

Gandhi (1982) 191 min
1st half - 92 min., 2nd half - 97 min.

Director: Richard Attenborough

Writer: John Briley

Stars: Ben Kingsley, John Gielgud and Candice Bergen

Matthew 5: 38-48

38 'You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." ³⁹But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; ⁴⁰and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; ⁴¹and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. ⁴²Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

43 'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy."
⁴⁴But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

John 8: 32-37

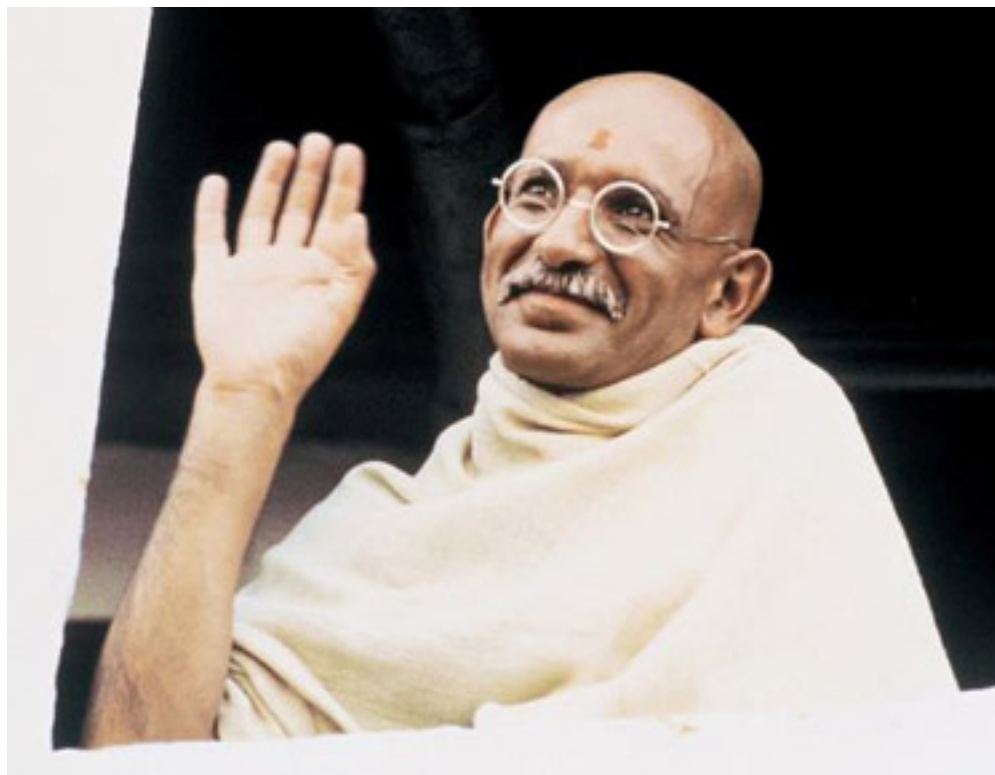
31 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'
³³They answered him, 'We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, "You will be made free"?'

34 Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there for ever. ³⁶So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me, because there is no place in you for my word.

India has many religious groups. The largest are the Hindus and the Muslims. While there were tensions and some hostility between religious groups before colonial rule, the British fanned the flames of religious intolerance and hatred to keep the Indians from uniting to resist colonial rule. The policy was called "Divide and Rule." Gandhi campaigned for religious tolerance. On several occasions he fasted almost to death, to stop sectarian rioting.

This film is a biography of Mahatma Gandhi, the saint and Indian social reformer. Gandhi would neither countenance the subjugation of his people nor demean himself by hurting

another human being. To reconcile these moral imperatives, he used nonviolent mass action (also called nonviolent civil disobedience) to force governments to change their policies and to achieve independence for India. Nonviolent mass action has been adopted by movements seeking social change or revolution in many parts of the world, including the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and revolutions in the Philippines and Russia. Most recently, it has transformed the Middle East. Gandhi also campaigned for Hindu/Muslim brotherhood against oppression of the untouchables and for reform in the treatment of women. He is personally responsible for saving hundreds of thousands of lives in India through fasting which stopped communal rioting. His leadership and example have inspired people and many governments, in India and throughout the world, to a new and higher level of morality.



Gandhi Film Questions, Part One

In the introduction to the film, Gandhi says to his people, “We will not strike a blow, but we will receive them.” This was an important part of his philosophy. His people were oppressed by a foreign colonial government, England. He proposed a practical program of nonviolent resistance. He claimed victory was a certainty. “One hundred thousand Englishmen simply cannot control 350 million Indians if they do not want to cooperate.”

The film opens in January, 1948, in India at the end of World War II. After Gandhi’s funeral, the film flashes back to 1893, as the young lawyer Gandhi enters South Africa by train.

1. What happens to Gandhi to introduce him to racial separation (“apartheid”) in South Africa?

2. What were Gandhi and his Indian followers protesting at the rally?
 3. Why is one man arrested and Gandhi beaten?
 4. What is Gandhi (along with his friend Charlie) trying to prove by “turning the other cheek” to the street bullies? Does it work?
 5. We observe Gandhi at his “ashram” village with an American news reporter. What does Gandhi tell the reporter he hopes to accomplish there?
 6. Gandhi and his wife, Kasturba, argue. Why does he lose his temper with her? How do they resolve their disagreement?
 7. New laws are passed in South Africa which further discriminate against Indian immigrants. What actions does Gandhi propose in order to change these unfair laws? How does Gandhi win their support?
 8. What happens at the mines to prevent many of the marchers from being injured or killed?
 10. We see many of the Indian people in jail along with Gandhi. What purpose does going to jail accomplish in the fight against the British?
 9. Gandhi, still in his jail uniform, is offered a compromise agreement by South Africa’s Governor Jan Smuts. What do Gandhi and his people gain from these new laws?
 10. How does Gandhi manage to keep the upper hand as he concludes his business with the Governor?
- Gandhi, after he is released from prison in South Africa, wins a victory for his people. The laws that required fingerprinting and unlimited searches have been cancelled, as long as Gandhi agrees to stop further protests. ___ Gandhi returns to India. He is greeted as a hero. The colonial British government there is opposed to Indian “home rule,” which would allow Indian citizens to have a voice in running their own country. Gandhi realizes that many of his people live in poverty because of British laws that exploit the people in favor of British business interests.
11. What is Gandhi’s plan to help win rights for the Indian tenant farmers?
 12. How does he gain a release from prison after refusing to pay bail?
 13. What plan of Gandhi’s do the other Indian political leaders agree to put into effect. Explain the British reaction.
 14. What does General Dyer say in defense of his actions at Amritsar? 7
 15. What is Gandhi’s response to the massacre of innocent civilians? What does Gandhi propose to do about this tragedy?

16. Gandhi makes a radio speech heard by millions. He makes 3 main points: (1) Promote Hindu-Muslim unity; (2) Get rid of personal anger; (3) Defy the British. Explain why each of these points was important to Gandhi's goals.

Gandhi Film Questions, Part Two

Gandhi has had several legal and political victories in India. The British realize that they are helpless to stop his popularity. People in other parts of the world are reading about Gandhi and the people's struggle. The Amritsar tragedy in which over 1,100 Indians were either killed or wounded, added to England's ugly image in the world's opinion polls. Gandhi wants to call the people's attention to their overall goal: Indian independence with dignity. He proposes different ways to hurt British interests.

1. Why does he propose that the people burn articles of clothing? How will this hurt the British economy?
2. What does he ask the people to do to prove they can survive without British products?
3. What sacrifices does he ask the people to make in the cause of freedom?
4. Why do the marchers riot in front of the police station at Chauri? What happens?
5. What is Gandhi prepared to do to end the violence? What is the result?
6. Gandhi makes a 200-mile "Salt March" with many of his supporters to symbolize India's defiance of British laws. What do his supporters do in large numbers?
7. Why do the British decide to arrest Gandhi and his supporters? Why is this event called a "turning point" in the people's struggle for independence?
8. While in prison in the Aga Khan's palace, Gandhi's wife, Kasturba dies. How does Gandhi handle this?
9. Gandhi is invited to go to England to represent India for discussions about independence. Why is Gandhi disappointed at the results?
10. What does Gandhi do to try to stop the Hindu-Muslim violence? What advice does he give to people who have been hurt by the violence?
11. The day of India's independence finally comes. Why is Gandhi troubled and sad? Gandhi was a great leader but seems to have made little progress in some areas. After he is killed, what issues are left for the new democratic government to deal with? How successful has the government of India been?