

Chapter II

Mandela and Gandhi: The Men and Authors

Life of the two Icons: Influences in making of their minds

Born and bred in humble families, both M.K. Gandhi and Nelson Mandela had observed from close – the exploitation, the discrimination, the neglect, the poverty and the misery of the people among whom they lived. Both could very soon diagnose that all these inflictions were not natural but the handiwork of man himself – an oppressor’s designs on an oppressed – the oppressor making an optimum use of the energy of the masses in order to enlarge his own horizon of comfort, luxury and sadist pleasure. Touched and moved by the problems and misery of their fellow people, both these leaders took upon themselves the challenge to end all kinds of discrimination and build a society and a nation where all would live peacefully – untouched by any of the evil discriminations based on colour, caste, community or religion. Imbued with humanitarian zeal, both the leaders placed the interests of their individual families behind, relinquished comforts, risked their own lives and sacrificed all that a man would yearn for, in a family and society.

Gandhi and Mandela led the masses to struggle, guided the people to fight, kindled in them a hope for the assertion of self, and aroused in them a wish to sustain. People could realise a presence in themselves, of potential and energy, and they could see in Gandhi and Mandela, in their respective countries, a saviour and

messiah who could guide them successfully to breaking the strong walls of discrimination and could make them enjoy the pleasures of breathing in an air of freedom, untouched by the consciousness of caste or colour. The two leaders made the people believe that the attainment of freedom was essential to secure selfhood. They cured the psyche of the people who had the belief that it was their destiny to suffer and to be exploited and discriminated against. By organising the masses into a group and leading them from the front, and fighting for a common cause, Gandhi and Mandela became the icons of the people. Their word was taken as final, their voices were heard with patience and people looked in the direction to which these two pointed. They strengthened the people in their wish to fight, prepared them to make sacrifices and made them ready to root out the unjust and inhuman system of discrimination and exploitation.

The strengthening of the masses helped in shaking away the very foundations of a system that had bestowed privileges on only a few and had unjustly subjugated the majority. The two leaders identified the needs of the people, sensitively touched their nerve and stimulated the masses into action, jointly against an oppressor. People united themselves behind these two leaders in their respective countries and in a single voice accepted each of the two as their saviour, messiah and crusader for their cause. A reciprocal system developed – the leaders channelized the potential of the masses to a battle to be fought for their emancipation and the people looked towards them for guidance and leadership. This reciprocity gave strength and impetus to the struggle and struck very hard at the colonial dispensation and shook the very foundations of the unjust rule. Even the Oppressor himself realised the strength of the two leaders which further led to their emergence as the unquestioned heroes of the masses – their icons, the one

(Gandhi) winning the titles of ‘Mahatma’ and the ‘Father of Nation’, and the other (Mandela) winning a noble prize and an election to the highest post of the country.

Formative Influences

Born in a simple family of Porbandar (Gujarat), that held the traditional values high and showed a deep reverence for religion and virtues, Gandhi imbibed the family traits that gave shape to his thoughts at maturity. He was the last son of the fourth wife (Tulsibai) of his father (Karam Chand Gandhi). His father was truthful, brave and impartial, and his mother was a deeply religious woman. Mohan Das was a shy and mediocre student at school and was not given to speaking lies. He was by nature not habitual of finding faults in his elders. The characters of Shravana, a man devoted to unflinching service of his parents and that of Harishchandra, known for his adherence to Truth even in the direst of the circumstances (both the characters taken from the Epics), had a deep influence on Gandhi during his childhood:

Still both Harishchandra and Shravana are living realities for me,
and I am sure I should be moved as before if I were to read those
plays again today. (Gandhi 19)

Truth and devotion to the parents were the traits which became integral to the personality of Gandhi.

Typical contemporary Indian customs prevailed over Gandhi’s life and he was married at a tender age of thirteen, to Kasturbai. He loved Truth even at the beginning of his life, and if ever he was blamed of lying, he felt pained. In his school days, he tried eating meat in spite of the family taboos, and also against the

dictates of the religion that advocated strict abstinence from meat eating. It is interesting to know why Gandhi ate meat. His friend who prompted him to meat-eating had argued:

We are a weak people because we do not eat meat. The English are able to rule over us, because they are meat eaters. (Gandhi 31).

A grudge against the unjust ruler made Gandhi soften his vows and resort to meat eating.

Gandhi, like any other human being, was not devoid of some blemishes of behaviour and habits. He fell a prey to the temptations of smoking at a small age and because of having a sense of guilt gnawing at his heart, even contemplated suicide. A clean confession of all this, and a silent forgiveness granted to him by his father, left an indelible impression on his mind and he viewed in this forgiveness a glowing manifestation of Ahimsa (non-violence).

Hinduism, at its core, had appealed Gandhi in his early life. The holy books of Hindus – *Ramayana* and *Bhagavat Gita* had left a deep impression on Gandhi's mind. This inclination he had inherited from his family. To make a complete assessment of Gandhi's thoughts about religion, it would be proper to take notice of his dislike for Christianity in his early life:

Only Christianity was at the time an exception. I developed a sort of dislike for it. And for a reason. In those days Christian missionaries used to stand in a corner near the high school and hold forth, pouring abuse on Hindus and their Gods. (Gandhi 44)

It needs to be remembered here that the religion of the oppressor was also Christianity.

Influences on Mandela, in his childhood, were mainly the exploitation and the discrimination perpetrated by the privileged few on the blacks, and a reciprocal acceptance by the majority, of their inferiority, just because of their colour. Born in a family connected to Thembu royal house, on 18 July 1918 at Mveze, a tiny village on the banks of the Mbashe River in the district of Umtata, the capital of the Transkei South Africa, Nelson Mandela was given the name Rolihlahla. The influences received by Mandela at the very early stage of life and further during his childhood shaped his ideals, personality and his objectives of life. The year of his birth:

...marked the end of the Great War, the outbreak of an influenza epidemic that killed millions throughout the world; and the visit of a delegation of the African National Congress to the Versailles Peace Conference to voice the grievances of the people of South Africa. (Mandela 3)

His father Gadla Henry Mphakanyiswa was the chief of Mveza, by virtue of the royal blood and custom. The position of a chief was an esteemed one but it was debased because of the control of the White government. Because of his royal blood, Mandela is often addressed Madiba, as a sign of respect.

Nelson Mandela inherited from his father a stately posture and a stubbornness of nature. Defiance against the unlawfulness was passed in the character of Mandela from his father who lost his chieftainship for challenging the authorities of a Magistrate. His father believed that the magistrate must not have a

say in tribal matters related to Thembu custom. His father did not accept subordination; instead he preferred to suffer a loss of both fortune and his title. With the same sense of defiance against the injustice and the highhandedness of the Whites, Nelson Mandela steered the Movement later in his life to crush apartheid.

Nelson Mandela spent his childhood in the lush environment of Qunu village situated in a narrow valley criss-crossed by clear streams and overlooked by green hills. He imbibed the customs and culture of Xhosa clan of South Africa in his personality. The tales he heard from his father had a deep impact on his psyche. Like all other Xhosas, his life was also shaped by customs, rituals and taboos of his tribe. He, in his childhood, received the awareness that the Whites were to be treated with “mixture of fear and respect”. The education that Mandela received at the school was that in which “British ideas, British culture and British institutions were automatically assumed to be superior”. And it was at the school that the Africans would receive a Western name and as such, Rolihlahla also got an English name Nelson from his teacher.

At the age of nine, Mandela lost his father and was brought up under the guardianship of Jongintaba, the Xhosa chief. In the process of Jongintaba’s accession to chieftainship, Mandela’s father had a great contribution. Later he tried to return the overtures by offering to become Mandela’s guardian in the wake of his father’s death. In Mqhekeziveni, at the Great Place, Mandela got the same treatment as regent’s (Jongintaba’s) own children got. Mandela admits that the seeds of leadership were sown in him while he closely observed the regent and his court. He watched tribal meetings held at the Great Place and learned a lot from

there. Mandela observed the prevalence of democratic norms at the meetings. Everyone was allowed to air his views and arguments freely; some even criticised the regent who did not even react in his own defence. The regent would speak at the end only after he had heard everyone. Mandela, in his later life, as a leader, adopted the same principles:

As a leader, I have always followed the principles I first saw demonstrated by the regent at the Great Place. I have always endeavoured to listen to what each and every person in discussion had to say before venturing my own opinion. Oftentimes, my own opinion will simply represent a consensus of what I heard in the discussion. I always remember the regent's axiom: a leader, he said, is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go on ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind. (Mandela 25-26)

Nelson got an appreciation of African history at Mqhekezweni and learned about Xhosa heroes. He learned of other African heroes also from the discussions of the chiefs and heads who visited the Great Place to settle disputes and try cases. One of the chiefs from whom, Mandela heard the ancient tales, was Zwelibhangile Joyi. He heard from this chief that the White man had told the Thembus that their true chief was the great white queen across the ocean and that they were her subjects. The tales told by Joyi only made Mandela angry and hostile against the oppression of the white man. This was Mandela's tender age when he learned that before the coming of 'abelungu', that is, the white people, the South Africans had lived in

peace. The white man shattered the unity of the tribes, divided them and disturbed the peace and fellowship between various tribes of South Africa. The impressionable mind of the child Nelson Mandela received negative impressions about the deeds of the White oppressor.

As was the custom, Nelson Mandela, at the age of sixteen, along with many other boys of his tribe underwent circumcision, a ceremony which is supposed to bestow manhood on Xhosa boys. After the ceremony, the Chief Meligquli spoke thus:

... we Xhosas, and all black South Africans are a conquered people. We are slaves in our own country. We are tenants on our own soil. We have no strength, no power, no control over our destiny in the land of our birth. (Mandela 35)

Mandela realised that a long battle had to be fought against the unjustified rulers to seek freedom and selfhood in their own nation. The words of the Chief worked on him. A seed was sown but that seed was left dormant for a long time which grew into a big tree afterwards.

Most of the blacks, including Mandela, had been made to believe that the English men were the educated people and their presence in South Africa was only to teach and civilize the natives. Africans were made to absorb in their minds the thought that the best ideas were English ideas, the best government was English government and the best men were Englishmen. Mandela perceived in the presence of the Englishmen, the benefactors of the native population. But during his student life, the ideas started creeping in his mind that discrimination and exploitation were the tools with which the whites used to rule over the natives. At

Hearldtown, Reverend Mokitini, a black, spoke against the authority of Wellington, a White. Nelson Mandela, with all astonishment, realised that a black man did not have to defer to a White, however senior he was.

The seed of leadership which was sown at the regent's started sprouting during Mandela's days of studies. During his second year at Hearldtown, Mandela was appointed the prefect in hostel carrying various duties on his shoulders. This responsibility led to another one of keeping a vigil during the night. As a prefect, Nelson Mandela perfected himself as a leader – the one who followed the rules honestly before applying them on others. A spirit of defiance against injustice made itself manifest in Mandela's personality during his stay as a student at the University college of Fort Hare. At the House Committee of the dormitory, the residents or freshmen were neglected. Nelson Mandela, after discussions with others elected their own House Committee of the dormitory. In spite of the opposition and resistance of the seniors, Mandela and his fellow-men remained firm and subdued their seniors. He was able to feel the power of remaining on the side of right and justice.

A strong will to fight against injustice and a spirit to fight for the rights showed themselves at the very outset in Mandela's student life. In the final year, he was elected to Student Representative Council. Out of the six elected members, five yielded to the pressure of the administration but Mandela resigned and even suffered an expulsion from Fort Hare. Mandela's inherent qualities of leadership were at the nascent stage that grew out in a bigger form at a later stage. The same spirit of defiance was displayed by Mandela in his running away from his

benefactor Regent's place to Johannesburg only because he did not want to yield to get married to a girl whom Regent had selected against Mandela's choice.

Gandhi's autobiography makes revelation of his experiments in various fields like – diet, his vegetarianism, health, a search for truth, Ahimsa (non-violence) and other issues related to human life and behaviour. He endeavours to probe his own evolution as a man yearning to attain a higher reality – the Truth of life, an inner search and a realisation of the self. This realisation of the self is the very basis of Gandhi's life. In his revelation, he tries to bring home to his reader his journey towards the realisation of his 'self' in the backdrop of religion. The purpose of life, he perceives, is the attainment of the Supreme reality, that is, God. To make this attainment, he envisages his own life in the context of religion, and the placement of the human self in the moulds of religion. Born in a Vaishnava faith, he had received the glimpses of the Hindu religion. In his childhood, he learnt 'Ramanama'. *Ramayana* was read by a devotee reader before Gandhi's ailing father to provide succour to his soul. Gandhi also got advantage of listening to the couplets of this book and felt an impression of the same on his mind. As he had the advantage of the company of Musalman and Parsi friends, Gandhi would get the glimpses of different faiths and in the process, developed a respect and tolerance for these faiths also.

During his voyage to England and his stay there, Gandhi had to combat with the confusion over vegetarianism and non-vegetarianism. In the end, the arguments favouring vegetarianism prevailed and he countered successfully all the temptations that came his way. Gandhi would assert himself and would exercise a strong will power putting up a strong resistance to all the temptations that seemed

to push him towards becoming a non-vegetarian. In a country where non-vegetarianism was a habit and where it was argued as essential for the very survival, he could rise to become a member of the Executive committee of the vegetarian Society. He started analysing his own self, adopted austerity and boldly accepted the truth as it came his way.

Gandhi's visit to South Africa, the challenges there and his encounter with these challenges that were the off shoots of a rampant race-hostility that had spoiled the social milieu of the society, set in motion the process of the making of a leader. Gandhi would put a brave face to all the problems that had their genesis in the colour consciousness of the society. Almost an alien in a foreign country and an upstart in law profession, at the threshold of his career, Gandhi refused to take off his turban in the African court and did not make a meek and coward submission to the senselessness of the authorities. He chose to display steel in his will. And this display of the strength of mind started laying down the foundations of the emergence of a great leader of the masses. His choice of protesting and suffering instead of yielding to the highhandedness of Rail authorities made him realise that there was much fight in store for him during his stay in South Africa. Soon Gandhi found that the coloured people in that country did not enjoy full freedom to walk everywhere and even some hotels and restaurants were taboos for them. These circumstances influenced Gandhi and stirred in him a wish to fight. More and more interactions with the people and his involvement with the society inspired a fighter in Gandhi. He girded up his loins and gradually started coming to the forefront as a leader of the people fighting for their cause against the senseless exploitation and discrimination.

Both Gandhi and Nelson Mandela perceived discrimination and exploitation as the common evils that their respective societies were afflicted with. Colour prejudice and, based on this colour prejudice, a gulf between the Blacks and Whites, made a deep impact on the psyche of the people in South Africa. The Blacks were made to accept their inferiority while in the presence of the Whites. Nelson Mandela, at the very outset of his career as a clerk noticed that the whites were conscious of their colour 'superiority' and never wanted to be guided or dictated by the Blacks.

Untouchability and caste-based discrimination had inflicted the Indian society and Gandhi diagnosed them as the ills that needed to be reformed for the uplift of the people. Nelson Mandela also noticed that the societies of South Africa were comprised of tribes, and the relations across the tribal boundaries were not much frequent. The tribes had a tendency to remain within their own walls and did not show any solidarity with other tribes as Africans. In India, marriage across the castes was a taboo, so was it in South Africa across the tribes. Mabusos with whom Nelson Mandela stayed in Alexandra, did not like his coming closer to a Swazi girl because he was a Xhosa. Both the leaders, Gandhi and Mandela, realised that the unity of the people was the foremost step that was essential to weaken the roots of the oppressor in their respective countries. Both the leaders knew that unless the societies were reformed and people were educated, battle against exploitation could not be won and freedom would remain only a dream. To strengthen their people was not to put arms in their hands but to educate them first. Apart from launching a fight against the injustice and oppression, Gandhi and Mandela felt a strong need to educate the people.

Evolution of Gandhi and Mandela as writers

Apart from being a philosopher and a seeker of truth, Gandhi was a prolific and a voluminous writer also. He has produced a bulk of writings that enable his readers to understand the life and vision of this great messiah of peace and the apostle of non-violence. He has written several letters addressed to the authorities in South Africa, in England and in India, to the individuals like his friends in India and abroad, and to the people with whom he wanted to share his thoughts on different matters like religion, health and truth. The study of religion attracted him a lot and he communicated with different people about Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. His pastime during his travel from one country on board the ship would be writing. In his letters written to his friends and acquaintances, he would write about the issues that occupied his mind during different phases of his life. For many years, he edited several newspapers like *Harijan* in Gujarati, in Hindi and in English languages. He edited *Indian Opinion* during his stay in South Africa. After his return to India, he edited *Young India* in English and, *Navjivan*, a Gujarati monthly for a long time.

His *Hind Swaraj*, published in 1909 in Gujarati, was recognised as the intellectual blueprint of the Indian freedom movement. A spiritual manifesto of self-rule *Hind Swaraj* is a practical book in which he speaks on the link between the inner self and the outer achievement of an individual. The basic ideas of Gandhi's philosophy are properly documented in this book. From talking about Indian nationalism and violence during the partition of Bengal, he moves on to talk about the causes and consequences of British rule in India. In this book, we find him talking of the self-rule which can be attained not through violence but through

Satyagraha. In addition to supporting the non-violent means, Gandhi lays emphasis on educational reforms and only that technical advancement which suits the Indian way of living. *Hind Swaraj* makes a complete rejection of violence of any type and constitutes the basic document of Gandhi's philosophy. It talks about the South Asian politics of 20th century.

The Story of My Experiments with Truth - Gandhi's autobiography is a collection of his experiences that he gathered from life and his realisation of the power of Truth and Non-Violence. The book covers his life beginning from his childhood growing into manhood in a traditional family of Gujarat leading to his life in England as a student of law and then to his visits to South Africa as a law professional and finally working in India for the uplift of the poor people along with leading the masses from the forefront against the unjust British rule. His will to adhere to truth and his repentance at his occasional fallibility, even during his childhood, indicate the presence of spirituality at its nascent stage at the beginning of life. The book covers his experiments in South Africa, his choice of a simple life and his experiments with Truth in all spheres of life. The instances of his various experiments are compiled in the book intended to make his readers have a glimpse of spirituality that is rooted in truth and non-violence. Gandhi's principles of Truth, non-violence, celibacy and dietary practices are the focal points of the book. Once his life became public, he did not feel any need to present it to the world in the form of a written document. So, this book covers his experiences and experiments till the time that he feels that the world must know and read. Some people hold the book in high esteem like a holy book because they feel that it has its origin from Truth.

Gandhi's versatility as a writer comes from his keen observation of life. Apart from being a writer of political, philosophical, ideological, religious and economic issues, he wrote some valuable articles on health issues also. He experimented and practised certain methods to keep the physical and spiritual health sound, and conveyed his experiences to the people also. Under the heading *Guide to health* in 1906, in the *Indian Opinion*, he contributed certain articles on health. These articles were later compiled and published in the book form. He suggests certain orthodox methods for maintaining a good health in this book. These are the methods which modern doctors and medical practitioners do not adopt usually. *Key to Health*, written during his confinement to Aghakhan Palace was originally written in Gujarati and translated by Sushila Nayar. It is a concise book written in a very lucid style. In this book, Gandhi talks about the rules of health including celibacy, food, exercise, air, water tea, coffee etc. The book is a testimony of Gandhi's keen observance of life and his capability to reach the hearts of the people by addressing to their immediate needs.

Nelson Mandela, the unparalleled hero of South Africa's freedom struggle, created a rich legacy of literary works. These books reflect his vision of an ideal society that he envisaged in his fight against racism and exploitation. He says that he is not only against white domination but is against black domination as well. His written work is, mainly biographical in nature – recounting his childhood, his youth, his experiences as a victim of racism and his struggle against the white domination from outside and inside the prison. His books in which he recounts his life provide a romantic experience to the readers who find these writings leaning toward fictional anthology. His letters, notebooks, prison diaries and books provide

his reminiscences of the anti-apartheid movement, his musings on the philosophy of life and a record of his hardships of prison life.

Mandela, during his imprisonment, wrote many letters and diaries and believed that these might not come out of the prison. These provide an intimate account of Mandela's life – his thoughts as a freedom fighter, as a father, as a husband, and so on. Through these personal documents the reader can get in touch with the innermost parts of Mandela's life. All these documents have been compiled in the form of a book *Conversations with Myself*. The book is not in a narrative form but is a disjointed account of the life of Nelson Mandela, touching the man at his personal and emotional levels. The book is not merely a recollection of his past. A life which is full of events, struggles, fights and philosophical musings comes alive in the pages of this book.

In another book, *In His Own Words*, again biographical in nature, we find reflections of his deeper thoughts and his perceptions of a casteless and peaceful society in which all the people live together in peace and harmony. The book, divided into different topics, provides his thoughts on education, religion, culture and other such areas. It provides an account of Mandela's series of speeches given at different places. The book is a reflection of the author's evolution from a common man to a staunch fighter fighting for all round peace not only for the exploited, but also that of a man yearning for a peaceful life for the exploiter also.

Long Walk to Freedom is world's most widely read and acclaimed book written by world's most significant leader and the fighter who fought against apartheid. Nelson Mandela covers in this book the story of his life beginning from his birth, and about the description of his family and his clan including African

culture. The book reveals his innermost thoughts and perceptions. His escapade from the Regent's and his joining of ANC leading to his arrest and then the description of his prison life including the painful span of the years of imprisonment in Robon Islands – all these events are presented in the book in a fictional sequence. All the events leading to the successful release of Mandela and then the war ending in a transition of power looks like a fictional work in which virtue is rewarded in the end. The gripping story of the international hero reveals his character as that of a humanist who loved peace and harmony for all, having no scope for any grudge against even those who had unleashed unjust exploitation against the coloured people.

Nelson Mandela's writings revolve round his own life and the African culture at large. He wanted to raise a consciousness for African culture in his works. This sense of pride in African culture and heritage prompts him to write *Favourite African Folktales* in which he picks up 32 folk tales drawn from various African cultures. The stories are all rich in, as Mandela says, "the gritty essence of Africa". These stories are drawn from the African countries like Morocco, Nigeria, Kenya, and Swaziland and contain myths and tales based on the morals useful for children and adults alike.

It is the strength of Mandela's personality, his life and his powerful skill of writing that he is read widely in the world. Parents and teachers adjudge him as a writer whose life should be read by the children, the students and the grownups. It is for this objective in view that an edited version of Mandela's autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom* was abridged by the author Chris Wan Wyck. This adapted version for children is read by the children from the age of 8 and above, and is

considered a moral guide that can be helpful in forging ahead in life by drawing lessons from the life of the great icon.

Style and Diction

It is the style and the art of narration that helps the readers in getting a glimpse of the milieu and the culture in which an autobiographer lived his life. An autobiographer's endeavour is to recreate a life afresh before the eyes of his readers. The style of expression, the symbols and the images impart richness to the language and help in producing before the eyes of his readers a true picture of his cultural environment. The understanding of a life can be better if the reader is able to trace a link between the style, the vocabulary, the language and the symbols in narration to the social and cultural melange of the author's life.

M. K. Gandhi's *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* covers different phases of the author's life that he lived in three different countries – his childhood in India, in England as a student of law, in South Africa as a barrister and in the same country as the people's leader fighting against exploitation and discrimination, and again in India gathering the masses against an oppressor leading them to see the dawn of freedom. Even while in England or in South Africa, Gandhi's perceptions, his actions, his thoughts and his reactions to various situations reflect his adherence to the values that he had imbibed from his Indian culture and environment.

The situations, incidents and the way of their presentation are typically Indian in the descriptions provided by M. K. Gandhi in his autobiography. He dwells largely on soul-searching and his attainment of Truth in life. He provides such glimpses from his life that enable the reader to understand the traits of

Gandhi's personality and character. The incidents of his acts of stealing, smoking and his visit to the brothel have been given much place and description by the writer. He makes confessions in the story of his life because he wishes to uphold the values of truth. The threadbare description reflects the state of his mind and the conflict raging there. The description is provided in such detail that the reader is able to see before him a live image of the writer passing through different phases and experiences of life:

My friend once took me to brothel. He sent me in with the necessary instructions. It was prearranged. The bill had already been paid. I went into the jaws of sin, but God in His infinite mercy protected me against myself. I was almost struck blind and dumb in this den of vice. I sat near the woman on her bed, but I was tongue tied. She naturally lost patience with me, and showed me the door, with abuses and insults. I then felt as though my manhood had been injured, and wished to sink into the ground for shame. (Gandhi 34).

He gives a description of his act of stealing and the subsequent confession:

I pilfered the coppers when I was committed when I was twelve or thirteen, possibly less. The other theft was committed when I was fifteen. In this case I stole a bit of gold out of my meat-eating brother's armlet. (Gandhi 37)

Gandhi has a knack of presenting to his readers the visuals from his life which entail his psychological condition and the environment that worked to shape his personality. The images that Gandhi builds are so telling and so widely expressed

that the reader can easily comprehend the mind of the author and his life. There are instances that had left an everlasting impression on Gandhi. In his autobiography, he reproduces these moments with a telling detail. The death of his father and Gandhi's own sense of guilt come alive before the readers' eyes. He is precise and exercises a skilled conciseness in the presentation of his own sense of guilt and the manner of his father's demise. He says:

This was also the time when my wife was expecting a baby, - a circumstance which, as I can see today, meant a double shame for me. For one thing I did not restrain myself, as I should have done, whilst I was yet a student. And secondly, this carnal lust got the better of what I regarded as my duty to my parents. Shravana having been my ideal since childhood. Every night whilst my hands were busy massaging my father's legs, my mind was hovering about the bed-room, - and that too at a time when religion, medical science and commonsense alike forbade sexual intercourse. I was always glad to be relieved from my duty, and went straight to the bed-room after doing obeisance to my father.

(Gandhi 39)

The same vividness and brevity are discernible in the chapter:

It was 10.30 or 11.00 p.m. I was giving the massage. My uncle offered to relieve me. I was glad and went straight to the bed-room. My wife, poor thing, was fast asleep. But how could she sleep when I was there? I woke her up. In five or six minutes,

however, the servant knocked at the door. I started with alarm.

(Gandhi 40)

When he writes, he is not afraid of being ridiculed. Truth is his religion and he follows truth in the presentation of instances from his life, even though they might reflect the blemishes of his character that perhaps a writer other than Gandhi, would prefer to hide.

In the presentation of the images produced by him and elsewhere in his writings, nowhere do we come across the flowing or pompous words. He dwells on simplicity in the choice of his words. The sentences are mostly simple, crisp and short in length. The thoughts are properly packed in these sentences and do not leave any scope for summarising. The simplicity of life conforms to the simplicity in writing. He never aimed at a style. As was his life - devoid of any artificiality, so was his style of writing - having no pomp and show of presentation. Hypocrisy had no place in his life, so had the hypocrisy no place in his writings as well. He aimed to present the thought as it came to his mind and tried never to swerve from the truth. For him, all art, including literature, was to be based on truth and must help in raising the masses upward. He believed that he was writing for half-starved masses and his writings should be intelligible to them so that they could benefit from these writings to raise themselves morally and spiritually. It was perhaps the reason that not a single pompous or fat word fled his pen. His sentence construction is so accurate and simple that the reader is able to grasp the contents of the narration without taxing his mind in the least. Sentences are simple or compound, connected with the help of conjunctions. Here also the length does not exceed beyond the two simple clauses or sometimes three, connected with the help

of conjunctions. A subordinate clause embedded in the main clause resulting in a complex sentence hardly became a part of Gandhi's writings. The thoughts kept coming to his mind and he continued scribbling them on paper. He could produce a bulk of writings in a short time, as many as fifty long letters in a single day. And this he could do only because he would avoid re-reading of what he wrote.

Nelson Mandela's autobiography covers the detailed account of his life – beginning from his boyhood, and then to his life at the Regent's, his life as a student, his brief stint as a law professional, the circumstances of his joining the ANC, his struggle as a freedom fighter, his married life, his hardships as a prisoner, his struggle and his fight from within the prison, his release from the prison and his accession to the highest office of South Africa. Amid a description of all this, he provides a detailed account of the characters of his father, his mother and the people he came in contact with, during the different stages of life. The people, the places, the customs, the incidents and the social life – all are lively portrayed by the writer. In his autobiography, he aimed at, as the title suggests, capturing the details of a long battle for freedom in the backdrop of the excesses perpetrated by the unmindful and unjust ruling dispensation. He wanted to present before the world, the wounds that a senseless and inhuman system based on race-hostility had inflicted on the psyche of the coloured people of South Africa. The battle that was fought against apartheid reached to its culmination in a successful elimination of class or colour discrimination and a realization by the world of the justification of the struggle, and a subsequent vindication of the stand of the strugglers. All this has been captured in detail by the deft hand of the autobiographer. By taking care of all the principles of humble modesty, he has

presented before the world, the sacrifices made by himself, and his capability as a leader in pushing the long struggle towards a successful liberation.

An outstanding feature of Mandela's narrative technique is his descriptive power with which he presents before his readers an account of the places, people and the events of his life. He has a knack of building before the eyes of his readers a true picture of the places where he lived or visited in his life at any point of time; he delineates with telling detail the characters of the people who are important in his life either for their formative influence on him or for their association with the struggle, for or against, the cause for which Mandela was fighting. The description of the events is also done in finer details so that the reader is able to have a peep into the life of the author from close. The details of author's reaction to different situations and to events allow the reader to analyse the author's mind and make an assessment of his life and personality from a psychological point of view.

With a remarkable detail, he begins his description, of the events that coincided with his birth. Then he describes how he got the name Rolihlahla and then moves onto the description of the district of Umtata and Transkei. The description of Transkei transports the readers' thoughts to the South African State to get an appreciation of the place that has a number of hills and rivers where the author had spent his early life. The poetic description builds before the readers' eyes a lively image of the place. The upbeat mood of the writer describing Transkei reflects his joy and satisfaction that he feels, at the beauty of his native place. His language corresponds with the joy of his heart. He dwells on providing the exact geographical location of his native place to the reader:

The Transkei is 800 miles east of Cape Town, 550 miles south of Johannesburg, and lies between the Kei River and the Natal border, between the rugged Drakensberg mountains to the north and the blue waters of the Indian Ocean to the east. It is a beautiful country of rolling hills, fertile valleys, and thousand rivers and streams which keep the landscape green even in winter. (Mandela 3)

Similar descriptions of all the locations which the author had been to, are provided in detail in *Long Walk to Freedom*. At another place, the description of the prison cell builds before the readers' eyes an atmosphere of pain, exploitation and struggle. The language used by the writer aptly pours out the pain and anguish of his heart. His language corresponds with his emotions and reflects the inner conflict of the author.

The way Mandela builds his images is remarkable for its poetic quality and descriptive power. He possesses a knack of transporting the imagination of his readers to the world which the author, at a certain point of time in his life, has been to. The frequent use of adjectives before nouns used for the description of an object or place or thought is done in a poetic manner that describes the reality most fittingly:

There is nothing magical about a gold mine. Barren and pockmarked, all dirt and no trees, fenced in on all sides, a gold mine resembles a war-torn battlefield. The noise was harsh and ubiquitous: the rasp of shaft-lifts, the jangling power drills, the distant rumble of dynamite, the barked orders. Everywhere I

looked I saw black men in dust overalls looking tired and bent. They lived on the grounds in bleak, single-sex barracks that contained hundreds of concrete bunks separated from each other by only a few inches. (Mandela 73)

An analytic study of Mandela's style shows, frequently at places, the use of a modifier (mostly adjectives) before a noun that provides a proper account of either a thing or a place or a person in detail. Sometimes, he makes use of the adjectives as post modifiers continuously at a stretch in the same paragraph that adds rhythm to the text and binds the reader more closely with the thoughts of the writer. The use of complex sentences in which one subordinate clause or two are added after the main clause with the help of a relative pronoun or without, is very common. It is done in order to provide more information about the noun representing a person, a thought, a place or an object that is being described. To make the narration more informative and the account more detailed, he adds clauses with the help of conjunctions very often:

Everyone who wanted to speak did so. It was democracy in its purest form. There may have been a hierarchy of importance among the speakers, but everyone was heard: chief and subject, warrior and medicine man, shopkeeper and farmer, landowner and labourer. People spoke without interruption and the meeting lasted for many hours. The foundation of self-government was that all men were free to voice their opinions and were equal in their value as citizens. (Women, I am afraid, were deemed second-class citizens.) (Mandela 24)

A stylistic analysis would show that the writer makes use of the parentheses, here and there, in his sentences. Very frequent use of the parentheses aptly points out the fact that the author has tried to make his sentences compact that provide more information in a small space. An epigrammatic style is the result. But he does not do it at the cost of lucidity and clarity. He does not go astray from the thought that he is dealing with, in a paragraph. There is no overlapping of the incidents and thoughts. One narration gets a proper treatment until the thought or incident reaches its conclusion, and only then he jumps to the next one. The thoughts or incidents that are beyond the purview of the work have not been incorporated anywhere in the narration. Thus the narrator is able to hold the interest of the reader in its grip successfully with no scope for any deviation. Like an adept and a successful narrator and story-teller, Nelson Mandela has presented before the world an account of a long battle that finds rare parallels in the history of the world. It can be aptly said that the life and the struggle of the author find an exact echo in the style and the narration of the autobiographical work.

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