

Sabarmati Ashram

History



Hridaya Kunj, Gandhi's Home

On his return from South Africa, Gandhi's first Ashram in India was established in the Kochrab area of Ahmedabad on 25 May 1915. The Ashram was then shifted on 17 June 1917 to a piece of open land on the banks of the river Sabarmati. Reasons for this shift included: he wanted to do some experiments in living eg farming, animal husbandry, cow breeding, Khadi and related constructive activities, for which he was in search of this kind of barren land; mythologically, it was the ashram site of Dadhichi Rishi who had donated his bones for a righteous war; it is between a jail and a crematorium as he believed that a satyagrahi has to invariably go to either place. The Sabarmati Ashram (also known as Harijan Ashram) was home to Mohandas Gandhi from 1917 until 1930 and served as one of the main centres of the Indian freedom struggle. Originally called the Satyagraha Ashram, reflecting the movement toward passive resistance launched by the Mahatma, the Ashram became home to the ideology that set India free. Sabarmati Ashram named for the river on which it sits, was created with a dual mission. To serve as an institution that would carry on a search for truth and a platform to bring together a group of workers committed to non-violence who would help secure freedom for India.

By conceiving such a vision Gandhi and his followers hoped to foster a new social construct of truth and non-violence that would help to revolutionize the existing pattern of like.

While at the Ashram, Gandhi formed a school that focused on manual labour, agriculture, and literacy to advance his efforts for self-sufficiency. It was also from here on the 12 March 1930 that Gandhi launched the famous Dandi march 241 miles from the Ashram (with 78 companions) in protest of the British Salt Law, which taxed Indian salt in an effort to promote sales of British salt in India. This mass awakening filled the British jails with 60 000 freedom fighters. Later the government seized their property, Gandhi, in sympathy with them, responded by asking the Government to forfeit the Ashram. Then Government, however, did not oblige. He had by now already decided on 22 July 1933 to disband the Ashram, which later became asserted place after the detention of many freedom fighters, and then some local citizens decided to preserve it. On 12 March 1930

he vowed that he would not return to the Ashram until India won independence. Although this was won on 15 August 1947, when India was declared a free nation, Gandhi was assassinated in January 1948 and never returned.

Over the years, the Ashram became home to the ideology that set India free. It aided countless other nations and people in their own battles against oppressive forces.

Today, the Ashram serves as a source of inspiration and guidance, and stands as a monument to Gandhi's life mission and a testimony to others who have fought a similar struggle.