

MAHATMA GANDHI: A MANIPULATOR OR HERO

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Abstract

His countrymen called him Mahatma; the world knew him as Gandhi. He defied the great British Empire, and the Empire failed to control him. He grew up an ordinary man, yet became extraordinary because of his intellect. He believed that bloodshed never brings peace but only more bloodshed. His self-confidence was so enormous that many misjudged him as dominating and proud. His determination to see his country free from foreign rule was never in vain, even at the great cost of partition. He united the whole country under the banner of the Indian National Congress and understood the deceptiveness of the British Raj. His actions troubled the Empire and did not go unnoticed or unpunished. On numerous occasions he was imprisoned, called evil, put under the microscope because the West never understood how a man who dressed like a beggar could become so popular and respected by millions. By advocating the *satyagraha*, he united the nation and showed the world that nonviolence and noncooperation can be the keys for political success. He became an icon for those who were struggling to win a freedom from their foreign ruler, and a great threat for the British colonial rule. The British Raj never knew how to subdue him or change his views, so he was portrayed as an arrogant man. After his death, many felt compelled to criticize his ideologies and his achievements based on his personal and sexual life. His image has been slandered, as many have been led to believe that he was an ambitious man who manipulated the legal system and the emotions of others to bend the people to his will and have them do his bidding. The question arises: was Gandhi a manipulator or a hero? Did he deceive others to boost his own popularity? Or he was the man who saw how poorly the Indians were treated by the British Raj and decided to stand firm against injustice no matter what?

Keywords: Nonviolence and noncooperation, *Satyagraha*, An icon, Slandered.