

# Long Walk to Freedom

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## Summary of the Chapter

Nelson Mandela was born on July 18, 1918. He was the first South African President to be elected in a fully representative democratic election.

In life, every man has twin obligations: obligations to his family, to his parents, to his wife and children; and he has an obligation to his people, his community and his country. In a civil and humane society, each man is able to fulfill those obligations according to his own inclinations and abilities. But in a country like South Africa, it was almost impossible for a man of my birth and colour to fulfill both of those obligations.

In South Africa, a man of colour who attempted to live as a human being was punished and isolated. In South Africa, a man who tried to fulfil his duty to his people was inevitably ripped from his family and his home and was forced to live a life apart, a twilight existence of secrecy and rebellion.

He said as quoted, "I did not in the beginning choose to place my people above my family, but in attempting to serve my people, I found that I was prevented from fulfilling my obligations as a son, a brother, a father and a husband."

"I was not born with a hunger to be free. I was born free — free in every way that I could know. Free to run in the fields near my mother's hut, free to swim in the clear stream that ran through my village, free to roast mealies under the stars and ride the broad backs of slow-moving bulls. As long as I obeyed my father and abided by the customs of my tribe, I was not troubled by the laws of man or God."

"It was only when I began to learn that my boyhood freedom was an illusion, when I discovered as a young man that my freedom had already been taken from me, that I began to hunger for it. At first, as a student, I wanted freedom only for myself, the transitory freedoms of being able to stay out at night, read what I pleased and go where I chose."

"Later, as a young man in Johannesburg, I yearned for the basic and honourable freedoms of achieving my potential, of earning my keep, of marrying and having a family — the freedom not to be obstructed in a lawful life. But then I slowly saw that not only was I not free, but my brothers and sisters were not free. I saw that it was not just my freedom that was curtailed, but the freedom of everyone who looked like I did. That is when I joined the

African National Congress, and that is when the hunger for my own freedom became the greater hunger for the freedom of my people."

"It was this desire for the freedom of my people to live their lives with dignity and self-respect that animated my life, that transformed a frightened young man into a bold one, that drove a law-abiding attorney to become a criminal, that turned a family-loving husband into a man without a home, that forced a life-loving man to live like a monk."

"I am no more virtuous or self-sacrificing than the next man, but I found that I could not even enjoy the poor and limited freedoms I was allowed when I knew my people were not free. Freedom is indivisible; the chains on anyone of my people were the chains on all of them, the chains on all of my people were the chains on me. I knew that the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed."

"A man who takes away another man's freedom is a prisoner of hatred; he is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else's freedom, just as surely as I am not free when my freedom is taken from me. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity."

### **Quick Revision Notes**

- Nelson Mandela swears in as the first black president of South Africa on 10th May 1994.
- At the time of his swearing two national anthems were sung. He wished that freedom in Africa should reign.
- The swearing in ceremony took place in the lovely sandstone amphitheater in Pretoria
- He addressed the rainbow gathering with a zest telling that never, never, and never again should it be that that beautiful land would experience the oppression of one by another.
- He wished that freedom in Africa should reign.

- The army officials who could have caught him and put him in jail before were saluting him to pay respect to the newly born democracy.
- The two national anthems were sung at the time of his swearing in ceremony.
- He recalls back the history and pays homage to the national martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the sake of their motherland.
- He tells about the martyrs were the man of extraordinary courage and wisdom and generosity.
- That's why he pays homage to the national martyrs who sacrifice their lives for the sake of their motherland.
- The country of South Africa is rich in minerals and gems but the greatest wealth of country is its people.
- He tells no one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background , or his religion.
- If people learn to hate, they can be taught to love too.
- He talks that man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never exhausted.
- He talks about the twin obligations-obligation towards his family & obligation towards his nation.
- While discharging his duties he found he was not free. Hence, he joined African National Congress fought for the freedom of his country.
- He well known about the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed.
- The oppressor and oppressed are alike are robbed of their humanity.