

Mahatma Gandhi

Quick Facts:

Born: 2 October 1869 Porbandar, Bombay Presidency, British India

Died: 30 January 1948 New Delhi, Union of India

Cause of death: Assassination (three bullets in the chest)

Other names: Mahatma Gandhi, Bapu

Known for: Prominent figure of Indian independence movement, Propounding the philosophy of Satyagraha and Ahimsa Religion Hinduism

Wife: Kasturba Gandhi

Children: Harilal, Manilal, Ramdas, Devdas

Parents: Putlibai Gandhi (Mother), Karamchand Gandhi (Father)

Ethical Values and Principles

Truth (Satya)

Non-Violence (Ahimsa)

Vegetarianism

Self-Discipline (Brahmacharya)

Simplicity

Faith

Non-Possession (Aparigraha)

Equality (Savara Dharma Samanata)

Child Hood:

- Mother has great influence on him
- Child marriage with Kasturbai at the age of 13

Academic Career:

- Average Student
- Problems with entry test for college
- Unhappy: family wanted him to become barrister
- 4. September 1888 goes to study in London
- Made vow to observe the Hindu precepts
- Experiments with english customs: Takes dance lessons

Time in London

- Could not eat food "at home" => always hungry
- Found vegetarian restaurant
- Joined the vegetarian society
- Got elected to executive committee
- Some vegetarians made him join the Theosophical Society
- Society studies Buddhist and Hindu literature
- Gandhi became interested in religion
- Reads Hindu and Christians scriptures
- Passed his final exam 10 June 1891
- Went to India 12 June 1891
- His mother died while he was in London (family kept quiet because of his studies)

Back in India

- Problems finding job
- Has to quit job as he runs foul of british officer
- Accepts job in South Africa because of bad circumstances

Gandhi in South Africa

- Experienced racism
- Starts to think about the place he has in society
- Extends stay-over
- Wants to support Indian's trying to get the right to vote
- Helps to found Natal Indian Congress
- Forms a unified Indian political force
- 1906: Transvaal government wants to count Indian population
=> Mass protest in Johannesburg on 11th September
- Government was successful repressing Indian
- Public was shocked of violence used against peaceful Indians
=> South African General had to negotiate a compromise with Gandhi
- Satyagraha got developed

Role in World War I

- Recruits Indians for war
- Will not hurt / kill anybody
- Says that it is important to know how to use weapons

Champaran and Kheda (Regions of India)

- First big political success (1918): Champaran and Kheda Satyagraha
- Bad situation: dirty, unhygienic, alcoholism
- British want to increase tax
- Opens ashram
- Gains confidence of villagers
- Starts clean-up, building schools etc.
- Gets arrested for allegedly causing unrest
=> Big protest in front of prison
- Freed he negotiates contract which gives farmers more rights
- Becomes famous
=> Names like Bapu (= Father) and Mahatma (= Great Soul) develop

Non-cooperation movement

- Gandhi's weapons: **non-cooperation, non-violence, peaceful resistance**
- Violence from British side => Indian react with violence
- Gandhi criticizes both sides
- Holds speech: **No violence can be justified**
- => Gandhi's objective: **complete** individual, spiritual, political **independence of India** (Swaraj)
- 1921 Gandhi becomes Leader of National Indian Congress
- => Reorganizes party for national mass appeal
- => Membership for little fee

- Swadeshi policy: **Boycott of foreign made goods**, especially British
- Khadi: Should wear home-spun cloth
- Also boycott British educational institutes, jobs, law-courts, titles and honors
- Campaign has **great success**
- Called off because of violence
- 3rd time big campaign gets called off by Gandhi
- 15.000 supporters jailed
- Arrested 10 March 1922 => 6 years jail because of sedition, early release in 1924 (illness)
- National Congress **splinters** in 2 sections: Make own laws <=> use British laws
- Hindu and Muslim cooperation reduces
- Gandhi couldn't restore old state

Salt Satyagraha (Salt March)

- Stays out of active politics in 1920s
- 1928 returns to the fore
- British government: New constitution commission without Indian representative
- => Boycott of commission by Indian parties
- Congress (Dec 1928): Dominion status or non-cooperation with complete Independence
- Ultimatum: 1 year, Mahatma refers to views of Subhas Chandra Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru
- British don't respond
- => 31 Dec 1929 India declares it's Independence
- 26 January 1930: Indian Independence Day
- *Satyagraha, cause: Tax on salt in March*
- *Salt March(12 Mar – 6 April):*
 - *388 km Ahmedabad to coastal Dandi*
 - *Wants to make salt himself*
 - *Thousands join*
 - *One of most successful campaign*
- *Britains jail over 60.000 people*
- Lord Edward Irwin negotiates with Gandhi
- => Gandhi – Irwin Pact
- Britain: Frees all political prisoners
- India: Stops civil disobedience
- Mahatma invited to Round Table Congress London
- Disappointment: no discussion of power transfer
- Successor of Irwin: New campaign subduing nationalist movement
- => Gandhi gets imprisoned and isolated from followers (no use)
- 1932: Role in granting rights to vote to the class of untouchable ends in 3 assassination attempt (1934)
- => Leaves congress party
- Returns to politics 1936
- Wants focus on independence
- Accepts socialism as goal

- Conflict with Subhas Bose (president 1938): Contra Democracy, Non-violence
 - Bose resigned. Cause: Mass-resignment because of abandonment of Gandhi's principles

Partition of India

- Plebiscite (=Volksabstimmung) about partition
- Riots => Gandhi goes and stops them
- Gandhi makes strong efforts to unite the Indian Hindus, Muslims and Christians

Assassination

- 30 January 1948: Shot by Nathuram Godse
- His last words maybe: "Oh God"
- Godse and his co-conspirator Narayan Apte executed on 15 November 1949

For this and more information please turn to gandhi.mababoo.net starting Saturday the 21st of May.

Sources

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