

Trees of Humanity



By Adithya Narayanan Selvakumar

This book is dedicated to my parents



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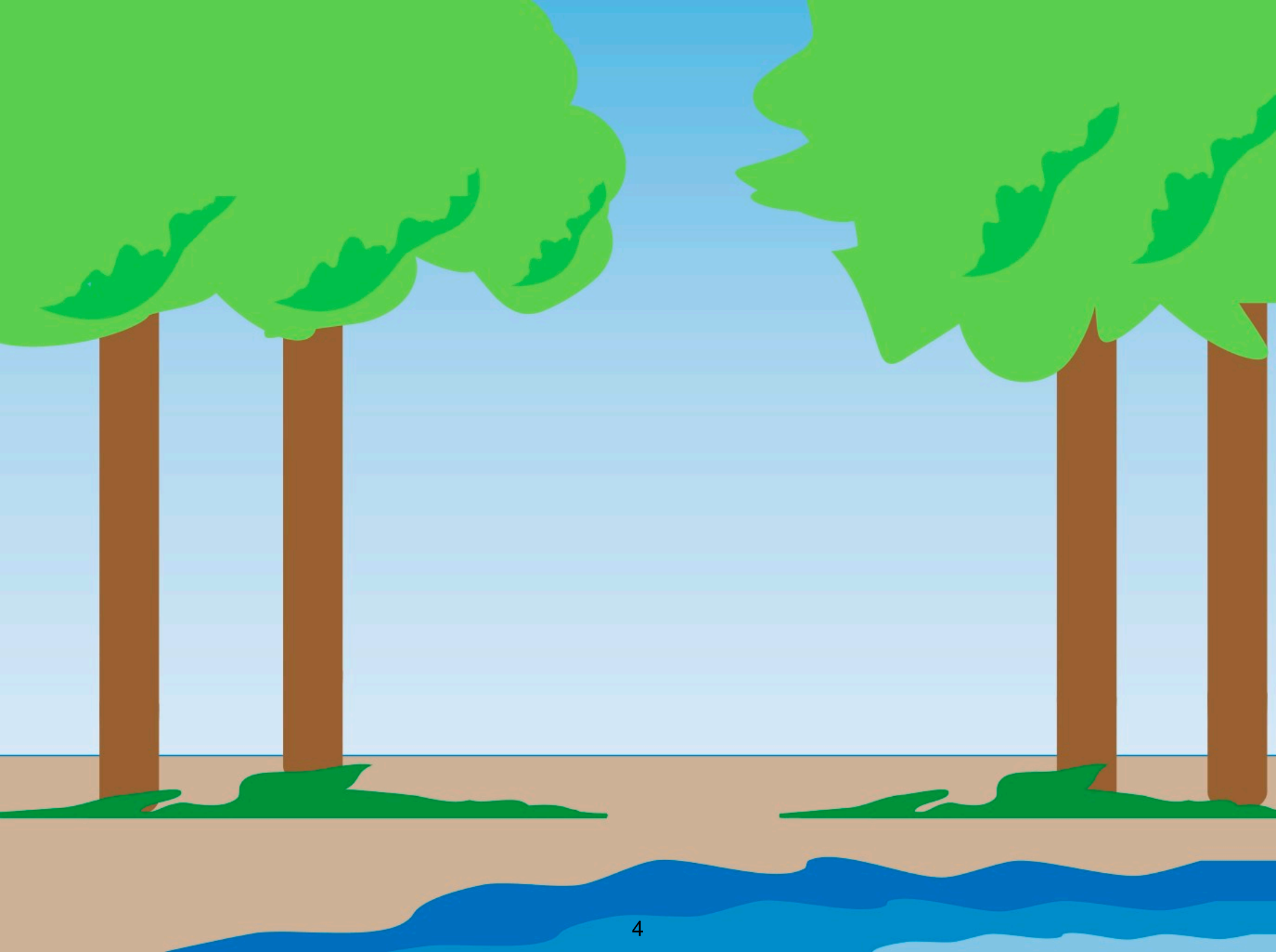
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Benefits of Trees

A tree is a wonderful creation in nature that symbolizes love and sacrifice. It serves other creations by:

1. Renewing our air supply by providing oxygen and absorbing carbon-dioxide.
2. Providing food and shelter for wildlife.
3. Combating the greenhouse effect (global warming).
4. Cleaning the air by absorbing odors and pollutant gases.
5. Conserving energy; when three trees are placed strategically around a house, it cuts summer air conditioning needs up to 50 percent.

and even when it is cut down, its wood is used for fire, construction, paper etc.

Now let us see some trees of humanity.



Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi was an Indian leader. He fought for India's independence against the British. He used Non-Violence. Gandhi believed that Non-Violence was the mightiest weapon on Earth. Gandhi was a very spiritual person. Gandhi fought against injustice and racism for Indians in South Africa and in India. In South Africa he fought for twenty years (1895 - 1915) and succeeded in his work. In 1915 he returned to India and fought against the British for India's Independence for thirty years (1916 - 1947.) All this time he used Non-Violence. Mahatma Gandhi is India's "Father of the Nation".

Sathyagraha

Sathyagraha was the non-cooperation movement that was founded and used by Gandhi. Sathyagraha means firmness in fighting injustice by sincere and truthful means. Policies adopted by Satyagrahis are "I shall stand firmly by truth, Ahimsa (Non-Violence), Non-Stealing, Swadeshi (boycott of British products and revival of domestic products) and fearlessness and stand against untouchability."

South Africa

In the twenty-year period, Gandhi made 3 Sathyagraha strikes and succeeded in his work.

India

In India, Gandhi improved village industry by improving village crafts work, spinning and weaving of Khadi clothes.

The use of Khadi clothes and the boycott of British clothes were promoted among Indians.

Sathyagrahis also promoted the abandoning of wine, liquor and untouchability.

Gandhi headed various events such as the Salt Satyagraha, Go Back Simon, Quit India, etc.



Mahatma Gandhi was an embodiment of devotion and non-violence.

Quotes

1."I do not claim I have committed any mistake, but this I claim, at any given time, I did what I considered right at that time."

2."Non-Violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man."

3."When I despair, I remember that all through history, the way of truth and love has always won. There have been many tyrants and murderers and for a time they seem invincible but in the end, they always fall, think of it, ALWAYS."



Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa dedicated her life to love and serve the poor and sick.

Birth and Early Life

Mother Teresa was born in Skopje, Albania. When she was young, her name was Agnes. Her full name then was Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu. She was born on August 26, 1910. She was inspired by a quote of St. Therese. It was "Even the smallest work is good as long as you do it with love". Also every year the family went on a trip to a shrine in Letnice, Montenegro. During one visit at the age of 12, Agnes thought "I want to become a missionary and help people, guide me Mother; Let me do what is right." Later she did become a missionary. She joined the Loreto Sisters. She took up a new name, Sister Teresa, after St. Therese.

Life as a Missionary

Sister Teresa didn't just work in the convent; during extra hours she worked in a clinic for the poor. Then on September 10, 1946 she got a CALL FROM GOD while traveling on a train, to leave the safety and comfort of the convent and love and serve the poorest of the poor on the streets and in the slums.

That day was an “Inspiration Day” in Mother Teresa’s life. Mother Teresa requested the Pope. The Pope said he would think about it. Mother waited patiently. Finally the Pope granted Mother Teresa permission to leave the convent and serve the poorest of the poor by August, 1948.

Work for Poor and Sick

When she served the poor, help came from all four corners. Her students in the convent, Subashini and Magdalena and other young people were inspired by her work and became nuns to help her in serving the poor and sick. Many people then started calling her “Mother” Teresa. Though Mother had very less money, her faith in God brought help from Delhi to Chennai and outside India many other countries helped, like the United States and Britain.

In 1950 the Pope named Mother Teresa’s order of nuns as the “Missionaries of Charity”. The Missionaries of Charity did a lot of work in a lot of cities, states and countries. Mother built a home for poor children. One was called “Shishu Bhavan.” She also made a home for dying people. She called it “Nirmal Hriday” (Place of the pure heart.) She also provided medication for lepers (people with a disease called leprosy.) She taught lepers farming, spinning and carpentry. She also helped the poor outside

India. In her lifetime, Mother Teresa started 610 missions in 123 countries. These 610 missions included hospices, orphanages, soup kitchens, schools and homes for people with AIDS, leprosy and TB.



Mother Teresa was an embodiment of love and compassion

Awards

Mother Teresa was not just recognized in India, but in many other places in the world.

For her work, she was awarded with

1. Padma Shri Award in 1962
2. Pandit Nehru Award in 1972
3. Nobel Peace Prize in 1979

...and many others.

Quotes

1. "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."
2. "Love begins at home, and it is not how much we do, but how much love we put in that action."
3. "Intense love does not measure, it just gives."
4. "Each one of them is God in disguise."
5. "We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do."
6. "The biggest disease today is not leprosy or tuberculosis, but rather the feeling of being unwanted."



Florence Nightingale

Birth and Early Life

Florence Nightingale was born on May 12, 1820 in Florence, Italy. Her parents were a young English couple. Her father was William Nightingale and her mother was Fanny Nightingale. They were very wealthy. In those days, in wealthy families, young women were expected to get married and have children. They were not encouraged to work outside home. Florence dared to be different.

Teen-age and Young Adult Life

On her seventeenth birthday Florence had a vision from God to serve the society. When she had free time, Florence cared for her sick relatives, but her family did not support her goal of being a nurse. When she told her family her “wonderful” idea, Fanny got outraged. So in the night she studied about health care and nursing secretly.

Work towards her Goal

In 1850 some family friends took Florence to the nursing training center in Kaiserswerth, Germany. Later in 1851, she studied there and learned

basic nursing skills. In 1853, her wishes of becoming a nurse were starting to come true. With the help of Sidney and Liz Herbert she became a superintendent nurse in a hospital in London. She also trained other young women in nursing. The students were called "Nightingale Nurses". Florence set many of the standards of health, cleanliness and compassion that nursing still follows today.

Florence's Nursing Health Care Reforms

Florence was very strict about cleanliness and hygiene. She wanted beds, sheets, clothes etc to be kept clean.

Service in Crimean War

Florence got the name "Lady with the Lamp" from her service in a war called the Crimean war. The man who sent British soldiers to fight was Sidney Herbert. He admired Florence's work for the sick and asked her to help. She got the name "Lady with the Lamp" because each night she went from bed to bed carrying a lamp to make sure each soldier was alright.

She lived to be 90 years old (1820-1910).



Florence was an embodiment of dedication and compassion.

Quotes

1. "I think one's feelings waste themselves in words; they ought all to be distilled into actions which bring results."
2. "How very little can be done under the spirit of fear."
3. "The very first requirement in a hospital is that it should do the sick no harm."



Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809. He was born in Hodgenville, Kentucky. His father's name was Tom Lincoln and his mother's name was Nancy Lincoln. He also had an elder sister called Sarah Lincoln. Abe and his family were very poor. They almost had no money at all. As Abe grew older Abe and Sarah grew happy in Kentucky but not Tom Lincoln. He always had a hard time planting seeds. When Abe was 8 they moved to Indiana. In Indiana there was a lot of work to do. First Abe helped Tom build the log cabin. Then Abe helped with the planting. Then Abe would keep the wood in the fireplace. The girls helped in washing, cooking, sowing, spinning, weaving and making soap. At age 9 Nancy Lincoln died of milk sickness. Tom married to a wife named Sarah who had 3 children Sarah, Matilda and John. It was his mother Sarah that encouraged Abe to read. Abe soon loved reading.

Young Adult Life

Abe was on a boat to New Orleans. He was delivering cargo. When he got to New Orleans, he saw something... It was a slave market! He saw black people being chained and sold like animals. Of course Abe had heard

of slavery, but he had never seen people being treated like animals. Before Abe had went to New Orleans he worked in a store in New Salem. Everyone could trust Abe. Once a lady came to buy cloth, but when she left Abe found out she had paid six cents too much. That night Abe walked six miles to her house to give back the money. Abe was known far and wide for his honesty. He also worked as a postmaster in New Salem. After this he moved to Springville, Illinois to be a lawyer at the age of 28. Abe was a good lawyer. He made fair judgments. At age 33 he married Mary Todd. Abe was a lawyer for about 9 years. Then he was elected as the U.S. president when he was 37 years old. As a president he worked to end slavery.

The End of Slavery

A few years before tension over slavery had grown between the South and the North. On April 12, 1861 Southern Troops attacked Fort Sumter, a federal fort in South Carolina. Abe knew now that the North had to fight the South. Abe was the commander in chief of the Union (North) army. In the third year of the war Abe signed the Emancipation Proclamation. It freed over 30,000 black people and called black men for the war. The South finally surrendered. Now somebody had to heal the nation but Abe couldn't. A bullet ended his life.



Abe was a honest man who worked towards human rights so everybody would be treated fairly.

Quotes

1. "I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live by the light that I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right, and stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong."
2. "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."
3. "Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right."
4. "Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe."



Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King fought racism for African Americans in the United States.

Early Life

Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929. He was born as Michael Luther King (which was his father's name also) and then they both changed their name to "Martin" when the younger Martin was 4. Martin had an older sister named Chris and a younger brother named Alfred. Due to Jim Crow laws (which were the laws that supported the segregation of black and white people) Martin did not know many white people. He only had one white friend, the son of a nearby grocer but their friendship ended when he went to his friend's house to play. When he got there the grocer said "You may no longer play with my son". Martin did not know that it was the color of his skin that affected his friendship. Later that day his mother told him "You are as good as anyone else". Then his mother told him about slavery and racism.

Education

Martin was a smart student. His mother taught him reading. Martin read so well that his mother enrolled him in school a year early, but the school soon found out that he was too young. Martin was so good that he was allowed to skip ninth and twelfth grades. In 1944 when he was 15 years old he graduated from Booker T Washington High School. Then four years later he graduated from the Morehouse College and was ordained as a Baptist Minister. But instead of joining his father at the Ebenezer Baptist Church immediately he joined the Crozer Theological Seminary to pursue his religious studies. At the Seminary, Martin was inspired by 2 men Mohandas Karamchand (Mahatma) Gandhi and Henry David Thoreau. He graduated in 1951. In 1953 he got married to Coretta Scott King. A year later they moved to Montgomery, Alabama.

The Work

In those days, many African Americans in Montgomery would use the bus to get to work and come back again. Unfortunately, they were treated badly by white bus drivers. They were to pay in the front and enter in the back. Some bus drivers sometimes even sped off without waiting for the blacks who paid. In 1955 something happened. That day a woman named Rosa Parks boarded a bus. Then a white man climbed aboard. The driver ordered Rosa to stand up. Rosa refused. The driver called the police.

The police arrested Rosa. Martin decided that they would have a one day boycott of the bus system. Amazingly it came into effect. A few years later he moved to Atlanta, Georgia. Later he delivered his famous "I Have A Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963. A year later he was awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize.

Sadly on April 4, 1968 he was assassinated.



Martin Luther King was an embodiment of non-violence and peace.

Quotes

1. "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."
2. "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."
3. "I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear."



Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela was a South African Leader who fought for South Africa's Independence.

Early Childhood

Nelson Mandela was born on July 18, 1918. His father, Henry Gadla Mphakanyiswa was the chief of the Thembu. When Nelson was born his name was Rolilahla which meant "troublemaker". At age 7 Rolilahla went to school and was renamed Nelson by his teacher. At the age of 9 his father died and he went to live with his father's friend Chief Jongintaba Dalindyebyo who had a son named Justice who became his good friend.

Education

Nelson continued his schooling at Clarkesbury Boarding institute and did his high schooling at Healdtown with Justice. At age 21 he was enrolled at the Fort Hare University College where he studied law. There he met Oliver Tambo who became his good friend.

The Struggle for Freedom

When Nelson and Justice got back, Uncle Jongi asked them to get married. They were shocked. They refused and ran away to Johannesburg to live their life. Justice returned to take Uncle Jongi's place after Uncle Jongi died. Nelson stayed at Johannesburg.

Nelson later met Walter Sisulu and his old college friend Oliver Tambo. They all joined the ANC (African National Congress) and formed the ANC Youth League. The ANC peacefully protested by marching through streets demanding their freedom. In 1948 the government passed a law called apartheid which meant blacks and whites were separated. It wasn't just black people who were against apartheid. Thousands of colored, Indian, and white South Africans were against it too. Many joined the Congress Alliance. In 1955, the ANC and the Congress Alliance drew up the Freedom Charter which was a promise to fight for the South Africa's freedom and democracy. The government did not like the Freedom Charter and arrested 156 Congress Members including Oliver, Walter and Nelson. They were charged with planning to destroy the government. The trial lasted 4 years but in the end they were not found guilty.

In 1960, in Sharpville 5,000 people marched to a police station to protest against carrying passbooks (passbooks were books that had the persons name, house address, occupation etc. Any black person found without one would be arrested). They were not armed with weapons but the police shot guns at them. 69 people were killed and 400 people were injured. In 1962 Mandela was sent to gather support from other countries sentenced for 5 years on his return to South Africa. In 1964 Mandela and 7 other men including Walter Sisulu are found guilty and are sentenced to life in prison at Robben Island. From 1980 to 1981 tons of people signed the "Release Mandela" petition. In 1982 he was moved to the Pollsmoor prison and in 1988 to the Victor Verster prison with a bedroom, a kitchen, and a swimming pool. Finally Nelson Mandela was released after 27 years in prison. In 1994 white and black people both come out of their houses to vote. Mandela won the election and was the first black president of a democratic South Africa.



Mandela was an embodiment of sacrifice (as he spent nearly 30 years of his life in prison for his community) and peace.

Quotes

1. "If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner."
2. "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."
3. "It always seems impossible until its done."
4. "We must use time wisely and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right."



Trees of Humanity

Just as trees serve other creatures by offering oxygen, wood, food etc, these people served humanity to make our world a better place. Their messages influenced the society. Their lives were role models.

The most important thing that we must learn from them is:



They did not worry about themselves and they contributed and worked for the benefit of the society.

Books Referred

Leaders	Reference Books	Author
Mahatma Gandhi	Mahatma Gandhi - Father of the Nation	Gayatri Madan Dutt
Mother Teresa	Mother Teresa - Little Acts of Love Mother Teresa	Shalini Srivinivasan Demi
Florence Nightingale	Heart and Soul - The Life of Florence Nightingale	Gena K. Gorrell
Abraham Lincoln	Abe's Honest Words If you grew up with Abraham Lincoln	Doreen Rappatort Ann Mcgovern
Martin Luther King Jr.	Martin Luther King Jr.	Adole Q. Brown
Nelson Mandela	Nelson Mandela - Long Walk to Freedom	Chris Van Wyk

About the Author

My name is Adithya Narayanan Selvakumar. I am called Adi by my family and friends. I wrote this book at the age of 8. During my free time I learnt about some of these great people and the rest I learnt about at school. When I was in second grade I read a Hindu scripture called "Bhagawat Gita". In this scripture along with several other concepts I learnt the importance of the concept of sacrifice. As an example, it explained how trees serve nature.

Based on this information, when I revisited the biographies of these great people I had a better idea of how much they gave for the society where they belonged.

That is why I wrote this book.



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