

## **The Sacrifice of Nelson Mandela in the Liberation of the Blacks From the Clutches of Slavery**

**Dr. K. Manikandan**  
**Guest Faculty**  
**Department of English**  
**H. H. The Rajah's College (Autonomous)**  
**Pudukkottai 622001**

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Rolihlahla Mandela was born into the Madiba clan in the village of Mvezo, in the Eastern Cape, on 18 July 1918. His mother was Nonqaphi Nosekeni and his father was Nkosi Mphakanyiswa Gadla Mandela, principal counsellor to the Acting King of the Thembu people, Jongintaba Dalindyebo. In 1930, when he was 12 years old, his father died and the young Rolihlahla became a ward of Jongintaba at the Great Place in Mqhekezweni.

The word sacrifice has been the real hall mark of the great world leaders in sacrificing themselves for the welfare of own country and its people. In the series of the world leaders like Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhiji, John F. Kennedy, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Martin Luthur King Junior. Nelson Mandela, though not a martyr, was a real hero and a savant and the Guardian of blacks who sacrifice most part of his life in Jail for the abolition of the slavery and also the liberation of South Africa from the hands of the white people. Here this article aims to explain the sacrifice made by Nelson Mandela the former president of South Africa.

Nelson Mandela was the first member of his family to attend school. He, along with Oliver Tambo, set up South Africa's first law firm run by blacks in 1952. Nelson's Mandela's favourite dish was tripe—the stomach lining of farm animals. He was often referred to as “the Black Pimpernel” for his ability to disguise himself in order to evade arrest. He frequently adopted the disguises of a fieldworker, a chauffeur, or a chef. He was a great communicator and devised a way of passing secret notes to other prisoners while he was incarcerated on the infamous Robben Island. He believed that sports were the great means of bringing the racially divided country together. A prehistoric woodpecker, *Australopicus nelsonmandelai*, is named after him. Mandela was once on the U.S. terror watch list because of his militant fight against apartheid. Nelson Mandela appeared in a cameo as a school teacher in the 1992 movie ‘Malcolm X’. Mandela was the recipient of more than 250 awards, including honorary degrees from more than 50 universities worldwide.

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (1918 – 2013) was a South African revolutionary and politician who is most famous for fighting against institutionalized discrimination against blacks in his country, known as Apartheid. Mandela began his political career in the 1940s and soon became a prominent member of the African National Congress (ANC) by leading its youth wing. He spent 27 years of his

life in prison from 1964 till 1990. After his release, he and President F. W. de Klerk negotiated an end to apartheid. In 1994, Nelson Mandela became the first black President of South Africa by leading his party to victory in the first multiracial elections in the country. During his presidency, he worked towards national reconciliation. Mandela received more than 260 honors during his life including the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize. Know more about his contribution to South Africa by studying his 10 major accomplishments.

African National Congress (ANC) was formed in 1912 to bring all Africans together as one people to defend their rights and freedoms in South Africa. Nelson Mandela became increasingly politically active in his early 20s and in 1944, he joined the ANC. In April of the same year, Mandela and other young ANC intellectuals founded the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL), the youth wing of ANC. The ANCYL changed the course of ANC and moved it towards a more radical and revolutionary path with nonviolent mass movements like civil disobedience and strikes. Mandela started as a member of the executive committee of ANCYL. He rose through the ranks and was elected the national president of ANCYL in 1950.

**Apartheid was a system of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination** in South Africa. All over the country legislation that discriminated against black Africans had existed for many years, when the openly racist National Party came to power in 1948, it introduced scores of new discriminatory laws. These included laws which segregated public premises; limited places where blacks were permitted to work; limited land ownership by black people; forbade marriage between white people and people of other races; and so on. In 1952, ANC launched the Defiance Campaign against apartheid, the first “large-scale, multi-racial political mobilization against apartheid laws under a common leadership.” On June 22, Mandela, addressed an assembled crowd of 10,000, initiating the campaign protests. He was arrested for this and spent two nights in jail. Though the South African government was able to suppress the Defiance Campaign, it established Mandela as one of the best known black political figures in the country.

In 1952, Nelson Mandela was elected President of the ANC’s branch in Transvaal. In August 1953, Mandela, along with Oliver Tambo, opened a law firm in Johannesburg named Mandela and Tambo. Tambo, who would later serve as President of ANC from 1967 to 1991, was a close friend of Mandela. Mandela and Tambo was the first black legal partnership in South Africa and, at the time, the only all black African law firm in the country. It was hugely popular with blacks and dealt with many cases, often those of police brutality. It closed in 1960 as anti-apartheid struggle consumed most of the time of its two founders. In 1955, the ANC issued the Freedom Charter, which called for the creation of a democratic, non-racist state in SA. The following year Mandela was arrested along with 156 activists. All 156 were charged with high treason, thus beginning the infamous Treason Trial, which lasted till 1961 when **all were found not guilty**.

Mandela came to the conclusion that **violent action would be necessary** to end apartheid. In 1961, he co-founded Umkhonto we Sizwe (“Spear of the Nation”, MK), the armed wing of the ANC. MK planned to carry out acts of sabotage that would exert maximum pressure on the government with minimum casualties. It was classified as a terrorist organization by the SA government. The police captured Mandela on 5th August 1962. The following year, he and his comrades were charged

with **sabotage and conspiracy to violently overthrow the government** in what is known as the Rivonia Trial. During the trial, Mandela gave his famous three-hour long “I Am Prepared to Die” speech, considered one of the great speeches of the 20th century and a key moment in the anti-apartheid struggle. The Rivonia Trial gained international attention and there were global calls for the release of the accused from the United Nations and World Peace Council. However, the eight defendants, including Mandela, were sentenced to life imprisonment on 12th June 1964.

Mandela spent 28 years of his life in prison from 1962 till 1990. He had to face numerous atrocities including solitary confinement. He continued to be influential even in prison and there were numerous calls for his release. In February 1985, South African president P. W. Botha offered to free Mandela, but Mandela refused saying that the government must first dismantle apartheid. F. W. de Klerk was sworn in as President of South Africa in August 1989. Amid growing domestic and international pressure, President de Klerk released Nelson Mandela on February 11, 1990. After his release, Mandela embarked on an international tour to encourage foreign countries to support sanctions against the SA apartheid government. In a series of negotiations from 1990 to 1993 between Mandela and de Klerk, the apartheid was dismantled and brought to an end.

General elections were held in South Africa on 27th April 1994. This was the first general elections in the country in which citizens of all races were allowed to vote. This multiracial election was therefore also the first in SA with universal adult suffrage. 27th April is now celebrated as the national day of South Africa and is a public holiday. Led by Mandela, the African National Congress (ANC) won a sweeping victory in the 1994 election taking 62 percent of the vote. Nelson Mandela thus became the first black head of state in South Africa and the first to be elected in a fully representative democratic election. He served as President of South Africa from 10th May 1994 to 14 June 1999. Mandela did not seek a second term as South African president and was succeeded by his deputy, Thabo Mbeki, in 1999.

The top priority of Nelson Mandela during his presidency was national reconciliation. He worked to reassure South Africa’s white population that they were represented in the government and would not be discriminated against. Despite having overwhelming majority, Mandela **appointed de Klerk as Deputy President and other National Party officials as ministers in various departments**. He emphasized on personal forgiveness and reconciliation. In one of the most famous events, Mandela **brought the nation together by encouraging the blacks to get behind the previously hated national rugby team, the Springboks**, during the 1995 Rugby World Cup, which was held in SA. South Africa went on to win the event and Mandela presented the cup to the SA captain.

When Nelson Mandela took over as president, out of a population of 40 million, 23 million lacked electricity; 12 million lacked clean water supplies; and 2 million children were not in school. By the end of his term as president in 1999, 2 million people were connected to the electricity grid; water access was extended to 3 million people; 1.5 million children were brought into the education system; and 750,000 houses were constructed, housing nearly 3 million people. Also, in 1994, free healthcare was introduced for children under six and pregnant women. Internationally, Nelson

Mandela served from 1998 to 1999 as Secretary-General of the Non-Aligned Movement, a group of states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. He also played a **key role as a mediator** in the ethnic conflict between Tutsi and Hutu political groups in the Burundian Civil War; and was a leading figure in calling for sanctions against the Nigerian leader Sani Abacha, whose regime committed severe human rights violations.

In 1995, Mandela found the Nelson Mandela Children’s Fund, a charitable organization which aims to help individuals from birth to age 22, particularly orphans of the AIDS crisis. In 1999, he found the Nelson Mandela Foundation to promote his vision of freedom and equality for all. Post presidency, Mandela raised money to build schools and clinics in South Africa’s rural areas; advocated for peace and equality; and remained committed in his fight against AIDS, a disease that killed one of his sons. In 2007, Mandela brought together a number of elder statesmen, peace activists and human rights advocates to form an organization called The Elders, whose goal is to work on solutions for seemingly insurmountable problems such as climate change, HIV/AIDS and poverty; and to help resolve conflicts which are difficult to handle. Mandela also wrote a number of books including his famous 1994 autobiography Long Walk to Freedom.

Mandela received more than 260 honors in his lifetime including the Soviet Union’s Lenin Peace Prize (1990); António Agostinho Neto Order (1990), the highest honor of the People’s Republic of Angola; Bharat Ratna (1990), India’s highest civilian award; National Order of Mali (Grande Croix, 1996), Mali’s highest decoration; and the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2002), the United States’ highest civilian award. In 1993, Nelson Mandela and Frederik Willem de Klerk were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize “for their work for the peaceful termination of the apartheid regime, and for laying the foundations for a new democratic South Africa”. In 1999, he was included in TIME magazine’s list of 100 most influential people of the 20th century. In 2009, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed Mandela’s birthday, 18 July, as “Mandela Day”. In South Africa, Nelson Mandela is widely considered both “the father of the nation” and “the founding father of democracy”. Outside SA, he remains a “global icon” and “a modern democratic hero”.

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