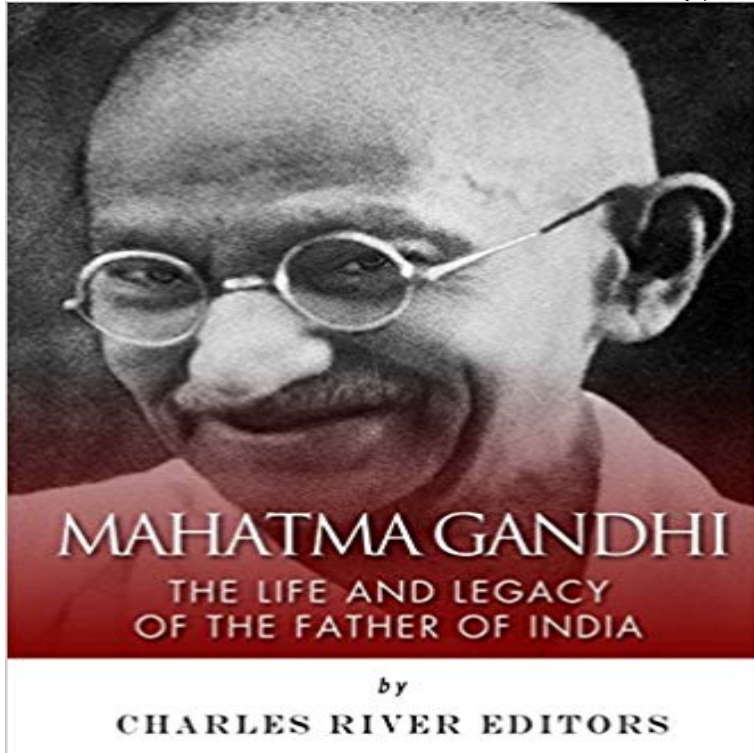


Mahatma Gandhi: The Life and Legacy of the Father of India



*Includes pictures *Includes Gandhis own quotes about his life and career *Includes footnotes and a bibliography for further reading

In judging myself I shall try to be as harsh as truth, as I want others also to be. Gandhi I am not pleading for India to practice nonviolence because it is weak. I want her to practice nonviolence being conscious of her strength and power. - Gandhi Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, or Mahatma Gandhi as he is more popularly known, was called Mahatma, or Great Soul not only because of his extraordinary achievements as leader of the Indian independence movement, but also because of his beliefs, practices, and principles that demonstrated to the world the depths that ones soul could have. Widely considered the father of India, the preeminent leader of the Indian struggle against British imperialism, and one of the most influential minds of the 20th century, Gandhi emerged to become one of the greatest advocates of peace and nonviolent resistance that the world has known. By leading a life of austerity and integrity, Gandhi became one of those rare leaders who preached through his own practices, motivating millions of people rich and poor, men and women, adults and children, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians to follow his principles of freedom and peace. Gandhi saw with his own eyes the negative impact of British colonialism on the Indian economy, culture, and identity, as did millions of other Indians. What made Gandhi unique was the fact that he also saw the enormously negative impact the diversity of the Indian population had on the struggle for Indian independence; divisions were rife between Hindus, Muslims, and dozens of other faiths, and the population was divided into hundreds of different ethnic groups, each with its own traditions and culture, and each unwilling to unite with other groups for the common cause of a free India. The caste

system in India, as a long-standing social stratification system that placed severe and often permanent social restrictions on individuals according to which social classes they were born into, also played a large role in dividing Indian society. Gandhi recognized that these divisions were what weakened India's chances to effectively oppose British imperialism and establish independence. As nationalism and independence movements began forming and spreading in the mid and late 1800s, Gandhi was able to unite these various ethnic groups, religious groups, and social groups and lead a unified Indian independence movement. The impact that Gandhi made was lasting, and his legacy can still be seen today. Gandhi was not a theorist or scholar in the traditional sense, and never professed to be one; he prided himself on instead being a reformer and a true activist, for he famously stated that I am not built for academic writings. Action is my domain. And yet, the action that Gandhi spoke of was not the violent and terror-invoking action that many other resistance movements took elsewhere in the world; Gandhi was guided by strict values, principles, and ideas of peace and nonviolence that remained remarkably enduring throughout his life. Mahatma Gandhi: The Life and Legacy of the Father of India chronicles the life and career of the man who shaped civil disobedience in the 20th century and led his country to independence. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Gandhi like never before, in no time at all.

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