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4

5 **Abstract**

6 The literal translation of Mahatma, the name which the people of India gave to Gandhiji, is
7 ?the Great Soul?, maha, great; atma, soul. The word goes back to the Upanishads, where it is
8 used in speaking of the Supreme Being, and, through communion of Knowledge and Love, of
9 those who become One with Him: "He is the One Luminous, Creator of All, Mahatma Always
10 in the heart of the people enshrined, Revealed through Love, Intuition, and Thought, Whoever
11 knows Him, Immortal becomes..." The Poet Rabindranath Tagore, on a visit to the Ashram,
12 quoted the above stanza, referring to the Apostle. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, byname
13 Mahatma Gandhi (born October 2, 1869, Porbandar, Indiaâ???"died January 30, 1948, Delhi)
14 Indian lawyer, politician, social activist, and writer who became the leader of the nationalist
15 movement against the British rule of India. As such, he came to be considered the father of
16 his country. Gandhi is internationally esteemed for his doctrine of nonviolent protest
17 (satyagraha) to achieve political and social progress.

18

19 *Index terms—*

20 **1 Introduction**

21 rica, left India again.

22 **2 II.**

23 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Mahatma Gandhi) was born on October 2, 1869, into a Hindu Modh family in
24 Porbanadar, Gujarat, India. His father, named Karamchand Gandhi, was the Chief Minister (diwan) of the city
25 of Porbanadar. His mother, named Putlibai, was the fourth wife; the previous three wives died in childbirth.
26 Gandhi was born into the vaishya (business caste). He was 13 years old when married Kasturbai (Ba) Makhanji,
27 through his parents arrangement. They had four sons. Gandhi learned tolerance and non-injury to living beings
28 from an early age. He was abstinent from meat, alcohol, and promiscuity. even as a young child his morals were
29 tested when an inspector of schools came to visit during a spelling test. Noticing an incorrect spelling, his teacher
30 motioned for him to copy his neighbour's spelling but he stoutly refused to do so. And after being told that the
31 power to the British colonial rule was their meat-eating diet, Gandhi secretly began to eat meat. He soon gave
32 up however, as he felt ashamed of deceiving his strictly vegetarian family.

33 At 19 years old, after barely passing his matriculation exam, he eagerly took the opportunity to travel to
34 Britain to become a barrister. After passing his bar, he returned to India to practise law. He found he was
35 unable to speak at his first court case, however, and when presented with the opportunity to go to South Africa,
36 left India again.

37 **3 M**

38 When he arrived there, however, he became disgusted with the treatment Indians faced by the white settlers.
39 He exhorted his countrymen to observe truthfulness in business and reminded them that their responsibility was
40 the greater since their conduct would be seen as a reflection of their country. He asked them to forget about
41 religious and caste differences and to give up their unsanitary habits. He wanted his countrymen to demonstrate
42 their suitability for citizenship by showing they deserved it. He spent twenty years in South Africa fighting for,
43 and finally gaining Indian citizenship rights. Mahatma Gandhi's effort to join spirituality and politics remains

44 beyond the comprehension of most narratives we have today. It is no surprise then that while Great Soul only
45 subtly illustrates Gandhi's deep spiritual beliefs through a critique of his political actions, reports about it have
46 cast Gandhi in what may be the easiest media cliché we have these days to describe a man of faith: that of the
47 fallen saint. We seem unable as a culture to evaluate someone whose spiritual integrity stands tall even if his
48 political efforts seem patchy, especially in hindsight. We are so steeped in irony that even a respectful title like
49 Great Soul, was, I suspect, misinterpreted by some commentators as a sarcastic one. But if we are to understand
50 what Gandhi meant, we have to admit one seemingly extremely hagiographical fact. To some of his followers, he
51 was more than a holy man, he was a god. As Lelyveld writes, some of the crowds at Gandhi's rallies saw "not
52 a mere mortal but an actual avatar of a god from the crowded Hindu pantheon". This view was not confined
53 to the unschooled and miracle-hungry masses either. I recently read the memoirs of A.K. Chettiar, a filmmaker
54 and journalist who made a documentary about Gandhi in the early 1940s. Chettiar writes that he and his team
55 simply "worshipped him as an incarnation of god." His adventures in making this film and finally screening it in
56 New Delhi and Washington are full of the kind of fearlessness and generosity Gandhi inspired.

57 Even if Gandhi's hallowed status was kept aloft after independence by government discourses, the reverence
58 accorded to him was not entirely orchestrated, especially for those of a certain generation. A few years ago,
59 a well-known Indian journalist gave a talk to my students about Gandhi that began, mysteriously, with the
60 story of the ten avatars of Vishnu. He did not claim Gandhi was an avatar of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi,
61 byname Mahatma Gandhi (born October 2, 1869, Porbandar, India-died January 30, 1948, Delhi) Indian lawyer,
62 politician, social activist, and writer who became the leader of the nationalist movement against the British rule
63 of India. As such, he came to be considered the father of his country. Gandhi is internationally esteemed for his
64 doctrine of nonviolent protest (satyagraha) to achieve political and social progress.

65 Vishnu or anything so simplistic, but suggested that since the Hindu mind sees evolution as natural, Gandhi
66 could be seen as the next stage of evolution that the rest of us would eventually get to; a humanistic and optimistic
67 reinterpretation of avatar hood, if there was one.

68 But like all gods in India, Gandhi's hallowed status has changed with the politics of the times. Democracy
69 has produced the deification of other leaders, and on occasion the increasing marginalization, if not the outright
70 vilification, of Gandhi. His name may be a symbol for the nation's conscience in some quarters, but it is also now
71 a symbol for the grievances of various groups-displaced Hindus, Dalits, and technocratic urban middle classes
72 embarrassed by his seeming eccentricities, among others. But even if Gandhi is not universally revered in India,
73 there is no shock about his seeming failings as we saw here. This is perhaps because popular Indian mythic
74 tradition sees the imperfections of deities as part of a bigger picture rather than as proof of evil. In contrast, in
75 the West we now have mainly a consumer culture's image of Gandhi, even more sanitized perhaps, and hence
76 the expose sort of reaction even when there was none.

77 That reaction though should make us reexamine some of the expectations we have come to have in our media
78 culture. Maybe we have lost the capacity to appreciate greatness, swinging from a misplaced adulation on the
79 one hand to a presumptuous condemnation on the other. We assume perhaps that if a man is considered great,
80 as Gandhi indeed is, then he must have greedily claimed that greatness for himself.

81 4 III.

82 5 Gandhi and religion

83 Gandhi was raised in a Hindu family, but he lived in a multicultural community. He had Christian and Muslim
84 friends as a child, and may have been especially influenced by the Jain religion, with its principle of total ahimsa,
85 or nonviolence. When he traveled to England to study law, he met theosophists who encouraged him to learn
86 more about his native Hindu texts like the Bhagavad Gita, as well as those of other religions like , the Holy
87 Quran and the bible. 'I see the same God in Gita whom I see in the Bible or whom I want to see in the Quran'.
88 According to him, the best religion of the world is one which contains the best elements of all the creeds of the
89 world. His religion was peace and nonviolence. His sword and the shield, both were love which was based upon
90 non-violence and truth.

91 IV.

92 6 Vaishnava Janato

93 V. Non-violence of Mahatma Gandhi Mahatma Gandhi is a Father of India Gandhi's unbound affection for Narsi's
94 composition Vaishnava janato is as good a way as any to gauge the Mahatma's religious sensibility. Vaishnavism-
95 which takes its name from the god Vishnu-was an important part of the religious milieu in which Gandhi grew
96 into adolescence, Gandhi describes his mother as a saintly woman for whom a visit to the "Vaishnava temple"
97 was "one of her daily routines."

98 Gandhi was not particularly interested in the sectarian divide between Vaishnavas and Saivites (the followers
99 of Shiva), and he sought to endow the term "Vaishnava" with a more capacious meaning. Narsi sings:

100 Vaishnavajana to tene kahiye, je pira parayi jaane re / par dukha upkaar kare, to ye man abhiman na aane re.
101 Call only him a Vaishnava, says Narsi, who feels another's pain as his own, who helps others in their sorrow but
102 takes no pride in his good deeds. The rest of the bhajan further adumbrates the qualities of a Vaishnava, who

103 is pure in thought, action, and speech; despising no one, and treating the low and the high alike, the Vaishnava
104 adopts the entire human family as his own and so works for the liberation of everyone.

105 Vaishnava janato was sung at Gandhi's daily prayer meetings. As Gandhi commenced his almost 250-mile
106 march to the sea in 1930, writes his biographer Narayan Desai, he was handed his walking stick by his close
107 associate Kaka Kalelkar, and Narayan Khare sang Vaishnava janato. The bhajan remained on the lips of Gandhi
108 and his companions throughout the Dandi March. Widely known as Narsi's Vaishnavajana to may have been to
109 Gujaratis, it was Gandhi who popularized it through the length and breadth of India.

110 While Gandhi spent many years reflecting on religious topics, his focus was always on practical action. When
111 a reporter asked Gandhi what his message was, he famously replied, "My life is my message." The same could
112 probably be said of his religious beliefs -that they were most fully expressed in his peaceful and just actions.
113 Mohandas K. ?andhi (1869 ?andhi (-1948)), who opposed British imperial rule in India during the 20th
114 century.

115 Gandhi took the religious principle of ahimsa (doing no harm) common to Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism
116 and turned it into a non-violent tool for mass action. He used it to fight not only colonial rule but social evils
117 such as racial discrimination and untouchability as well.

118 Gandhi called it "satyagraha" which means 'truth force.' In this doctrine the aim of any non-violent conflict
119 was to convert the opponent; to win over his mind and his heart andpersuade him to your point of view.

120 Gandhi was firm that satyagraha was not a weapon of the weak -"Satyagraha is a weapon of the strong; it
121 admits of no violence under any circumstance whatever; and it always insists upon truth." Gandhi did not think
122 that non-violence was a tool for those who were too scared to take up arms.

123 Therefore Non-Violence was also a compulsion for Gandhi. At the most it was only one aspect of

124 **7 VI. MAHATMA GANDHI AS A FREEDOM FIGHTER**

125 Mahatma Gandhi promoted the values of individual liberty and the rights of free individuals to transcend
126 oppression through free exchange and freedom of religious practice, without divisions amongst the people of
127 India as provoked by the British Empire.

128 In 1893 he went to South Africa to fight a lawsuit on behalf of Dada Abdullah & Company. It was the
129 place, which changed the course of Gandhi's life and the history of India. While traveling in a first class rail
130 compartment, Gandhi was thrown out by railway officials just because a white man objected to his presence in
131 the first class compartment. This and some other such incidents made Gandhi feel that being quiet will not do
132 any good. He stood up for the cause of all the Indians residing there who were suffering humiliation daily. After
133 fighting for the cause of the Indian people in South Africa. He to India in 1915. But he was not the same man
134 who left India. He was much transformednow he had nothing but one resolve -to serve the masses of his country.
135 He was in the battlefield to fight for the independence of his own country, but his ways were totally different. He
136 did not ever use any weapon.

137 'Satyagraha' A sahyog Andolan' and 'Savinay Avagya Andolan were his weapons. His first Satyagraha was in
138 Champaran in 1917 for the cause of peasants of Champaran. The harsh Rowlatt Act introduced by the British
139 government brought him actively into Indian politics and he remained at its centerstage till his death in 1948.
140 With his Non Cooperation Movement, the struggle for independence became the struggle of the masses. He got
141 enormous support in his campaign. He was arrested by the British government and was sentenced to six years
142 of imprisonment. On his release, he undertook the famous \'Dandi March\' in 1930, to break the salt law of the
143 British and he was again arrested but later released unconditionally. On 29th August 1931 he sailed to England
144 for the second round table conference as a delegate of the Congress but returned empty handed. In 1942 he
145 organized Quit India movement and gave the slogan of \'Do or Die\'. He prepared to organize a Satyagraha but
146 along with other freedom fighters was arrested. Unable to deal with the increasing unrest in India, the British
147 government invited Jawaharlal Nehru to form an Interim government. All this annoyed the Muslim league and
148 Jinnah and resulted in the outbreak of violence Mahatma Gandhi was against the partition of India. But he
149 could not make the leaders of Indian National Congress and Muslim League understand his stand. On 15th
150 August 1947 India finally got independence but Gandhi refused to join the celebrations, mourning for the loss of
151 unity of his countrymen.

152 On his birthday i.e. on 2nd October 1947, when everyone was greeting him, Some people did not like his
153 message of love and brotherhood. A bomb was thrown at him while he was in prayer meeting but it missed its
154 mark. Ten days later on January 30th 1948, when Gandhi was going for the evening prayers in Birla House,
155 a young Hindu fanatic Nathuram Godse, from Poona forced his way to Gandhi and fired three shots at him.
156 Gandhi fell to the ground and breathed his last. He died with the words of God on his lips.

157 **8 VII.**

158 **9 Conclusion**

159 In the eyes of millions of his fellow Indians, Gandhi was the Mahatma ("Great Soul"). The unthinking adoration
160 of the huge crowds that gathered to see him all along the route of his tours made them a severe ordeal; he
161 could hardly work during the day or rest at night. "The woes of the Mahatmas," he wrote, "are known only

9 CONCLUSION

162 to the Mahatmas." His fame spread worldwide during his lifetime and only increased after his death. The name
163 Mahatma Gandhi is now one of the most universally recognized on earth.

164 Mahatma Gandhi was my favourite leader in india . I respect him. He loved and supported to poor people. He
165 supported India to get freedom . Mahatma Gandhi is a honour of India. I follow the rules of Mahatma Gandhi.

166 Bapu as we call him, the father of our nation, is no more... The light has gone out, I said, and yet I was
167 wrong. For the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. The light that has illumined this country
168 for these many years, and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts. For that light
169 represented the living truth, and the eternal man was with us with his eternal truth reminding us of the right
170 path, drawing us from error, taking this ancient country to freedom...,, Gandhi's versatile Hindu philosophy but
171 always subordinate to TRUTH, as has been described by the Gandhi in following words: Life and its problems
172 have thus become to me so many experiments in the practice of truth and nonviolence. By instinct I have been
173 truthfulbut not nonviolent. As a Jain Muni once rightly said I was not so much votary of 'Ahimsa' as I was
174 of truth, and I put the latter in the first place and the former in the second. For, as he put it, I was capable
175 of sacrificing violence for the sake of truth. In fact it was in the courseof my persuit of truth that I discovered
176 non-violence. Our scriptures have declared that there is no 'dharma'(law) higher than Truth. But non-violence
177 they say is the highest duty. The word 'dharma' in my opinion has different connotations as used in the two
178 aphorisms. ?? Harijan , 28-03-1936) Works Cited ¹ ²

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