as he had great faith in the Russian's teachings and for some time had sought to embrace Tolstoy's ideals of simplicity, manual labour and self-renunciation. Here, C F Andrews, an English clergyman, was to join them too, as Satyagrahis and their families worked cohesively as a community to support themselves.

These settlements were earnest experiments to eliminate one's needless possessions and subsist in a society with full equality. Very soon, believing that family life was taking away from achieving his full potential as a public advocate, Gandhiji took the vow of Brahmacharya. This, he believed, allowed him to further focus on the concept of Satyagraha. A Satyagrahi would resist injustice by refusing to follow an unjust law. Without resorting to anger or passion that could smear the opponent, he would put up freely with physical assaults and the confiscation of his property, the goal being not to prove anybody as a winner or a loser, but rather that all would eventually see and understand the 'truth' and agree to rescind the unjust law.

Gandhiji's use of Satyagraha saw him behind bars several times, beaten up and jailed along with his followers. But he stubbornly

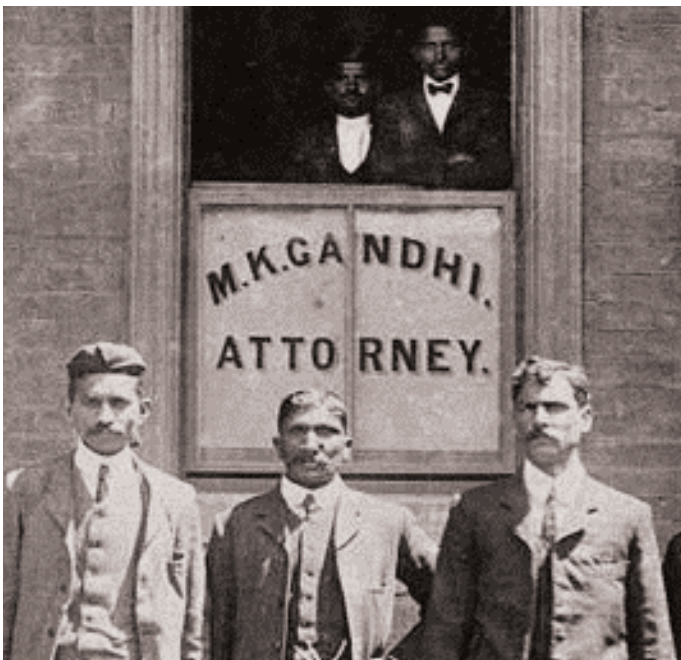
resisted all attacks to quietly prove that nonviolent protests could be immensely successful. The courage shown by him and his Satyagrahis in the face of repressive governmental action mobilised public opinion to such an extent that the inexperienced South African Government was considerably discomfited. In jail, Gandhiji made such good use of his time with study and prayer that he was able to declare, 'the real road to ultimate happiness lies in going to jail and undergoing sufferings and privations there in the interest of one's own country and religion.'

During the South African years, Gandhiji had taken great pains to refine his asceticism, setting high standards of austerity that he would in future expect his followers to maintain in India in their fight for independence. Over time, Satyagraha became the weapon of the bravest and the strongest, an antidote for coercion. The idea of linking self-improvement with the struggle to win one's rights turned out to be fundamental to Gandhiji's approach to civil disobedience. For him, Satyagraha was not merely a political technique of revolt but an alternative medium

of education and a deeply spiritual experience. Such was its power that one of his bitterest opponents, General Jan C Smuts, the administrator of South Africa, had to ultimately bow down and accept the triumph of passive resistance.

During one of his numerous prison terms in Pietermaritzburg jail, Gandhiji had opted for leatherwork and made a pair of sandals. While leaving South Africa, he had requested his secretary, Sonja Schlesin, to deliver them to Smuts as a gift. Smuts wore them every summer at his Doornkloof farm at Irene near Pretoria, remembering the frail little man with whom he had crossed swords. As he recalled decades later, 'It was my fate to be the antagonist of a man for whom I had the highest respect... He never forgot the human background of the situation, never lost his temper or succumbed to hate... While in jail, he had prepared for me a very useful pair of sandals which he presented to me when he was set free. I have worn these sandals for many a summer since then, even though I may feel that I am not worthy to stand in the shoes of so great a man!'

“ The first time Gandhiji officially used Satyagraha in South Africa was in 1907, when he organised a resistance march against the Black Act to the Asiatic Registration Law Office ”



M K Gandhi outside his office in South Africa



Gandhi (left) with Hermann Kallenbach and his secretary, Sonja Schlesin



Gandhiji and Pt Jawaharlal Nehru



The Mahatma on his way to the Round Table Conference



The Father of the Nation with Netaji Subhas Bose and Vallabhbhai Patel



Gandhiji travelling by bus to search for rural India

KASTURBA: CANDLE IN THE WIND

'Man can never be a woman's equal in the spirit of selfless service with which nature has endowed her'

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi



History has often presented Kasturba Gandhi as a supplementary shadow of her husband. Even Gandhiji, offering a dispassionate summary of his eldest son Harilal's bitter complaint, had written in his autobiography, 'He feels that I have always kept all the four boys very much suppressed... always put them and Ba last.' Yet Kasturba's indelible mark on Indian history, with her significant contributions to the struggle for India's independence, cannot be denied. She was not taught to read or write, but at a very young and confusing age, when little girls were still playing with toys, she was asked to make a conscious decision to cast herself into the mould of a traditional wife and, a few years into her marriage, dedicate her life to fighting for the freedom of the oppressed, initially in South Africa and then, once Gandhiji returned, in India.

Born on 11th April 1869 to Gokuldas Kapadia, a wealthy

merchant dealing in grains, silk, cotton and clothes, with export interests in the Middle East and Africa, and his wife, Vrajkunwar, in the old city of Porbandar in Gujarat, little Kastur was a carefree child, often given to stubbornness while expressing a wilful mind of her own. Along with two brothers, she grew up in apparent affluence, indulged by the family. The Gandhis and the senior Kapadias

were known to each other and when the children were seven years old, Kastur and Mohandas were formally betrothed in 1876 as their parents decided to cement their friendship. The marriage was finally solemnised in 1882, when Kastur and Mohandas were thirteen years old.

In the early days of their marriage, Gandhiji's attempts to control Kasturba in their home at Rajkot bore no fruit. As they fumbled about, discovering adulthood and their married life, Gandhiji's need to exercise control is said to have manifested itself in fits of jealousy. She, however, defied him and as was customary at the time, followed her mother-in-law, with whom they were then living, to the temple, only to be later censured by her husband for disobeying his orders. Young Kastur decided she would have none of it and silenced him by impertinently asking, 'Are you suggesting that I should obey you and not your mother?'

Around this time, Gandhiji also decided to teach Kasturba to read and write. He wanted it to be a new project for

them to carry out together. In his autobiography, Gandhi explained that his ambition was to make her an ideal wife. But Kasturba was wary and surprised as this was unconventional and went against tradition. The lessons

“Along with two brothers, she grew up in apparent affluence, indulged by the family”

started but were not successful because Kasturba had little patience late at night to pour over books, after a long day of household work. Furthermore, she was scared that

her studies might affect her relationship with other women in the house who would think she was trying to be superior to them since literacy amongst women was very unusual at the time. Despite Kasturba's resentment, she never protested openly to her husband's wishes. She simply chose not to master the lessons!

Several years later Gandhiji was to write, 'According to my earlier experience, she was very obstinate. In spite of all my pressure she would do as she wished. This led to short or rather long periods of grim estrangement between us. But as my public life expanded, my wife bloomed forth and deliberately lost herself in my work... Without her unfailing cooperation, I might have been in the abyss.'

Kasturba's seminal obstinacy kept her grounded in their rather tumultuous relationship only because of Gandhiji's many, fast-changing avatars – from an impatient, jealous adolescent to 'the Mahatma', and from an energetic young man to his decision to adopt celibacy in 1906 by the time he was in his mid-thirties. These vagaries made it clear



Kasturba and Gandhiji at Sabarmati Ashram

to Kasturba that she would have to constantly catch up with her husband's varying moods. She often did so without complaint, but always taking her time. A child was

would have been a problem. But her spirit never flagged and when she finally went to live with him in South Africa and set up a home for the family, Kasturba found herself



Kasturba as the traditional wife

born to the couple in 1885 but died shortly after birth. Their first child to survive – a son Harilal – was born in 1888, six years into their marriage. Mohandas left shortly after Harilal's birth to study law in London, while Kasturba stayed behind with the new baby. She went on to bear three more sons – Manilal (1892), Ramdas (1897) and Devdas (1900). For years she lived far away from her beloved Mohandas without a single complaint, hiding her utter loneliness in dull and dreary family chores. Kasturba could not read or write and so exchanging messages

“ The tenacity and courage that Kasturba possessed proved to be the backbone in Mahatma Gandhi's fight for justice ”

divided at the crossroads of her own beliefs and those espoused by Gandhiji. One day at the Phoenix Settlement just outside Durban, early in 1898, Kasturba's loyalty to her husband and his ideals came into dire conflict with the conservative traditions in which she had been brought up. A Christian Indian guest of untouchable parentage did not empty his chamber pot in the morning, unaware of the house rules. Under these odd circumstances, Gandhiji wanted Kasturba to join him in the cleaning of the pots that had not been emptied.



In their younger days: Mr and Mrs M K Gandhi



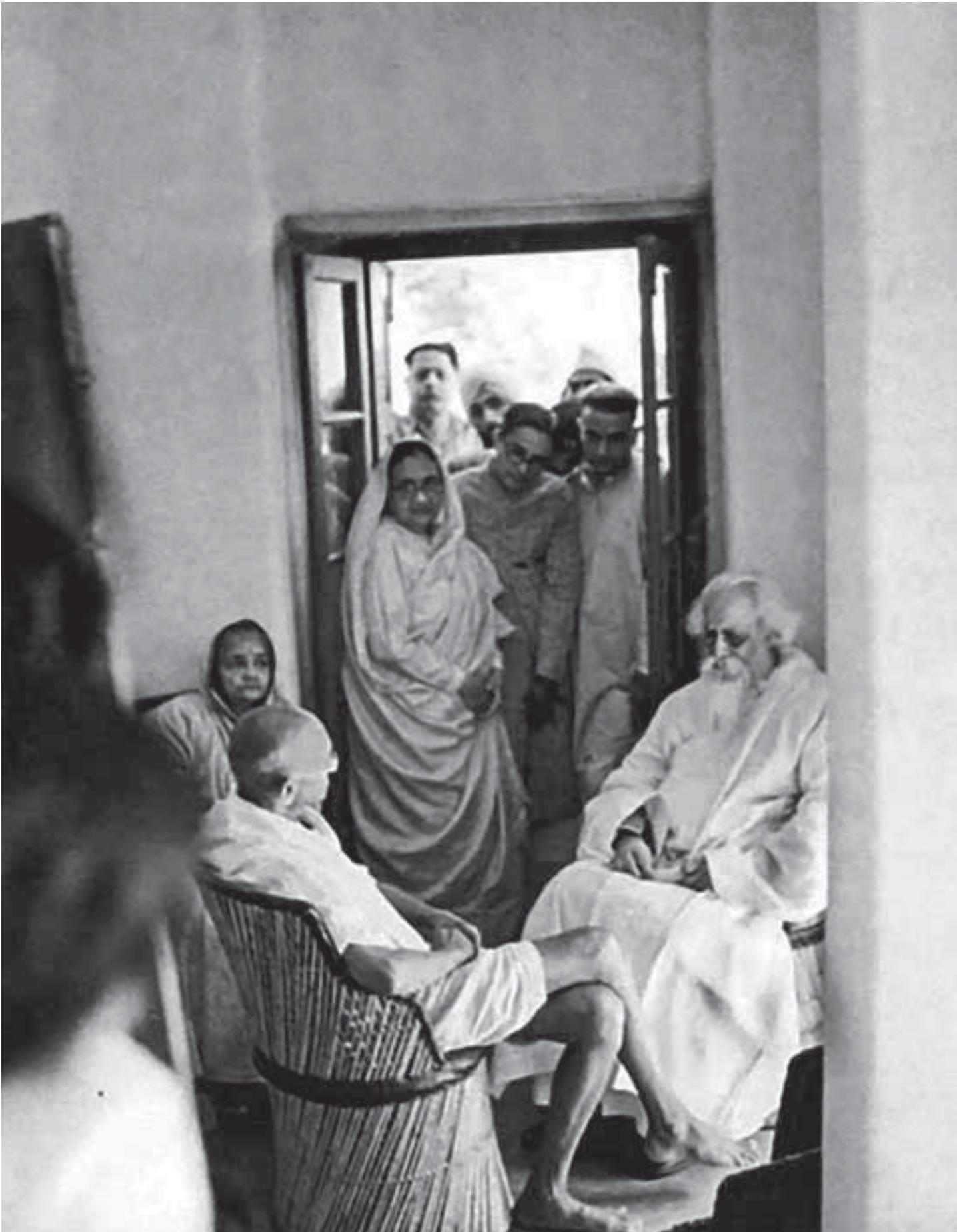
Weaving India's destiny: Kasturba on the charkha



Gandhiji and Kasturba with Gurudev Rabindranath in Santiniketan



On their way to a public rally: Gandhiji and Kasturba



In Santiniketan: 'Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high'

When Kasturba resisted, Gandhiji lost his temper. But as soon as he recovered his equanimity he was filled with shame. He realized that Kasturba had a strong mind of her own, and could question his beliefs and practices. They lived as any regular married couple till 1906, braving differences and fights but with deep love and devotion. In 1906, when Mahatma Gandhi finally took the vow of celibacy, Kasturba agreed without protest.

Earlier, in March 1904, disaster had struck the Indian community in Johannesburg in the form of the Bubonic plague. Gandhiji organised medical assistance for the sick and Kasturba offered to help. She visited women in the Indian quarters to talk about basic health and hygiene measures, and explained how to detect plague symptoms. She showed her ability to work with women and to make them trust her, even as Gandhiji discovered in his wife a newfound ally in his work.

Kasturba Gandhi was amongst the first of the protesters or Satyagrahis, as Mahatma Gandhi used to call the nonviolent resisters, to stage a dharna at Transvaal High Court in South Africa after the colonial government there declared all non-Christian marriages invalid. Despite her husband's dissuasion, which included telling her that her participation would be disgraceful if it weakened her health, 'Mrs Gandhi was not to be moved' wrote *Indian Opinion*, a newsletter founded by Gandhiji in 1913.

Kasturba's last days in South Africa were spent in celebrations. She stood with her husband at receptions; they were garlanded with flowers, photographed with officials and hailed by cheerful crowds. On 18th July 1914, they sailed for England, before going back to India. Here too, in her own country, Kasturba's gentle persuasion touched the lives of numerous women, and she proved herself to be a crucial tool in furthering the movement. If Gandhiji beckoned women to join the struggle for independence, it was Kasturba who gave them conviction. While Gandhiji remained in jail, she made a speech as part of the Quit India movement on 9th August 1942, saying, 'The women of India have to prove their mettle. They should all join in this struggle, regardless of caste or creed. Truth and nonviolence must be our watchwords.'

Kasturba had begun experiencing serious medical problems while in South Africa but, undeterred, she continued to participate in the increasing number of civil actions and protests across India that Mohandas and others organized. She often took her husband's place when he was in prison and much of her time was devoted to assisting to manage the various ashrams that she helped Gandhiji found.

Despite her failing health, over the years Kasturba became increasingly involved in India's political struggle. She supported her husband in numerous ways and also adopted causes of her own. Gandhiji's first full-scale campaign in India in 1917 was over the condition of indigo farmers in Champaran, Bihar. The farmers were subjected to an oppressive system of land tenure highly profitable to English landowners. Kasturba travelled to Champaran with her son Devdas to assist her husband. She worked with farmers' wives and daughters and became

involved in a district-wide sanitation campaign. Her efforts led to an official report on agricultural conditions in Champaran being prepared and an agrarian reform law was finally passed in Bihar with the purpose of improving farmers' conditions.

Kasturba always tried to reach Indian women with a special message. She ardently believed that women had to become self-sufficient by learning how to spin and weave. This way, they could escalate change within their households and discourage the consumption of foreign products like cloth. She also joined Gandhiji during meetings whenever she could, sitting next to him and spinning the charkha.

“She supported her husband in numerous ways and also adopted causes of her own”

Kasturba was arrested four times upon returning to India, including in 1939, when the women of Rajkot asked her to protest with them against British rule. It earned her a month of solitary confinement but she remained, till her last breath, the mainstay of the force that Mahatma Gandhi unleashed on the British colonial rulers. Her final spell in jail came in 1943 when she was seventy-four years old.

Her health quickly deteriorated, and she suffered two heart attacks over the course of one week, finally passing away on 22nd February 1944, three years before the Independence she ardently fought for and four years before her husband was shot dead at a prayer meet in Delhi.

Kasturba died with her head placed on her husband's lap, softly whispering to the Mahatma, 'Do not sorrow after my death. It should be an occasion for rejoicing.' She was cremated in the compound of the vast Aga Khan Palace on 23rd February. Gandhiji sat through the cremation in silent prayer till the pyre was extinguished and only the embers glowed. Someone suggested to him to move away mid-way as he looked unduly exhausted. Mahatma Gandhi is said to have replied softly, 'This is the final parting, the end of sixty-two years of shared life. Let me stay here till the cremation is over.'



Young Kasturba as a fearless freedom fighter

MIRABEN: O LOVE THAT WILT NOT LET ME GO...

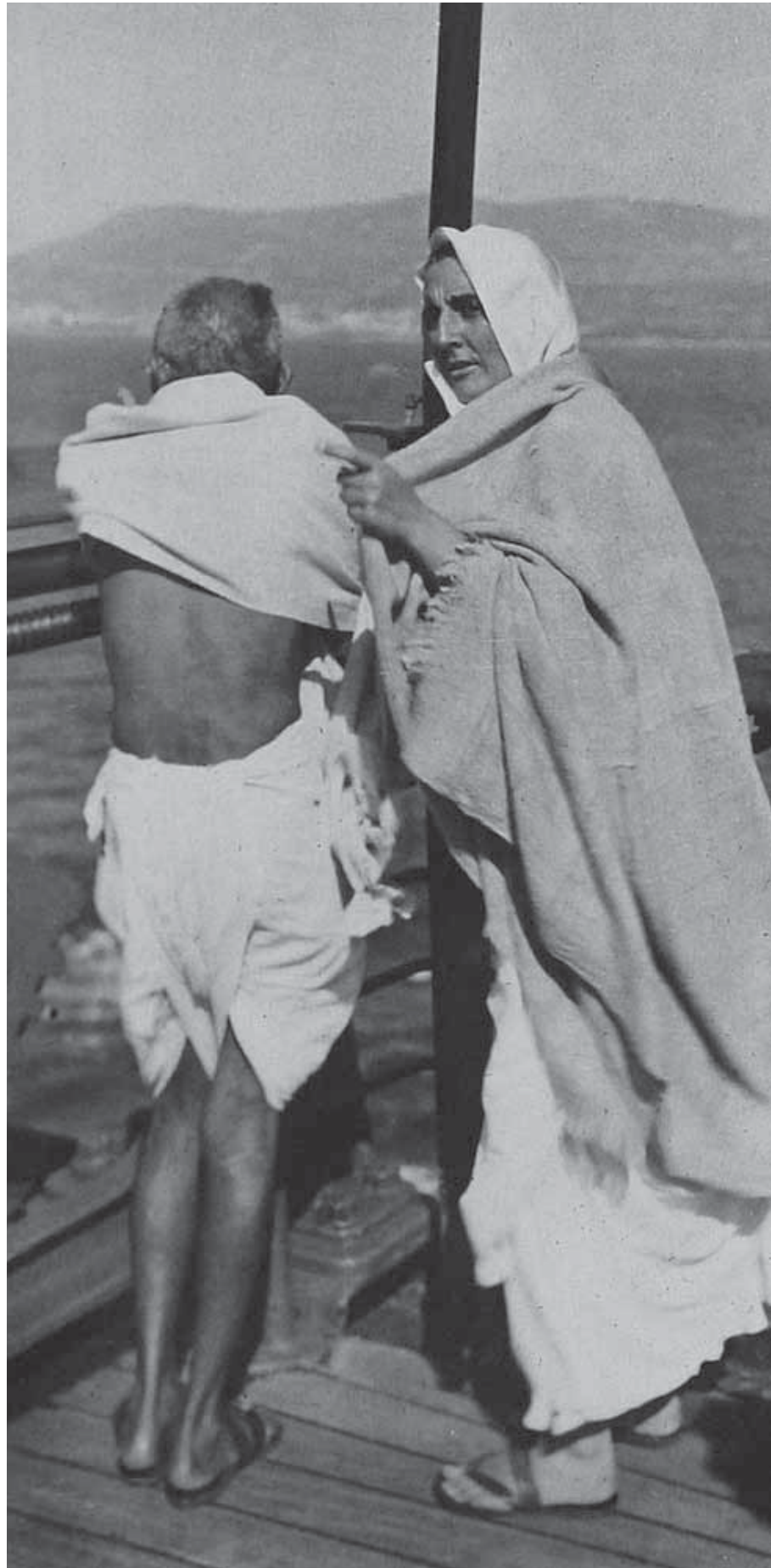
'I may be blinded by my love for him. But I believe, when we most needed it, he offered the world a way out of madness. But he doesn't see it. Neither does the world'

Madeleine Slade alias Miraben



Once she came to live at Gandhiji's Sabarmati Ashram at the age of thirty-three, Madeleine Slade was rechristened Miraben by the Mahatma who would often listen to the devotional songs of Meerabai, the sixteenth century princess. Meerabai had renounced her royal lineage to live the life of a wandering mendicant, intoxicated by the love of Lord Krishna. Several historians have drawn parallels to Miraben's blind devotion for Gandhiji, very similar to Sister Nivedita's unconditional dedication to Swami Vivekananda.

Born into an aristocratic British family on 22nd November 1892, Madeleine Slade's father, Sir Edmond Slade, was Rear-Admiral of the Royal Navy, posted as Commander-in-Chief of the East Indies Squadron, who later became the director of the Naval Intelligence Division. Young Madeleine spent much of her childhood with her maternal grandfather who owned a large country estate in Surrey and was from an early age a nature and animal lover. Madeleine Slade's other great passion was the music



Gandhiji and Miraben on their way to London for the Round Table Conference

of Ludwig van Beethoven. She not only took piano lessons as a teenager but also went on to become a concert manager. Beethoven's sublime music instilled a deep sense of humble spirituality and a rare other-worldliness in her heart,

assiduously sowing the seeds of her quest for the unknown, which she cherished all her life. On a visit to Vienna and Germany to see the places where Beethoven had lived and composed his great music, she explored Romain

Rolland's books on the maestro and, later, sought a meeting with him at Villeneuve, where he was then living. During this meeting around 1924, Rolland mentioned a new book of his called *Mahatma Gandhi* which she had not read, describing

the protagonist as another Christ and the greatest figure of the 20th century. Fascinated by this 'liberator of the oppressed' from the mystic East, that year in England she subscribed to *Young India* and spent a lot

of time in Paris absorbing the text of the Bhagavad Gita and parts of the Rig Veda in French. Her swift and intimate encounter with Gandhi through Rolland's biography and the impact it had on her is best described in her own words: 'As I read, the pure

Light of Truth broke in upon my troubled soul and led me to my destination.' Around this time, she was perturbed by the news of Gandhiji undertaking a fast to promote communal harmony despite his deteriorating health that was getting worse by the

day. When the fast finally ended, a relieved Madeleine sold off her diamond brooch for twenty pounds and remitted it to Gandhiji as a token of gratitude. Touched by her gesture, Gandhiji soon acknowledged her generosity in a letter. This was the beginning of their acquaintance. Next, Madeleine asked for his consent to join him at Sabarmati Ashram. Gandhiji gladly agreed but while replying in the affirmative, forewarned her of the difficulties of such a life. He wrote, 'You are welcome whenever you choose to come. If I have advice of the steamer, there will be someone receiving you and guiding you to Sabarmati. Only please remember that the life in the Ashram is not at all rosy. It is strenuous. Bodily labour is given by every inmate. The climate of this country is also not a small consideration. I mention these things not to frighten

you but merely to warn you.' Pragmatic that she was, the young devotee assiduously did her homework in a bid to be more acceptable. She learnt weaving and spinning, became a vegetarian and practised squatting and sleeping on the floor. Thus undeterred, Miss Madeleine Slade finally reached India, stepping ashore in Bombay on 6th November 1925 and then quickly proceeded to Ahmedabad by train. The following morning she was received at the station by several of Gandhiji's close associates.

Upon reaching the Ashram, the English woman was ushered into a room where Gandhiji greeted her and acknowledged her as his daughter. She henceforth took on the name Miraben and addressed the Mahatma as 'Bapu' or 'Father.' It was a momentous meeting. Miraben made India her home for the next thirty-four years and

“When the fast finally ended, a relieved Madeleine sold off her diamond brooch for twenty pounds and remitted it to Gandhiji as a token of gratitude”



Gandhiji and Miraben (far right) with textile mill workers in England

chose not to return to England for personal visits, even when her father died in 1926. The mentor-disciple relationship that had commenced at this initial meeting remained unwavering and often rather troubled. Living the community life of the ashram was, indeed, an arduous task for Miraben, with the scorching Indian summer proving to be a huge deterrent. Nonetheless, she remained steadfast on her path. She donned immaculate white borderless saris, chopped off her hair and took a vow of celibacy. During the first two years in India, she learned Hindi and spent much time spinning and carding cotton. Subsequently, the bundle of unbounded energy that she was, Miraben travelled extensively to several far-flung villages all over the country to promote Khadi. She wrote prolifically for noted journals, ranging from *Young India* and *Harijan* to *The Statesman*, *The Times of India* and *The Hindustan Times*. Yet, over the years, Miraben remained so dependent on Gandhiji that whenever he was obliged to leave the ashram she grew depressed, at times writing to him daily about how she felt. Miraben truly 'lived for the moments when she could set eyes on Bapu' and was the happiest when she was 'deputed to do all Bapu's personal service.' Bapu himself, on the other hand, wished Miraben to be primarily a useful worker and resented her obsessive personal attachment to him that often also irritated Kasturba. Gandhiji was compelled to write to her and tell her, 'You must not cling to me as in this body. The spirit without the body is ever with you. And that is more than the feeble embodied imprisoned

spirit with all the limitations that flesh is heir to. The spirit without the flesh is perfect; and that is all we need. This can be felt only when we practice detachment. This you must now try to achieve.'

Miraben had arrived in India during a highly eventful period in Gandhiji's life. From the Simon Commission that faced protests in 1927 to the Dandi March and the iconic Civil Disobedience Movement, she had seen it all and even gone with Gandhiji and others to the Round Table Conference in London in 1931. Pleading India's case, she had also met David Lloyd George, General Smuts, Lord Halifax, Sir Samuel Hoare, Clement Attlee and Winston Churchill, and visited the United States, where she saw Mrs Roosevelt at the White House. She took an active interest in the establishment of the Sevagram Ashram at Wardha in Maharashtra, and worked among the people of Orissa to resist any potential Japanese invasion during the Second World War. Miraben was arrested multiple times, including during a period of civil disobedience in 1932-33, when she was detained on the charge of supplying information to Europe and America regarding conditions prevailing in India; and again in 1942, when she was imprisoned in the Aga Khan Palace in Pune along with Gandhiji and Kasturba.

After her release, with Gandhiji's permission, she established the Kisan Ashram at a village near Roorkee. The land was donated to her

by the local villagers. After Independence, she launched the Pashulok Ashram near Rishikesh and took to dairying and farming experiments. She even experimented with the introduction of Dexter cattle

from England for crossbreeding with the yak in Jammu and Kashmir. During the time she spent in the hills of Garhwal, she very often saw the cruel destruction of the forests and the severe impact it was having on floods

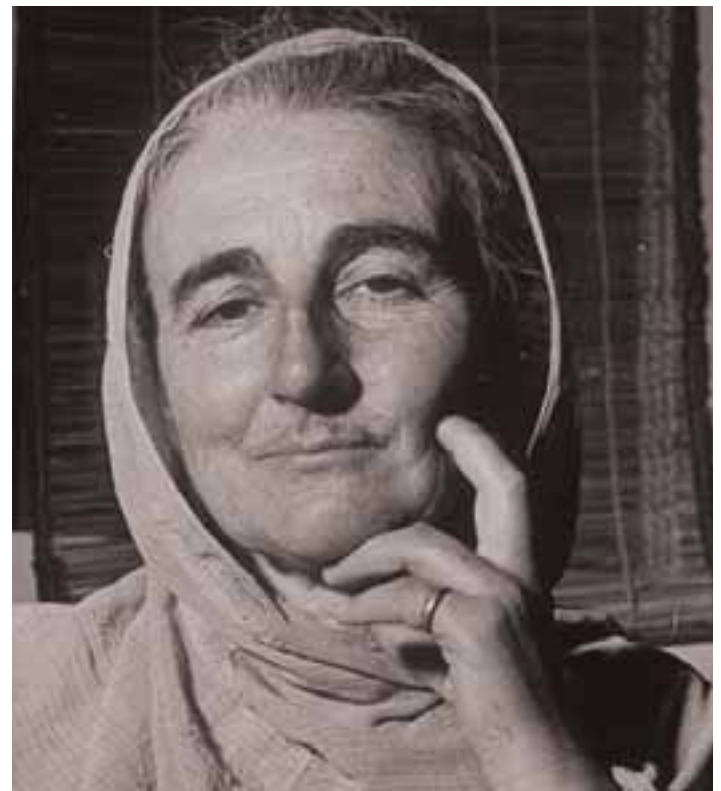
in the plains. Later, around the early 1980s, several of these areas witnessed a very large Gandhian environmental drive to save the forests that came to be known as the Chipko Movement.

Miraben never reconciled to Gandhiji's untimely assassination and her passage from anguished

bereavement to acceptance of her Bapu's loss kept her back in India till 1959, when she finally returned to England. In 1960, she relocated to Austria and spent twenty-two years in small villages in the Vienna Woods, where she died in 1982. In 1969, on the occasion of the Centenary Celebrations of Gandhi, Miraben was invited by Lord Louis Mountbatten to visit England. Addressing a mammoth gathering at Albert Hall in London, Miraben offered a vivid account of her ties with Gandhiji. In 1981, the Government of India honoured Miraben with the Padma Vibhushan, the country's second highest civilian honour, for her meritorious service to India and to humanity.

A few months later, before she died, Miraben is supposed to have told a journalist, 'I wonder sometimes if India really deserved Bapu. No one knew him! No one at all! Not even me!'

“ During the first two years in India, she learned Hindi and spent much time spinning and carding cotton ”



Madeleine Slade alias Miraben



Miraben on the charkha at Sabarmati Ashram



Miraben: 'If they answer not your call, walk alone'



Miraben with a group of dedicated Satyagrahis



Miraben teaching women in Karachi how to spin

SUSHILA NAYYAR: THAT SELFLESS HEALING TOUCH

'Anyone who observes the rules of health will not need to knock the doors of doctors from day to day'

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi



Mahatma Gandhi's personal physician, Sushila Nayyar – younger sister of Pyarelal Nayyar, Gandhiji's personal secretary – was so deeply influenced by Gandhian philosophy that she became a central part of his life. Born on 26th December 1914 in Kunjah, a small town in the district of Punjab, now in Pakistan, she developed an early attraction to Gandhian ideals through her brother. Sushila had even met Gandhiji as a young child in Lahore. Recounting her pleasant memories, she had once said in an interview, 'He made me sit on his lap and began playing with me. I liked him at once.'

Having studied at Lady Harding College in Delhi from where she earned her MBBS and MD degrees, she was convinced of her life's purpose and soon became Kasturba and Gandhi's physician. Attracted to the

Mahatma's ideas and work from a young age, in an article, *Medicine for the Masses*, Sushila Nayyar had once written that Gandhiji was so gentle with patients that she told him, 'Bapu, you should have been a doctor.' Her beloved Bapu had replied, 'Oh yes, I always wanted to be one.'

Gandhiji did not end up pursuing medicine but that did not diminish his interest in health and working for the sick and the poor. His interest in hygiene, nutrition and diseases was as great as his interest in politics and though he chose law as his profession, which took up a significant amount of his time in his early life, his passion lay in caring for the sick and nursing them back to health. And Sushila

was always by his side from 1939, once she came to live in his ashram at Sevagram in Maharashtra, eight kms away from Wardha, becoming an important member of his inner circle. She even happened to be a part of his controversial experiment with Brahmacharya or celibacy though Gandhiji proclaimed that Sushila was, indeed, a natural Brahmachari, having observed its tenets assiduously from childhood. Shortly after her arrival, cholera had broken out in Wardha, and the young medical graduate had tackled the outbreak almost singlehandedly, greatly impressing her mentor with her selfless dedication.

Sevagram was originally meant to be a place where Gandhiji wanted to live on his own; he did not want anyone to accompany him when he moved there from the Sabarmati Ashram at Ahmedabad in 1936. But that was not to be. Pyarelal Nayyar, along with workers from distant corners began to visit and Gandhiji could not say 'no.' He had never planned on having

a dispensary on the premises. Gandhiji was a firm believer in the principle that a healthy mind also keeps the body fit. He would often say that the reason he had high blood pressure was because he could not control his mind as well as he would have liked to. 'We want healers of souls rather than of bodies,' he had written in one of the issues of *Young India* way back in 1927. 'The multiplicity of

“ She even happened to be a part of his controversial experiment with celibacy though Gandhiji proclaimed that Sushila was, indeed, a natural Brahmachari ”

hospitals and medical men is no sign of civilization. The less we and others pamper our body the better for us and the world.' Yet, whenever patients came to visit and asked to be treated by him, he would usually tell them to practise fasting. Castor oil, sodium bicarbonate, quinine and iodine were the only drugs he ever

prescribed. However, the number of people visiting Sevagram started to increase, even more so when Sushila Nayyar followed her brother's footsteps and joined him. Over the years, this gritty woman played a leading role in several programmes for public health, medical education, and social and rural reconstruction in India. The ashram not only provided her with spiritual and nationalistic perspectives, but at the same time allowed her to have her first encounter with community medicine in remote villages. The larger goal was always to provide proper healthcare to economically backward individuals. Hence, in 1944, she began attending the small dispensary in the ashram. Its growing popularity allowed her to move it out from the ashram premises to a small clinic donated by G D Birla. This clinic was to become a seed for a bigger hospital, and in 1945 her dream came true with the establishment of the Kasturba Hospital – now the Mahatma

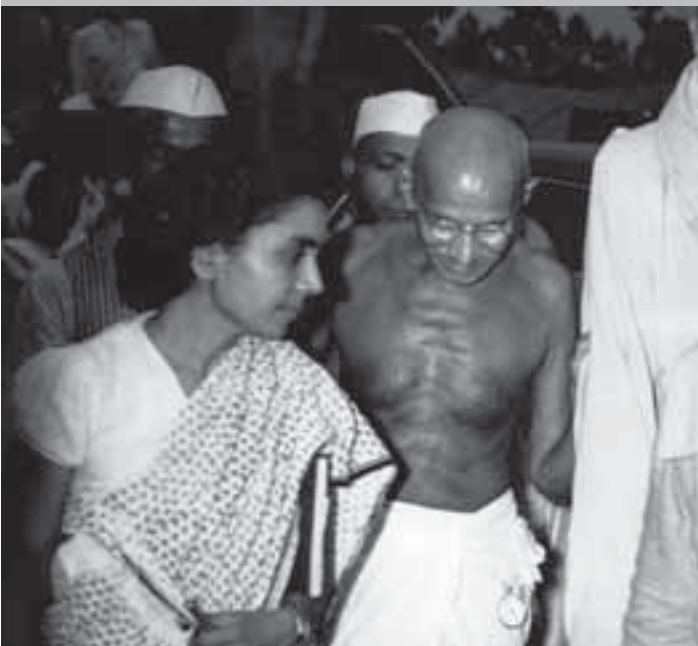
Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences. While working with Dr R V Wardekar, the father of Leprosy control in India, Sushila Nayyar came across a sea of leprosy patients, since Wardha district had a high prevalence of the disease at the time. Years of close involvement with many the patients made a very lasting impact, paving the way for various social and medical reforms for the under-privileged and the sick in the future. From zealously participating in the Quit India Movement which was sweeping the country at that time to getting imprisoned in the Aga Khan Palace jail for her ardent pro-independence ideologies, Sushila Nayyar also wielded a large influence on India's political future. The times were, however,

“Like Gandhiji, she believed that there was no such thing as a dirty job, and that medicine required hands-on involvement with patients and their ailments”

highly fraught and burdened with tension; several attempts had been made on Gandhiji's life and Sushila Nayyar testified on several occasions to the attacks. In 1948, she appeared before the Kapur Commission regarding the incident in Panchgani in 1944 when Nathuram Godse had allegedly tried to attack Gandhiji with a dagger. Left bereft after Mahatma Gandhiji's assassination, Sushila Nayyar soon joined Johns Hopkins University in USA, where she took two degrees in public health. Returning to India in 1950, she set up a tuberculosis sanatorium in Faridabad. Dr Nayyar also headed the well-known Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation. At last, in late 1952, when the first elections took



Sushila Nayyar was an integral part of Gandhiji's experiments with celibacy



Sushila Nayyar on a political march with Gandhiji



Young Sushila with Gandhiji in Sevagram



Dr Sushila Nayyar at a health camp



Taking care of Gandhiji as he fasts



Sushila Nayyar with Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai Patel

place in India, she entered politics and was nominated to the Legislative Assembly of Delhi. Following the path of India's first health minister, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, who was also an ardent Gandhian, Sushila Nayyar too became the first female health minister of Delhi state in Pandit Nehru's cabinet and served until 1955.

In an age when it was extremely difficult for single young women to have careers, she managed by sheer grit and dedication to carve out a life for herself without concessions to her gender and remained one of the few who set the country on a path of modern medicine devoid of superstitions. Like Gandhiji, she believed that there was no such thing as a dirty job, and that medicine required hands-on involvement with patients and their ailments.

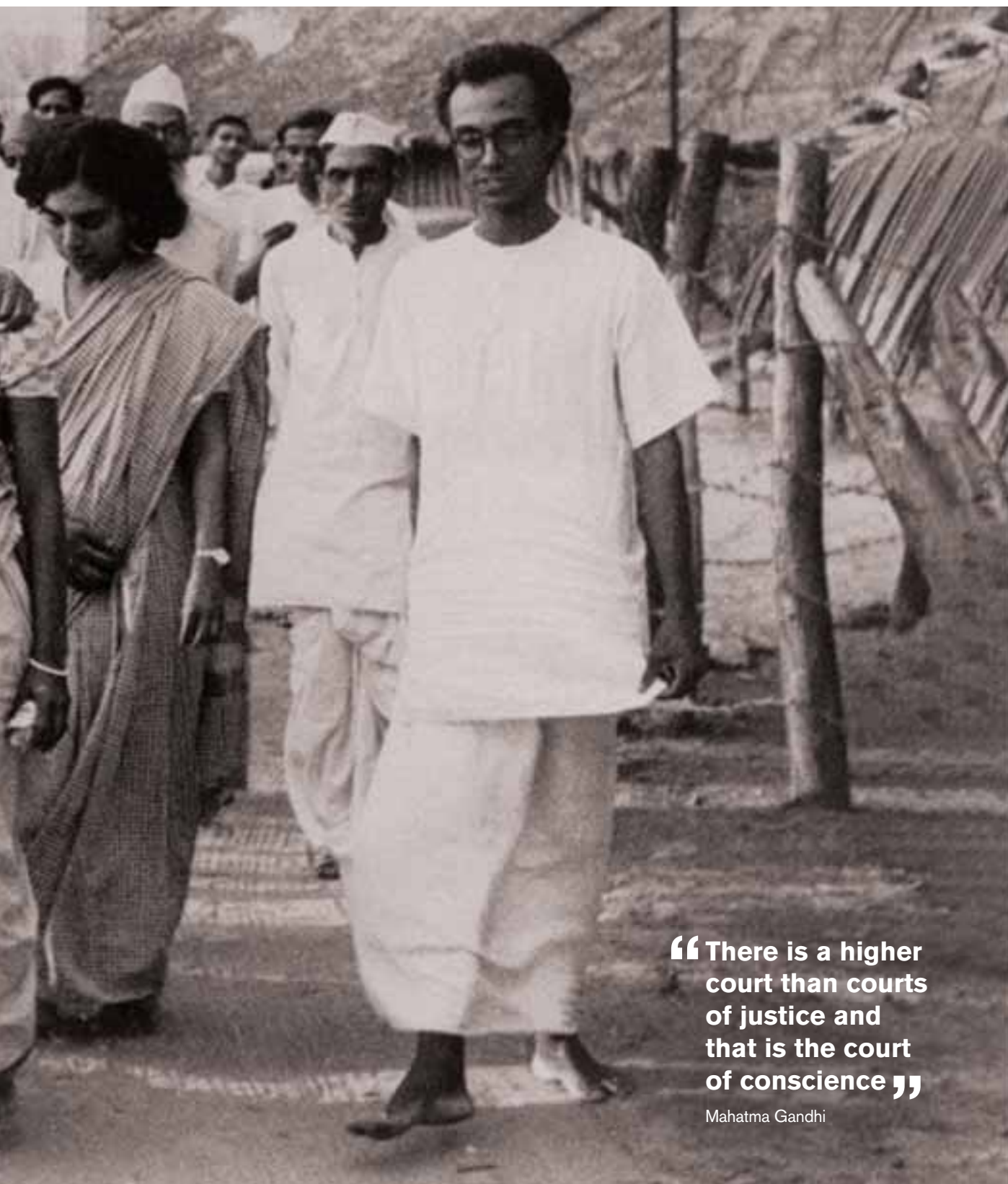
Sushila Nayyar remained unmarried throughout her life. On 3rd January 2001, she died due to a cardiac arrest. Till the very last, she found unreserved solace in her Bapu's favourite bhajan written by the 15th century mystic, Narsinh Mehta:

*'Vaishnava jana toh teney kahiye je
Peed paraaye jaaney re
Par dukkhey upkaar karey toye
Mann abhimaan na anney re
Vaishnav jana toh teney kahiye je
Peed paraaye jaane re...'*

(*'Only those great souls are called Vaishnavas who feel the pain of others.*

Who help those in misery but never let self-conceit enter their minds...')





“ There is a higher court than courts of justice and that is the court of conscience ”

Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhiji on a padayatra, leaving from his ashram in Sevagram

SAROJINI NAIDU: INDIA'S BELOVED NIGHTINGALE

'Like Gautama Buddha, Gandhi was a lord of infinite compassion; he exemplified in his daily life Christ's Sermon from the Mount of Olives; both by precept and practice he realized the prophet Mahomet's beautiful message of democratic brotherhood and equality of all mankind'

Sarojini Naidu



One of the most prominent personalities of India's Independence Movement, Sarojini Naidu, apart from being a political activist, was also a prolific writer, orator, administrator and a gifted poet. She wrote her first poem in her maths notebook and thereafter, her literary buds bloomed to enrich her verses with vivid imagery covering a variety of themes. Her valuable contribution to English poetry earned her the sobriquet: 'The Nightingale of India.' Sarojini was drawn into India's freedom struggle after the partition of Bengal in 1905 when several compatriots asked her to use her poetry to invigorate a passion for liberty among the masses.

Born as Sarojini Chattopadhyay on 13th February 1879 in Hyderabad, she was a child prodigy. Her father, Aghore Nath Chattopadhyay, a scientist, had founded the famous Nizam's College. Her mother, Barada Sundari Devi, was one of Bengal's well-known poets. Sarojini, the eldest of eight siblings, topped the matriculation examination at Madras University when she was just twelve years old. At the age of sixteen, she received a scholarship from the Nizam himself and went to London to study, first at King's College, and later at Girton College in 1896 – the first women's college in Cambridge. Soon thereafter, she began working as a suffragist. During her stay in England, Sarojini fell in love with Govindarajulu Naidu, a non-Brahmin and a doctor by profession. As soon as she finished her studies, she married him, knowing full well that inter-caste marriages were a taboo at that time.

It was in London that young Sarojini also first met Mahatma Gandhi.

On 2nd August 1913, at Caxton Hall, London, Gopal Krishna Gokhale (founder of the Servants of Indian Society in 1905 at Pune) had addressed a large number of young enthusiastic Indians, including Sarojini, who happened to be in the audience. In an impassioned address, Gokhale set before them the lessons of self-sacrifice and patriotism. From that day on, Sarojini became a dedicated servant of the people of India. It was Gokhale again who spoke to her of Gandhiji and prepared her for continuing her apprenticeship under the Mahatma's guidance. When Gandhiji finally reached London from South Africa on his journey back home to India, Gokhale was unexpectedly held up for some days in Paris. Sarojini was in London at the time by chance, convalescing from an illness, and was asked to look him up.

As she recalled, 'My first meeting with Mahatma Gandhi took place in London on the eve of the Great European War of 1914 when he arrived fresh from his triumphs in South Africa, where he had initiated his principle of passive resistance and won a victory for his countrymen who were at the time chiefly indentured labourers, over the redoubtable General Smuts. I had not been able to meet his ship on his arrival, but the next afternoon I went wandering



Sarojini Naidu with other Indian delegates on her way to the Round Table Conference

round in search of his lodging in an obscure part of Kensington and climbed the steep stairs of an old, unfashionable house, to find an open door framing a living picture of a little man with shaven head, seated on the floor on a black prison blanket and eating a messy meal of squashed tomatoes and olive oil out of a wooden prison bowl... I burst instinctively into happy laughter at this amusing and unexpected vision of a famous leader, whose name had already become a household word in our country. He lifted his eyes and laughed back at me, saying: "Ah, you must be Mrs Naidu!" Who else dare be so irreverent? "Come in," said he, "and share my meal." "No, thanks," I replied, sniffing, "What an abominable mess it is!" In this way and at that instant commenced our friendship, which flowered into real comradeship, and bore fruit in a loving, loyal discipleship, which never wavered for a single hour through more than thirty years of common service in the cause of India's freedom.'

Meeting Gandhiji was certainly a life-changing experience for Sarojini. It took her away from the comfortable rooms of scholars and poets and placed her squarely before a beggar-saint. With time, they went on to share a great camaraderie. In a letter dated 8th August 1932 forwarded to Sarojini Naidu, Gandhiji addressed her as 'Bulbul' and signed

off as 'Little Man'; and she too referred to the Mahatma as 'Mickey Mouse,' much to Gandhiji's amusement. This sobriquet was affectionately given to the Mahatma by the British media because of the way his ears stuck out like Walt Disney's cartoon character. Sarojini was certainly one of Gandhiji's greatest devotees but despite her admiration for him, she dreaded the Mahatma's frugal diet. 'Good heavens, all that grass and goat milk! Never, never, never!' she would often exclaim when he asked her to join him for a meal. Sarojini Naidu, ever feisty and outspoken, remained totally unfazed by Gandhiji's growing stature as a global celebrity. She often berated him for his attempts to live in poverty as a semi-recluse in his Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad. 'Bapu, do you know how much it costs every day to keep you in poverty?' she would often ask him in exasperation. Gandhiji's response remains unknown, but clearly he was not offended as he knew the accusation to be true. He was acutely aware of how much every train journey

“ It was Gokhale again who spoke to her of Gandhiji and prepared her for continuing her apprenticeship under the Mahatma’s guidance ”

in a simple third-class railway carriage cost the state because of the adoring millions who flocked to see him. They had to schedule special trains and reserve a whole compartment for him because of the crowds. So Gandhiji accepted his 'Bulbul's' criticism with a mischievous smile.



A relaxed moment: the Mahatma with Charlie Chaplin, Sarojini Naidu and others in London

Sarojini could tease the Mahatma and joke about him but she always held him in utmost reverence. She had started by calling him 'friend' and ended up thinking of him as 'father.' Throughout her life, she wanted to be treated as his daughter. She always upheld the ideal of 'Indians first, Indians last, and Indians always' in her world vision like Gandhiji, her master. With more than a man's courage when she had to face brutal British authority, she remained ever feminine to the core. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in *India's Pilgrimage to Freedom*, most poignantly deliberated: 'She began life as a poet; in later years when the compulsion of events drew her into the national struggle, she plunged into it with all the zest and fire she possessed... whose whole life became a poem and a song and who infused artistry and grace in the national struggle, just as Mahatma Gandhi had infused moral grandeur to it.'

Sarojini Naidu played a vital role in the Civil Disobedience as well as the Quit India movements, fronting the women's wing in 1930 during Gandhiji's historic Dandi March. Imprisoned several times in the 1930s and earlier in 1925, she had become the second woman President of the Indian National Congress. In 1931, she participated in the Round Table Summit in London along with Gandhiji, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Ghanshyam Das Birla, Muhammad Iqbal, Sir Mirza Ismail Diwan of Mysore, S K Dutta and Sir Syed Ali Imam, taking little notice of Prime Minister Winston Churchill's offensive remark when he decried the 'nauseating and humiliating spectacle of this once inner-temple lawyer [Gandhi], now seditious fakir, striding half-naked up the steps of the viceroy's palace, there to negotiate and parley on equal terms with the representative of the King Emperor.'

With a natural gift of electrifying audiences, and her ability to weave strength into everything she said, Sarojini Naidu is credited for inspiring countless women to participate in the freedom struggle and bringing them out of the kitchen. She travelled from state to state, city after city, asking for the rights of women to re-establish their self-esteem,

including their right to vote. In that surcharged atmosphere, she would stun her audience with soul-stirring eloquence and staunch advocacy of the national cause, often concluding her speeches dramatically by jumping down from the dais and racing to join the women volunteers as they sang patriotic songs. Later, Sarojini Naidu also contributed to the drafting of the Indian Constitution.

Born an irrepressible 'Hasya Yogini,' India's beloved Nightingale breathed her last on 2nd March 1949 at the Raj Bhavan in Lucknow, where she resided as the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, forever a dedicated patriot and boundless disciple of Gandhiji. Nothing is more moving than her recollections of the Mahatma, penned some years after his assassination:

'He was – though it sounds obsolete and almost paradoxical to use such a phrase – literally a man of God, in all the depth, fullness and richness of its implications, who, especially in the later years of his own life, was regarded by millions of his fellowmen as a living symbol of Godhead. But while this man of God inspired in us awe and veneration because of his supreme greatness, he endeared himself to us and evoked our warmest love by the very faults and follies which he shared with our frail humanity. I love to remember him as a playmate of little children, as the giver of solace to the sorrowful, the oppressed and the fallen.'

'I also love to recall the picture of him at his evening prayers, facing a multitude of worshippers, with the full moon slowly rising above the silver sea, the very spirit of immemorial India; and, with but a brief interval, to find him seated with bent brows, giving counsel to statesmen responsible for the policies and programmes of political India, the very spirit of nascent India demanding her equal place among the world nations. But, perhaps, the most poignant and memorable of all is the last picture of him walking to his prayers at the sunset hour on 30th January 1948, translated in a tragic instant of martyrdom from mortality to immortality.'

“ She had started by calling him 'friend' and ended up thinking of him as 'father' ”



The Nightingale of India



Sarojini Naidu with Netaji and other political compatriots



On their way to the Round Table Conference: Sarojini Naidu with Gandhiji and others



With Gandhiji and Kasturba



Sarojini Naidu and Gandhiji surrounded by admirers in London



THE ICONIC DANDI MARCH

'I cannot teach you violence, as I do not myself believe in it. I can only teach you not to bow your heads before anyone even at the cost of your life'

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi had a long-standing commitment to peaceful and nonviolent civil disobedience as the basis for achieving Indian sovereignty and self-rule. Purna Swaraj, according to Indian nationalists, could only be achieved once people in India had freedom and unequivocal opportunities for growth. According to a declaration penned by the Congress, 'The British government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or complete sovereignty and self-rule.'

Thus, Gandhiji chose 6th April 1930 to mount a highly visible demonstration against the increasingly repressive salt tax by marching from his ashram at Sabarmati in Ahmedabad to the town of Dandi near Surat on the shores of the Arabian Sea. The British establishment, however, were initially not too disturbed by these plans of resistance. The Viceroy himself, Lord Irwin, did not take the threat seriously, having already taken stringent measures the previous year to imprison Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt who had hurled two bombs inside the Central Legislative Assembly to

protest against an unfavourable Bill. Rather nonchalantly, he wrote to London, 'At present the prospect of a salt campaign does not keep me awake at night.'

How wrong the viceroy of India was proved once Gandhiji set out on foot to cover a journey of 240 miles, accompanied by several dozen followers!

After each day's march, the group would stop in a different village along the route, where increasingly larger crowds gathered to hear Gandhiji protest against the unfairness of the tax on poor people. The 1882 Salt Act had given the British a monopoly on the collection and manufacture of salt, limiting its handling to government salt depots and levying an unjust salt tax. Any violation of the Act was a criminal offence. Even though salt was freely available to those living on the coast by the evaporation of sea water, Indians were forced to buy it from the colonial government. 'Next to air and water, salt is perhaps the greatest necessity of life,' Gandhiji would point out and ask the crowds to support him in his nonviolent quest for justice. The Congress Working Committee had given Gandhiji the responsibility for organizing the first act of civil disobedience with members of the party ready to take charge after Gandhiji's expected arrest. But this was a lull before the storm. In any event, Gandhiji had

prepared the worldwide media for the march by issuing regular statements from Sabarmati at his customary prayer meetings and through direct contact with the press. Expectations were heightened by his repeated declarations and his increasingly dramatic language as the hour approached: 'We are entering upon a life and death struggle, a holy war; we are performing an all-embracing sacrifice in which we wish to offer ourselves as oblation.'

“ ‘Next to air and water, salt is perhaps the greatest necessity of life,’ Gandhiji would point out and ask the crowds to support him in his nonviolent quest for justice ”

Correspondents from dozens of Indian, European and American newspapers, along with film companies, responded to the drama and began covering the event. As hundreds more would join the core group of followers making their way to the sea, Gandhiji wanted the strictest discipline and adherence to Satyagraha and Ahimsa.

Crowds greeted the marchers in each village, beating drums and cymbals. Gandhiji gave speeches, attacking the salt tax as inhuman and expounding that the salt Satyagraha was a 'poor man's struggle.' Each night the protestors slept in the open. The only thing that was asked of the villagers was food and water to wash with. Thousands of Satyagrahis and leaders like Sarojini Naidu and Gandhiji's wife, Kasturba, joined him. Every day, more and more people entered the march until the procession became at least two miles long. To keep up their spirits, the demonstrators sang bhajans while walking.



On with the struggle! Gandhiji marching to Dandi



A glimpse of the famous Dandi March



Crowds cheer Gandhiji on his way to make salt

At Surat, they were greeted by 30,000 people. When they reached the railhead at Dandi, more than 50,000 had gathered to greet the activists. Gandhiji gave interviews and wrote articles along the way. Foreign journalists and three Bombay cinema companies shooting newsreel footage turned him into a household name in Europe and America. At the end of 1930, *Time* magazine acknowledged him as the 'Man of the Year' and the *New York Times* wrote almost daily about the Salt March, including two front-page articles on 6th and 7th April. Near the end of the march, the Mahatma declared, 'I want world sympathy in this battle of right against might.'

When Gandhiji finally broke the law at 6.30 am on 6th April 1930, bending to pick up handfuls of salt along the shore and proclaiming, 'With this, I am shaking the foundations of the British Empire,' it sparked large-scale acts of civil disobedience by millions of Indians against the British Raj's salt laws. A pinch of salt made by Gandhiji himself sold for 1,600 rupees, equivalent to \$750 at the time. In reaction, the British government arrested over sixty thousand people by the end of the month. Several Satyagrahis, along with Gandhiji, were arrested and thrown into jail. But the Salt March to Dandi and the beating of hundreds of nonviolent protesters by British police received worldwide news coverage, demonstrating the effective use of civil disobedience as a technique for fighting social and political injustice.

United Press correspondent Webb Miller reported in utter horror, 'Not one of the marchers even raised an arm to fend off the blows. They went down like ten-pins. From where I stood I heard the sickening whacks of the clubs on unprotected skulls. The waiting crowd of watchers groaned

and sucked in their breaths in sympathetic pain at every blow. Those struck down fell sprawling, unconscious or writhing in pain with fractured skulls or broken shoulders. In two or three minutes the ground was quilted with bodies. Great patches of blood widened on their white clothes. The survivors without breaking ranks silently and doggedly marched on until struck down... Finally the police became enraged by the non-resistance... They commenced savagely kicking the seated men in the abdomen. The injured men writhed and squealed in agony, which seemed to inflame the fury of the police... The police then began dragging the sitting men by the arms or feet, sometimes for a hundred yards, and throwing them into ditches.'

The Satyagraha teachings of Gandhiji and the historic Salt March had a significant influence on American activists like Martin Luther King Jr, James Bevel and others during the Civil Rights Movement for African Americans and other minority groups in the 1960s.

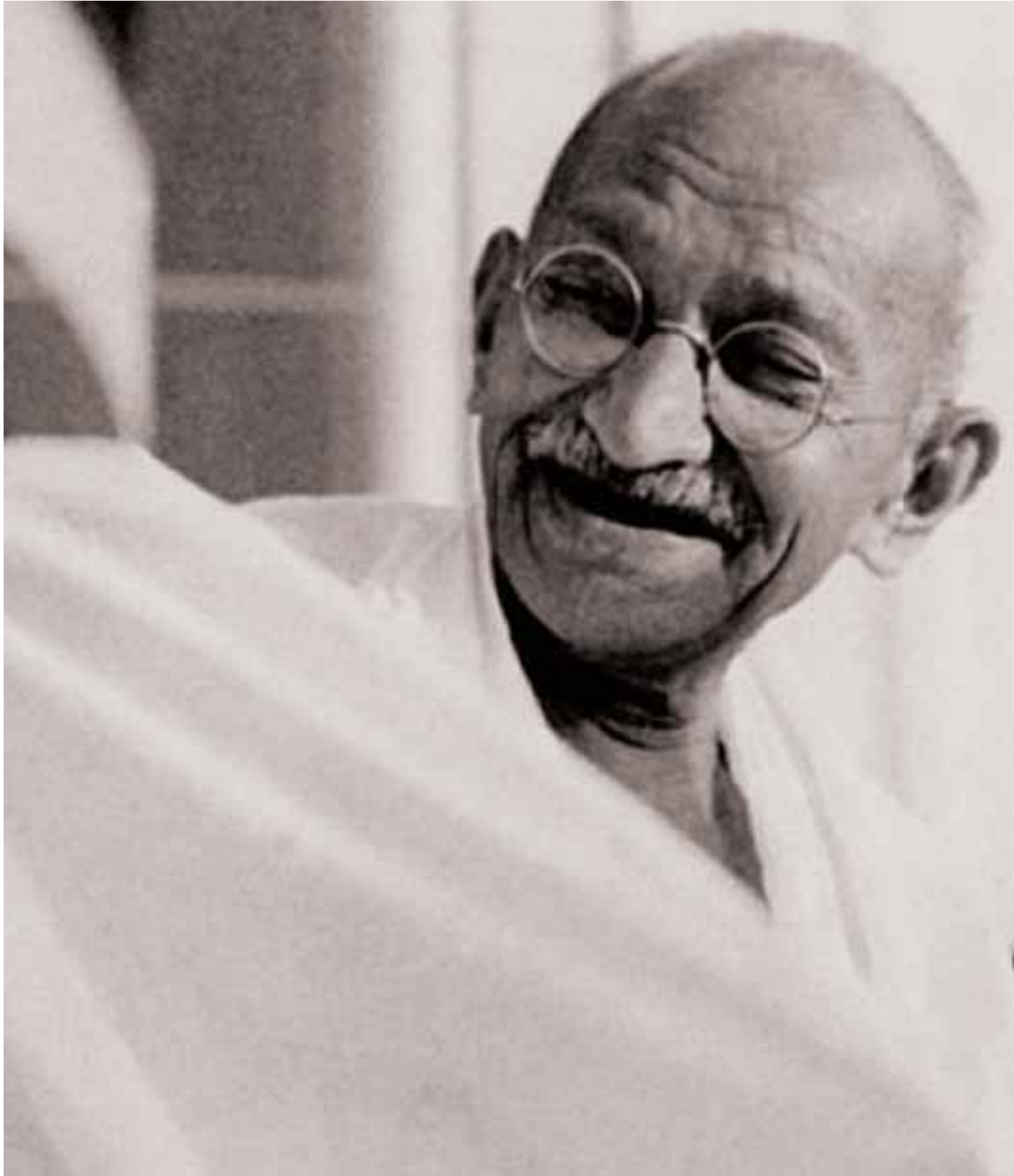
The Salt Satyagraha and civil disobedience continued until early 1931, when Gandhi was finally released from prison to hold talks with Irwin. It was the first time the two met on equal terms, resulting in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. These talks would lead to the Second Round Table Conference at the end of 1931.

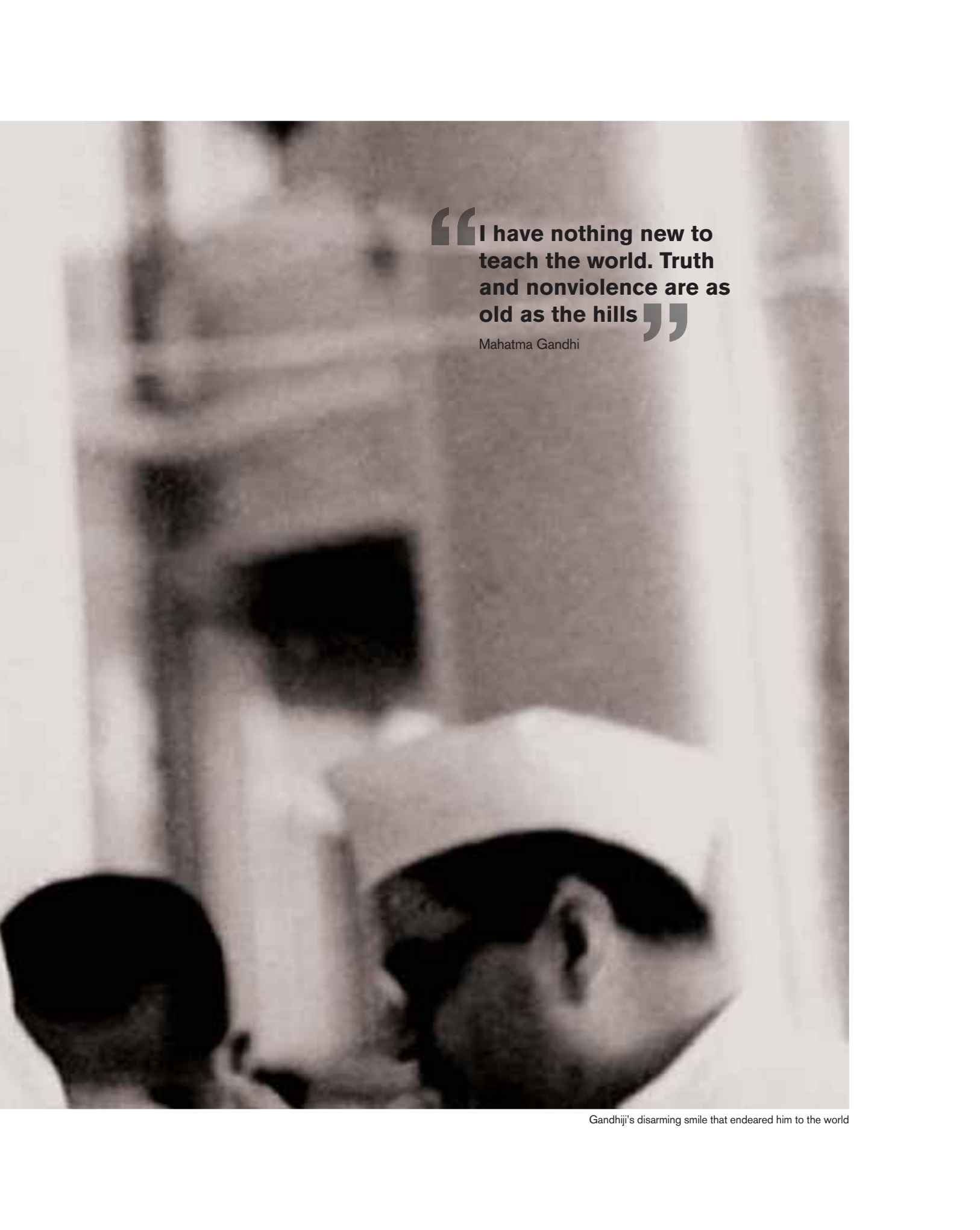
As Gandhiji would say, 'I have faith in the righteousness of our cause and the purity of our weapons. And where the means are clean, there God is undoubtedly present with His blessings... A Satyagrahi, whether free or incarcerated, is ever victorious. He is vanquished only when he forsakes truth and nonviolence, and turns a deaf ear to the inner voice.'

“Foreign journalists and three Bombay cinema companies shooting newsreel footage turned him into a household name in Europe and America”



'A Satyagrahi, whether free or incarcerated, is ever victorious.'





**“I have nothing new to
teach the world. Truth
and nonviolence are as
old as the hills”**

Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhiji's disarming smile that endeared him to the world

MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE: THROUGH THE LENS OF TIME

'Spinning is raised to the heights almost of a religion with Gandhi and his followers. The spinning wheel is sort of an icon to them. Spinning is a cure-all, and is spoken of in terms of the highest poetry'

Margaret Bourke-White



A woman of many firsts, Margaret Bourke-White was *Life* magazine's first female staff photographer; the first Western photographer permitted to enter the Soviet Union during the 1930s industrial revolution; the first accredited female photojournalist to cover the combat zones of the Second World War; and the first woman to break the ice with Mahatma Gandhi, interviewing and photographing him

just a few hours before he was assassinated on 30th January 1948.

Born in the Bronx, New York on 14th June 1904, she became interested in cameras due to her father Joseph White's career as an inventor, scientist and engineer. However, it was not until after his death that she actually used one for herself when her mother, Minnie Bourke, bought her a box camera as a

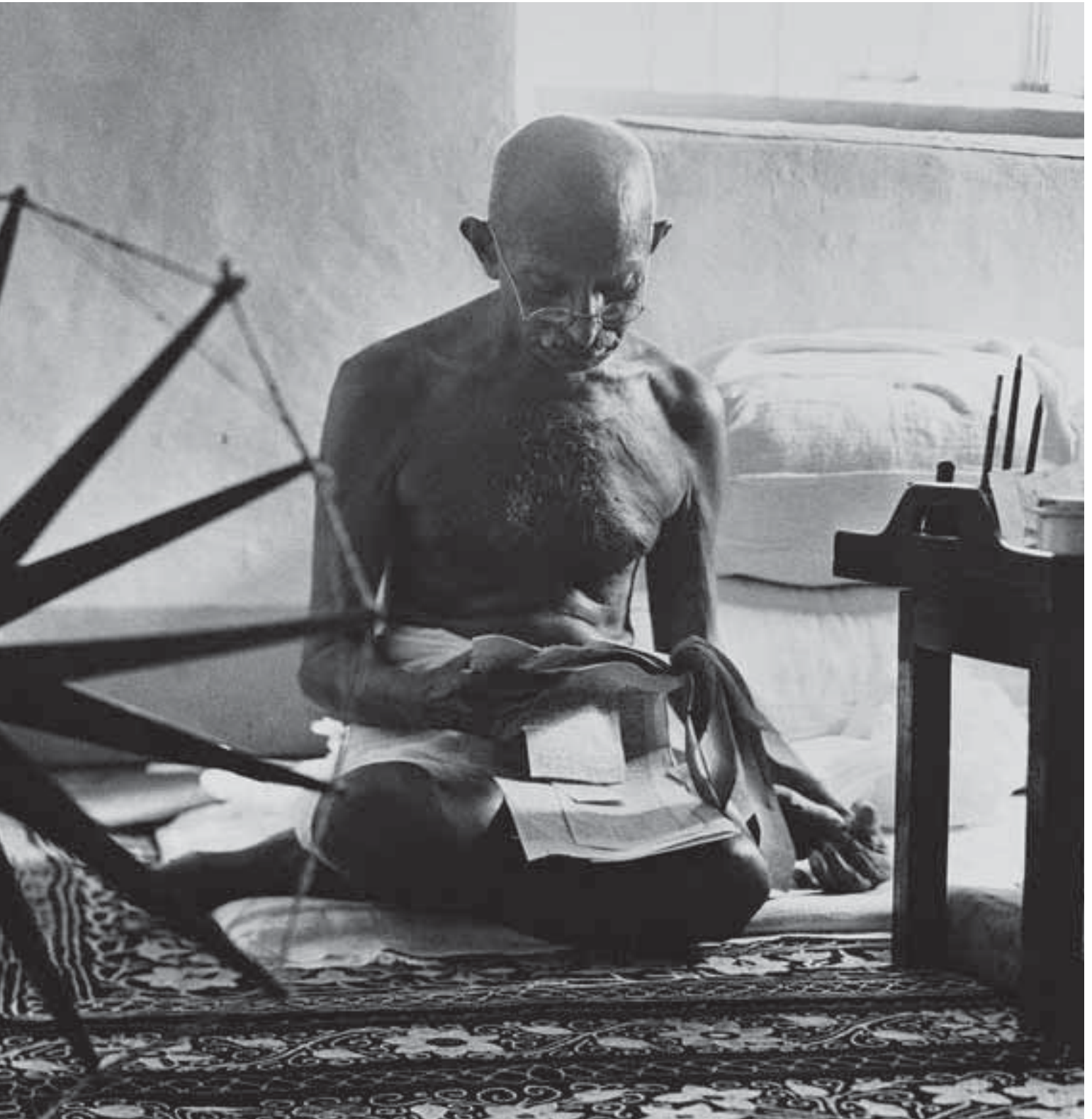
“ She was hired by Henry Luce as the first female photo journalist for Life magazine in 1936 ”

gift. Thus, Margaret's interest in photography began as a hobby in her youth and she honed her craft during a one-week course at The Clarence H White School of Modern Photography. After flitting between college degrees and failing to find one that stuck, she moved to Cleveland, Ohio, to start a



commercial photography studio. Bourke-White's professional skills soon led her to become a leading documentary photo journalist, called 'Maggie the Indestructible' by her colleagues. She was known for her bravery, her resourcefulness and her ability to be in the right place at the right time. She was hired by Henry Luce as the first female photojournalist for *Life* magazine in 1936. Her friend and colleague, Alfred Eisenstaedt, often

reiterated that one of her strengths was that no assignment and no picture was unimportant to her. Once she established herself in her profession, there was no looking back. Images from the Second World War, the liberation of Buchenwald and Joseph Stalin at the Kremlin firmly established Bourke-White's reputation not only as a photographer but also as one with indefatigable energy, initiative and, of course, the brashness



Margaret Bourke-White's celebrated photo of Gandhi in *Life* magazine

required to literally elbow one's way in and get the best shot. It was, therefore, hardly surprising that *Life* commissioned her to photograph the exchange of populations that followed the Partition of India.

While in India, Bourke-White lived many lives. She had the style and acumen to be able to entertain at the same table 'Hindu nationalists, Moslem separatists, Communists, British diplomats and local maharajas.' The much admired Indian photographer, Sunil Janah, became her assistant and Frank Moraes, the journalist, fell hopelessly in love with her. She took numerous portraits of the rich and famous – various members of royal families, some more awake than others; Subhas Chandra Bose smiling self-consciously; Bhimrao Ambedkar looking a tad suspicious; Jawaharlal Nehru posing with a cigarette in an elegant holder while Jinnah's deep-sunk eyes became, for her, 'pinpoints of excitement.'

Bourke-White also managed to capture one of her most famous images – Mahatma Gandhi with his spinning wheel.

When the British had held Gandhiji prisoner at Yerwada Jail in Pune from 1932 to 1933, the nationalist leader had made his own thread with a charkha or a portable spinning wheel. The practice evolved from a source of personal comfort during captivity into a touchstone of the campaign for independence, with Gandhiji encouraging his countrymen to make their own homespun cloth instead of buying British goods. By the time Margaret Bourke-White came to his compound to interview him, spinning had been so bound up with Gandhiji's identity that his personal secretary, Pyarelal Nayyar, told Bourke-White that she would have to learn the craft before photographing the leader.

Margaret had few qualms in doing whatever was needed to get her image. This was a rare photo-op and Bourke-White was not going to lose it. She quickly learnt how to use the spinning wheel but further demands followed – Gandhiji was not to be spoken to as it was his day of silence. And because he detested bright light, Bourke-White was only allowed to use three flashbulbs. When time finally came to shoot, Bourke-White's first flashbulb failed. And while the second one worked, she forgot to pull the slide, rendering it blank. She thought it was all over, but luckily, the third attempt was successful. In the end, she came away with an image that became Gandhiji's most enduring representation – the civil disobedience crusader with his most potent symbol of peace, his cherished spinning wheel. In a note to explain the image Margaret Bourke-White had written, 'Gandhi spins every day for one hour, beginning usually at 4 am. All members of his ashram must spin... when I remarked that both photography and spinning were handicrafts, they told me seriously that the greater of the two is spinning... It would be impossible to exaggerate the reverence in which Gandhi's own personal spinning wheel is held in the ashram.' A few days later, when Margaret Bourke-White wanted Gandhiji's autograph on one of her pictures, he smiled in mischief and

said, 'It would cost you five rupees.' She immediately paid the money and told him of her plan of writing a book on India for which she wanted to interview him. Gandhiji extracted an assurance that she would report his words accurately and not misquote him, as had often happened in the past. Bourke-White promised she would use his words exactly as he spoke them and proceeded to ask, 'You have always stated that you would live to be one hundred and twenty-five years old. What gives you that hope?' Gandhiji's answer startled her: 'I have lost that hope...because of the terrible happenings in the world. I do not want to live in the darkness and madness. I can't continue...' But suddenly his mood changed and despair gave way to faith as he remarked, 'But if my services are needed, if I am commanded, then I shall live to be one hundred and twenty-five years old.'

Throughout the interview Margaret Bourke-White had observed that Gandhiji had no ambition to re-shape the structure of society; he only wanted to re-shape the individual human heart. But for him the inner change of heart – either of the poor or of kings – would always have to be by conversion, not by coercion. To provoke him she probed, 'Do you really believe you could use nonviolence against someone like Hitler?' With quiet resignation Gandhiji replied, 'Not without defeats, and great pain. But are there no defeats in war? No pain? What you cannot do is accept injustice. From Hitler, or anyone. You must make the injustice visible, and be prepared to die like

a soldier to do so.' Having heard rumours, Margaret Bourke-White then questioned, 'So you really are going to Pakistan then? You are a stubborn man!' Gandhiji chuckled and said, 'I'm simply going to prove to Hindus here and Muslims there that the only devils in the world are those running around in our own hearts. And that is where all our battles ought to be fought.' Not to be silenced so quickly, Bourke-White inquired, 'So what kind of warrior have you been in that warfare?' Without any hesitation Gandhiji declared, 'Not a very good one. That's why I have so much tolerance for the other scoundrels of the world.'

Bourke-White discovered that all the inconsistencies she had attributed to Gandhiji slowly faded away, replaced by a great consistency in all his thoughts, beliefs and action. Bourke-White now asked Gandhiji a question that had been in her mind for some time: 'How would you meet the atom bomb? Would you meet it with nonviolence?' The incredulity in her tone, she remembered, was quite palpable. 'How shall I answer that?' Gandhiji debated before speaking very slowly and emphasizing each word, 'I would meet it by prayerful action... I will not go underground. I will not go into shelters. I will come out in the open and let the pilot see I have not the face of evil against him... The pilot will not see our faces from his great height, I know. But that longing in our hearts that he will not come to harm would reach up to him and his eyes would be opened...' Completely stumped, Margaret Bourke-Whitenow pointed out, 'You're the only man I know who makes his own clothes'. Gandhiji grinned and retorted,

“She came away with an image that became Gandhiji's most enduring representation”

'You're a temptress.' 'Just an admirer!' Margaret Bourke-White laughed. To which, Gandhiji had an impish retort, 'Nothing is more dangerous, especially for an old man!'

The interview was over. The time was up and Bourke-White rose to leave. How to say goodbye to the Mahatma may have been a question that crossed her mind. A few days earlier she had met Ram Krishna Dalmia, the leading industrialist. When the meeting ended, Bourke-White had extended her hand. But Dalmia had refused to hold it, saying, 'Only the husband should touch a woman's hand.' This memory may have been fresh in her mind as she decided to say goodbye to Gandhiji from a distance. Years later Bourke-White recalled, 'I folded my hands together... But Gandhi held out his hand to me and shook hands cordially in a Western fashion. We said goodbye and I started off. Then something made me turn back. Perhaps it was because his manner had been so friendly. I stopped, looked over my shoulder and said, "Goodbye and good luck."'

Only a few hours later, this man who believed that even the atom bomb should be met with nonviolence, was brutally killed.

Gandhiji was hurrying to his daily evening prayer meeting at Birla House in New Delhi. Leaning on Mridula Gandhi (Manuben) and Abha Gandhi, his grand nieces, who were called his 'walking sticks,' they were stopped by a stout young man dressed in khaki. Manuben thought that he wanted to touch Gandhiji's feet. She said, 'Bapu is already ten minutes late, why do you embarrass him?' However, Nathuram Godse, a member of the Hindu Mahasabha, pushed her aside and fired three shots at pointblank range from a 9mm Beretta that ripped through the Mahatma's chest.

And from those who were at his side in that dark moment, we know that as he fell, his hands were raised in prayer and the word 'Ram' – meaning 'God' – was on his lips.



Margaret Bourke-White learning to spin the charkha



Photographers Sunil Janah (left) and Ram Rahman (right) with Margaret Bourke-White



Ace photographer Margaret Bourke-White



Gandhiji on the way to a prayer meeting captured by Margaret Bourke-White

What The World Has To Say About Mahatma Gandhi

From Martin Luther King Jr to Steve Jobs, Mahatma Gandhi has left an indelible impression on the lives of many world leaders. As the nation marks the 71st death anniversary of the Mahatma, we, at Potpurri, look at what some important intellectuals and leaders from around the world have to say about Gandhiji:

Barack Obama, former President of the USA, said: 'It was Gandhi's understanding of India's stories and traditions, his attention to the marginalized voices in Africa that helped him gather a movement that drove out the world's most successful empire.'

Martin Luther King Jr, civil rights activist, reiterated: 'From my background I gained my regulating Christian ideals. From Gandhi, I learned my operational technique.'

Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa, remarked, 'Gandhi's magnificent example of personal sacrifice and dedication in the face of oppression was one of his many legacies to our country and to the world. He showed us that it was necessary to brave imprisonment if truth and justice were to triumph over evil. The values of tolerance, mutual respect and unity for which he stood and acted had a profound influence on our liberation movement, and on my own thinking. They inspire us today in our efforts of reconciliation and nation-building.'

One of our greatest scientists, **Albert Einstein**, did not hesitate in stating: 'Generations to come, it may well be, will scarce believe that such a man as this one ever in flesh and blood walked upon this Earth.'

Although Nobel Laureate **Rabindranath Tagore** and Gandhiji had some sharp differences, the former was the first notable contemporary to refer to the latter as Mahatma. 'Mahatma Gandhi came and stood at the door of India's destitute millions... who else has so unreservedly accepted the vast masses of the Indian people as his flesh and blood? Truth awakened Truth,' he said.

Noted American writer and novelist, **Pearl S Buck**, who was also a Nobel Laureate, had this to say after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi: 'He was right; he knew he was right; we all knew he was right. The man who killed him knew he was right. However long the follies of the violent continue, they but prove that Gandhi was right. "Resist to the very end," he said, "but without violence." Of violence the world is sick. Oh India, dare to be worthy of your Gandhi.'

American historian, **Will Durant**, best known for writing *The Story of Civilization*, spoke some of the most inspirational words ever about the Mahatma: 'Not since Buddha has India so revered any man. Not since St Francis of Assisi has any life known to history been so marked by gentleness, disinterestedness,

simplicity of soul and forgiveness of enemies. We have the astonishing phenomenon of a revolution led by a saint.'

Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple, expressed: 'Mohandas Gandhi is my choice for the 'Person of the Century' because he showed us the way out of the destructive side of our human nature. Gandhi demonstrated that we can force change and justice through moral acts of aggression instead of physical acts of aggression. Never has our species needed this wisdom more.'

British musician and member of the revolutionary band, The Beatles, **John Lennon** referred to Gandhi as an influence on



Gandhi with his brother Laxmidas in India



Mahatma Gandhi (2nd from right) in his early days at Tolstoy Farm



Gandhi sitting extreme right with others at Tolstoy Farm



Young Gandhi around 1908

his music. John and his wife Yoko Ono protested for nonviolent interactions in the world, and for the end of the Vietnam War.

Film director and producer **Lord Richard Attenborough**, whose film *Gandhi* swept the Oscars in 1983, speaking of his inspiration, said: 'When asked what attribute he most admired in human nature, Mahatma Gandhi had replied, simply and immediately, "Courage". "Nonviolence," he said, "is not to be used ever as the shield of the coward. It is the weapon of the brave."'

Famous Jewish-American journalist **Louis Fischer** who penned *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, that became the inspiration for Attenborough's award-winning film, said on Gandhi's assassination: 'Just an old man in a loin cloth in distant India. Yet when he died, humanity wept.'

Gandhiji had a great effect on Mexican-American labour movement and civil rights leader, **Cesar Chavez**, and his advocacy for Latino farm workers. Chavez modelled many of his tactics, like boycotts and hunger strikes, on Gandhiji's methods. 'Not only did he talk about nonviolence, he showed how nonviolence works for justice and liberation,' said Chavez.

And finally, no one could say it better than Nobel-prize-winning Irish playwright, maverick and passionate socialist, **George Bernard Shaw**: 'Impressions of Gandhi? You might well ask for someone's impression of the Himalayas.'



Gandhiji on one of his endless train journeys



Gandhiji had a special relationship with children



Gandhiji with Dicky and Edwina Mountbatten



Gandhiji in England with his women admirers

Mahatma Gandhi's Life



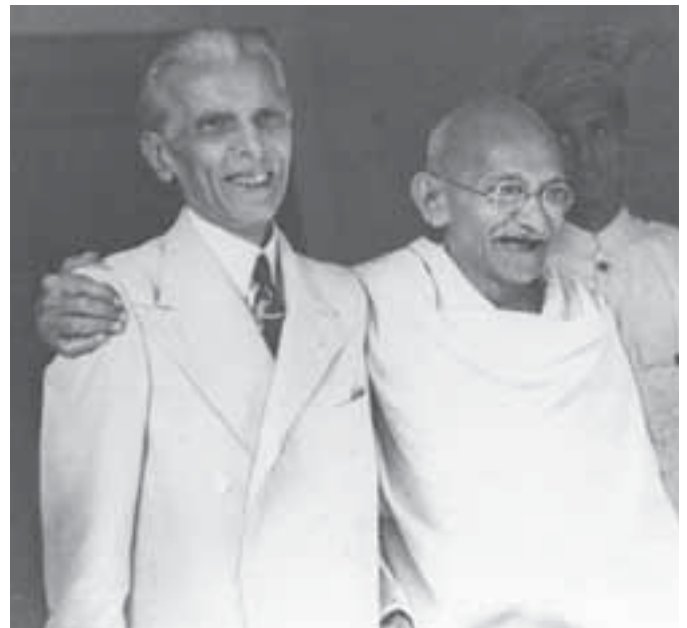
A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY

- 1869: Born 2nd October in Porbandar, Gujarat, on the Arabian Sea.
- 1876: Family moves to Rajkot, where he attends school.
- 1883: Marries Kastur Gokuldas Kapadia at age thirteen, after betrothal of seven years.
- 1885: Death of father, Karamchand Gandhi.
- 1888: Birth of eldest son, Harilal; sails to England later that year to study law at Inner Temple.
- 1891: Completes studies and sails for Bombay.
- 1892: Birth of second son, Manilal; admitted that year to the Bombay Bar.
- 1893: Sails to South Africa and arrives in Durban.
- 1894: Becomes secretary of the Natal Indian Congress; opens law office in Durban.
- 1896: Returns to India, only to go back with family to Durban.

- 1897: Birth of third son, Ramdas.
- 1899: Leads Indian Ambulance Corps in Anglo-Boer War.
- 1900: Birth of fourth son, Devdas.
- 1901: Returns with family to India intending to settle there; attends Indian National Congress meeting in Calcutta.
- 1902: Called back to South Africa to lead fight against discriminatory legislation; brings family.
- 1903: Opens law office in Johannesburg and launches *Indian Opinion*, a weekly.
- 1904: Establishes a rural commune called the Phoenix Settlement, north of Durban.
- 1907: Starts first passive resistance campaign; arrested in December, tried and ordered to leave Transvaal.
- 1908: Replaces the term 'passive resistance' with 'Satyagraha'; sentenced to two months' imprisonment; assaulted by Pathans for reversing stand on registration boycott; encourages burning of registration certificates; arrested at Volksrust and sentenced to two months' hard labour.
- 1909: Campaign continues for failing to produce registration document; Gandhi lobbies in London; writes *Hind Swaraj* on voyage back to South Africa.
- 1910: Corresponds with Tolstoy; establishes Tolstoy Farm, another commune, with Hermann Kallenbach, a Jewish architect originally from East Prussia.
- 1911: Suspends campaign against discriminatory legislation on the basis of a pledge by General Smuts.
- 1915: Arrives in Bombay on 14th January; establishes an ashram at Ahmedabad with support from industrialist Ambalal Sarabhai.
- 1916: Tours India, travelling third-class with his wife Kasturba and C F Andrews, a British clergyman.
- 1917: Campaigns on behalf of indigo farmers at Champaran, Bihar.
- 1918: Leads a campaign on behalf of Ahmedabad mill workers; further Satyagraha against taxes on farmers in Gujarat's Kheda district; seeks unsuccessfully to recruit Indians to join army for service in Europe.
- 1919: First national Satyagraha, in the form of a strike, against repressive legislation; arrested for defying order on entering Punjab four days before massacre at Jallianwalla Bagh led by acting Brigadier-General, Reginald Dyer, and his British troops at Amritsar; suspends campaign after subsequent outbreaks of violence.
- 1920: Indian National Congress adopts his programme of 'noncooperation'; declares its aim to be achievement of Swaraj by nonviolent means; emerges as Congress leader as well as leader of the Khilafat, a movement by Muslims seeking restoration of Ottoman Caliph.



Mohandas as a child



Gandhiji with Mohd Ali Jinnah



Gandhiji being released from jail

- 1922: Suspends campaign over violence at Chauri Chaura; goes on a five-day fast of penance; charged with sedition and sentenced to six years in prison.
- 1924: Released from prison after appendicitis attack, having served two years; goes on a twenty-one day fast to promote Hindu-Muslim unity.
- 1926: Autobiography, *The Story Of My Experiments With Truth*, is serialized in *Young Indian* and *Navajivan*, his English and Gujarati weeklies; stays at the ashram; ostensibly withdraws from politics.
- 1928: Back in politics, supports call for declaration of independence if self-government is not granted within a year.
- 1929: Drafts the Congress resolution for 'complete independence.'
- 1930: Launches a nationwide campaign with the famous Salt March from Ahmedabad to Dandi on the Arabian Sea; jailed without trial as strikes spread nationwide.
- 1931: Released after eight months; negotiates with viceroy, Lord Irwin; sails for England, his final trip out of India, to attend the Round Table Conference to chart India's future constitution; no accord reached on special voting rights for untouchables and Muslims; calls on Mussolini in Rome.
- 1932: Arrested shortly after return to Bombay in response to his call for a renewed Satyagraha campaign; 'fast unto death' in Yeravda prison forces British and B R Ambedkar to relent on plans for separate electorates for untouchable representatives; simultaneously calls for a swift end to discriminatory practices.
- 1933: Still at Yerwada, Gandhi fasts again for twenty-one days over the harsh treatment of untouchables; released and rearrested; released again after a second fast.
- 1934: Barnstorms across India against untouchability, calling on caste Hindus to open all temples; target of a bomb, this is the first attempt on Gandhi's life; resigns from Congress with the express aim of devoting himself to rural development, especially on behalf of untouchables whom he seeks to rename as Harijans or Children of God.
- 1936: Settles at Sevagram near Wardha in Maharashtra, an impoverished area in the country.
- 1942: Launches the 'Quit India' movement, demanding immediate self-rule in return for support of war effort; arrested and imprisoned in Aga Khan Palace in Poona.
- 1944: Wife, Kasturba, dies in detention at the Aga Khan Palace; suffering from high blood pressure, Gandhi is released ten weeks later on health grounds; begins talks with Mohammed Ali Jinnah, leader of the Muslim League; talks break down after eighteen days.
- 1946: Participates in constitutional talks; attempt made to

derail train carrying Gandhi to Poona; responding to the eruption of mutual slaughter by Hindus and Muslims in Bengal, he rushes to Muslim majority area, Noakhali, to plead for harmony; stays there for four months, eventually trekking barefoot from village to village for eight weeks.

- 1947: Visits riot-torn areas of Bihar where thousands of Muslims have been killed; speaks against partition but does not oppose Congress resolution in its favour; shuns independence celebrations to fast in Calcutta for end to violence.

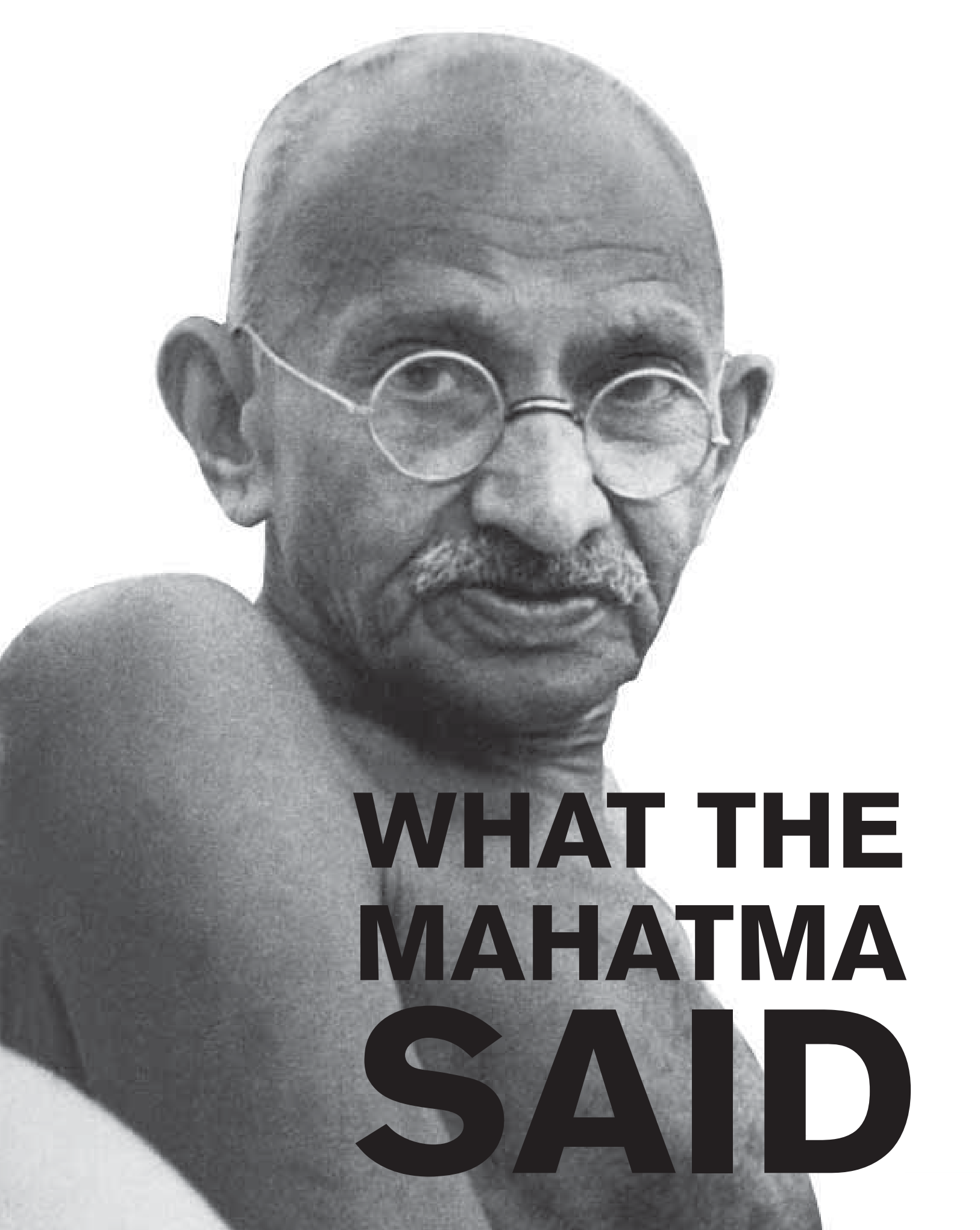
- 1948: Fasts in New Delhi against expulsion and killing of Muslims; violence ebbs, but two days after Gandhi ends fast, a bomb is thrown in the garden of Birla House where he is staying. Ten days later, on 30th January, he is shot to death by a Hindu extremist, Nathuram Godse, while walking briskly to the evening prayer meeting.



The Mahatma with young Indira Gandhi



Greeting his followers: Gandhiji with other workers in his Sevagram Ashram



**WHAT THE
MAHATMA
SAID**

“ What is true of individuals is true of nations. One cannot forgive too much. The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong ”

“ To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man’s injustice to woman ”

“ A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history ”

“ It is unwise to be too sure of one’s own wisdom. It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest might err ”

“ Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will ”

“ Be the change that you wish to see in the world ”

“ If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change ”

“ Happiness comes when you follow your own path. When you refuse to settle for others expectation of what you should and shouldn’t be doing, and instead live the life you know is right for you ”

“ Living as if you were going to die tomorrow doesn’t mean you should be reckless; it means to live fully today, because you are not guaranteed tomorrow ”

“ If you think weakness, fear, failure – you will manifest it in your life. Think great, read great books, talk to strong-minded people and you will succeed ”

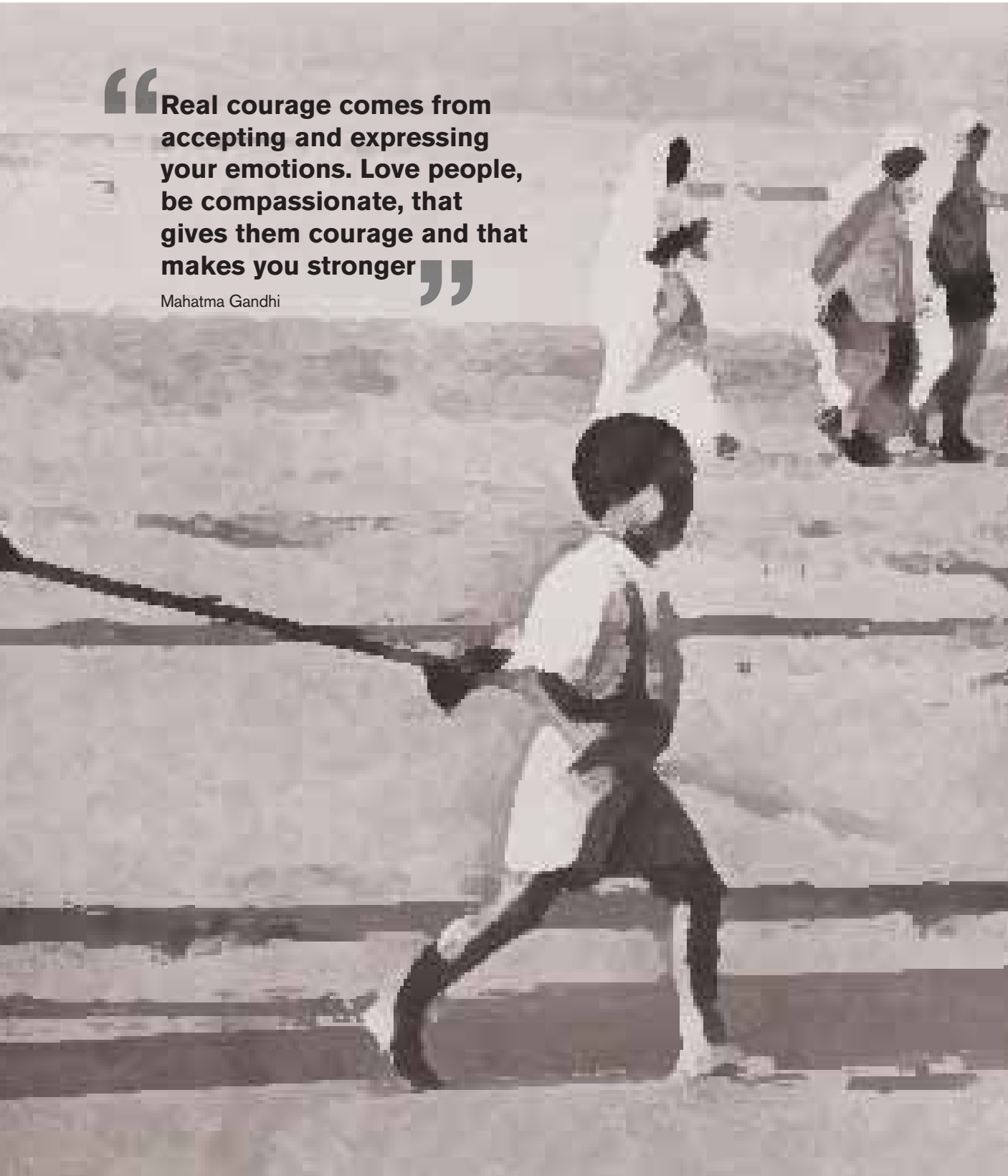
“ We often try and blame our circumstances for holding us back. But we always have the freedom to make a choice ”

“ We may stumble and fall but shall rise again; it should be enough if we did not run away from the battle ”



“Real courage comes from accepting and expressing your emotions. Love people, be compassionate, that gives them courage and that makes you stronger”

Mahatma Gandhi



'The Child is father of the Man'

Housing and Township

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The Residency - City Centre Patna

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patnaresidency.com | +91 33 4040 6060

RERA Registration No: BRERAP05734-1/994/R-766/2019 | www.rera.bihar.gov.in

Completed Projects

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Ulhas, Burdwan

A mini township spread over 96 acres

Uttorayon, Siliguri

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A residential project spread over 5 acres with 402 units

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Ujaas, Lake Town

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Ganga Kutir - Raichak on Ganges

A luxury resort with 26 guest rooms which includes 16 guest rooms by the river and 10 duplex Pool Villas
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Swissotel Kolkata Neotia Vista

Deluxe 5-star hotel located in New Town
www.swissotel.com | +91 33 6626 6666

Altair

A boutique hotel comprising 23 well-appointed rooms and a sky lounge in Sector V, Salt Lake
altairkolkata.com | +033 7101 7101

Raajkutir

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**“ I regard myself as
a soldier, though
a soldier of peace ”**
Mahatma Gandhi

AmbujaNeotia

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