

2. Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom

(Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela)

ABOUT THE CHAPTER

Introduction

The extract "Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom" is taken from the autobiography of this great man. It is a touching account of the horrible atrocities and oppression inflicted by the heartless white rulers on the innocent black natives in South Africa. The regime adopted a policy called apartheid that created one of the harshest systems of racial discrimination in the world.

Mandela shares a few of his bitter experiences during his struggle against apartheid along with the overwhelming emotions he experienced when a democratic era was finally ushered in after years of struggle.

Summary:

The chapter is an extract from Nelson Mandela's autobiography and takes the reader back to May 10, 1994, when Mandela was sworn in as the first black president of democratic South Africa.

This historic day was clear and bright with dignitaries from all over the world coming over gradually to felicitate him. The inauguration ceremony of the installation of South Africa's first democratic, non-racial government was to be held in a sandstone amphitheatre in Pretoria. This building had been the "seat of white supremacy" for decades but on this day it was thronged by people of varied colours and races from different nations.

Mandela was accompanied by his daughter Zenani and his swearing-in was preceded by that of Mr de Klerk as the second deputy president and Mr Thabo Mbeki as the first deputy president. Nelson Mandela

pledged to obey and uphold the constitution of his Republic. He also swore to devote himself "to the well being of his Republic and its people." In his inaugural speech, Mandela equated the centuries old misrule of the whites to an "extraordinary human disaster." He promised to bring up a society of which all humanity would be proud. He expressed a sense of pride over the fact that the blacks, who had been considered as 'outlaws' till then, were host to so many nations of the world. He expressed his gratitude to all the dignitaries for having participated in this common victory for justice, peace, and human dignity. He further added that they had achieved political emancipation and were now taking the pledge to free all their people from the shackles of poverty, suffering, deprivation, gender and other types of discrimination. He closed his address with the wish that freedom reigns and Africa be blessed by God.

An impressive display of South African jets, helicopters and troop carriers added to the spectrum of the inauguration ceremony. Mandela termed it as an exhibition of military loyalty to the newly formed democratic government. When saluted by the military generals, Mandela pointed out the shift in their attitude. These decorated officers, who had just saluted him as the new president and pledged loyalty to his government, would have arrested him not many years ago. The grand ceremony came to a close with the Impala jets leaving a trail of the bright colours that formed the new South African flag.

On that symbolic day, two national anthems were played, the whites sang "*Nkosi Sikelel -iAfrika*" and the blacks "*Die Stem*." Mandela knew that although the two groups had once despised each other's anthem, they would soon memorize both.

Mandela also recalled the historical events that had marked the growth of apartheid in South Africa. The Boer war and the first

decade of the twentieth century had witnessed the spreading of the system of racism and dominance of the blacks by the whites. However, in the last decade of the century, all this had been overturned and the South Africans enjoyed equal rights and freedom irrespective of the colour of their skin.

Mandela also recognised the sacrifices made by thousands of people before him who had suffered hardships because they were patriots. He felt sorry that they could not witness the fruits borne due to the hardships undergone by them. Mandela particularly criticised the policy of apartheid, which had left a deep and lasting wound on his country and its people. He admitted that it would take ages to recover from this but also observed that decades of oppression and brutalities had given birth to courageous patriots like Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Chief Luthuli and many more. He shared that his people were his greater wealth than the minerals and gems found in his country. He further remarked that he had learnt the real meaning of courage and selflessness from such patriots. He had learnt that "courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it."

Another observation that Mandela shared was the belief that hatred is not natural to men. It is acquired. If a man can learn to hate another because of the colour of the skin, he can also be taught to love. Love, according to him "comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite." He recounted the days of oppression that he had undergone during his long imprisonment as a freedom fighter. He shared that even at the most critical time he saw "a glimmer of humanity" in one of the guards. This helped to keep alive his faith that man's goodness is a flame that can never be extinguished.

Sharing another aspect of his experience regarding the obligations every individual has in life, Mandela remarked that every individual has twin obligations – personal obligations to his family and friends

and obligation to his community and country. Every man fulfils both these obligations according to his circumstances and abilities. But tragically in his country, if any black coloured man like him tried to fulfill these obligations he was "punished and isolated." Discharging duties to one's country, its people and community was considered a crime by the authorities and such a person was severed away from his surroundings. This was what had happened to him as well. As a child, he did not understand the meaning of freedom because he enjoyed life freely under the care of his parents. He later realized that this "boyhood freedom" was an illusion and after going to Johannesburg, his attention was drawn to the fact that he as well as his fellow beings were not free. He then began to yearn for the basic and honourable freedom which he required to achieve his potential. He observed that this freedom had been curtailed for all those who were like him.

It was at this stage that he joined the African National Congress which drew him into the struggle for a general freedom for his countrymen. His desire to see his countrymen leading a free and dignified life in place of insubordination changed Mandela from a timid man into a bold one and from a law-abiding attorney into a criminal. He was isolated and rendered homeless.

In the end, Mandela says that he considers both the oppressor and the oppressed to be prisoners. The oppressed is a prisoner because he undergoes physical torture and the oppressor because he is bound by hatred. He very rightly sums up by saying that, "The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity."

TITLE

"Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom" is a befitting title for this extract. It is an autobiographical account by this great South African leader and deals with the long and arduous journey he undertook to bring liberation to his countrymen. He had to struggle against the

cruel apartheid regime for over eight decades, which was preceded by three centuries of tireless efforts of his patriotic countrymen. The entire extract focuses on the various stages of the 'walk' that led Mandela and his country to 'freedom'. Therefore, the title clearly connects to the contents of the extract that follows.

THEME

The chapter explores the idea of struggle, setback, renewed hopes and ultimate triumph of truth. Its theme is summed up in the last sentence of the extract, "The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity." Nelson Mandela shares his experiences to convey the thought that freedom is an individual's birthright. Oppression is condemnable when it is inflicted as well as when it is tolerated. People all over the world are equal and deserve respect, irrespective of their cast, creed or skin-colour. So, those who look down upon their fellow beings or mistreat them, behave against the laws of nature. The natural tendency of human beings is to love and not to hate. This flame of love can never be extinguished. Therefore, the chains of hatred that bind the oppressor and the chains that deprive anyone of his rights, must be broken.

MESSAGE

Nelson Mandela, the legendary South African leader and the author of this extract, clearly advocates the supremacy of love. He conveys the message that love comes more naturally to living beings than hatred. Love and compassion are inborn while hatred is acquired. Therefore, the flame of goodness and love in man can never be extinguished. The author also wants human beings to accept the need for compassion even for one's oppressor. He believes that liberation from bondage is essential for both the oppressed and the oppressor since slavery robs them both of their humanity.

Another message that the author wishes to impart is about 'courage'. Courage does not stand for absence of fear, but it actually lies in overcoming fear. So, one must struggle fearlessly for a just cause. Courage helps ordinary people do extraordinary things. It also gives the ability of resilience that helps to fight the adversities of life.

CHARACTER

Nelson Mandela

This autobiographical extract tells us that Nelson Mandela was born in a family with adequate means. As a child he was free to do whatever he liked as long as he was obedient and honoured the customs of his tribe. On growing up, he acquired education and realised that the freedom enjoyed by him in his childhood was a myth. He found himself and his countrymen bound by racial oppression and discrimination. His love of freedom made him react very strongly against it.

Mandela was a courageous person and did not fear anything. He had immense will-power to undergo a long and difficult struggle for almost eight decades before he won freedom for his countrymen. He was a humble man with gratitude in his heart for all those who had kept the flame of freedom-struggle alive before he carried on their legacy. He had a kind heart and bore no malice against anyone.

As a dedicated leader of the African National Congress, Mandela worked all his life for peace and humanity. His resilience and selflessness earned him love and respect from the whole world. His views, that even the oppressor requires to be liberated from the chains of hatred that bind him, indicate that he was an apostle of love and harmony. This dynamic leader eventually succeeded in realising his aim to set up a democratic non-racial government in South Africa.

EXTRACTS FOR COMPREHENSION

*Read the following extracts and answer the questions
that follow in one or two lines.*

(I)

For decades this had been the seat of white supremacy, and now it was the site of a rainbow gathering of different colours and nations for the installation of South Africa's first democratic, non-racial government.

(a) What does 'this' refer to in the extract?

'This' refers to the lovely sandstone amphitheatre formed by the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

(b) Why had 'this' been the seat of white supremacy for decades?

The sandstone amphitheatre had been the seat of white supremacy for decades because it was used by the whites as a place from where they would pass racist policies to suppress the native blacks.

(c) Why was 'this' now the site of a rainbow gathering?

The sandstone amphitheatre was now the site of a rainbow gathering as it was the venue of the installation of a democratic, non-racial government in South Africa.

(d) What does the term 'rainbow gathering' stand for?

'Rainbow gathering' conveys the presence of people from varied nationalities belonging to different classes, creeds and colours.

(II)

Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster that lasted too long, must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud.

(a) Who speaks these words and when?

Nelson Mandela speaks these words on the occasion of the installation of South Africa's first democratic, non-racial government.

(b) According to the speaker, what is the 'extraordinary human disaster'?

According to Mandela, the 'extraordinary human disaster' is the suffering borne by the blacks of South Africa under their oppressive and racist white rulers.

(c) Why did the 'extraordinary human disaster' last too long?

The sufferings of the blacks of South Africa lasted too long because they had been under the white rule for more than three centuries.

(d) What type of society does the speaker expect to be born out of this 'extraordinary human disaster'?

Mandela expects the birth of a society that would be fair and equal for all regardless of class, colour or creed.

(III)

We, who were outlaws, not so long ago, have today been given the rare privilege to be host to the nations of the world on our own soil.

(a) Whom does 'we' refer to in this extract?

'We' refers to the native black population of South Africa.

(b) Why were 'we' considered 'outlaws'?

The natives of South Africa were considered 'outlaws' because the ruling white government did not recognize them as citizens.

(c) What was the 'rare privilege'?

The 'rare privilege' was to welcome people from different nationalities on the South African soil. These nationalities had boycotted South Africa so far because of the racist policies of their apartheid government.

(d) Why was the 'rare privilege' given?

The 'rare privilege' was given to show solidarity with the newly elected democratic first non-racial government of South Africa.

(IV)

I was not unmindful of the fact that not so many years before they would not have saluted but arrested me.

(a) Who is 'I' in this extract?

'I' in this extract is Nelson Mandela, the first President of a democratic non-racial South Africa.

(b) Whom does 'they' refer to?

'They' refers to the highest generals of the South African defence force and police.

(c) When does 'I' make this observation?

Mandela makes this observation when he is saluted by the senior officials from the former white regime.

(d) Why would 'they' have arrested the speaker not so many years before?

They would have arrested Mandela not so many years before because the racist law that they safeguarded considered Mandela as an 'outlaw' as he was a black

(V)

On the day of the inauguration, I was overwhelmed with a sense of history.

(a) Who speaks these words?

Nelson Mandela, the first President of the newly formed democratic, non-racial government of South Africa, speaks these words.

(b) When was the day of the inauguration?

Tenth May 1994 was the day of the inauguration.

(c) What was inaugurated on that day?

The newly formed democratic, non-racial government of South Africa was inaugurated on that day.

(d) Why was the speaker overwhelmed with a sense of history?

Mandela was overwhelmed with a sense of history because he recalled the countless sacrifices made by his countrymen for centuries before their present generation could see the light of freedom.

(VI)

I would see a glimmer of humanity in one of the guards, perhaps just for a second, but it was enough to assure me and keep me going. Man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished.

(a) Who speaks or writes these words?

Nelson Mandela writes these words in the excerpt from his autobiography.

(b) Which guard does he/she refer to?

Mandela refers to one of the guards in the prison where he had been kept along with his comrades for protesting the racist policy of apartheid.

(c) What would assure him/her and keep him/her going?

The brief glimmer of humanity that Mandela would see in one of the guards even in the grimmest times in prison assured him to keep going for the victory of love.

(d) Why does he/she compare man's goodness to a flame?

Mandela compares man's goodness to a flame because it can never be blown out. It keeps glowing and keeps spreading light of hope.

(VII)

I saw that it was not just my freedom that was curtailed, but the freedom of everyone who looked like I did.

(a) Who is 'I' in this extract?

'There is Nelson Mandela, the symbol of courage, who fought the racist apartheid regime to win freedom for South Africa.'

- (b) When did the speaker see that freedom was curtailed for him and others?**

Mandela saw this when he was a young man in Johannesburg.

- (c) Why was freedom curtailed for everyone who looked like the speaker?**

Mandela was a black South African and the government in his country was racist that oppressed the black coloured people. So, freedom of all those who had black looks like Mandela was also curtailed.

- (d) What did the speaker do after seeing that freedom was curtailed for him and others like him?**

After seeing that freedom was curtailed for him and others like him, Mandela joined the African National Congress to subsequently become part of the freedom struggle of South Africa.

(VIII)

A man who takes away another man's freedom is a prisoner of hatred;

- (a) Who is the speaker here? When does he/she make this observation?**

Nelson Mandela is the speaker here. He makes this observation when he notices the situations of the oppressor and the oppressed.

- (b) Whom does he refer to as 'prisoner of hatred'?**

Mandela refers to the oppressor as a 'prisoner of hatred'.

- (c) Whose freedom is taken away and why?**

The freedom of the oppressed is taken away because the oppressor has greater power vested in him.

- (d) How can hatred imprison anyone?**

Hatred is like a wall of a prison that does not allow a person inside it to connect to those on the other side. In this way, a man who allows hatred to control him gets cut off from everyone and is left alone like a prisoner.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 30 – 40 words each)

- Q1.** What is apartheid? Which country faced apartheid until very recently?

Apartheid is the oppressive policy that is based on racial discrimination. South Africa faced the evil effects of this inhuman practice till 10 May, 1994.

- Q2.** Can you say how 10 May is an 'autumn day' in South Africa?

Or (Textual)

What is the significance of tenth May for the people of South Africa?

Or

Why did Mandela call May 10 'that lovely autumn day'?

Mandela called 10 May 'that lovely autumn day' as this day saw the fall of a system of governance based on race and creed. Just as the trees shed their old and worn out leaves in autumn, so were the oppressive policies practised in South Africa shed, making room for a new and fresh democratic non-racial government.

- Q3.** Why had the international leaders gathered on South African soil? What did it signify?

The international leaders had gathered on South African soil to congratulate Nelson Mandela and his team at the victory of their struggle against racism. They were the guests at the installation ceremony of the newly elected democratic, non-racial government.

This gathering signified recognition of the rights of the black community in South Africa by the political agencies of the world.

- Q4.** Where did the ceremonies of the inauguration of South Africa take place? Can you name any public buildings in India that are made of sandstone? *(Textual)*

The ceremonies of the inauguration of South Africa took place in the lovely sandstone amphitheatre formed by the Union Buildings in Pretoria. It was attended by dignitaries from more than 140 countries around the world.

The Jama Masjid and Humayun's Tomb in Delhi and the Amer Fort in Jaipur are some of the sandstone buildings in India.

Q5. What two symbols did the sandstone amphitheatre stand for?

Or

What importance do the Union Buildings in Pretoria hold?

The sandstone amphitheatre stood as a symbol of white supremacy over the people of black race till the new democratic government came to power on May 10, 1994. After the installation of the first non-racial democratic government, it stood as a symbol of freedom, peace and harmony of human-race.

Q6. Who accompanied Mandela for the inauguration? Which three people were sworn in? *Or*

Which two political members were sworn in before Mandela on 10 May 1994?

Mandela was accompanied to the inauguration by his daughter Zenani. The three people who were sworn in were Mr de Klerk as the second deputy president, Thabo Mbeki as the first deputy president, and Nelson Mandela as the President of South Africa.

Q7. What did Mandela pledge when he was sworn in?

Mandela pledged to obey and uphold the Constitution and to devote himself to the well-being of the Republic and its people. He also pledged to liberate all his people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination.

Q8. Why did Mandela say that the entire humanity will be proud at the birth of a new society in South Africa?

Mandela said so because he viewed this new society as a brave survivor who had withstood the onslaught of a long and extraordinary human disaster. This society was therefore unique and its existence was a matter of pride for the entire world.

Q9. What does Mandela thank the international leaders for? (Textual)

Mandela thanks the international leaders for having graced the occasion of the installation of the democratic, non-racial government of South Africa. Their presence on this historic day proved that the international community supported equality and recognised its victory over injustice and discrimination. The countries of these representatives had earlier severed diplomatic relations with the white regime in South Africa to express their disapproval of the policy of apartheid.

Q10. Why did Mandela call the swearing-in 'a common victory for justice, for peace, for human dignity'?

Mandela calls the swearing-in 'a common victory for justice, for peace, for human dignity' because most nations of the world who had expressed their disapproval of the policy of apartheid practised by the white rulers of South Africa had now given international recognition to a newly born free nation. The setting up of a democratic, non-racial government thus was a victory for everyone.

Q11. 'We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation.' Explain the significance of this statement.

This statement means that the black people of South Africa had eventually won their freedom from oppressive laws like the apartheid. Now, their political rights and opportunities were the same as that of the whites.

Q12. What ideals does Mandela set out for the future of South Africa? (Textual)

Mandela foresees that his country will be free of segregation in the name of colour and class. It will be free from hatred, and love will reign supreme. He also pledges to liberate his countrymen from poverty, deprivation and suffering.

Q13. What did Mandela say about the spectacular array of South African jets?

Presenting his observations about the performance of military at the inauguration ceremony, Mandela records that it was not only a display of pinpoint precision and military force, but was also a demonstration of the military's loyalty to democracy and to a new government that had been elected freely and fairly.

Q14. Why does Mandela observe that the generals of the South African defence force and police would have arrested him not so many years ago?

Mandela makes this observation because these generals abided by the rules of the apartheid regime before the non-racial democratic government came to power. As per the laws of apartheid Mandela was an outlaw who protested their racist and discriminatory rules. So he would have been arrested by the generals.

Q15. Why were two national anthems sung on the inauguration day? What did it symbolize? (Textual)

The two national anthems sung on the inauguration day were the '*Nkosi Sikelel -iAfrika*' sung by the whites and the '*Die Stem*' - the old anthem of the Republic - sung by the blacks. It symbolized the coming together of two groups that had remained segregated along racial lines till then.

Q16. What overwhelmed Mandela on the day of the inauguration?

On the day of the inauguration, Mandela was overwhelmed by a sense of history. He recalled the first decade of the twentieth

century, a few years after the bitter Anglo-Boer war and the time before his own birth. Enumerating the sacrifices of the freedom fighters before him, he expressed gratitude.

Q17. How had the white-skinned peoples of South Africa managed to dominate the blacks?

The white-skinned peoples of South Africa patched up their differences and erected a harsh and inhumane system of racial domination against the dark-skinned blacks of their own country. They adopted the policy of apartheid and took away even the basic rights of the black people.

Q18. Explain: "That long and noble line ended and now began again with me."

This means that the numerous freedom fighters before Nelson Mandela had passed away after having contributed to the struggle for liberation. These were men of extraordinary courage, wisdom and generosity. Mandela had resumed their struggle against poverty, discrimination and suffering.

Q19. '...they were not able to see what their sacrifices has wrought'. Whose sacrifices was Mandela talking about? Why?

Mandela was talking about the unimaginable sacrifices made by thousands of his people. He was talking about them because the suffering and courage of these people could never be counted or repaid. The victory of freedom struggle was actually the sum total of all the African patriots before him.

Q20. What was the impact of the policy of apartheid on the people of South Africa? Or

What was the only 'positive', albeit 'unintended effect' that Mandela attributed to apartheid?

The policy of apartheid had created a deep and lasting wound on South Africa and its people. The hurt was so profound that it

was likely to take years to recover from it. However, the 'unintended effect' was that it gave birth to courageous, wise and generous people like Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Chief Luthuli and other extraordinary personalities.

Q21. How does Mandela associate oppression with character?

Mandela believes that deeper the oppression, the greater the height of character. To him, character is strengthened by the challenges and sufferings encountered by a person. Tougher the challenges, the stronger the character.

Q22. What, according to Mandela, is the true wealth of his nation?

Or

What or whom does Mandela regard as the country's finest resource?

According to Nelson Mandela, the true wealth of his nation is its people who are finer and truer than the purest diamonds. He considers the people to be richer than the minerals and gems beneath the nation's soil.

Q23. How did Mandela learn the meaning of courage?

Mandela learnt the meaning of courage from his comrades in struggle for freedom. He repeatedly saw men and women risking and giving their lives for an idea. He saw them standing up to attacks and torture, displaying remarkable resilience without breaking.

Q24. What does courage mean to Mandela?

(Textual)

To Mandela, courage means overcoming fear and not the absence of fear. The brave always conquer fear which gives them the strength to stand firmly against atrocities without breaking down. The courageous people never feel afraid.

Q25. Why does Mandela believe that people can be taught to love?

Or

Which does Mandela think is natural – to love or to hate? (Textual)

Mandela believes that love comes naturally to human heart while hatred is acquired. Therefore, if people can learn to hate, they can also be taught to love. He forms this opinion out of his own experience as a prisoner when he saw a "glimmer of humanity" in the eyes of white prison guards at crucial times.

Q26. In Mandela's opinion, what are the 'twin obligations' that every man has in life? Why was it not possible for a man in South Africa to fulfill these 'twin obligations'? Or

What 'twin obligations' does Mandela mention? (Textual)

Mandela is of the opinion that every man has twin obligations. The first one is towards his family, his parents, his wife and children, and the second one is towards his people, his community and his country. It was not possible for a man in South Africa to fulfill both these because by doing so he became a threat to the white rulers. They punished and isolated such a man under the oppressive apartheid laws.

Q27. What kind of life did Mandela have as a child? Or

What had freedom meant to Mandela when he was a child?

As a child, Mandela had a safe and free life. He was free to run in the fields, swim in the clear stream, roast mealies under the stars and ride the bulls. As long as he obeyed his father and abided by the customs of his tribe, he was not restricted.

Q28. When and why did Mandela begin to feel the hunger for freedom?

Mandela began to feel the hunger for freedom when he was in Johannesburg as a young man. He felt this hunger because even the basic and honourable freedom desired by him, and others like him, was curtailed by the whites.

Q29. When and why did Mandela join the African National Congress?

Mandela joined the African National Congress when he saw all black people in his country bound in the chains of oppression.

He joined the ANC because he was now hungry for the freedom of the entire race and wanted his people to live a life of dignity and self-respect.

Q30. Why was Mandela labelled a 'criminal'?

The desire for freedom of his people to live their lives with dignity and self-respect emboldened Mandela. Earlier he was a law abiding attorney but later he defied the oppressive laws of the white rulers and was labelled a 'criminal'.

Q31. How did the struggle for winning freedom affect Mandela's life?

The struggle for winning freedom isolated Mandela and he had to leave his family and home to live like a monk. He could fulfill his obligation only towards the nation and had to give up his obligation towards his family.

Q32. 'Freedom is indivisible'. What did Mandela mean by these words?

Mandela used this expression to convey that the chains and bondage, that enslaved anyone of his people, were the chains on all of them including him. Freedom had to be brought to every citizen as all had an equal right for an honourable existence.

Q33. "The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity." Why did Mandela say this? Or

What, according to Mandela, is similar about the oppressor and the oppressed? Or

Does Mandela think the oppressor is free? Why/Why not?

(Textual)

According to Mandela, the oppressor is as enslaved as the oppressed. They both are robbed of their humanity. The oppressed is robbed by the suppressive power of the oppressor while the oppressor is burdened with the weight of hatred and is enslaved by the barriers of prejudice and narrow-mindedness.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 100 – 150 words each)

- Q1. What do you understand by the term 'Apartheid'? Of the three countries namely North America, Australia and South Africa, where was this system practised and with what result? Who was responsible for wiping out this system from the country?**

'Apartheid' was a political system based on racial discrimination intended to establish dominance of the whites over the dark-skinned people in their own land. This system granted social and political privileges only to the whites. The blacks were subjected to harsh and inhuman oppressive practices that had ever been faced by any society in the world.

This vicious political system was practised in South Africa by the Botha regime. This policy resulted in the creation of a very deep and lasting wound on the country and its people. The blacks of South Africa were treated as 'outlaws' and any attempt to fight for their rights led to their victimization by the laws of the apartheid.

Nelson Mandela, the African National Congress, and many other freedom fighters like Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu and Chief Luthuli waged a long war against this deeply oppressive policy and eventually succeeded in wiping it out on May 10, 1994.

- Q2. Why did a large number of international leaders attend the inauguration? What did it signify the triumph of? (Textual)**

A large number of international leaders and dignitaries representing more than 140 countries from all over the world attended the inauguration ceremony because it was hosted to install the first democratic, non-racial government in South Africa. These leaders had come to show solidarity with, and pay their respects to the long and arduous freedom struggle of South

Africans. The swearing in of Mandela as the first black president of South Africa was an event of international significance as the fight against the racist policy of apartheid was supported by almost all the nations of the world. They had broken their diplomatic relations with the white rulers of South Africa to strongly express their disapproval. They had gathered in such great numbers on the soil of South Africa after a very long time. Their presence at the time of the establishment of democracy and acknowledgement of the rights of blacks was a victory for the entire international community. It signified the triumph of the faith in equality and the right to liberty.

Q3. At the beginning of his speech, Mandela mentions "an extraordinary human disaster." What does he mean by this? What is the "glorious human achievement" he speaks of at the end? (Textual)

The "extraordinary disaster" that Mandela talks of in his inaugural presidential speech is the effect of the long drawn apartheid policy practised by the whites in South Africa. This policy had inflicted unthinkable, inhuman and harsh atrocities on the dark-skinned people in their own country. This was against natural justice because God has made everyone equal and rights of one man could not be allowed to be suppressed by another solely on the basis of the difference in the colour of the skin.

The "glorious human achievement", about which Mandela speaks in the end, is the eventual victory of the 'outlaws', who, after making countless sacrifices, finally won the first democratic elections in South Africa to form a government which was non-racial. This achievement was glorious as it had been gained after undergoing hardships for many centuries.

Q4. What did the military and police generals do? How had their attitude changed and why? (Textual)

The highest ranking generals of the South African defence forces and the police demonstrated their loyalty to the new government by saluting their first black president, Nelson Mandela. Their attitude underwent a change because as government servants they were the ones who had earlier carried out the duty of arresting all the 'outlaws' who had fought the oppressive policies of the white government. However, the situation changed after the democratic elections which resulted in the victory of the African National Congress. The power now shifted to the team led by Nelson Mandela. But these officers displayed integrity by pledging their loyalty to the newly elected democratic, non-racial government. The change in their attitude showed that they served as the upholders of law and worked within the ambit of their constitutional responsibilities.

Q5. Why were two national anthems sung on the occasion of the installation ceremony? *Or*

'Although that day neither group knew the lyrics of the anthem they once despised, they would soon know the words by heart.' What do you think Mandela meant by these words?

The whites and the blacks in South Africa had always been at loggerheads. The whites ruled South Africa with an iron hand denying even the basic rights to the dark-skinned people in their own land. They oppressed the blacks and ripped them of normal life if they tried to raise their discontentment over the white misrule. However, the country belonged to both the whites and the blacks. So, the two groups sang their respective national anthems to pledge their loyalty to the nation. The blacks sang "Die Stem" which was the old anthem of the Republic, while the whites sang "*Nkosi Sikelel -iAfrika*." Although both the groups had despised the lyrics of each other's anthem but it was now

expected that after living together as equal citizens of the same country they would soon learn these anthems by heart.

- Q6. How does Mandela describe the systems of government in his country (i) in the first decade, and (ii) in the final decade, of the twentieth century? (Textual)**

In the first decade of the twentieth century, before Mandela was born, the whites in South Africa sorted out their differences and became united. They set up the most vicious system of racial domination called the apartheid. In the words of Mandela, this system was "an extraordinary disaster" that formed the basis of one of the harshest, most inhumane societies the world had ever known. The whites discriminated against the blacks and scarred them deeply.

However, in the last decade of the twentieth century, the apartheid system was overturned forever and was replaced by the one that recognized the rights and freedom of all people, regardless of the colour of their skin. This new system was a symbolic victory for justice, peace and human dignity. It led to the installation of the first democratic, non-racial government of South Africa.

- Q7. What does Mandela mean when he says he is "simply the sum of all those African patriots" who had gone before him? (Textual)**

The struggle against the atrocities committed on blacks by the whites in South Africa started much before Mandela was born. The African patriots before him had already started the struggle for equality and liberty. Had they not raised their voice against oppression and racial discrimination, Mandela, perhaps, would never have realised the real significance of being a free man. He carried forward the legacy left by these great African patriots. Thus, the courage exhibited, the sufferings undergone and the

sacrifices made by thousands of his people before him became a symbol of awakening for Mandela. Whatever he did for his country, was the culmination of the total efforts made by all the freedom fighters put together. This made him the sum of all those who had kept the hunger for freedom thriving.

Q8. "Man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished"? Why does Mandela say this? Or

During his time in prison, what reassured Mandela that man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished?

Nelson Mandela had unflinching faith in the goodness of man. He believed that it was like a glowing flame that could perhaps be kept hidden but could never be extinguished. He understood and acknowledged this value of man when he was kept confined as a political prisoner along with his comrades. He observed that even in the grimmest times in prison, when he and his fellow freedom fighters were pushed to their limits, a glimmer of humanity would flicker momentarily in one of the guards. This was enough to assure Mandela that goodness of man could not be extinguished and he continued to fight for his rights. He admired this 'flame' and kept going on to face adversities, overcome suppression and eventually win liberation for his brothers. He knew that love comes more naturally to human heart than hate. Therefore, man's goodness could never be wiped off. Sooner or later it would glow like a flame and spread its brightness in human lives.

Q9. What "twin obligations" does Mandela mention? What happened to people who tried to perform both these obligations under the white rule in South Africa?

The 'twin obligations' Mandela talks about are a man's duty towards his blood relations i.e. parents, wife, children, brothers

and sisters on the one hand, and his country and his community on the other. Under the white rule in South Africa, so long as a black did not question the rules laid down by the whites and submitted to all their whims, he was not disturbed. But the moment he started working for the uplift of his community, he earned the wrath of the white rule and was penalised. He was ripped off his family and was constrained to lead a "twilight existence" divorced from his near and dear ones. The white government left no scope of rebellion and brutally curtailed all such efforts. They executed their powers to suppress the blacks and kept all the resources concentrated in their own hands. All voices of discontentment were throttled ruthlessly.

Q10. What did being free mean to Mandela as a boy and as a student?

How does he contrast these 'transitory freedoms' with the "basic and honourable freedoms?" *Or* *(Textual)*

How did Mandela realize that his vision of boyhood freedom was an illusion?

As a village boy, freedom for Mandela meant running about the fields freely, swimming in the clear stream at will, roasting mealies under the stars and riding the broad backs of slow-moving bulls. As a young man, freedom for him meant staying late at night and reading what he liked. However, later on, he realised that these were mere illusionary "transitory freedoms." 'Basic and honourable freedoms' lied in achieving one's potential and leading a life of dignity and self-respect. It included the right to earn one's keep, the right to marry and have a family, and the right not to be obstructed in a lawful life. The 'transitory freedoms' were restricted to a phase in one's life where one was under the guardianship of elders. In contrast the 'basic and honourable freedoms' were for the individual as well as those

around him. These freedoms were not divisible and had to be won for all the brothers and sisters of the community.

Q11. How did Mandela's understanding of freedom change with age and experience? *(Textual)*

Mandela, as a child, had nothing exceptional about him and like other children he too felt content with the freedom he enjoyed in his own village. He was free to do whatever he liked so long as he obeyed his father and abided by the dictates of his tribe. However, his perception of freedom changed with the passage of time. Age and experience made him understand that real freedom stood for the right to live with dignity and self-respect. He realised that he was not free to achieve his potential, or earn his keep, or marry and have a family or free not to be obstructed in the name of law. He also understood that his fellow-beings too were as bound as he was. So, as a grown up man, his understanding of freedom changed leading to a hunger for an honourable life for himself and for his brethren.

Q12. When and why did Nelson Mandela join the African National Congress (ANC)?

Mandela belonged to a loving family that provided him with all that was required by a young growing up boy. However, on reaching boyhood, he understood that his freedom was an illusion. Gradually he began to feel a strong hunger for freedom. Initially, he wanted the freedom only for himself. This was a transitory freedom of being able to stay out at night, read what pleased him and go where he wanted. These thoughts remained with him when he was a student. But on reaching Johannesburg, as a young man, he yearned for the basic and honourable freedom to achieve his potential and lead a life where there would not be any obstruction to earn his keep, and marry and

have a family. However, on a closer observation of people around him, Mandela realised that all those who looked like him were not free. The freedom of each one of his brothers and sisters had been curtailed. At this juncture Nelson Mandela joined the African National Congress since the hunger for his own freedom became the greater hunger for the freedom of his people.

Q13. How did Mandela's "hunger for freedom" change his life? (Textual)

Or

How did Mandela's personality undergo a transformation after joining the ANC?

Mandela's hunger for freedom changed his life diametrically. He realized that all his countrymen, who were black like him, were bound by racism. This realisation thrust him into a way of life where he gave up his family and home to live like a monk. He changed from a law-abiding attorney to a 'criminal' who challenged and defied the oppressive laws. He was no longer a frightened young man, but a self-sacrificing bold one. He could not enjoy the little freedom that he had because he knew that his people were not free. He had finally realised that as long as his brothers were in chains, he too was a slave. He also understood that even the oppressor was a slave. He was bound by the chains of hatred and locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. Thus Mandela's hunger for freedom brought a complete change in his life and his way of thinking.

Q14. Would you agree that the "depths of oppression" create "heights of character"? How does Mandela illustrate this? Can you add your own examples to this argument? (Textual)

It is certain that the "depths of oppression" bring the best out of an individual and create "heights of character". Mandela illustrates this by talking about the unimaginable atrocities

perpetrated by the whites against the black South Africans. This awakened the spirit of revolt in them and they showed a rare strength of character in fighting against their oppressors. The atrocities inflicted upon the South Africans by the apartheid regime led to an equally strong retaliation by patriots like Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Chief Luthuli, Yusuf Dadoo, Bram Fischer, Robert Sobukwe and later on Nelson Mandela.

On the Indian scene, one can't forget the sacrifices made by the likes of Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Pandit Nehru, Lala Laj Pat Rai, Bhagat Singh, Subhash Chander Bose and Chander Shekhar Azad in India's struggle for freedom.

