



## The Great Trial of Mohandas K.Gandhi

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### *Abstract*

*The famous speech delivered by Mohandas K. Gandhi, the father of the nation on March 23, 1922 in the court defending his beliefs is a historical speech from the context of the study of freedom movement of India, law and leadership. The speech is a classic study rather a microcosm of the vision, strategy and thought process that led to the birth of a nation and it tells about the brain behind it which was one of the most visionary and opulent brains.*

*The article strives to study deliberate upon the mettle behind one of the greatest humans and leader the world has seen: his in-depth insight into human psychology, civilization, economics, machinery of justice and political influence which ultimately envisioned the making of a great nation. It also throws light on the aspect or moral courage, obedience to morality than law and the ultimate target of law: to uphold morality and goodness for the masses.*

*The article also deliberates on how The Father of the Nation He truly built the soul and structure of a nation which would take rapid strides and the strides would be firmer and the progress sustainable if his ideals are put into practice wherever possible and at as many fronts as possible.*

**KEY WORDS:** ‘Gandhi’ ‘Law’, ‘Speech’, ‘Oratory’, ‘Humanity’, ‘Language’, ‘Morality’, ‘Great Trial’

## **Introduction:**

The famous speech delivered by Mohandas K. Gandhi, the father of the nation on March 23, 1922 in the court defending his beliefs is a historical speech from the context of the study of freedom movement of India, law and leadership. Gandhiji was arrested in 1922 and charged with sedition under article 124-A. The Trial and the subsequent speech by the father of the nation marked a turn in the freedom movement. The freedom movement then became completely non-violent and even stray incidents like Chauri-Chaura did not happen till the end. “The whole trial lasted one hundred minutes, each minute enacting a page in the history of the battle of India’s freedom.” [1]

## **RESULT**

For the field of law and the machineries of law and justice it is unique, mainly in three aspects. As some of the experts of law say, this was a unique case wherein the accused accepted all the charges without arguments and also added to the charges.

The speech is a classic study rather a microcosm of the vision, strategy and thought process that led to the birth of a nation and it tells about the brain behind it which was one of the most visionary and opulent brains.

## **DISCUSSION**

“I would like to state that I entirely endorse the learned advocate general’s remarks in connection with my humble self. I think that he was entirely fair to me in all the statement that he has made, because it is very true, and I have no desire whatsoever to conceal from this court.....that my preaching of disaffection did not commence with my connection with Young India, but that it commenced much earlier.” [2]

It is also unique in a way that after the verdict of sentencing Gandhiji for six years of imprisonment was delivered, the judge Mr. Broomfield noted that it had been his painful duty to do so and if His Majesty’s Government would reduce the sentence he would be the happiest man. No judge in the world would say such a thing or officially note it down but the judge was facing one of the greatest men the human race has seen. It is also extraordinary in the sense of the court room decorum, when the accused entered the entire court the stood up to respect him; nowhere has such a thing happened. “ The tone of the trial was set by the judge when he took his seat, bowing gravely to the distinguished prisoner. Gandhiji returned the bow.” [3]

First of all it shows the moral conviction and moral courage of Gandhiji. When he wanted to call off the non-cooperation movement the entire congress and other leaders were against it as the fervour had caught heat in the entire nation. He called it off as it was not going in the right spirit and way. As a leader he took the blame of all the wrong happenings like Chauri-Chaura, Bombay occurrence, Madras occurrence and submitted himself before the law.

“...it is impossible to dissociate myself from the diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura or the mad outrages of Bombay...I should have known the consequences of every one of my acts. “

[4]

The moral courage and conviction was unique in any man hitherto seen. Any political leader would have evaded the charges but self interest was the last thing this man thought of.

Gandhiji has often been attributed with multi faceted personality traits ranging from being an economist, spiritual leader, political leader, psychologist etc.

We also see him as a man of tremendous psychological insight. One of the reasons, though not officially declared, of accepting the charges and the imprisonment was his dealing with psychology of the mass. His taking the blame and the subsequent penalty led the people of the country to have a feeling of guilt and a belief that because of their rash violent acts their leader had to suffer- a quality often attributed to Jesus Christ who suffered for the people and redeemed them of their sins. Then onwards no major or glaring incident of violence or sabotage happened in any of the movements till the end. It can be also explained in a simple example. If a child does mischief and its parents have to suffer or face the onslaught because of this misconduct, the child would feel guilty and never would like to repeat such an act.

There is a famous and proven proverb “First deserve than desire.” The acts and method of Gandhiji seemed to follow this maxim for our countrymen. He first supported the British Government and laws in Africa as well as India by raising ambulance corps during the Boer war, raising stretcher-bearer party during Zulu revolt of 1906 or raising corps for war as per the appeal of Lord Chelmsford. He also wanted his countrymen to serve the cause of the government and humanity. He was simultaneously developing the people for challenges so that when they are free their situation would not like be an abandoned child by parents. Even his philosophy of self reliance and cottage industries advocated the same principle of growing and deserving before desiring.

We can also say he was a strategist, though the method would not have been on his mind then, as he first supported the government in their problems and worked with it shoulder to shoulder learning their methods and limit. When he observed that the government in return is

not doing anything for the people of India, on the contrary harming the interest of the people, he plunged into action. Also his movements be it Champaran, Kheda, Non-Cooperation, Salt Satyagrah etc. targeted one or the other law and breaking them. Once the laws are broken and their control is weakened the government cannot rule smoothly or have control over the people. He targeted maiming the effect of the laws which were harmful- an insightful thought that can come from a student of law.

It was a Herculean task for any leader and the congress then to take the country out of the vicious circle of poverty, political dependability, social problems and anti-Indian laws. Gandhiji's travelling in the entire country clubbed with his education of law and experience of Africa enabled him to decipher the circle and move in the right direction for the betterment of the country.

"I came reluctantly to the conclusion that the British connection had made India more helpless than she ever was before, politically and economically....the law itself in this country has been used to serve the foreign exploiter. In my opinion, the administration of the law is thus prostituted consciously or unconsciously for the benefit of the exploiter." [5]

## **CONCLUSION**

"Why has the trial of Gandhiji been universally acknowledged to be a great historic trial overshadowing all similar trials of leaders and patriots? Surely, not merely because of the personality of the accused, nor because of his extra-ordinary sway over India's teeming millions whom he treated as his own, nor because of its political future of India. The chief and most important factor which made the trial historic was the profound issue involved in it, namely, that of obedience to law as against obedience to moral duty. The trial is of profound and momentous significance in that Gandhiji during the trial sought to establish beyond doubt the superiority of soul force over sheer brute force, born out of the gospel of self-suffering and the doctrines of willful yet holy withdrawal from all that is foul, base and unholy in human behaviour, a conclusion which will have an abiding purpose and a meaning until humanity survives." [6] Thus, the father of the nation, as he has been rightly called, showed a myriad of personality traits which are not seen in any normal human being. We can also see that he is not called The Father of the Nation just because he led the freedom movement to victory but as a father he wanted and striven to bring all round development in the country – form economical aspect, political, societal, legal etc. He truly built the soul and structure of a nation which would take rapid strides and the strides would be firmer and the progress

sustainable if his ideals are put into practice wherever possible and at as many fronts as possible.

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