**Indian independence movement**

The Indian independence movement was a series of historic events with the ultimate aim of ending [British rule in India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj) also known as British Raj. It lasted from 1857 to 1947.

The first nationalistic [revolutionary movement for Indian independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutionary_movement_for_Indian_independence) emerged from [Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal). It later took root in the newly formed [Indian National Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress) with prominent moderate leaders seeking the right to appear for [Indian Civil Service examinations in British India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Civil_Service_(British_India)), as well as more economic rights for natives. The first half of the 20th century saw a more radical approach towards self-rule by the [Lal Bal Pal triumvirate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lal_Bal_Pal" \o "Lal Bal Pal), [Aurobindo Ghosh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aurobindo_Ghosh" \o "Aurobindo Ghosh) and [V. O. Chidambaram Pillai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V._O._Chidambaram_Pillai).

The stages independence struggle in the 1920s were characterized by the leadership of [Mahatma Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi) and [Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress)' adoption of Gandhi's policy of [non-violence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-violence) and [civil disobedience](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March). Some of the leading followers of Gandhi's ideology were [Jawaharlal Nehru](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jawaharlal_Nehru), [Vallabhbhai Patel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vallabhbhai_Patel" \o "Vallabhbhai Patel), [Abdul Ghaffar Khan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdul_Ghaffar_Khan), [Maulana Azad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maulana_Azad" \o "Maulana Azad), and others. Intellectuals such as [Rabindranath Tagore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabindranath_Tagore), [Subramania Bharati](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subramania_Bharati" \o "Subramania Bharati), and [Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bankim_Chandra_Chattopadhyay" \o "Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay) spread patriotic awareness. Female leaders like [Sarojini Naidu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarojini_Naidu" \o "Sarojini Naidu), [Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vijaya_Lakshmi_Pandit" \o "Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit), [Pritilata Waddedar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pritilata_Waddedar" \o "Pritilata Waddedar), and [Kasturba Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kasturba_Gandhi) promoted the emancipation of Indian women and their participation in the freedom struggle.

Few leaders followed a more violent approach. This became especially popular after the [Rowlatt Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rowlatt_Act" \o "Rowlatt Act), which permitted [indefinite detention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indefinite_detention). The Act sparked protests across India, especially in the [Punjab province](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjab_Province_(British_India)), where they were violently suppressed in the [Jallianwala Bagh massacre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jallianwala_Bagh_massacre" \o "Jallianwala Bagh massacre).

The Indian independence movement was in constant ideological evolution. Essentially [anti-colonial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-imperialism), it was supplemented by visions of independent, economic development with a secular, democratic, republican, and civil-libertarian political structure. After the 1930s, the movement took on a strong socialist orientation. It culminated in the [Indian Independence Act 1947](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Independence_Act_1947), which ended [Crown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Crown) [suzerainty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suzerainty) and partitioned British Raj into [Dominion of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominion_of_India) and [Dominion of Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominion_of_Pakistan).

India remained a [Crown Dominion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominion) until 26 January 1950, when the [Constitution of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_India) established the Republic of India. Pakistan remained a dominion until 1956 when it adopted its first constitution. In 1971, East Pakistan declared its own independence as [Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_independence_movement#cite_note-1)

**Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi**[[pron 1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-6) (2 October 1869 – 30 January 1948) was an Indian lawyer,[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-7) [anti-colonial nationalist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-colonial_nationalism)[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-GangulyDocker20082-8) and [political ethicist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_ethics)[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Parel20162-9) who employed [nonviolent resistance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonviolent_resistance) to lead the successful [campaign for India's independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_independence_movement) from [British rule](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj).[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Stein20102-10) He inspired movements for [civil rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_rights_movements) and freedom across the world. The honorific **Mahātmā** ([Sanskrit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanskrit): "great-souled", "venerable"), first applied to him in 1914 in [South Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Union_of_South_Africa), is now used throughout the world.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-McGregor19932-11)[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-rajmohan_gandhi_p1722-12)

Born and raised in a [Hindu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu) family in coastal [Gujarat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gujarat), Gandhi trained in the law at the [Inner Temple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inner_Temple), [London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London), and was [called to the bar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Call_to_the_bar) at age 22 in June 1891. After two uncertain years in India, where he was unable to start a successful law practice, he moved to [South Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa) in 1893 to represent an Indian merchant in a lawsuit. He went on to live in South Africa for 21 years. It was here that Gandhi raised a family and first employed nonviolent resistance in a campaign for civil rights. In 1915, aged 45, he returned to India and soon set about organising peasants, farmers, and urban labourers to protest against excessive land-tax and discrimination.

Assuming leadership of the [Indian National Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress) in 1921, Gandhi led nationwide campaigns for easing poverty, expanding women's rights, building religious and ethnic amity, ending [untouchability](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Untouchability), and, above all, achieving *[swaraj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swaraj" \o "Swaraj)* or self-rule. Gandhi adopted the short [*dhoti*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhoti) woven with [hand-spun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charkha_(spinning_wheel)) yarn as a mark of identification with India's rural poor. He began to live in a [self-sufficient residential community](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabarmati_Ashram), to eat simple food, and undertake [long fasts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fasts_undertaken_by_Mahatma_Gandhi) as a means of both introspection and political protest. Bringing anti-colonial nationalism to the common Indians, Gandhi led them in challenging the British-imposed [salt tax](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_tax#Impacted_regions) with the 400 km (250 mi) [Dandi Salt March](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March" \o "Salt March) in 1930 and in calling for the British to [quit India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quit_India_Movement) in 1942. He was imprisoned many times and for many years in both South Africa and India.

Gandhi's vision of an independent India based on [religious pluralism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_pluralism) was challenged in the early 1940s by a Muslim nationalism which demanded a separate homeland for Muslims within [British India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_India).[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Khan2007-page1-13) In August 1947, Britain granted independence, but the British Indian Empire[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Khan2007-page1-13) was [partitioned](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Partition_of_India) into two [dominions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominion), a Hindu-majority [India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominion_of_India) and a Muslim-majority [Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominion_of_Pakistan).[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-autogenerated3-14) As many displaced Hindus, Muslims, and [Sikhs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikh) made their way to their new lands, religious violence broke out, especially in the [Punjab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjab_region) and [Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal). Abstaining from the [official celebration of independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence_Day_(India)), Gandhi visited the affected areas, attempting to alleviate distress. In the months following, he undertook several [hunger strikes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunger_strike) to stop the religious violence. The last of these, begun in Delhi on 12 January 1948 when he was 78,[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-spear-gandhi-1948-preconditions-fast-15)[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-sources-ind-tradition-gandhi-1948-16)[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-wolpert-patel-cash-assets-17)[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Brown1991-p380-18) also had the indirect goal of pressuring India to pay out some cash assets owed to Pakistan,[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-metcalfandmetcalf-cash-assets-godse-19)[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-piotr-kashmir-gandhi-assets-20)[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-ceplair-cash-payment-21)[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-rudolphs-lakshmi-gandhi-last-fast-22) which the Indian government[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-burton-stein-godse-23) had been resisting.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-elkins-pakistan-payment-24)[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-blinkenberg-patel-cash-payments-25)[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-sarkar-modern-india-jan48-1-26)[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-gandhi-suhrud-patel-27)[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-gurharpal=-shani-patel-28) Although the Government of India relented,[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-talbot-2016-gandhi-assets-29) as did the religious rioters, the belief that Gandhi had been too resolute in his defense of both Pakistan and Indian Muslims spread among some Hindus in India.[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-geva-delhi-jan48-30)[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-talbot-singh-delhi-31)[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Brown1991-p380-18) Among these was [Nathuram Godse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathuram_Godse" \o "Nathuram Godse),[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-ahmed-godse-assets-32) a militant [Hindu nationalist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_nationalism) from [Pune](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pune), western India,[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-sarkar-modern-india-jan48-2-33)[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-bell-savarkar-34) who [assassinated Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassination_of_Mahatma_Gandhi) by firing three bullets into his chest at an interfaith prayer meeting in Delhi on 30 January 1948.[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-babb-godse-assets-35)[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-lelyveld-godse-assets-36)[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-CushRobinson2008-37)[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-copland=-godse-38)

Gandhi's birthday, 2 October, is commemorated in India as [Gandhi Jayanti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gandhi_Jayanti), a [national holiday](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_holidays_in_India), and worldwide as the [International Day of Nonviolence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Day_of_Non-Violence). Gandhi is considered the [Father of the Nation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Father_of_the_Nation) in India[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-archive.indianexpress.com-39)[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-timesofindia.indiatimes.com-40) and is commonly called **Bapu**[[38]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi" \l "cite_note-41) ([Gujarati](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gujarati_language) endearment for 'father',[[39]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-McAllister1982-42) 'papa'[[39]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-McAllister1982-42)[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Eck2003-43)).

## **Biography**

### Early life and background

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Gandhi_name-44) was born on 2 October 1869[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Gandhi_DOB-45) into a [Gujarati](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gujarati_people) [Hindu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu) [Modh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modh" \o "Modh) [Bania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bania_(caste)" \o "Bania (caste)) family[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-46)[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-47) in [Porbandar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porbandar" \o "Porbandar) (also known as *Sudamapuri*), a coastal town on the [Kathiawar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathiawar) Peninsula and then part of the small [princely state](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princely_state) of [Porbandar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porbandar_State" \o "Porbandar State) in the [Kathiawar Agency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathiawar_Agency) of the [British Raj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj). His father, [Karamchand Uttamchand Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karamchand_Uttamchand_Gandhi" \o "Karamchand Uttamchand Gandhi) (1822–1885), served as the *[dewan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dewan" \o "Dewan)* (chief minister) of Porbandar state.[[45]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-48)[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-GangulyDocker20082-8) His family originated from the then village of [Kutiana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kutiyana" \o "Kutiyana) in what was then [Junagadh State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Junagadh_State" \o "Junagadh State).[[46]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Gandhi_before_India-49)

Although he only had an elementary education and had previously been a clerk in the state administration, Karamchand proved a capable chief minister.[[47]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-GuhaPP19to21-50) During his tenure, he married four times. His first two wives died young, after each had given birth to a daughter, and his third marriage was childless. In 1857, he sought his third wife's permission to remarry; that year, he married Putlibai (1844–1891), who also came from Junagadh,[[47]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi" \l "cite_note-GuhaPP19to21-50) and was from a [Pranami](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pranami" \o "Pranami) [Vaishnava](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaishnavism" \o "Vaishnavism) family.[[48]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-51) Karamchand and Putlibai had three children over the ensuing decade: a son, Laxmidas (c. 1860–1914); a daughter, Raliatbehn (1862–1960); and another son, Karsandas (c. 1866–1913).[[49]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-52)[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-53)

On 2 October 1869, Putlibai gave birth to her last child, Mohandas, in a dark, windowless ground-floor room of the Gandhi family residence in Porbandar city. As a child, Gandhi was described by his sister Raliat as "restless as mercury, either playing or roaming about. One of his favourite pastimes was twisting dogs' ears."[[51]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-54) The Indian classics, especially the stories of [Shravana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shravan" \l "In_Hindu_epics" \o "Shravan) and king [Harishchandra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harishchandra" \o "Harishchandra), had a great impact on Gandhi in his childhood. In his autobiography, he states that they left an indelible impression on his mind. He writes: "It haunted me and I must have acted Harishchandra to myself times without number." Gandhi's early self-identification with truth and love as supreme values is traceable to these epic characters.[[52]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Sorokin2002-55)[[53]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-RudolphRudolph1983-56)

The family's religious background was eclectic. Gandhi's father Karamchand was [Hindu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu) and his mother Putlibai was from a Pranami [Vaishnava](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaishnava" \o "Vaishnava) Hindu family.[[54]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-57)[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-sharma11-58) Gandhi's father was of Modh Baniya caste in the [varna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varna_(Hinduism)" \o "Varna (Hinduism)) of [Vaishya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaishya" \o "Vaishya).[[56]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-59) His mother came from the medieval [Krishna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krishna) bhakti-based [Pranami](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pranami" \o "Pranami) tradition, whose religious texts include the [*Bhagavad Gita*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhagavad_Gita), the *[Bhagavata Purana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhagavata_Purana" \o "Bhagavata Purana)*, and a collection of 14 texts with teachings that the tradition believes to include the essence of the [Vedas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vedas), the [Quran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) and the [Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible).[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-sharma11-58)[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-60) Gandhi was deeply influenced by his mother, an extremely pious lady who "would not think of taking her meals without her daily prayers... she would take the hardest vows and keep them without flinching. To keep two or three consecutive fasts was nothing to her."[[58]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-61)

In 1874, Gandhi's father Karamchand left Porbandar for the smaller state of [Rajkot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajkot), where he became a counsellor to its ruler, the Thakur Sahib; though Rajkot was a less prestigious state than Porbandar, the British regional political agency was located there, which gave the state's *diwan* a measure of security.[[59]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-62) In 1876, Karamchand became *diwan* of Rajkot and was succeeded as *diwan* of Porbandar by his brother Tulsidas. His family then rejoined him in Rajkot.[[60]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-ReferenceA-63)

At age 9, Gandhi entered the local school in [Rajkot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajkot), near his home. There, he studied the rudiments of arithmetic, history, the Gujarati language and geography.[[60]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-ReferenceA-63) At the age of 11, he joined the High School in Rajkot, [Alfred High School](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_High_School_(Rajkot)).[[62]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-ReferenceB-65) He was an average student, won some prizes, but was a shy and tongue tied student, with no interest in games; his only companions were books and school lessons.[[63]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-66)

In May 1883, the 13-year-old Mohandas was married to 14-year-old [Kasturbai Makhanji Kapadia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kasturba_Gandhi" \o "Kasturba Gandhi) (her first name was usually shortened to "Kasturba", and affectionately to "Ba") in an [arranged marriage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arranged_marriage), according to the custom of the region at that time.[[64]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Mohanty2011-67) In the process, he lost a year at school but was later allowed to make up by accelerating his studies.[[65]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Childhood-68) His wedding was a joint event, where his brother and cousin were also married. Recalling the day of their marriage, he once said, "As we didn't know much about marriage, for us it meant only wearing new clothes, eating sweets and playing with relatives." As was the prevailing tradition, the adolescent bride was to spend much time at her parents' house, and away from her husband.[[66]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Husband-69)

Writing many years later, Mohandas described with regret the lustful feelings he felt for his young bride: "even at school I used to think of her, and the thought of nightfall and our subsequent meeting was ever haunting me." He later recalled feeling jealous and possessive of her, such as when she would visit a temple with her girlfriends, and being sexually lustful in his feelings for her.[[67]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-70)

In late 1885, Gandhi's father Karamchand died.[[68]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-ReferenceC-71) Gandhi, then 16 years old, and his wife of age 17 had their first baby, who survived only a few days. The two deaths anguished Gandhi.[[68]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-ReferenceC-71) The Gandhi couple had four more children, all sons: [Harilal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harilal_Gandhi" \o "Harilal Gandhi), born in 1888; [Manilal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manilal_Gandhi" \o "Manilal Gandhi), born in 1892; [Ramdas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramdas_Gandhi" \o "Ramdas Gandhi), born in 1897; and [Devdas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Devdas_Gandhi" \o "Devdas Gandhi), born in 1900.[[64]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Mohanty2011-67)

In November 1887, the 18-year-old Gandhi graduated from high school in [Ahmedabad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmedabad).[[69]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-72) In January 1888, he enrolled at [Samaldas College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samaldas_College" \o "Samaldas College) in [Bhavnagar State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhavnagar_State), then the sole degree-granting institution of higher education in the region. However, he dropped out, and returned to his family in Porbandar.[[70]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-autogenerated32-73)

### Struggle for Indian independence (1915–1947)

At the request of [Gopal Krishna Gokhale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gopal_Krishna_Gokhale" \o "Gopal Krishna Gokhale), conveyed to him by [C. F. Andrews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Freer_Andrews), Gandhi returned to India in 1915. He brought an international reputation as a leading Indian nationalist, theorist and community organiser.

Gandhi joined the [Indian National Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress) and was introduced to Indian issues, politics and the Indian people primarily by [Gokhale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gopal_Krishna_Gokhale" \o "Gopal Krishna Gokhale). Gokhale was a key leader of the Congress Party best known for his restraint and moderation, and his insistence on working inside the system. Gandhi took Gokhale's liberal approach based on British Whiggish traditions and transformed it to make it look Indian.[[114]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Whiggism-117)

Gandhi took leadership of the Congress in 1920 and began escalating demands until on 26 January 1930 the Indian National Congress declared the independence of India. The British did not recognise the declaration but negotiations ensued, with the Congress taking a role in provincial government in the late 1930s. Gandhi and the Congress withdrew their support of the Raj when the Viceroy declared war on Germany in September 1939 without consultation. Tensions escalated until Gandhi demanded immediate independence in 1942 and the British responded by imprisoning him and tens of thousands of Congress leaders. Meanwhile, the Muslim League did co-operate with Britain and moved, against Gandhi's strong opposition, to demands for a totally separate Muslim state of Pakistan. In August 1947 the British partitioned the land with India and Pakistan each achieving independence on terms that Gandhi disapproved.[[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-118)

#### **Partition and independence**

Gandhi [opposed the partition of the Indian subcontinent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opposition_to_the_partition_of_India) along religious lines.[[197]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-201)[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Khan2007-page1-13)[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-autogenerated3-14) The Indian National Congress and Gandhi called for the [British](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire) to [Quit India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quit_India_Movement). However, the [All-India Muslim League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All-India_Muslim_League) demanded "Divide and Quit India".[[198]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-202)[[199]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-203) Gandhi suggested an agreement which required the Congress and the Muslim League to co-operate and attain independence under a provisional government, thereafter, the question of partition could be resolved by a plebiscite in the districts with a Muslim majority.[[200]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-(Mahatma)Jack1994-204)

Jinnah rejected Gandhi's proposal and called for [Direct Action Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Direct_Action_Day), on 16 August 1946, to press Muslims to publicly gather in cities and support his proposal for the partition of the Indian subcontinent into a Muslim state and non-Muslim state. [Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huseyn_Shaheed_Suhrawardy" \o "Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy), the Muslim League Chief Minister of Bengal – now [Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh) and [West Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bengal), gave Calcutta's police special holiday to celebrate the Direct Action Day.[[201]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Wolpert118-205) The Direct Action Day triggered a mass murder of Calcutta Hindus and the torching of their property, and holidaying police were missing to contain or stop the conflict.[[202]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Chapter_1-206) The British government did not order its army to move in to contain the violence.[[201]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Wolpert118-205) The violence on Direct Action Day led to retaliatory violence against Muslims across India. Thousands of Hindus and Muslims were murdered, and tens of thousands were injured in the cycle of violence in the days that followed.[[203]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-207) Gandhi visited the most riot-prone areas to appeal a stop to the massacres.[[202]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Chapter_1-206)

[Archibald Wavell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archibald_Wavell,_1st_Earl_Wavell), the Viceroy and Governor-General of British India for three years through February 1947, had worked with Gandhi and Jinnah to find a common ground, before and after accepting Indian independence in principle. Wavell condemned Gandhi's character and motives as well as his ideas. Wavell accused Gandhi of harbouring the single minded idea to "overthrow British rule and influence and to establish a Hindu raj", and called Gandhi a "malignant, malevolent, exceedingly shrewd" politician.[[204]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Dalton2012p65-208) Wavell feared a civil war on the Indian subcontinent, and doubted Gandhi would be able to stop it.[[204]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Dalton2012p65-208)

The British reluctantly agreed to grant independence to the people of the Indian subcontinent, but accepted Jinnah's proposal of partitioning the land into Pakistan and India. Gandhi was involved in the final negotiations, but [Stanley Wolpert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanley_Wolpert) states the "plan to carve up British India was never approved of or accepted by Gandhi".[[205]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-209)

The partition was controversial and violently disputed. More than half a million were killed in religious riots as 10 million to 12 million non-Muslims (Hindus and Sikhs mostly) migrated from Pakistan into India, and Muslims migrated from India into Pakistan, across the newly created borders of India, West Pakistan and East Pakistan.[[206]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-MetcalfMetcalf2006-210)

Gandhi spent the day of independence not celebrating the end of the British rule but appealing for peace among his countrymen by fasting and spinning in Calcutta on 15 August 1947. The partition had gripped the Indian subcontinent with religious violence and the streets were filled with corpses.[[207]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-gs-211) Some writers credit Gandhi's fasting and protests for stopping the religious riots and communal violence.

#### **Nonviolence**

Although Gandhi was not the originator of the principle of nonviolence, he was the first to apply it in the political field on a large scale.[[302]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-306)[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Parel20162-9) The concept of nonviolence ([*ahimsa*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahimsa)) has a long history in Indian religious thought, and is considered the highest dharma (ethical value virtue), a precept to be observed towards all living beings (*sarvbhuta*), at all times (*sarvada*), in all respects (*sarvatha*), in action, words and thought.[[303]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-307) Gandhi explains his philosophy and ideas about *ahimsa* as a political means in his autobiography [*The Story of My Experiments with Truth*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Story_of_My_Experiments_with_Truth).[[304]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Borman1986-308)[[305]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-309)[[306]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Johnson2006-310)

Gandhi's views came under heavy criticism in Britain when it was under attack from [Nazi Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_Germany), and later when the [Holocaust](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocaust) was revealed. He told the British people in 1940, "I would like you to lay down the arms you have as being useless for saving you or humanity. You will invite Herr [Hitler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hitler) and Signor [Mussolini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mussolini) to take what they want of the countries you call your possessions... If these gentlemen choose to occupy your homes, you will vacate them. If they do not give you free passage out, you will allow yourselves, man, woman, and child, to be slaughtered, but you will refuse to owe allegiance to them."[[307]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-Wolpert2002-311) [George Orwell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Orwell) remarked that Gandhi's methods confronted "an old-fashioned and rather shaky despotism which treated him in a fairly chivalrous way", not a totalitarian power, "where political opponents simply disappear."[[308]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-312)

In a post-war interview in 1946, he said, "Hitler killed five million [Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jews). It is the greatest crime of our time. But the Jews should have offered themselves to the butcher's knife. They should have thrown themselves into the sea from cliffs... It would have aroused the world and the people of Germany... As it is they succumbed anyway in their millions."[[309]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-313) Gandhi believed this act of "collective suicide", in response to the Holocaust, "would have been heroism".[[310]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-314)[[*failed verification*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Verifiability)]

Gandhi as a politician, in practice, settled for less than complete non-violence. His method of non-violent Satyagraha could easily attract masses and it fitted in with the interests and sentiments of business groups, better-off people and dominant sections of peasantry, who did not want an uncontrolled and violent social revolution which could create losses for them. His doctrine of ahimsa lay at the core of unifying role played by the Gandhian Congress.[[311]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-315) However, during the Quit India Movement, even many staunch Gandhians used 'violent means'.[[312]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi#cite_note-:0-316)