

Nelson Mandela
Long Walk to Freedom

1. Where did the ceremonies take place? Can

you name any public buildings in India

that are made of sandstone?

⇒ The ceremonies took place in campus of

the Union Building of Pretoria, which were

attended by dignitaries and leaders of

the nations. In India, Rashtriya Rath

Bhawan and Red Fort are buildings made

of red stone.

2. Can you say how to may is an 'Autumn

day' in South Africa?

⇒ To him may is an 'Autumn Day' in South

Africa because on this day there was the

largest gathering of international leaders on

South African soil for the installation of

South Africa's first democratic non-racial

government.

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?

⇒ By an 'extraordinary human disaster' Mandela

means to state the practice of apartheid

in South Africa. During this, there was a

racial segregation based on colour & the

blacks suffered a lot. They were not allowed

to demand freedom or any right Mandela

himself did spend many years on infamous

Robben Island as a prisoner, where he was

beaten mercilessly

4. What does Mandela thank the international

leaders for?

⇒ Mandela felt very privileged to welcome the

international leaders at the swearing cere-

mony because not long ago, the

South Africans were considered outlaws. He

thus thanks all of them for having come to

witness the historical ceremony. This was

the gesture of the international recognition

to a newly born free democratic nation and

it could be considered a common victory

for justice, and peace & human dignity

5. What ideals does he set out for the future

of South Africa?

⇒ Nelson Mandela said the ideals of liberating

people from bondage of poverty, deprivation &

suffering. He also said the ideal for a society

there where would be no discrimination based on gender & racial origins

1. What do the military generals do? How has their attitude changed, and why?

⇒ The highest military generals of South African defence force saluted Mandela and pledged their loyalty which was of great significance as during apartheid era. They would have arrested him. The change in their attitude was because of struggle & sacrifices put in by many heroes of South Africa. This struggle not only insure the freedom of a nation struggling with apartheid but also brought a change a mind set of many. He believed that love can also be taught and human being is naturally inclined towards love rather than hate.

2. Why were two national anthems sung? On the auspicious occasion of the inauguration two national anthems, one by the whites & the other by the blacks symbolising the quality of the blacks & the white were sung. The interpretation of national anthem from old republic as well as new republic was sign of the pledge of those who were laying the foundation of

new nation

3. 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?

⇒ i) In the first decade of twentieth century there was a system of racial domination against the black people. It was the most inhuman system. ii) In the last decade of the same century that system had been replaced by a system that recognised the rights & freedom of the peoples

4. What does courage mean to Mandela? ⇒ For Mandela courage was the not absence of fear but the triumph over it.

5. Which does he think is natural, to love or to hate? ⇒ To love is natural in human being.

1. What "twin obligations" does Mandela mention? ⇒ One obligation is to one's family, parents, wife & children. The second obligation is to his peoples community & country.

2. 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"?

⇒ As a boy freedom for Mandela was to run in the fields, come to swim in the stream, running through his village, to ride the bull. As a student freedom for Mandela was to stay out at night, to read what he pleased & to go where he chose. These were only transitory freedom, later he realised that he wanted the basic freedom & honourable freedom of achieving his potential, earning his keep, marrying & having a family.

3. Does Mandela think the oppressor is free? Why/why not?

⇒ Mandela thinks that the oppressor is not free because he is the prisoner of hatred. He is locked by prejudice & narrow minded.

1. Why did such a large number of international leaders attend the inauguration? What did it signify the triumph of?

⇒ The presence of large no. of international leaders was a gesture of solidarity from international community to the idea of the end of apartheid. It signified the triumph of good over evil, the

triumph of the idea of a tolerant society without any discrimination.

2. What does Mandela mean when he says he is "simply the sum of all those African patriots" who had gone before him?

⇒ Mandela wants to pay his tribute to all the people who had sacrificed their lives for the sake of freedom. He feels that he is the sum of all those African patriots who had gone before him because those heroes of yesterday years had paved the path of co-operation and unity for him. Therefore, he got the support of his people to be able to come to power to bearing equality for his own people.

3. 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?

⇒ Yes, I agree that the "depths of oppression" create "heights of character". Nelson Mandela illustrates this by giving e.g. of great heroes of South Africa who sacrificed their lives in the long freedom struggle. India is full of such examples. During our freedom struggle there was a galaxy of leaders of great characters. Probably the oppression of British rule created

so many men of such characters. If we compare this with the quality of political leaders India is having today, then Nelson Mandela seems to be absolutely right.

4. How did Mandela's understanding of freedom change with age & experience?

⇒ As a young boy, and a student, Mandela's idea of freedom was to be able to stay out at night, read whatever he desired and go wherever he chose. On growing up as a man, he realised that these were "transitory freedoms" he was looking for because their "basic & honourable freedoms" had been taken away. There was no liberty to have a peaceful marriage, family & life. Dark-skinned people were deprived of their fundamental human rights. For them, freedom was an "illusion".

5. How did Mandela's 'hunger for freedom' change his life?

⇒ Once Mandela realized his hunger for freedom, his life changed forever. It transformed him from a family-man to a man of his people and a frightened young man into a bold one. He built his entire life around fighting for the basic fundamental rights for his community. He was more selfless & virtuous than ever.