
1. EXPLANATION (LONG WALK TO FREEDOM)

Introduction :

This chapter is an extract from the autobiography of Nelson Mandela (born- 18 July, 1918), the first Black President of South Africa. Excerpts from “Long Walk to Freedom” include description of the inauguration ceremony, citations from his speech, his journey to being a freedom fighter, the struggle, along with a tribute to other freedom fighters and countless other people who fought for their freedom. In South Africa, a brutal practice named “apartheid” was followed. Apartheid refers to the discrimination between people on the basis of their race. It was one of the most brutal societies where dark-skinned people were deprived of their basic rights. This lesson gives us an overview as to how Nelson Mandela along with others, carved their way to a society where there will be no discrimination on the basis of their colour, caste, race, age or gender.

10th May was the day when Nelson Mandela sworn in as the first black Head of State, South Africa. It was after years of struggle that his anti-racist party came into power. Until then, the seat had always been occupied by white Presidents. That is why, the author referred to the day as “bright and clear”. It was a morning full of hope. Days before this date, many notable personalities started congratulating him for his victory. For the first time in the country’s history, so many international leaders came together for their inauguration ceremony. The ceremony took place in an open circular building made of sandstone consisting of Union buildings in the Pretoria city.

The author was accompanied by his daughter, Zenani on his big day. First, the two Vice-Presidents took an oath. Then, when his turn came, he committed to respect, protect and abide by the Constitution and to devote his entire self into the welfare of the country.

The author also mentions some parts of his speech where he said that everyone, by his presence was giving rise to hope for a new beginning. Previous rulers were discriminatory and lasted for long but the ones, who are given the opportunity to rule now (ANC), would stand up against discrimination. He is glad to host a ceremony with the presence of global leaders. It is an achievement in itself. There was a time when South Africa, for practicing apartheid, lost all its international political relationships. Now, when there is no segregation on the basis of race and gender, other nations are happy to have healthy democratic relationships. Finally, they have come to power and they pledge to make everyone proud. He thanked everyone, especially the international leaders for joining them in celebrating their achievement which is a step towards an equal society where every human will be treated fairly.

He mentions that after great struggle, they have finally achieved political freedom. His government promised to free everyone of the still existing poverty, hardship and inequalities of all kind along with assuring everyone of a country where no community will be considered inferior. He then exclaims that freedom should rule and may god shower his blessings on their land.

Just after the newly elected President’s address to the audience, an impressive arrangement of fighter jets, helicopter and soldier transporters raised everyone’s heads up in the sky. It symbolised perfection as well as military’s respect and obedience towards the free country. The high commanders, who have won medals for their bravery, also saluted and promised their loyalty. Mandela mentions that he was well aware that these commanders, who were now saluting him, would have arrested him under the previous rule as during the oppressive white supremacy, he was considered to be a criminal. The air show finally ended by making of the South African flag in the sky from smoke beneath the jets.

The author remembers the day as the playing of two National Anthems of the country; one of the whites and the other, that of the blacks. On that day, no one knew the wordings of the anthem of the blacks but Mandela was confident that everyone would soon learn this anthem that they once hated.

This equal and free country was a result of sacrifices of countless other men and women who have fought all their lives for this day. The author wishes if he could thank them all but unfortunately, they didn’t live to see the result of their courage. Nelson Mandela gathered his courage and power from all these people and thus, wishes to make them proud.

The oppression policy scarred many people and it will take a long time for them to move on. The author mentions that this hard time had its negative impacts but it also exposed a lot of strong and courageous men who stood up and raised their voice. Thus, it required that level of unjust treatment to produce such great heroes. South Africa, he says, is rich in minerals and gems but its greatest strength lies in its people. Nelson Mandela gained his strength to stand against the wrong from all the great nationalists he mentioned above, who have even risked their lives for freedom and tolerated ill treatment, but never stopped fighting. He learned that "courage" didn't mean the absence of fear, but the ability to overcome fear. The man who overcomes his fear is called brave.

One is taught by its society to hate humans because of their skin, colour, age, gender and religion. No one is inborn with hatred. The author's idea is that if people can be taught hatred, they can also be taught love and brotherhood. In their most testing times in prison when they were being treated brutally, Mandela would see a pinch of humanity and kindness in one of the guards and that was enough to keep him going. He believes that goodness in human beings can be suppressed but never eliminated.

According to the author, every human being has its responsibility towards the family and as well as the society. Generally, under normal circumstances, a person can maintain the balance between the two but in countries like South Africa, it was never so easy. When a person of colour would come up for his society, he would be arrested and taken away from his family, thus keeping them from fulfilling both responsibilities. In the beginning, Mandela did not put his people over his family, but it was only later when he realised that in order to be there for his people, he was compromising his duties towards his own family.

He mentions that the need to free the oppressor is as high as that of the oppressed because the oppressor is bounded by the shackles of hatred. He has the weight of all the people who he has tormented, for he carries the curses of all of their families. For taking away someone else's freedom and making them a prisoner, he becomes a prisoner of biasness. Thus, he is robbed of his humanity and need to be freed.

Answer the following questions:

1. Where did the ceremonies take place? Can you name any public buildings in India that are made of sandstone?
2. Can you say how 10 May is an 'autumn day' in South Africa?
3. At the beginning of his speech, Mandela mentions "an extraordinary human disaster". What does he mean by this? What is the "glorious ... human achievement" he speaks of at the end?
4. What does Mandela thank the international leaders for?
5. What ideals does he set out for the future of South Africa?
6. What do the military generals do? How has their attitude changed, and why?
7. Why were two national anthems sung?
8. How does Mandela describe the systems of government in his country
 - (i) In the first decade, and
 - (ii) In the final decade, of the twentieth century?
9. What does courage mean to Mandela?
10. Which does he think is natural, to love or to hate?
11. What "twin obligations" does Mandela mention?
12. What did being free mean to Mandela as a boy, and as a student? How does he contrast these "transitory freedoms" with "the basic and honourable freedoms"?
13. Does Mandela think the oppressor is free? Why/Why not?
14. Why did such a large number of international leaders attend the inauguration? What did it signify the triumph of?
15. What does Mandela mean when he says he is "simply the sum of all those African patriots" who had gone before him?
16. Would you agree that the "depths of oppression" create "heights of character"? How does Mandela illustrate this? Can you add your own examples to this argument?
17. How did Mandela's 'hunger for freedom' change his life?

WRITING AND GRAMMAR

1. Fill in the blanks with the most suitable words (any four):

Some people feel that(a)..... best way to take a vacation is to go(b)..... a cruise. There is a lot one can do while(c)..... across the sea. Besides the beautiful sights, the indoor games(d)..... the variety of foods, there is always something(e)..... everyone to do.

2. In the following passage, one word has been omitted in each line against which a blank space is given. Write the missing word along with the word that comes before and the word that comes after it. Ensure that the word that forms your answer is underlined.

	BEFORE	ANSWER	AFTER
Poverty is primary cause of child labour	(a)
It forces the parents send their	(b)
children do menial jobs. Very often, the	(c)
Backward outlook of the parents also responsible.	(d)

3. The following passage has not been edited. There is an error in each of the lines against which a blank is given. Identify the error and write it along with the correction in the answer sheet.

	INCORRECT	CORRECT
Once upon the time, a tortoise (a)
and a hare had a argument (b)
about who was fast. They decided (c)
to settle the argument for a race (d)

4. Rearrange the following groups of words / phrases to make meaningful sentences:

- a) celebrates/of/birth/the/Lord Krishna/Janmaashtami
- b) actually/it/is/Krishna Jayanti/called
- c) Rohini Nakshatra/date/on/falls/the

5. You are Swetankan Bose/Shreaswari sen, President, DWX, Kanakpuri, Chennai. The model park, Pearl Garden, of your society has become a dwelling spot for anti-social elements and a permanent resting place for stray animal. Write a letter to the Municipal Commissioner requesting him to instruct the horticulture department to take prompt action and restore the park.

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