

## THE READING / TAPESCRIP

Mohandas "Mahatma" Gandhi was India's most important political and spiritual leader. He still is honored in India as Father of the Nation. His non-violent protests led to independence for India from the British. His beliefs and actions have inspired civil rights movements across the globe. He is an icon of world peace. His birthday, 2<sup>nd</sup> of October, is commemorated worldwide as the International Day of Non-Violence.

Gandhi was born in Gujarat, Western India, in 1869. He grew up surrounded by religious traditions of compassion, vegetarianism, and tolerance for all people. He got married at the age of 13. When he was 19, he went to London to study law. He returned to India to practice as a lawyer but British officials hampered him, so he accepted a job in South Africa.

In South Africa, Gandhi faced discrimination and hardship wherever he went. White people treated him as a third-class citizen. This awakened in him questions about social justice and the role of the British in India. He returned to India in 1915, ready to put to work the concept of passive resistance he developed in South Africa.

Between 1916 and 1945, Gandhi campaigned tirelessly to set India free from British rule. He started by leading protests against British taxes and property owners, and walked across India encouraging non-cooperation with the British. He was arrested and imprisoned for creating unrest. Gandhi's fame spread all over the nation. In 1948, he was assassinated. Two years later, India became an independent republic.

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