

# **Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom**

## **Introduction**

The present chapter is an extract from the autobiography of Nelson Mandela titled, 'Long Walk to Freedom'. In this chapter, there is a glimpse of the inauguration ceremony of the first non-racial government of South Africa along with the memories of past.

## **Summary**

10 May 1994, will be written in golden script in the history of South Africa. On that day, Nelson Mandela became the first black President of South Africa and the country got the chance to be a part of world community after almost eighty years.

The ceremony was organised at a beautiful amphitheatre. Representatives from different countries attended it. Thabo Mbeki was sworn in as the first Deputy President. When it was Nelson Mandela's turn, he swore his loyalty towards the Constitution. He devoted himself for the welfare of humanity.

He discussed in his speech the past, the present and the future. He focused on an incredible human disaster which took place in South Africa. He pointed towards 'apartheid'—a political system that discriminates amongst people according to their race. He promised that he would free his people from all discrimination. He said, 'Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another.'

While remembering the history, he wrote that in the first decade of the twentieth century, a few years after the Anglo-Boer War, the white-skinned people of South Africa erected a system of racial domination against the dark-skinned people of their own land. This system proved to be one of the most inhumane systems of the world. But this has changed forever.

He writes that there is no scarcity of gems in his country but his most precious stones are his own people. He has learnt that absence of fear is not courage rather the triumph over it. According to him, if people are taught to hate others, they can be taught to love others also.

Every individual has two types of obligations—one is towards his own family and another is towards his community and nation. Nelson Mandela realises that during the long walk to freedom he had to leave behind his family.



He remembers that his feelings for freedom were not inherited since childhood. As he grew old, he came to know that not only he but also the members of his family, his neighbours and his community were leashed and not free. Then, he started his struggle for freedom.

## Message

This autobiographical piece gives the message of peace and equality among mankind and the necessity of freedom for people.



## Extract Based Questions

### 1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Tenth May dawned bright and clear. For the past few days I had been pleasantly besieged by dignitaries and world leaders who were coming to pay their respects before the inauguration. The inauguration would be the largest gathering ever of international leaders on South African soil.

The ceremonies took place in the lovely sandstone amphitheatre formed by the Union Buildings in Pretoria. For decades this had been the seat of white supremacy, and now it was the site of a rainbow gathering of different colours and nations for the installation of South Africa's first democratic, non-racial government.

#### (a) The ceremony took place on:

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| (i) 9 May   | (ii) 12 May |
| (iii) 8 May | (iv) 10 May |

#### (b) Describe the inauguration ceremony.

#### (c) The author was about to become the:

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| (i) Vice President   | (ii) President     |
| (iii) Prime Minister | (iv) None of these |

#### (d) By whom was the author surrounded?

## Answers

(a) (iv) 10 May

(b) The inauguration ceremony was held on 10 May, 1994 in the Union Building's amphitheatre in Pretoria. It was attended by politicians and dignitaries from more than 140 countries. It was the largest gathering ever of international leaders on South African soil.

(c) (ii) President

(d) The author was surrounded by the dignitaries and world leaders.

### 2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

On the day of the inauguration, I was overwhelmed with a sense of history. In the first decade of the twentieth century, a few years after the bitter Anglo-Boer War and before my own birth, the white-skinned peoples of South Africa patched up their differences and erected a system of racial domination against the dark-skinned people of their own land. The structure they created formed the basis of one of the harshest, most inhumane societies the world has ever known. Now, in the last decade of the twentieth century and my own eighth decade as a man, that system had been overturned forever and replaced by one that recognised the rights and freedoms of all peoples, regardless of the colour of their skin.

#### (a) Who was overwhelmed with a sense of history?

#### (b) State whether the given statement is True or False.

The author is in his own sixth decade.

#### (c) What did the new system recognise?

#### (d) Complete the analogy with a word from the text:

bitter : cruel :: callous : .....

## Answers

(a) The author, Nelson Mandela, was overwhelmed with a sense of history.

(b) False

(c) The new system recognised the rights and freedoms of all people regardless of the colour of their skin.

(d) Inhumane

### 3. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

To the assembled guests and the watching world, I said: Today, all of us do, by our presence here..... confer glory and hope to newborn liberty. Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster that lasted too long, must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud. We, who were outlaws not so long ago, have today been given the rare privilege to be host to the nations of the world on our own soil. We thank all of our distinguished international guests for having come to take possession with the people of our country of what is, after all, a common victory for justice, for peace, for human dignity. (CBSE 2023)

#### (a) A society that ..... was born out of human disaster.

- |   |
|---|
| (i) all humanity would be proud of            |
| (ii) was full of extraordinary human disaster |
| (iii) was full of outlaws and fighters        |
| (iv) hosts nations on their soil              |

#### (b) The former outlaws were given the privilege of .....

- |   |
|---|
| (i) getting citizenship of their country            |
| (ii) participating in a trade conclave              |
| (iii) finalising the foreign policy                 |
| (iv) hosting the nations of the world on their soil |

#### (c) The speaker was overwhelmed with the sense of .....

- |                  |
|------------------|
| (i) gratitude    |
| (ii) achievement |
| (iii) happiness  |
| (iv) charity     |



(d) State whether the following statement is True or False:

The common victory was when South Africa did not become an independent nation.

(e) The noun form of the word 'confer' is:

- (i) conferring (ii) confident
- (iii) conference (iv) configuring

### Answers

- (a) (i) all humanity would be proud of
- (b) (iv) hosting the nations of the world on their soil
- (c) (i) gratitude
- (d) False
- (e) (iii) conference

4. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

A few moments later we all lifted our eyes in awe as a spectacular array of South African jets, helicopters and troop carriers roared in perfect formation over the Union Buildings. It was not only a display of pinpoint precision and military force, but a demonstration of the military's loyalty to democracy, to a new government that had been freely and fairly elected. Only moments before, the highest generals of the South African defence force and police, their chests bedecked with ribbons and medals from days gone by, saluted me and pledged their loyalty.

(a) It was a display of:

- (i) precision (ii) military force
- (iii) loyalty to democracy (iv) All of these

(b) Why did the audience lift their eyes in awe?

(c) Who is the speaker here?

- (i) Walter Sisulu (ii) Zenani
- (iii) Thabo Mbeki (iv) Nelson Mandela

(d) How had the new government been elected?

### Answers

- (a) (iv) All of these
- (b) The audience lifted their eyes in awe because a spectacular array of South African jets, helicopters and troop carriers roared in perfect formation over the Union Buildings.
- (c) (iv) Nelson Mandela
- (d) The new government had been elected freely and fairly.

5. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite. Even in the grimmest times in prison, when my comrades and I were pushed to our limits, I would see a glimmer of humanity in one of the guards, perhaps just for a second, but it was enough to reassure me and keep me going. Man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished.

(a) What comes naturally to the human heart?

(b) State whether the given statement is True or False.

A few people are born hating another person.

(c) People must learn to hate. Elaborate.

(d) Which word in the extract is opposite in meaning to the word 'exposed'?

### Answers

- (a) Love comes naturally to the human heart.
- (b) False
- (c) According to the author, Nelson Mandela, no one is born hating another person. Person must learn to hate, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than hate.
- (d) hidden

6. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

But the decades of oppression and brutality had another unintended effect, and that was that it produced the Oliver Tambo, the Walter Sisulu, the Chief Luthuli, the Yusuf Dadoo, the Bram Fischers, the Robert Sobukwe of our times—men of such extraordinary courage, wisdom and generosity that their like may never be known again. Perhaps it requires such depths of oppression to create such heights of character. My country is rich in the minerals and gems that lie beneath its soil, but I have always known that its greatest wealth is its people, finer and truer than the purest diamonds. It is from these comrades in the struggle that I learned the meaning of courage.

Time and again, I have seen men and women risk and give their lives for an idea. (CBSE SQP 2021 Term-1, Modified)

(a) What was the unintended effect of the long oppression?

- (i) It made the people indifferent to injustice.
- (ii) It made the people reject oppression.
- (iii) It influenced a generation to fight against.
- (iv) It made people accept their oppression.

(b) Fill in the blank with one word only:

Nelson Mandela compares ..... to diamonds.

(c) When Nelson Mandela says, "I have seen men and women risk and give their lives for an idea", he means that they are .....

- (i) stubborn
- (ii) committed
- (iii) intelligent
- (iv) proud

(d) To whom does 'men of such extraordinary courage' refer?

### Answers

- (a) (iii) It influenced a generation to fight against injustice.
- (b) his countrymen
- (c) (ii) committed
- (d) 'Men of such extraordinary courage' refers to the people who demonstrated utmost strength to oppose the system.



## Short Answer Type Questions

**Q 1. What did the South African jets, helicopters and troops demonstrate?**

**Ans.** South African jets, helicopters and troop carriers roared in perfect formation over the Union Buildings. It was a show of pinpoint precision and military's loyalty to the country and its democracy.

**Q 2. Name the two anthems sung on the day of oath-taking ceremony.**

**Ans.** On the day of oath-taking ceremony, two anthems were sung; 'Nkosi Sikelel-iAfrika' and 'Die Stem'. 'Die Stem' was the oldest anthem of the country. Both blacks and whites jointly sang these anthems.

**Q 3. At the beginning of his speech, Mandela mentions 'an extraordinary human disaster'. What does he mean by this? What is the 'glorious human achievement' he speaks of at the end?**

**Ans.** By an extraordinary human disaster, he means the apartheid policy of the white race against the black people.

The achievement he talks about is getting political independence from the white rule by the black natives and ending the policy of apartheid.

**Q 4. What is meant by apartheid?**

**Ans.** 'Apartheid' is a political system that discriminates amongst people according to their race. In this system, the black-coloured people in South Africa had no freedom to discharge their personal and social obligations.

**Q 5. What do the military generals do? How has their attitude changed, and why?**

**Ans.** The military generals saluted President Nelson Mandela and pledged their loyalty towards him. This was in stark contrast of their attitude a few years back when they would have arrested Mandela. Their attitude has changed because there is no more racial discrimination in South Africa.

**Q 6. Why did such a large number of international leaders attend the inauguration? What did it signify the triumph of?**

**Ans.** Such a large number of international leaders attended the inauguration to mark the occasion of installation of South Africa's first democratic non-racial government memorable. It signified the triumph of justice, peace and human dignity.

**Q 7. What did being free mean to Mandela as a boy and as a student? How does he contrast these 'transitory freedoms' with 'the basic and honourable freedoms'?**

**Ans.** Being free as a boy meant to Mandela doing things such as running in the fields, swimming in the river and riding on the back of slow moving bulls. Being free as a student meant to Mandela to stay out at night, to read what he pleased and to go where he

chose. He contrasts these transitory freedoms with the basic and honourable freedoms of living with dignity and self-respect.

**Q 8. What changed Nelson Mandela as a fearful young man into a bold one?**

**Ans.** Nelson Mandela wanted freedom for his country and his countrymen. The desire for freedom of his people changed him into a bold man. He wanted his people to live their lives with dignity and self-respect and to achieve this he was ready to risk his life.

**Q 9. How did Mandela's 'hunger for freedom' change his life?**

**Ans.** It was Mandela's hunger for the freedom of his people, to live their lives with dignity and self-respect, that animated his life. This hunger changed a fearful young man into a bold one. This drove a law-abiding attorney to become a criminal. This changed a family-loving husband into a man without home. This forced a life-loving man to live like a monk.

**Q 10. How does Mandela define 'courage' and 'the brave man'?**

**Ans.** Mandela defines 'courage' as not the absence of fear but as the triumph over it. Also, according to him, a 'brave man' is not he who does not feel fear of any kind. He is the one who conquers fear.

**Q 11. What did Mandela think about the oppressor and the oppressed?**

**Ans.** Mandela thought that the oppressor and the oppressed were both equally robbed. The oppressor is a prisoner of hatred. He is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. The oppressed is one whose freedom has been taken away forcibly. They both are without freedom. So, both of them must be liberated.

**Q 12. What unintended effect was produced by decades of oppression?**

**Ans.** Decades of oppression and brutality in South Africa had an unintended effect. The unintended effect was that it produced great leaders like Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulus, Yusuf Dadoo, Bram Fischers, Robert Sobukwe, etc. These leaders were courageous, wise and generous and it is doubtful whether such men will be born in future.

**Q 13. What does Mandela mean when he says he is 'simply the sum of all those African patriots' who had gone before him?**

**Ans.** When Mandela says that he is simply the sum of all those African patriots who had gone before him, he means that he has learnt a lot from those patriots and has adopted all the essential qualities from them to fight against the racial government of South Africa.

**Q 14. How does Mandela describe the systems of government in his country: (i) in the first decade, and (ii) in the final decade, of the twentieth century?**



**Ans.** According to Mandela, the system of government in the first decade was based on erecting a system of racial domination against the dark-skinned people of their own land. In the last decade of the twentieth century, that system had been overturned and in place of a racial government, a democratic government had been established.

**Q 15. What is the dream of Nelson Mandela for the future of South Africa?**

**Ans.** In his address, Nelson Mandela sees a bright future of the country. He promises that under his presidency, the country shall never face the oppression of one by another. It shall always progress further. Freedom shall rule. All people shall be free to do what they like.

## Long Answer Type Questions

**Q 1. Describe the inauguration ceremony in brief.**

**Ans.** The inauguration ceremony was held on 10 May, 1994 in the Union Building's amphitheatre in Pretoria. It was attended by politicians and dignitaries from more than 140 countries. It was the largest gathering ever of international leaders on South African soil. Mr de Klerk was first sworn in as second deputy president. Then, Thabo Mbeki was sworn in as first deputy president. After that Nelson Mandela was sworn in as the President and he gave his speech. There was also a spectacular display of formations formed by South African jets, helicopters and troop carriers. The inauguration ceremony was also symbolised by the playing of the two national anthems of South Africa.

**Q 2. What does Nelson Mandela mean by an 'extraordinary human disaster'?**

**Ans.** By an 'extraordinary human disaster' Nelson Mandela means the apartheid policy of the white race against the black people. For long the white people ruled South Africa. They snatched freedom from the coloured race to whom South Africa belonged. The black people were subjected to oppression for long. They didn't have any freedom to discharge their obligations to their own families and their own community and country. They yearned for the basic and honourable freedom of living their own lawful lives. The white rulers had no compassion for them. The blacks lived the life of a slave.

**Q 3. 'I was not born with a hunger to be free.' When did Mandela feel a hunger for freedom?**

**Ans.** Nelson Mandela was not born with a hunger to be free. As a boy, he enjoyed the freedoms known to him. He was free to run in the fields near his mother's hut, free to swim in the clear stream that ran through his village, free to roast mealies under the stars and ride the broad backs of slow-moving bulls. But as he grew he learnt that his boyhood

freedom was an illusion and that his freedom had already been taken away from him by the white colonial rulers. It was at this time that he began to feel a hunger for freedom. At first, as a student, Mandela wanted freedom only for himself. He wanted the freedom of being able to stay out at night, read what he pleased and go where he chose. Later, as a young man, he yearned for the basic and honourable freedoms of achieving his potential, of earning his keep, of marrying and having a family. But then he realised that his fellow beings and countrymen were also not free. It was then that the hunger for his own freedom became the greater hunger for the freedom of his people.

**Q 4. According to Nelson Mandela, which two obligations does every man have in life? How could a man not fulfil these obligations in a country like South Africa?**

OR

**What according to Nelson Mandela are a man's twin obligations?** (CBSE 2019)

**Ans.** According to Nelson Mandela, every man has the following two obligations in his life:

- (i) Obligations to his family—to his parents, to his wife and children.
- (ii) Obligation to his people, his community, his country.

In a civil and humane society, each man can fulfil these obligations according to his own inclinations and abilities. But a man could not fulfil these obligations in a country like South Africa which was not independent and which followed the policy of apartheid.

Here, a black man who tried to live as a human being, was punished and isolated.

A man who tried to fulfil his duty to his family and people was unavoidably torn away from his home and was forced to live a life behind the bars.

**Q 5. 'Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom' describes the freedom and what value it has for all the living beings. Describe the value of freedom for the human beings and how it is important for the growth of civilisation and humanism.** (CBSE 2017)

**Ans.** All humans and other living beings are born free. But sometimes they are denied this basic right. Therefore, the value of freedom is known more to those who are not free. For instance, its value is known better to Nelson Mandela who lived a major part of his life in prison or its value is known to the coloured people of South Africa who were not allowed to fulfil their basic obligations.

The value of freedom for human beings is described with the help of the following points:

- (i) Freedom helps an individual to live his life with dignity and self-respect.
- (ii) Freedom is indivisible. It cannot be extended in parts. Even if one individual is denied freedom, then it means that all are chained.



(iii) Freedom helps an individual to fulfil his obligations towards his family, his people, his community and his country.

Freedom is having an ability to act or change without constraint. A free person is able to make his own choices. He chooses only that alternative which benefits him and his family. This results in his growth and development. An individual's growth ultimately results in the growth of the civilisation and humanism. Hence, it can be said that freedom is important for the growth of civilisation and humanism.

**Q 6. India is a country of unity in diversity—there are different languages, traditions, attires, castes and cultures. Do you find any sort of discrimination in India? Explain.**

**Ans.** India is a diverse country. It has different languages, traditions, dresses, castes and cultures. Even then India has unity in diversity. Its Constitution gives equality to every citizen. There is no place for colour prejudice in it. In India, everyone has a right to get education, to appear in competitions and to live at any place. There is no discrimination among Indians on the basis of caste, creed and colour. Indians can live in any state and they can marry in any caste. Initially, the Indian society also faced the problem of untouchability. People belonging to scheduled castes and tribes were not allowed in certain areas and in places of religious importance. However leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Ambedkar worked to end this social evil. It was due to their efforts that our Constitution has declared untouchability a criminal offence. So, presently we do not find any sort of discrimination, on lawful grounds, in India.

**Q 7. Mandela said, "People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love." Discuss.** (CBSE 2023)

**OR**

**"No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background or his religion." Do you agree? Elaborate on the basis of the chapter "Nelson Mandela—Long Walk to Freedom".** (CBSE 2023)

**Ans.** The statement "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background or his religion" is a powerful assertion by Mandela. It emphasises the idea that hate and prejudice are learned behaviours and not innate characteristics and if a person can learn to hate, he can also learn to love. This statement is supported by the life and struggles of Nelson Mandela.

Nelson Mandela was born in a country that was divided by racial segregation and discrimination. As a black man, he experienced first hand the injustice and inequality of the apartheid system in South Africa. However, as a child, he was not born with the hatred and prejudice that characterised the society in which he lived. Instead, he was taught these beliefs through the social and political systems that existed at the time.

Throughout his life, Mandela fought against the system of apartheid and worked tirelessly to end the division and discrimination that existed in South Africa. He understood that hate and prejudice were learned behaviours and that it was possible to overcome them through education, understanding and compassion. In this way, love can take the place of hate as it comes more naturally to the human heart.

**Q 8. You have been chosen to address a student gathering from the neighbourhood schools, to speak on the resilience of human spirit required to transcend discrimination. Prepare the speech draft, with reference to the commonality of themes in Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom and The Trees by Adrienne Rich.**

**You may begin this way:**

**Good morning, everyone. Today, I'd like to discuss two pieces of literature that offer a powerful insight into the resilience of the human spirit required to transcend discrimination.**

**You may end this way.**

**To conclude, I'd like to say that ...**

**Thank you**

(CBSE SQP 2023-24)

**Ans.** Good morning, everyone.

Today, I'd like to discuss two pieces of literature that offer a powerful insight into the resilience of the human spirit required to transcend discrimination. Both works share some of the common themes.

Both Mandela's excerpt and Rich's poem address the issue of discrimination. Mandela speaks of how his own experiences of discrimination made him more determined to fight against it. Similarly, Rich's poem acknowledges the discrimination faced by trees, which are often overlooked and undervalued.

Both pieces of literature highlight the hard work and sacrifices required to achieve equality. Mandela describes his long and difficult journey towards freedom, including his time spent in prison. In the same way, Rich's poem speaks of the efforts required to protect trees and nature, highlighting the importance of activism and advocacy.

Despite the challenges faced, both Mandela's excerpt and Rich's poem showcase the resilience of the human spirit. Mandela's perseverance and unwavering determination to fight against discrimination, even in the face of great adversity, inspire us to do the same. Rich's poem also speaks about the resilience of nature, which continues to thrive even in the face of human neglect and disregard.

To conclude, I'd like to say that the common themes of transcending discrimination and the efforts involved in achieving equality are prevalent in both these pieces of literature and remind us of the strength of the human spirit and the importance of standing up for what we believe in, even when faced with obstacles.

Thank you.