

Gandhi Study Guide

Gandhi by Louis Fischer

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Plot Summary

GANDHI - HIS LIFE AND MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD by Louis Fischer is a biography of the life of Mahatma Gandhi, known throughout the world as the Father of India. The narrative chronicles his story from his birth as the fourth and last son of his father, a government official, and his beloved mother who was illiterate but a devout follower of Hinduism. His mother, who he referred to as a saint, died when he was away in London at law school. He was not notified of her passing since the family knew he would be distraught.

Gandhi's life took a huge turn from which it never returned when he is offered a position as a lawyer in South Africa. He had not been successful as a lawyer in Bombay because he was too shy to speak up in court. After experiencing discrimination first-hand, he found his voice. He spoke before a large gathering of Indians and Moslems working as indentured laborers in South Africa. His intent was to lift these people up and encourage them to stand up against discrimination. Gandhi's view was that discrimination could be overcome by a two-fold approach: exalting the individual who is being discriminated against while appealing to the fairness of the discriminator. Gandhi worked tirelessly to forge a better life for his countrymen who lived and worked in South Africa. He stayed in South Africa over twenty years and realized many successes in his goal to help his people.

When Gandhi returned to his native India, he was met by a variety of challenges but did not hesitate to take them on. During these difficult times, he promoted civil disobedience marches for which he was assaulted and even jailed. He believed in only non-violent protest, but since he was a man of action—a karma yogi—he had no reluctance in voicing his feelings and fasting—coming close to death several times—to bring attention to his cause. Through hard work, unrelenting self-sacrifice, years of frustrating negotiations, and always a devout love of God, Gandhi was finally able to orchestrate an agreement between the British, Moslems and Hindus for an independent India. The Moslems fought and won a separate Pakistani state which frightened Gandhi who had always advocated for a united India.

As a young man born in a Hindu family, he was raised to believe and adhere to the Indian caste system. As he grew older and more spiritual, he saw the debilitating effect that such practice had on not only the "untouchables" but on the soul of India itself. He made the unfair treatment of the untouchables one of his main causes in his later years. He embarked on his most famous fast known as the Epic Fast for the cause of the untouchables. Leading by example, he invited untouchables to live with him and even adopted an untouchable girl.

Throughout his life with all the risks and trials he endured, his strength was derived from the God he loved and worshiped daily. His belief that by giving up worldly possessions, attaining desirelessness, he would become pure and one with God. He felt that praying in jail made the jail a temple. He was content and happy to have nothing in life. He would visit the poor and live with them. He did not want to be a holy man, which did not



stop people from worshiping him. Although he secured freedom for India, he wanted no role in the new government. The millions who worshiped him viewed him as superior to a government official—he was the Father of India. He was assassinated in January 1946. The world wept—from the poor to leaders from all over the world. The little brown man in the loin cloth who wanted nothing for himself showed the world what selfless love was. He did not fear death knowing that he would be with God forever.



Part 1: Chapters 1 through 3

Part 1: Chapters 1 through 3 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 1: The World Weeps

Near the holy waters of Jumna, outside New Delhi, a million people wait in the oppressive heat for the funeral procession of the Mahatma, Mohandas K. Gandhi. Gandhi had been assassinated the day before, January 30, 1948. He was India's leader and its teacher. In the evening, his pyre is set afire by his son, Ramdas to the wailing of weeping of the throngs gathered to honor him. When he died, Gandhi was what he had always been: a private citizen with no wealth, property, title or noteworthy professional achievement. Despite this, all the major leaders of the world pay homage to him. Gandhi had made "humility and truth more powerful than empires." Those who adore him feel that his death leaves the conscience of mankind without a spokesman.

Chapter 2: Blundering Boy

Gandhi is born in Porbandar on October 2, 1869, a small seaside home on the Kathiawar Peninsula in western Indian. As a young boy, Gandhi shows no proclivity towards school work and no special talent. Mohandas is shy and obedient on the surface. However, even as a child he has a rebellious, independent streak that he hides from his elders as much as possible. In his youth, Mohandas privately rejects his family's Hindu religion although he returned to it later in life. His independent side shows up again when he secretly eats meat to gain size. The eating of meat is taboo in the Hindu religion. Through parental arrangement, Mohandas marries his life-long wife Kasturbai. They are both only thirteen years of age. Gandhi considers his young marriage wrong and refers to the "cruel custom of child marriage." Some years later, laws are changed to disallow such young marriages. In his youth, Mohandas privately rejected his family's Hindu religion, although he returned to it later in life. His independent side shows up again when he secretly eats meat to gain size. The eating of meat is taboo in the Hindu religion. When it is time to decide upon a career, Gandhi decides to become a lawyer. He travels to London, England, where he will enroll in a three-year course of study in law.

Chapter 3: Gandhi in London

Gandhi desperately tries to fit in in his new life in London, but it is not an easy transition. He tries to learn to speak better English but is not very successful. During his time in England, his thirst for religious knowledge grows. Although he was a Hindu, he enjoyed learning about other religions. He loves the lessons and stories of the Christian Bible; however, where he finds his most comfort is reading the Bhagavad Gita, the sacred book of the Hindus.



Krishna, the hero of the Gita, describes the Yogi as one whose mind is untroubled in sorrows and does not long for joys and is free of passion, fear and anger. There are two types of yogis—one who meditates and one who acts. Gandhi is a karma yogi, one who acts but has no longing or ego. Gandhi describes it in one word: Desirelessness. This philosophy is also known as Hindu renunciation. Some had considered this mind-set responsible for keeping its adherents poor and down-trodden. Gandhi disagrees. He feels renunciation creates inner peace and the necessary characteristics to become united with God after death, never having to be reincarnated again. As soon as Gandhi passes the English bar, his longing for India sends him home the very next day.



Part 1, Chapters 4 through 6

Part 1, Chapters 4 through 6 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 4: Two Incidents Shape the Future

When Gandhi returns to India, he learns that his beloved mother died while he was away. His family decided not to send word to him in England as they knew he would be very upset. He does not do well as a lawyer in Rajkot or Bombay. One problem, Gandhi is still so shy it is hard for him to speak in open court.

One incident that changes Gandhi forever deals with his older brother, Laxmidas. The brother is holding an important government position but he fears a run-in with a British official will hamper further advancement. He calls on Gandhi, who knows this official casually, to intercede for him. When Gandhi visits the official, he is treated rudely and thrown out of the building. Gandhi decides he never wants to be part of the pettiness and snobbery of the government.

Gandhi is offered a position as a lawyer in South Africa which he accepts. After arriving in Africa, Gandhi experiences the second incident that changes the direction of his life. While riding on a train from Maritzburg, South Africa, an English man protests Gandhi's presence in first-class. He is considered "colored" and should not be allowed to ride in first class. Although he had a ticket for his seat, he and his luggage are thrown off the train when he refuses to move. This incident led to his resolve to fight color prejudice. He could never be passive when confronted with injustice. He is a karma yogi.

Chapter 5: Color Prejudice

A short time after the incident on the train, Gandhi gives his first major speech at a meeting of the Indians of Pretoria. The subject was discrimination against the Indians and other colored people by the white people. He loses his shyness and inability to speak in public. His leadership qualities emerge during the meeting. His philosophy is that for Indians to be treated fairly, they need to improve themselves and discard any bad habits. Believing in exalting the individual, Gandhi feels that becoming a better person leads to a better life. Lifting fellow man up or kicking him down is the difference between a Mahatma and a dictator. Persecution stems from lack of self-worth by the persecuted. He also believes in improving the oppressors as well as the oppressed. Purifying the behavior of both will contribute to man's moral progress.

Indians became the political football in the early 1900's when the Prime Minister promises to drive the "coolies" out of the country. "Coolie" is a derogatory term applied to Indians. The future of the 100,000 Indians in South Africa was in jeopardy. Gandhi decides to save them.

Chapter 6: Courage Under Attack



Gandhi knows that prejudice cannot be eradicated by legislation. Rather, only work and education can remedy the matter. Gandhi knows that since desegregation cannot be achieved quickly, there is much work ahead of him. But if Indians continue to accept believing they are inferior, they will deteriorate morally. The whites who inflict such discrimination will likewise deteriorate.

Gandhi returns to India to bring his wife and two sons back with him to South Africa. When their steamer and another from India arrives in South Africa, both filled with new Indian immigrants, they are at first not allowed to disembark. The people feel Gandhi is encouraging more Indian immigration. Finally when the passengers are allowed on land, Gandhi is attacked and stoned. Some wanted to hang him. When the authorities decide to prosecute his attackers, he refuses to cooperate saying it is the fault of the government not the individuals.



Part 1, Chapters 7 through 9

Part 1, Chapters 7 through 9 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 7: The Transformation

After reading John Ruskins' *UNTO THIS LAST*, Gandhi's life is forever changed. He decides to live the simple life of a farmer. Gandhi buys a large farm in Phoenix, Natal, where learning to live the austere life of self-control occupies him. Like his mother, he takes to fasting frequently. Gandhi's Hindu renunciation is the unselfishness of love. He ultimately learns to lose himself in the oneness of others.

At thirty-seven years of age, Gandhi decides to give up sex as a selfless act. Celibacy, or Bramacharya, has an important role in Hindu lore and life. Bramacharya includes restraint in sex, anger, diet and emotions. This decision by Gandhi is part of his transformation to a better, desireless individual. Clearing his mind and soul of personal needs and desires allows him to work for the common welfare. Once others believe the genuineness of Gandhi's renunciation, he will be deluged with their devotion.

Chapter 8: Soul Force

To achieve success in South Africa, Gandhi's most effective tool is a unique creation of his own. He names it satyagraha which translates to soul force. Satya means truth and graha is defined as firmness or force. Satyagraha is "the vindication of truth not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one's self." Again, Gandhi's selfless philosophy is apparent. Satyagraha abandons the eye for an eye attitude in favor of returning good for evil until the evil doer is exhausted.

Satyagraha receives its first test in 1906, when the government announces that all Indians must register. Gandhi tells his people to resist and pledge defiance. After protests grow, the government agrees to make the registration voluntary. Many Indians do not trust that the government will keep its word, but Gandhi insists they should be trusted. When Gandhi tries to register, he is attacked and injured. After recovering, he registers and is joined by most of his followers. Only then did they learn that the compulsory aspect of the registration law had not been removed as promised.

The Indians burn the registrations they had filled out. Gandhi encourages the Indians to walk freely around Transvaal, the city forbidden to unregistered Indians. Gandhi and one of his sons and many other Indians are arrested for being non-registered coloreds.

Chapter 9: Happy Victory

The Transvaal Indians are given three-month sentences, some serve multiple terms. In 1909, Gandhi gets word to England about the treatment of the Indians in South Africa. He wins the support of many of the liberals of the country. The government again promises to lift an unfair tax for Indians who want to stay in South Africa after their



indentured term has expired. But once again the government reneges on their promise. Adding insult to injury, the government announces that the only marriages that are deemed legal are those of Christians. Gandhi encourages a large group of mine workers to strike and come to the farm. Suddenly there are 5,000 people sleeping under the stars at the farm. Gandhi cannot feed all these people, so he decides to embark on a protest march to the city of Transvaal where they would be arrested, jailed and fed. On the way to Transaal, Gandhi himself is arrested several times and released.

Ultimately through talks with government representatives, Gandhi enters into an agreement that removes the unfair tax on former Indian indentured laborers, validates marriages of all religions and allows free movement into the Cape Colony. Indentured labor immigration would end in 1920. Free Indians can continue to live in South Africa and will be allowed to bring their families into the country.

Although the Indians will still be refrained from freely entering many areas of South Africa and have to live under other unfair conditions, Gandhi has made much progress in bringing equality to the Indians of South Africa.



Part 2: Chapters 10 and 11

Part 2: Chapters 10 and 11 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 10: Ears and Mouth Open

Gandhi returns to India in 1915 to the shouts of Mahatmajji; the "ji" suffix indicates respect and affection. A short while later, Gandhi receives the title of Mahatma from Rabindranath Tagore, Nobel Prize winner in Literature in 1913. Gandhi and Tagore admire and respect each other and remain close friends, although there are many differences between the two men. They both are wounded from the state of their beloved India. They agree that many of India's problems are self-inflicted.

Gandhi expresses his rather unconventional thoughts on Indian independence in his first book, "Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule" written in 1909 and reissued unchanged in 1921. In this book, Gandhi's philosophy that India allows its oppressors to be successful emerges. Gandhi urges that Indian freedom is dependent upon the nation treating the British in a just manner. The Indians had expected a charismatic return of a new leader based on his work in Africa; instead, they see a scrawny man in loin cloth who speaks in a soft, weak voice. Many are at first disappointed but that soon changes. Gandhi was not known throughout all of India, but word began to spread that a great man was among the people.

Gandhi spent the next 16 years in an ashram. The ashram is a religious retreat for a monk. Gandhi's austere Satyagraha Ashram was located at Sabarmati where Gandhi lives in a cell-like room free of possessions where he prays and meditates. From these meager surroundings, Gandhi restores India's confidence through his magical personality and consistent relation to the truth.

Chapter 11: Mahatma Gandhi and the British

Although later touting full independence, Gandhi goes through a stage when he sees India on a par with Canada or Australia. A sharecropper asks Gandhi to help the people in his region of Nepal. Gandhi eventually travels there and finds that the million peasant Indians there are suffering under unfair treatment by the British. Gandhi winds up staying a year and eventually wins better conditions for the people. Gandhi's theory that Indians would gain equality by their own inner discipline and dignity receives strength from the adoption in December 1916 of the Lucknow Pact between the Hindu Indian National Congress and the Moslem League. England is beginning to realize the importance to India of their independence. The bravery of the many Indians who fought for the British in WWI cannot be ignored.

Prior to this period, at the beginning of the 20th century, a better-educated middle class has begun to emerge. There are internal conflicts within Britain as to India's future and how to deal with emerging hostilities toward the British. By 1920, however, most British

officials look at Indians as an inferior people. When earlier promises of dominion status are shelved, Gandhi takes his first overt action against British imperialism.



Part 2: Chapters 12 and 13

Part 2: Chapters 12 and 13 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 12: Blood

After WWI ends, conditions for the Indians do not improve. In fact the Rowlatt Acts of 1919, continue the unfair conditions for the Indians. Gandhi encourages the Indians to observe a hartal—a boycott of shopping, working and banking leading to a suspension of all economic activity. At the same time, Gandhi plans a campaign against the Rowlatt Act's limitations of civil liberties. The boycott results in violence and Gandhi calls off his campaign. He takes blame for miscalculating the dangers of the hartal. The most tragic incident occurred in Amritsar. British officials order their soldiers to fire on a massive crowd that had gathered. There are 379 people killed and many more injured.

Chapter 13: The Road to Jail

Gandhi calls for non-violent nonco-operation—the boycotting of everything British. Indian lawyers quit the British courts; students leave school; taxes are not paid. For seven months, Gandhi tours the countryside to bolster his campaign.

Gandhi tells the masses not to wear western clothing. He asks the people to strip themselves of these clothes and sets them afire. Self-government is still not realized and many thousands of Indians are arrested. In 1922, Gandhi organizes a civil disobedience campaign in the county of Bardoli which he personally supervises. Violence breaks out in the small town of Chauri Chaura where the angry mob kills 22 police constables. In response, Gandhi calls off the civil disobedience but is arrested and is sentenced to six years in prison. This would not be the last time Gandhi would be imprisoned but it would be the last time he was tried.

Part 2: Chapters 14 and 15

Chapter 14: Gandhi Fasts

In January 1924, the Mahatma is rushed from prison to the hospital. He is operated on for acute appendicitis. Due to his weakened condition, the government releases him from his prison term. He had served 22 months. Having long ago concluded that India's future depends on the relationship between the Moslems and the Hindus, he reaches out to the Moslems, hoping for their unification. Gandhi prays and fasts for a good outcome. Gandhi views fasting as a way of communicating with the soul of other men. Gandhi fasts for twenty-one days, but relations do not improve between Moslems and Hindus.

Although the minority, middle-class Moslems had emerged in India earlier than that of the Hindus, resentment over limited economic opportunities exist between the two



factions as well as religious intolerance. Gandhi devotes himself to the slow process of re-educating the masses on the path to freedom.

Chapter 15: Answer to Moscow

Although failing to free India, the Indian people's love and adoration for Gandhi grows. They call his ashram the White House of India. To his horror, one tribe is worshiping him as God. Many Indians think he is the reincarnation of God. He corrects anyone who refers to him in this way.

A misconception long existed that Gandhi loved poverty because he gave up all worldly possessions. But he did so in unity with the poor but did not want them to remain paupers. He resists manufacturing innovations feeling that Indians would best be served by having a miniature mill in their homes—the spinning wheel. Machinery allows the jobs of many to be done by a few thus taking employment opportunities away from the masses. Machinery allows a few to ride on the backs of the millions. There are aspects of the west that Gandhi admires. He is not against all advancements; however, he strongly believes that western civilization does not belong in India.

Gandhi is anti-Communism but feels it differs from the west only in degree. He feels the liberated person can defeat Communism and cure democracy. The diminished spirit of a man is an open door to the inroads of power and freedom is doomed. Gandhi's following grows and is of a diverse make-up including the poor, rich, politicians, doctors and scholars. All his followers feel his spirituality and see he is a man of action. He never uses anyone as an instrument; rather, he uses a person who can be made better internally. India now calls him "Bapu," Father.



Part 2: Chapters 16 and 17

Part 2: Chapters 16 and 17 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 16: The Salt of Freedom

India sees much unrest in 1928. There is an assassination of a police official in Bengal. The killer escapes and becomes a hero to the people. Jawaharlal Nehru is emerging as a leader of the young and is not in agreement with Gandhi on non-violent rebellion. After weeks of meditation, Gandhi informs the British Viceroy that civil disobedience will take place on March 11th, since he fears the promises for India's change of status will never be fulfilled.

On March 11, Gandhi and 75 male members of the ashram start their march south to the sea. It takes them 24 days to walk the 241 miles. On the way, Gandhi tells village people they pass to make homemade clothing, reject alcohol and drugs, abandon child marriage and live pure lives. Many villagers attach themselves to the march and by the time they arrive at the sea on April 5th, they are several thousand strong. In May, Gandhi is again arrested and jailed.

Gandhi's son Manilal takes his father's place and leads a march to the salt works some 150 miles away. The area is guarded by police; however, the marchers attempt to enter the area. They have vowed not to lift a hand in their own defense and will subject themselves to beating, arrest and even death. Many are injured and jailed; however, Gandhi's marchers have won India's freedom. England has lost its moral authority and the Indians have shown them that they are powerless against India's invincibility. They soon realize that India will no longer be ruled.

Chapter 17: The Half-Naked Fakir

Winston Churchill for one is reviled by the appearance of equality between the Prime Minister and what he termed the half-naked, seditious fakir from India. In reality, Churchill is not concerned about Gandhi's appearance; he senses the growing acknowledgment that India will win its freedom. While most visitors to the Prime Minister are seeking favors, Gandhi is coming to negotiate the terms of India's independence. Gandhi and the British Viceroy sign the Delhi Pact, which frees prisoners, allows private salt production and cancels the civil disobedience. While India did not win independence, Gandhi views it as an important step towards independence.



Part 2: Chapters 18 and 19

Part 2: Chapters 18 and 19 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 18: In London in Minus Fours

In August, 1931, Gandhi travels with his son and entourage from Bombay to London for the second Round Table Conference. Gandhi stays in London through the end of the year. He often walks through slum areas where the local kids call him Uncle Gandhi. A reporter asks him about his dress. Gandhi responds that the Englishmen "wear plus-fours, mine are minus-fours." He is comfortable in London and wears his loincloth everywhere, even to Buckingham Palace to meet the King and Queen. Churchill refuses to see him.

Chapter 19: Children of God

Although Gandhi fails to win India's freedom while in London, the masses greet him like a victor. However, a week after he returns, he is once again jailed. A renewed effort on England's part is borne from the installation of new government officials. The Indian Congress vows to obstruct England's plans. Adhering to his discipline, Gandhi is a model prisoner and follows all rules. He has discussions about religion and other matters with the jailed and jailer alike. Gandhi writes a book on religion while in jail. Since Gandhi is a man of action and is not afraid of dying, he contemplates fasting to death on the issue of India's untouchables, the lowest caste of Indians. Unable to persuade the Prime Minister to change a proclamation segregating the Harijans by statute, Gandhi begins his fast to death.



Part 2: Chapters 20 and 21

Part 2: Chapters 20 and 21 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 20: The Magician

Gandhi is fasting to save the soul of India. The leaders of the untouchables or Harijans immediately meet with Hindu leaders. A compromise is proposed wherein the Harijans would be able to hold primaries to select Harijan candidates. The next day, Hindu officials present the plan to Gandhi who is already weak from fasting. Gandhi finds problems with the agreement and insists on more favorable terms for the Harijans. The doctor announces that Gandhi is in such bad shape that he may die at any moment. On the fifth day of the fast, an agreement is reached which Gandhi approves. Gandhi does not eat until the next day when the plan is certified by the English.

The country is jubilant that Gandhi lives and that conditions are improved for the Harijans. Nehru who ridiculed Gandhi for fasting for the Harijan cause joins in the good will that is apparent everywhere. "What a magician, I thought, was this little man sitting in Yeravda Prison, and how well he knew how to pull the strings that pulled the people's hearts." Temples heretofore closed to untouchables are opening their doors to them. Holy men were seen openly dining with Harijans. The pact represents a religious reformation and a psychological revolution. Gandhi is attaining his goal—he is changing the heart of India.

Chapter 21: Personal

Gandhi's personal life is not as successful as his public life. Gandhi is not a perfect husband nor father. Although he loves his wife, he does not have much contact with her. Of his four sons, one becomes a drunkard and converts to Islam. Two of the sons have little to do with him. His youngest son works with him when asked. He has not given his family much attention. He didn't have time—Gandhi's passion was to help the poor people of India.



Part 2: Chapters 22 and 23

Part 2: Chapters 22 and 23 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 22: Jesus Christ and Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi admires Christ. When asked if he's a Christian, he replies that he is a Hindu, a Christian, a Jew and a Moslem. He is an enigma since he is not a Christian, yet he is the most Christ-like man on earth. A famous Christian lecturer dedicates a book to Gandhi writing, "To Mahatma Gandhi who Made Jesus and His Message Real to Me." One of Gandhi's closest associates is Charles Freer Andrews, a Christian missionary. Gandhi once considered converting to Christianity but could not reconcile himself to the fact that God had only one Son—why not more?

Although very critical of the west, Gandhi knows that there are many problems existing in his own country. Through the years, Gandhi has grown increasingly critical of the West. Although he is a complete pacifist and believes in non-violence, he sees the triumph of Western violence over Christian values.

Chapter 23: Winston Churchill Versus Mohandas Gandhi

When WWII breaks out, England quickly engages India. Gandhi is very distressed but torn as he is pro-England and pro-American and anti-Japan and anti-German. The Indian Congress, although mostly pacifists, is willing to bring India fully into the war for the compensation of becoming a free country. Prime Minister Churchill is a purist and will not allow India to be lost as a British possession. Churchill is adamant. He will crush Gandhism in order to save England and keep it as it has always been. As long as Churchill is in power, he will block India's independence.



Part 2: Chapters 24, 25 and 26

Part 2: Chapters 24, 25 and 26 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 24: My Week with Gandhi

The author of the book, Louis Fischer, visits Gandhi in his ashram and stays for four days. He is amazed at Gandhi's fitness. His skin seems younger than his 73 years. His legs are strong and his chest is muscular. His age is seen in his face, a face Fischer describes as ugly in repose. His eyes are soft and kind but his wide nose almost covers his upper lip. He has false teeth but only wears them to eat.

Gandhi lives in the ashram with his wife and several dozen ashramites. Gandhi and his followers are still most concerned about India's independence from England. Gandhi is considering another civil disobedience that he calls, "Quit India." Nehru visits one day and argues against another civil disobedience. But Gandhi stubbornly holds his view. By the time Nehru leaves the ashram, Fischer can detect that Nehru was being won over, later becoming a stronger advocate of the civil disobedience than Gandhi himself. Nehru tells Fischer privately that he is hopeful that Gandhi can work out a settlement with the British viceroy. Unfortunately, the viceroy refuses to see Gandhi.

Chapter 25: Frustration and Irritation

The Indian Congress meets on August 8th where Gandhi's proposal of another civil disobedience in the cause for India's freedom is approved. The next day Gandhi and many of his followers are again arrested. Violence breaks out—buildings are set on fire, railroad tracks uprooted and British officials assaulted and killed. The Viceroy blames Gandhi who rejects the blame. Rather, Gandhi responds that the government is to blame. Even though Gandhi is given the opportunity to leave jail, he refuses unless the blame is removed from him. He fasts for thirteen days and though close to death he survives.

Gandhi's suffering for the unfair blame for the violence is only exacerbated when one of his jailed associates, Mahadev Desai, dies of a heart attack beside him in jail. On February 22nd, his dear wife, Kasturbai, also dies in prison, her head on his lap. From that time until his death, he says prayers on the 22nd of every month to honor her. Gandhi soon falls ill with malaria and is not expected to live. The government is pressured to release the ailing Mahatma. After leaving jail, he stays with a friend and is able recuperate.

Chapter 26: Jinnah versus Gandhi

In an effort to gain support, Gandhi appeals to Mohamed Ali Jinnah, president of the Moslem League. However, after a few written exchanges, Gandhi fails to open talks. Jinnah will only accept a deal that creates a separate Pakistani state. Gandhi will not agree to this since the proposed boundaries will leave the Hindus in the new state under

Moslem rule. Jinnah and his supporters feel that the peasantry in the proposed new state will be easier to control under religious rule. The Moslems are not interested in living under the rule of Nehru who was assumed to be India's Prime Minister. Jinnah hates Nehru and Gandhi and has become Gandhi's biggest problem.



Part Three: Chapter 27, 28 and 29

Part Three: Chapter 27, 28 and 29 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 27: Seeking the Divine in Man

In March of 1946, an envoy of British officials comes to India to settle the terms of its independence. These officials had gone over documents covering the proposed Pakistani state. They conclude that such action would not bring the desired result which was to solve the communal minority problem. The British officials recommend a united India, and the establishment of a central government along with provincial governments that would have sweeping authority.

In August 1946, Nehru is authorized to form the first Indian government. Nehru offers Jinnah a role in the government, but he rejects it. Jinnah declares a "Direct Action Day" on August 16th resulting in a four-day riot in Calcutta that results in 5,000 dead and 15,000 casualties. Despite the violence, Nehru becomes Prime Minister of India on September 2, 1946. Jinnah and his followers do not recognize the new government and violence continues. The hatred between Hindus and Moslems torments Gandhi. Gandhi hears of violence in Noakhali in the province of Bengal and travels there to intercede. He vows not to leave the province until there is peace.

Chapter 28: On the Eve

Before leaving for Noakhali, word comes that the neighboring province of Bihar has broken out into violence. Thousands of Moslems are massacred. Gandhi puts the blame at the feet of the Bihar Hindus. Finally violence decreases and Gandhi travels to the remote area of Noakhali.

Still the British, Moslems and Indians cannot agree on a final resolution. Finally, the idea of a smaller Pakistan emerging is gaining support. The new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, arrives in New Delhi. He wants to meet with both Gandhi and Jinnah but Gandhi is far away. The months following represent the most fateful in India's modern history.

Chapter 29: Round and Round the Mulberry Bush

While Gandhi is in Noakhali, Mountbatten, after going round and round with Jinnah, reaches a final agreement to partition off the provinces of Punjab and Bengal as the new country of Pakistan. Gandhi never agrees to this and in fact plans to disrupt the plan.



Part 3: Chapters 30, 31 and 32

Part 3: Chapters 30, 31 and 32 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 30: The Birth of Two Nations

While Gandhi remains steadfast against the creation of Pakistan, Nehru and the others are weakening. They do not want to delay India's freedom so they agree with the plan. Nehru later confessed that had he known the violence and death that would result leading to the War of Kashmir, he would have held out for a unified India. Gandhi fails in swaying opinion and the Indian Congress approves the partition. Gandhi declares that his 32 years of working for India's freedom "have come to an inglorious end."

Chapter 31: Gandhi Hoes His Garden

India wins its independence on August 15, 1947. Gandhi refuses to attend the official celebration. He is saddened by the continuing violence spurred on by the creation of Pakistan. Gandhi continues his work of helping the poor, reigning in violence and practicing much self-introspection.

Chapter 32: Love on Troubled Waters

In response to continued unrest and violence, Gandhi embarks on a fast to death. He breaks his fast only when all parties agree to end the violence in Calcutta. Next, Gandhi addresses the situation in New Delhi where violence and murder and disease are raging. He works effortlessly to quell the violence and promote peace and love to the warring Hindus and Moslems alike. However, there is so much anger that the odds are against him. He decides to fast to death again—it will be his last.



Part 3: Chapters 33 and 34

Part 3: Chapters 33 and 34 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 33: Victory Is to Him Who Is Ready to Pay the Price

Gandhi is growing exceedingly weak but he refuses even water. He pressures the Congress to pay Pakistan a share of old India's treasury. Doctors warn him that even if he survives he will have permanent kidney injury. Finally, agreements are reached including protection for Moslems and their temples. To the relief of all, Gandhi ends his fast.

Chapter 34: Death Before Prayers

There is resentment by some Hindus who feel Gandhi caved to the Moslems. A bomb is thrown near him during a prayer session. Gandhi forgives the young man who threw the bomb. Another young man, Nathuram Vinayak Godse, cannot understand why a Hindu Mahatma protects Moslems and even reads from the Koran at prayer time. When Gandhi steps on the prayer stage at 5pm on January 30, 1948, Godse shoots three bullets into the Mahatma. Gandhi murmurs only God's name and dies.



Characters

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, The Mahatma Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born October 2, 1869, in the small seaside town of Porbandar, on the Kathiawar Peninsula in western India. His father Karamchand served in governmental positions and owned homes in several cities. As a young boy, Mohandas was shy but had a decided rebellious streak. At twelve, he would steal from his parents to buy cigarettes to smoke secretly with his friends. He early rejected the his family's Hindu religion and out of his father's sight ate beef, which was against Hindu laws. As the years passed, however, Gandhi returned to his Hindu religion and became a very spiritual man. His life was centered around God. He worked at becoming pure, giving up all desire for worldly goods or riches. He termed his approach to life as "desirelessness." When he died he had only a few pair of sandals, his glasses, loincloth, a few bowls and spoons and his sacred holy book. Gandhi greatly admired Jesus Christ and kept a picture of Him with him. An associate made the comment about Gandhi that the most Christ-like man on earth is a man who is not a Christian.

Through an arranged marriage, Gandhi wed his life-long wife, Kasturbai, when both were only 13 years of age. Later in life, he spoke out against the custom of such child marriages. After preliminary education, he decided to go into law. He traveled to London to study there and three years later received his law degree. Gandhi did not have much success in life as a lawyer. He was shy and reluctant to speak up in court.

The path of Gandhi's life changed forever when he accepted a position with a legal firm in South Africa. On his train ride through Africa, he was thrown off a train because a white passenger did not want him to ride in the first class area. That experience stung Gandhi and stayed with him forever. Many Indians were working in South Africa as indentured laborers. After he experienced discrimination first hand, Gandhi forgot his timidity and spoke before a large group of Indians and Moslems promoting ways to combat discrimination. Gandhi was an advocate of exalting the individual rather than tearing down his enemy. Gandhi stayed in South Africa for over twenty years using his influence to improve conditions for his countrymen who worked there. He was able to have unfair laws and labor practices changed. He organized his first civil disobedience march to the town of Transvaal in protest of laws requiring mandatory registration of Indians that would limit their movements in the population centers.

When Gandhi returned to India he had major challenges awaiting him. Gandhi worked tirelessly for years for India's independence from England. There were many barriers and ups and downs in his quest for India's freedom but independence was finally realized when he was in his late seventies. He did not consider himself a holy man, although millions worshiped him, which he did not encourage nor like. Neither was he a politician; although he was instrumental in gaining India's independence, he wanted no governmental position. He considered himself a karma yogi which translates to a man of action, but always non-violent action. Gandhi had an easy way with the poor and mighty



alike. The millions of adoring and grateful citizens of India referred to him as the Father of India.

Gandhi also fought for the fair treatment of those in the "untouchable" category of society. Gandhi staged his most famous fast, called the Epic Fast, for the cause of the untouchables. He led by example and invited untouchable families to live with him and even adopted an untouchable daughter. Gandhi was successful in his tireless work to improve the lives of the untouchables. He knew, however, that prejudice could not be legislated away and not swept away overnight.

Gandhi was assassinated in January 1948 at the age of 78. The world wept and millions mourned his loss. Every powerful leader in the world payed homage to the little man in the loin cloth who loved the life of helping others but did not fear death.

Kasturbai

Kasturbai was Gandhi's wife. The couple married through arrangement when both were thirteen years old. Later in his life, Gandhi spoke out against child marriages. When first married, he and his wife were shy and innocent. They had to be coached in the responsibilities of marriage. The young couple stayed with their parents and did not have to worry about buying furniture or a place to live at such tender ages. Kasturbai had to ask her husband's permission to go outside and play with her friends. Kasturbai was headstrong and flaunted Gandhi's authority and mostly came and went as she pleased. In later years when Kasturbai refused to clean the chamber pots of poor people Gandhi invited to live with them, Gandhi exerted his authority as the husband and threatened to throw her out. After that, she reluctantly obeyed his requests.

Kasturbai had to endure many months and years away from her husband. When he studied law in England, she was left behind with a young child and another on the way. When Gandhi accepted a position in South Africa, she did not join him for almost three years. Both Gandhi and Kasturbai were born and reared under the Hindu caste system, which established discrimination by Hindu law.

They had four sons together. Kasturbai was closer to her children than was Gandhi because she spent much more time with them. Kasturbai was a faithful wife and follower of Gandhi and spent many terms in jail with him over his civil disobedience marches. In fact, Kasturbai followed him to the end and died in his arms while both were in jail. From the time of her death until his, Gandhi honored his wife with prayers on the monthly anniversary of her death.

Karamchand Gandhi

Karamchand Gandhi was Gandhi's father. Gandhi wrote in his later years that his father "had no education save that of experience" and was even "innocent" of history and geography, but remained "incorruptible." Karamchand held various prime minister positions to the raja or rana of small communities.



Putlibai

Putlibai was Gandhi's mother. She was a devout, illiterate Hindu girl. Gandhi adored his mother who he viewed as saintly and deeply religious. She died while he was away in London at law school. His family did not notify him because they knew how upset he would be.

Laxmidas

Laxmidas was one of Gandhi's older brother. He asked Gandhi to intercede for him with a government official he knew. Gandhi was treated rudely by the person when he tried speak up for his brother. It was a humiliating experience that Gandhi never forgot.

Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore was one of Gandhi's best friends. The title of "Mahatma" was conferred upon Gandhi by Tagore. Tagore, a poet, won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. Tagore referred to Gandhi as "Great Soul in peasant's garb."

Krishna

Krishna is the hero of the holy book the Bhagavad-Gita (Celestial Song). Krishna is worshiped as a God in India.

Henry David Thoreau

Gandhi was greatly influenced by the works of Henry David Thoreau, especially his essay entitled, "Civil Disobedience."

Ramsay MacDonald

Ramsay MacDonald was the British Prime Minister when Gandhi was jailed for the "salt" civil disobedience. MacDonald received world-wide pressure to release India's "Father."

Sir Winston Churchill

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was one world leader that Gandhi was never able to win over. Churchill looked down upon the "half-naked fakir," refused to ever meet with him and vowed to crush Gandhi's goal of a free India.



Jawaharlal Nehru

Gandhi considered Jawaharlal Nehru his successor although the two had many disagreements. Their relationship was close, however, similar to a father and son. Nehru became the first Prime Minister of a free India.

Louis Fischer

Louis Fischer is the author of this book. He was a respected American foreign correspondent. He visited with Gandhi twice during the 1940's.

Charles Freer Andrews

One of Gandhi's closest friends through the years was Charles Freer Andrews, a Christian missionary. Gandhi and Andrews shared a deep love for Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ

Gandhi admired Jesus Christ and his words in the Bible. An acquaintance said of Gandhi that it was ironic that the most Christ-like man on earth is not a Christian. Gandhi kept a picture of Christ on his wall.



Objects/Places

Porbandar

Gandhi was born in the Indian seaside town of Porbandar, India in 1869.

London

Gandhi traveled from India to London to study law. He eventually earned his law degree there. He traveled there several times years later to meet with British officials to discuss India's independence.

South Africa

Gandhi spent over 20 years in South Africa fighting for the rights of the East Indians who lived there and suffered under governmental color discrimination.

Pretoria, South Africa

After feeling the sting of discrimination because of his color, the young Gandhi lost his timidity and gave his first speech in Pretoria, promoting ways the gathered Indians and Moslems could combat discrimination by white men.

Bombay

Gandhi was not successful as a lawyer in Bombay. He was sold his first insurance policy there which he later let lapse, trusting God more than an insurance company.

Satyagraha Ashram

Gandhi's Satyagraha Ashram was located at Sabarmati. Gandhi lived there in a cell-like room free of all worldly possessions where he prayed and meditated.

The Epic Fast

Gandhi's most renowned fast was the "Epic Fast," which he undertook for the cause of the untouchables. He was within a day or hours of dying before the fast ended when he deemed there was progress for the untouchables.



Yeravada

During one of his times in jail, Gandhi wrote a book called Yeravada Mandir. The jail was in a city called Yeravada and the word "mandir" means temple. He believed that a jail where God is worshiped is a temple.

Transvaal

Transvaal was the South African city where Gandhi marched his registration resisters hoping that they would all be jailed and then fed.

Phoenix Farm

Phoenix Farm was Gandhi's farm where he allowed the poor people who needed a place to live and work to stay.

Calcutta

A four-day riot broke out in Calcutta, spurred on by the Moslem leaders, when word spread that India would be under the rule of the new Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, a Hindu.

Bihar

Gandhi was very upset with the Hindus in Bihar in the province of Bengal who had rioted and killed many Moslems during the unrest caused by independence negotiations. Gandhi promised to fast to death unless the Bihari Hindus turned over a new leaf.

Themes

Religion

As a very young man, Gandhi had a rebellious streak that led him to reject his family's Hindu religion. His rejection was not overt; rather, he would sneak and eat meat, a practice forbidden in Hinduism. Gandhi disliked the pomp and glitter of the temples and confessed to friends that he had no "living faith in God." However, the young Gandhi was intrigued by the discussion of various religions. He learned about the beliefs of others from Moslem, Parsi and Jain friends and compared them to his family's religion. Jainism is a reform Hindu religion that advocates rather radical precepts in its protection of living things. A Jain priest will not open his mouth outside lest he inhales an insect and thus ends its life. They must watch where they walk to avoid stepping on a worm or other crawling insect.

Gandhi's rejection of Hinduism was short-lived. While studying law in London, a fervor for religion emerged from within Gandhi. Although learning about other religions, he was never converted and returned to Hinduism. He was a great admirer of the parables and morality taught in the Christian Bible. He would sometimes sing a Christian song before saying his Hindu prayers. Gandhi once considered converting to Christianity but could not reconcile himself to the fact that God had only one Son—why not more? He also believed that in Heaven there were no Christians, Moslems or Hindus—all were equally loved by God. One acquaintance marveled at the irony that the most Christ-like man on earth was a Hindu. To Gandhi, the Christian Bible was reminiscent of his beloved sacred book, the Bhagavad-Gita or Celestial Song. Throughout the years, Gandhi always found peace and joy in the message of the Gita.

At thirty-seven years of age, Gandhi decided to become celibate and kept that vow the rest of his life. He based his decision on his quest to become a fully spiritual and holy man. Though never a priest, Gandhi's most important part of his existence was his love of God. He believed that if he could reach true purity in this life, he would be at one with God. If he was able to achieve this holy state, he would be able to stay with God and not return to another life on earth. Hinduism ascribes to reincarnation.

During one of his times in jail, Gandhi wrote a book called Yeravada Mandir. The jail was in a city called Yeravada and the word "mandir" means temple. He believed that a jail where God is worshiped is a temple. Every action that Gandhi took and every belief he had was based on his love of God. He wanted no worldly possessions and no glory. His love of God kept him from fearing death. He was more than willing to die for the truth and purity of God.



Discrimination

The Mahatma Gandhi fought discrimination his entire life. He himself experienced the pain and humiliation of discrimination when at a young age he was not allowed to ride in the first class section of a train in South Africa. Gandhi had purchased the first-class fare and was seated in his rightful seat. However, when a white man who also had a first-class ticket realized that this dark-brown man would be near him, he complained to the conductor. Due to the laws at the time, there was nothing to debate. Gandhi, who refused to leave, was thrown off the train. This incident stung him and stayed with him. Although very shy at the time, his timidity vanished as he spoke before a gathering of Moslems and Hindus in Pretoria, South Africa. The subject was discrimination and how to combat it. He advised the group to be truthful, adopt more sanitary habits, not focus on religious and caste differences and learn English. His view at the time was to improve those who were discriminated against while attempting to appeal to the fairness of the discriminators.

After being in South Africa for a while, Gandhi saw how discrimination was legislated and placed workers who emigrated from India in a no-win situation. Once their indentured labor term ended, they had to either return to India or stay and agree to pay a tax, one that was so unfair that in reality kept them as slaves. Indians could not enter parts of the cities after certain hours. One of the officials running for office vowed to "drive the coolies out of the country." Gandhi worked tirelessly against discrimination in South Africa the many years he was there. He held his first non-violent march to the city Transvaal for the cause of the Indian workers. He made many inroads and succeeded at vastly improving the conditions for Indian workers in South Africa; however, he was well aware that prejudice could not be legislated away.

Gandhi was also cognizant that his own culture was guilty of debilitating discrimination. The Hindu caste system was adopted centuries before and not only fostered discrimination but demanded it. Although raised under the caste system and once advocating it, as Gandhi grew in his spirituality he realized it was wrong. Gandhi's most famous fast was for the cause of the untouchables. The untouchables were the group of people lower than the lowest rung of the caste system. Gandhi took on the cause of the untouchables and made many advances for them.

India's Caste System

Gandhi began a "fast to death" for the cause of the "untouchables" when he was jailed by the new British regime in late 1931. As a younger man, Gandhi favored the caste system, thinking it was necessary. But as the years went by, Gandhi began to see the unfair treatment of this segment of the community as hurtful not only to these people but to Hindu society as well. In these later years, Gandhi favored intermarriage and inter-dining among castes and would not give a speech unless at least one untouchable was present. Always teaching by example, Gandhi invited untouchable families to live with him and even adopted an untouchable girl.



As the caste system existed in the early thirties, an orthodox Hindu was not allowed to touch an untouchable or to touch anything an untouchable touched; therefore, the untouchables were not allowed to enter a Hindu temple and were thus driven from their religion years before. The untouchables were lower than the lowest members of the Indian caste system and considered as outcasts by the other castes. The four Hindu castes range from superior to inferior: The Brahmans or holy men reside in the highest caste; the Kshatriyas is the next level, which consists of rulers and warriors; the next caste are the Vaisyas are tradesmen and farmers; and, the Sudras are laborers. Below that, too low to even be listed as a caste, are the untouchables.

Gandhi belonged to the Vaisyas caste. The name Gandhi translates to grocer indicating that his ancestors worked in that field. Once Gandhi rose in worldwide esteem, many Brahmans visited him and dined with him although inter-dining was prohibited by caste system rules. The Brahmans ate with him but may have purged their food outside since Gandhi was on the third rung of the caste system.

During his "epic fast" in the Yeravda jail for the cause of the untouchables, Gandhi nearly died. An agreement was reached between the Hindus and the Harijans just in time to save his life. He told his followers that his suffering was nothing in comparison to that of the untouchables over the many centuries. Through his efforts, Gandhi was successful in changing the heart of India and thus made way for vastly improved conditions for the untouchables.



Style

Perspective

The book, GANDHI - HIS LIFE AND MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD was written by Louis Fischer who was a respected American foreign correspondent during the 1940's. Fischer as a journalist focused on world affairs and was quite conversant on the subject about whom he wrote. Since the book is written by a reporter, there is an element of reporting the facts. However, as much as this foreign correspondent experienced in his life, he openly describes his own astonishment of the untiring selflessness of the skinny brown man who wore nothing but a loincloth which he wore as a way of connecting with the poor.

As is the practice of any good reporter, it is apparent that Fischer did a fair share of research. As an example, his research allowed him to understand and relate in great detail the complex negotiations that went on for years between Gandhi, the Moslem leaders of India and officials of imperialistic England with a goal of making India an independent country. However, Fischer had the advantage of knowing his subject. Fischer traveled to India on two separate occasions in 1942 and 1946. He was able to see the man up close and get to know his habits and see his sparkling sense of humor. He was able to laugh at jokes especially those on him. Fischer spent four days on each visit and was able to gain great insight and perspective on the man about whom he was to write. The perspective from which Louis Fischer writes about the Mahatma Gandhi is one that aptly blends reporting skills and first hand knowledge from his personal relationship which his subject, one that was warm and mutually respectful.

Tone

The biography of Mohandas Gandhi was written by author and reporter Louis Fischer. Fischer was an American foreign correspondent during the 1940's. He visited Gandhi in 1942 and 1946 which gave him the somewhat unique advantage of meeting and knowing the historic figure of whom he would be writing a biography. On his two visits with Gandhi, Fischer stayed four days each time allowing him to become familiar with Gandhi's daily schedule and rituals, his interaction with family and friends and his keen sense of humor.

The account of The Mahatma Gandhi's life is at once straight-forward and sentimental. The saga of the Father of India was obviously written with a large measure of affection and respect. However, Fischer provides some insight into the young Gandhi who is more human. Although the man became a saint to millions, Fischer does not sugarcoat his less-than-selfless beginnings. He portrays Gandhi's rebellious nature as a child, his anti-religious stances early on and his problems at times in reigning in his temper and anger.



Having met the man that lit the world and told its people how to live in harmony, his allure was not lost on the reporter/author. Although Fischer obviously did his homework and provided much detail and comments from others, Fischer's tone throughout the book is one of admiration and a continuous sense of astonishment. Gandhi's unyielding selflessness, and as Gandhi framed it his "desirelessness," never ceased to surprise the author. Just when the author must have assumed that Gandhi could not give any more of himself, he is compelled to add another episode that reaches to yet a deeper level of self-sacrifice.

Structure

GANDHI - HIS LIFE AND MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD is separated into three main parts. Part One is titled "From Birth to Greatness" sub-categorized into nine chapters. Part Two is titled "Gandhi in India" is separated into 17 chapters. The final section which is titled, "Part Three: Victory and Tragedy," contains an additional eight chapters. The first chapter begins with the end. The "end" which Gandhi met is undoubtedly known to all living people and therefore is no surprise. But beginning with this "end" makes the story start with a punch that spurs the interest of the novice and recaptures the curiosity of the seasoned reader. Why was this spiritual, kind old man killed? Thus the outrage is a new experience for every new reader. The chapter is entitled, "The World Weeps," which describes the assassination of Gandhi in 1948 at the age of seventy-eight along with the accompanying pain and anguish that it caused his followers and indeed the world at large. After this "ending," the book then follows a straight-forward style that lays out his life in a mainly chronological order.

Since the author, Louis Fischer, was also a reporter, the structure is that of a fact-telling account of this world-renowned and historic figure. The account rolls out, at times, like an in-depth investigative report. However, it is tempered with humorous episodes that soften its edge.



Quotes

"Mahatma Gandhi's body lay on the pyre with his head to the north. In that position Buddha met his end." (7)

"Men and women and children knew, or felt, that when Gandhi fell by the assassin's three bullets the conscience of mankind had been left without a spokesman. Mankind was impoverished because a poor man had died." (8)

"Winston Churchill saw this better than anyone. He was revolted, he declared, by 'the nauseating and humiliating spectacle of this one-time Inner Temple lawyer, 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.'" (10)

"We live, he felt, not in order to feed, clothe, shelter and pamper the body; we provide for the body in order to live. Life begins after the needs of the body have been met, yet how many people ruin life for the sake of rich living. The souls, alas, needs a temporary abode, but a clean mud hut will do as well as a palace, indeed better, for when the physical absorbs the lion's share of man's effort the spirit languishes, life loses content, and discontent appears." (31)

"Forgiveness is the ornament of the brave." (47)

"Tagore wept at seeing India 'the eternal ragpicker at other people's dustbins,' an emotion Gandhi shared, and he prayed, as did the Mahatma, for the 'magnificent harmony of all human races.'" (50)

"Gandhi had the answer and antidote to Stalinism: a big, brave, spirit-over-matter individual who could resist invasions of his freedom because he put principles above possessions. This prescription would defeat communism and cure democracy." (88)

"I am not conscious of a single experience throughout my time in England and Europe that made me feel that after all East is East and West is West. On the contrary, I have been convinced more than ever that human nature is much the same, no matter under what clime it flourishes, and that if you approached people with trust and affection, you would have ten-fold trust and thousand-fold affection returned to you." (107)

"The ideals of humanity in the West is perhaps lower, but their practice of it is very much more thorough than ours. We rest content with a lofty ideal and are slow or lazy in its practice." (125)

"It would also deny a basic tent of Gandhi's faith: that an affinity exists or can be established between people who think themselves different. This was now his task. 'But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. . . for if ye



love them which love you, what reward have ye?' thus Jesus spoke. Thus Gandhi lives and asked others to live." (166)

"Thirty-two years of work, Gandhi declared, 'have come to an inglorious end.' It takes great courage to say that to oneself and in public. It took even greater courage to continue to work in the wreckage of a lifetime's labor. Gandhi now rose to supreme height." (175)

"St. Francis of Assisi was hoeing his garden when someone asked what he would do if he were suddenly to learn that he would die before sunset that very day. 'I would finish hoeing my garden,' he replied. Gandhi continued to hoe his garden." (177)

"'Do not worry about what others are doing,' began in a weak voice. 'Each of us should turn the searchlight inward and purify his or her heart as much as possible. I am convinced that if you purify yourselves sufficiently you will help India and shorten the period of my fast.' But they must not think primarily of him. 'No one can escape death. Then why be afraid of it? In fact, death is a friend who brings deliverance from suffering.'" (184)

Topics for Discussion

What were the ages of Gandhi and his wife when they married? How did Gandhi feel about "child marriages?"

What did Gandhi mean when he described his approach to life as "desirelessness?"

What are the four levels of the Indian caste system?

In Hindu society, what defines a person known as an "untouchable?"

How did Gandhi feel about Jesus Christ and Christianity?

Why did Gandhi feel that Western civilization corrupted Christianity?

For what cause did Gandhi endure his most famous and dangerous fast called the Epic Fast?