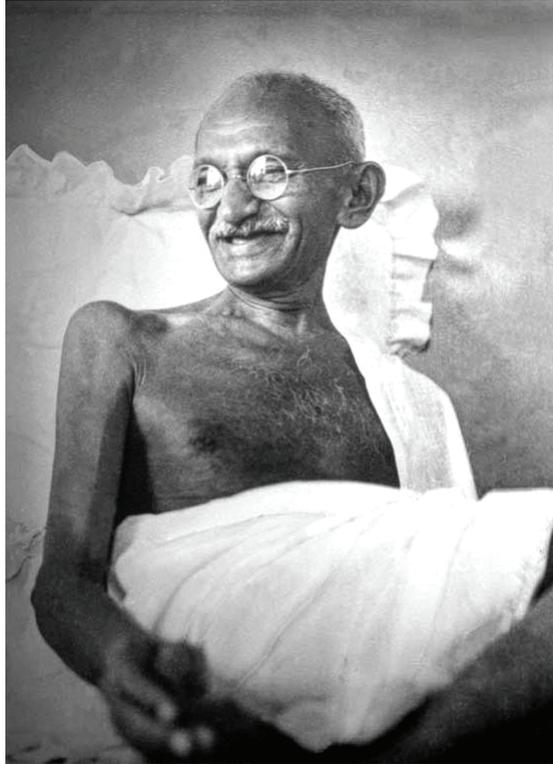


Mahatma Gandhi

Godfather of the Peaceful Protest



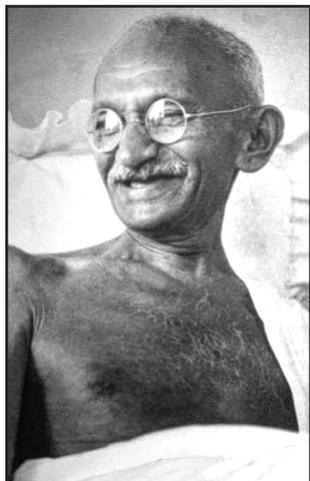
Kanu Gandhi [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Mahatma Gandhi taught the world about peaceful protests. He taught the world about civil disobedience. Martin Luther King, Jr. learned about them. He used them in the Civil Rights Movement.

Mahatma Gandhi was born in 1869 in India. He became a lawyer. But he was not very successful.

Gandhi moved to South Africa in 1893. He got a job at an Indian law firm. South Africa was an apartheid state. White people kept non-white people separate. Non-whites were treated unfairly. Gandhi did not worry about this. Then something happened one day. It changed him.

Mahatma Gandhi



Gandhi bought a first-class train ticket. He boarded the train. He sat down in the first-class car. A white passenger complained. Colored people weren't allowed in the first-class cars. They had separate cars. Gandhi refused to move. It was his first act of civil disobedience. This means he refused to obey an unfair law.

The conductor dragged him out of the car. Gandhi was thrown off the train at the next stop. This was a peaceful protest. Gandhi did not fight back.

Gandhi started to fight discrimination. He started the Natal Indian Congress. It protested unfair laws. It used only nonviolence and civil disobedience. Gandhi led many protests in South Africa. He went to jail several times because of this.

Gandhi returned to India in 1914. At the time, the British controlled India. They treated non-whites unfairly. Gandhi led many protests against this treatment. Sometimes he fasted. He stopped eating for several days or even for a month.

In 1919, tragedy happened at a protest. British troops fired machine guns into a crowd of unarmed people. Four hundred men, women, and children were killed. It was called the Massacre of Amristar. Gandhi decided that the Indians should rule India. Not the British.

Mahatma Gandhi

In 1930, Gandhi led protests against Britain's Salt Acts. These laws made Indians pay taxes on salt. Gandhi organized a march. The march protested the Salt Acts. The march lasted 24 days. He walked 240 miles. Thousands of people joined him.

The world took notice of Mahatma Gandhi. Time Magazine named him "Man of the Year" for 1930. Many praised his peaceful protests. Even so, the British government put Gandhi in jail many times.

Gandhi worked to make India independent. India became an independent country in 1947. A year later, Gandhi was assassinated. One million people went to his funeral.



Gandhi leads the Salt Act March