

Dr. BRR GOVT DEGREE COLLEGE JADCHERLA

Department of English



A PROJECT REPORT

ON

Shyness My Shield

-M.K. Gandhi

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DECLARATION

We are hereby declare that the study project: **Shyness My Shield**

is a record of work done by us under the supervision of **R.ANITHA**, faculty of English, Government Degree College, Jadcherla, Mahabubnagar District and that the project has not been previously done by any others in this college and any other college/University.

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CERTIFICATE

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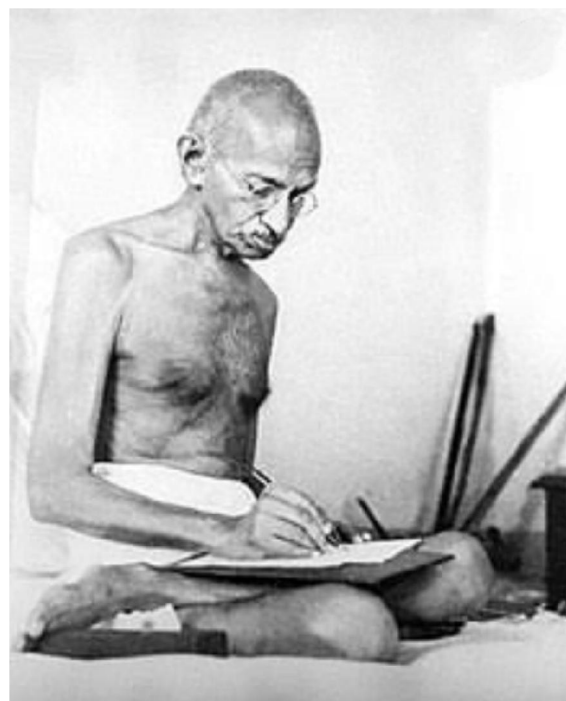
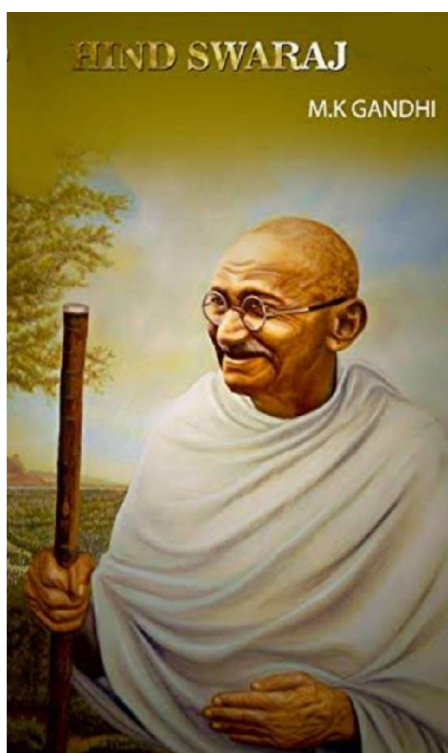
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Shyness My Shield

-M.K. Gandhi

ABOUT THE AUTHOR M K GANDHI



Mahatma Gandhi, byname of **Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi**, (born October 2, 1869, Porbandar, India—died January 30, 1948, Delhi), [Indian](#) lawyer, politician, social activist, and writer who became the leader of the nationalist movement against the [British rule](#) of [India](#). As such, he came to be considered the father of his [country](#). [Gandhi](#) is internationally esteemed for his [doctrine](#) of [nonviolent protest](#) ([satyagraha](#)) to achieve political and social progress.

In the eyes of millions of his fellow Indians, Gandhi was the Mahatma (“Great Soul”). The unthinking adoration of the huge crowds that gathered to see him all along the route of his tours made them a severe ordeal; he could hardly work during the day or rest at night. “The woes of the Mahatmas,” he wrote, “are known only to the Mahatmas.” His fame spread worldwide during his lifetime and only increased after his death. The name Mahatma Gandhi is now one of the most universally recognized on earth.

Youth

Gandhi was the youngest child of his father’s fourth wife. His father—Karamchand Gandhi, who was the *dewan* (chief minister) of [Porbandar](#), the capital of a small principality in western India (in what is now [Gujarat](#) state) under British suzerainty—did not have much in the way of a formal

education. He was, however, an able administrator who knew how to steer his way between the [capricious](#) princes, their long-suffering subjects, and the headstrong British political officers in power.

Gandhi's mother, Putlibai, was completely absorbed in [religion](#), did not care much for finery or jewelry, divided her time between her home and the temple, fasted frequently, and wore herself out in days and nights of nursing whenever there was sickness in the family. Mohandas grew up in a home steeped in [Vaishnavism](#)—worship of the [Hindu](#) god [Vishnu](#)—with a strong tinge of [Jainism](#), a morally rigorous Indian religion whose chief tenets are nonviolence and the belief that everything in the universe is eternal. Thus, he took for granted [ahimsa](#) (noninjury to all living beings), [vegetarianism](#), [fasting](#) for self-purification, and mutual tolerance between adherents of various creeds and sects.



The educational facilities at Porbandar were rudimentary; in the [primary school](#) that Mohandas attended, the children wrote the alphabet in the dust with their fingers. Luckily for him, his father became *dewan* of [Rajkot](#), another princely state. Though Mohandas occasionally won prizes and scholarships at the local schools, his record was on the whole [mediocre](#). One of the terminal reports rated him as “good at English, fair in Arithmetic and weak in Geography; conduct very good, bad handwriting.” He was married at the age of 13 and thus lost a year at school. A [diffident](#) child, he shone neither in the classroom nor on the playing field. He loved to go out on long solitary walks

when he was not nursing his by then ailing father (who died soon thereafter) or helping his mother with her household chores.

He had learned, in his words, “to carry out the orders of the elders, not to scan them.” With such extreme passivity, it is not surprising that he should have gone through a phase of adolescent rebellion, marked by secret [atheism](#), petty thefts, furtive smoking, and—most shocking of all for a boy born in a Vaishnava family—meat eating. His [adolescence](#) was probably no stormier than that of most children of his age and class. What was extraordinary was the way his youthful transgressions ended.

In 1887 Mohandas scraped through the matriculation examination of the University of Bombay (now [University of Mumbai](#)) and joined Samaldas College in [Bhavnagar](#) (Bhaunagar). As he had to suddenly switch from his native language—[Gujarati](#)—to English, he found it rather difficult to follow the lectures.

Years in South Africa

Africa was to present to Gandhi [challenges](#) and opportunities that he could hardly have conceived. In the end he would spend more than two decades there, returning to India only briefly in 1896–97. The youngest two of his four children were born there.

“The saint has left our shores,” Smuts wrote to a friend on Gandhi’s departure from South Africa for India, in July 1914, “I hope for ever.” A quarter century later, he wrote that it had been his “fate to be the [antagonist](#) of a man for whom even then I had the highest respect.” Once, during his not-infrequent stays in jail, Gandhi had prepared a pair of sandals for Smuts, who recalled that there was no hatred and personal ill-feeling between them, and when the fight was over “there was the atmosphere in which a decent peace could be concluded.”



Emergence as nationalist leader

By the autumn of 1920, Gandhi was the dominant figure on the political stage, commanding an influence never before attained by any political leader in [India](#) or perhaps in any other [country](#). He refashioned the 35-year-old [Indian National Congress](#) (Congress Party) into an effective political instrument of Indian nationalism: from a three-day Christmas-week picnic of the upper middle class

in one of the principal cities of India, it became a mass organization with its roots in small towns and villages. Gandhi's message was simple: it was not British guns but imperfections of Indians themselves that kept their country in bondage. His program, the nonviolent [noncooperation movement](#) against the British government, included [boycotts](#) not only of British manufactures but of institutions operated or aided by the British in India: legislatures, courts, offices, schools. The campaign electrified the country, broke the spell of fear of foreign rule, and led to the arrests of thousands of *satyagrahis*, who defied laws and cheerfully lined up for prison. In February 1922 the movement seemed to be on the crest of a rising wave, but, alarmed by a violent outbreak in [Chauri Chaura](#), a remote village in eastern India, Gandhi decided to call off mass [civil disobedience](#). That was a blow to many of his followers, who feared that his self-imposed restraints and scruples would reduce the nationalist struggle to pious futility. Gandhi himself was arrested on March 10, 1922, tried for sedition, and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. He was released in February 1924, after undergoing surgery for [appendicitis](#). The political landscape had changed in his absence. The Congress Party had split into two factions, one under [Chitta Ranjan Das](#) and [Motilal Nehru](#) (the father of [Jawaharlal Nehru](#), India's first prime minister) favouring the entry of the party into legislatures and the other under [Chakravarti Rajagopalachari](#) and [Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel](#) opposing it. Worst of all, the unity between Hindus and Muslims of the heyday of the noncooperation movement of 1920–22 had dissolved. Gandhi tried to draw the warring [communities](#) out of their suspicion and fanaticism by reasoning and persuasion. Finally, after a serious outbreak of communal unrest, he undertook a three-week fast in the autumn of 1924 to arouse the people into following the path of nonviolence. In December 1924 he was named president of the Congress Party, and he served for a year.

Return to party leadership

During the mid-1920s Gandhi took little interest in active politics and was considered a spent force. In 1927, however, the British government appointed a [constitutional](#) reform commission under [Sir John Simon](#), a prominent English lawyer and politician, that did not contain a single Indian. When the Congress and other parties [boycotted](#) the commission, the political tempo rose. At the Congress session (meeting) at Calcutta in December 1928, Gandhi put forth the crucial resolution demanding [dominion](#) status from the British government within a year under threat of a nationwide nonviolent campaign for complete independence. Henceforth, Gandhi was back as the leading voice of the Congress Party. In March 1930 he launched the [Salt March](#), a satyagraha against the British-imposed tax on salt, which affected the poorest section of the [community](#). One of the most spectacular and successful campaigns in Gandhi's nonviolent war against the British raj, it resulted in the imprisonment of more than 60,000 people. A year later, after talks with the [viceroy](#), [Lord Irwin](#) (later Lord [Halifax](#)), Gandhi accepted a truce (the [Gandhi-Irwin Pact](#)), called off civil disobedience, and agreed to attend the [Round Table Conference](#) in [London](#) as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress.

The conference, which concentrated on the problem of the Indian minorities rather than on the transfer of power from the British, was a great disappointment to the Indian nationalists. Moreover, when Gandhi returned to India in December 1931, he found his party facing an all-out offensive from Lord Irwin's successor as viceroy, Lord Willingdon, who unleashed the sternest repression in the history of the nationalist movement. Gandhi was once more imprisoned, and the government tried to insulate him from the outside world and to destroy his influence. That was not an easy task. Gandhi soon regained the [initiative](#). In September 1932, while still a prisoner, he embarked on a fast to protest against the British government's decision to segregate the so-called "[untouchables](#)" (the lowest level of the Indian [caste](#) system; now called Scheduled Castes [official] or [Dalits](#)) by allotting them separate electorates in the new constitution. The fast produced an emotional upheaval in the country, and an [alternative](#) electoral arrangement was jointly and speedily devised by the leaders of the Hindu community and the Dalits and [endorsed](#) by the British government. The fast became the starting point of a vigorous campaign for the removal of the disenfranchisement of the Dalits, whom Gandhi referred to as Harijans, or "children of God."

In 1934 Gandhi resigned not only as the leader but also as a member of the Congress Party. He had come to believe that its leading members had adopted nonviolence as a political expedient and not as the fundamental creed it was for him. In place of political activity he then concentrated on his “constructive programme” of building the nation “from the bottom up”—educating rural India, which accounted for 85 percent of the population; continuing his fight against untouchability; promoting hand spinning, [weaving](#), and other cottage industries to supplement the earnings of the underemployed peasantry; and evolving a system of education best suited to the needs of the people. Gandhi himself went to live at [Sevagram](#), a village in central India, which became the centre of his program of social and economic uplift.

The last phase

With the outbreak of [World War II](#), the nationalist struggle in India entered its last crucial phase. Gandhi hated [fascism](#) and all it stood for, but he also hated war. The Indian National Congress, on the other hand, was not committed to [pacifism](#) and was prepared to support the British war effort if Indian self-government was assured. Once more Gandhi became politically active. The failure of the mission of [Sir Stafford Cripps](#), a British cabinet minister who went to India in March 1942 with an offer that Gandhi found unacceptable, the British equivocation on the transfer of power to Indian hands, and the encouragement given by high British officials to [conservative](#) and communal forces promoting [discord](#) between Muslims and Hindus impelled Gandhi to demand in the summer of 1942 an immediate British withdrawal from India—what became known as the Quit India Movement.



Pune, Maharashtra, India: Gandhi Memorial Stone

Gandhi Memorial Stone, Gandhi National Memorial, Pune, Maharashtra, India.

Shyness My Shield

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION:

It reveals his situation in London and his efforts to overcome shyness and realizing his shyness has helped him in discernment of truth.

EXPLANATION :

Gandhi was a member of the vegetarian society in London and President of the Society was Mr. Hills , a puritan . As Mr. Hills supports financially , no one speaks against him . He could not support Dr. Allinson , a supporter of vegetarianism , was in favor of birth control movement , which is anti - puritan . Gandhiji was too shy to speak at meetings . He shivered to speak in the meeting to promote vegetarianism at Ventnor . He made himself ridiculous while speaking in his last meeting departure from London . He said that his constitutional shyness was not a disadvantage as it taught him economy of words . It helped him in limiting his thoughts . He never uttered or wrote impromptu . He never regretted anything after he spoke or wrote .

CONCLUSION:

He says that silence is not his weakness but a part of spiritual discipline . A man of few words will rarely be thoughtless in his speech . He admits that his shyness was once an annoyance and later a pleasure . He concludes that his shyness is his shield and buckler . In his own words . " My shyness has been in reality my shield and buckler . It has allowed me to grow . It has helped me in my discernment of truth . "