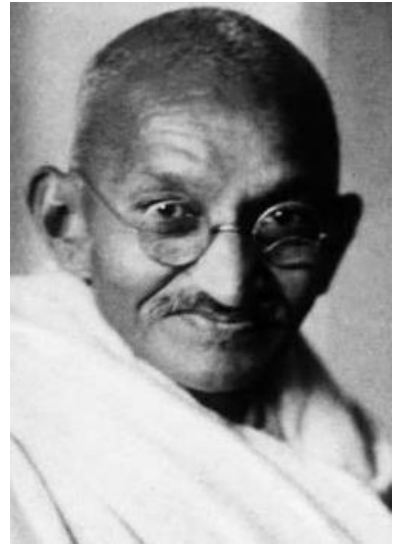


This Monday, Wednesday and Friday, we will talk about three very great men, each of whom helped to free their people from being treated badly by others simply because of the colour of their skin.

We begin with MAHATMA GANDHI (pronounced 'Gan - dee'), who was born in INDIA in 1869 - just over 150 years ago. At the time, India was ruled by the BRITAIN, and was part of the BRITISH EMPIRE - the biggest empire the world has ever known. And the Queen of England at the time Gandhi was born, QUEEN VICTORIA, had been given the title EMPRESS OF INDIA. And the British were very proud to have such a great nation like India - so rich in resources and materials - as part of their empire: India was known as the JEWEL IN THE CROWN of the British Empire. And it was Gandhi who freed India from British rule in 1947, just after the end of WORLD WAR II - when Gandhi was 78 years old. Imagine having to wait until you are 78 before the thing for which you are most famous happens! And just like ABRAHAM LINCOLN, who was shot and killed just after winning the AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, and helping to free America's slaves, Gandhi was given virtually no time to enjoy his achievement in freeing India from British rule. India became an independent country on 15 August 1947, and Gandhi died less than a year later, on 30 January 1948. And how did he die? Just like Lincoln - he was shot and killed by a madman, who was angry with Gandhi for one reason or another. It's like God sends these good, good people into the world to make it better, and the Devil stirs up bad, bad people to get rid of them. Sadly, we will see some other examples of this before we are finished.



But let's keep focussed on Gandhi for the time being. No one who knew Gandhi when he was young would have guessed that he would bring down the British Empire (because having already lost America, once the British Empire lost India, it became quite a small and sad thing). In fact, Gandhi travelled from India to Britain as a young man to study Law - he went to a London university, University College London. He then went back to India to try to make a career as a barrister - which is someone who represents people in court, trying to convince a judge to find in favour of their client (the person they are representing). But Gandhi couldn't find enough clients in India, so he went to SOUTH AFRICA to see if he could become a successful barrister there. This was in 1893, when Gandhi was 24 years old. Now in 1893 South Africa was already not a nice place to live in if you weren't white. People of colour - black people, and people from Asia like Gandhi - were treated very badly. There were rules about where they could sit on buses, to keep them away from white people. And they weren't even allowed to walk on the pavement, but were expected to walk in the road, where they would get mud on their feet and might get run down. Gandhi was outraged by this, and tried to use his knowledge of the law to



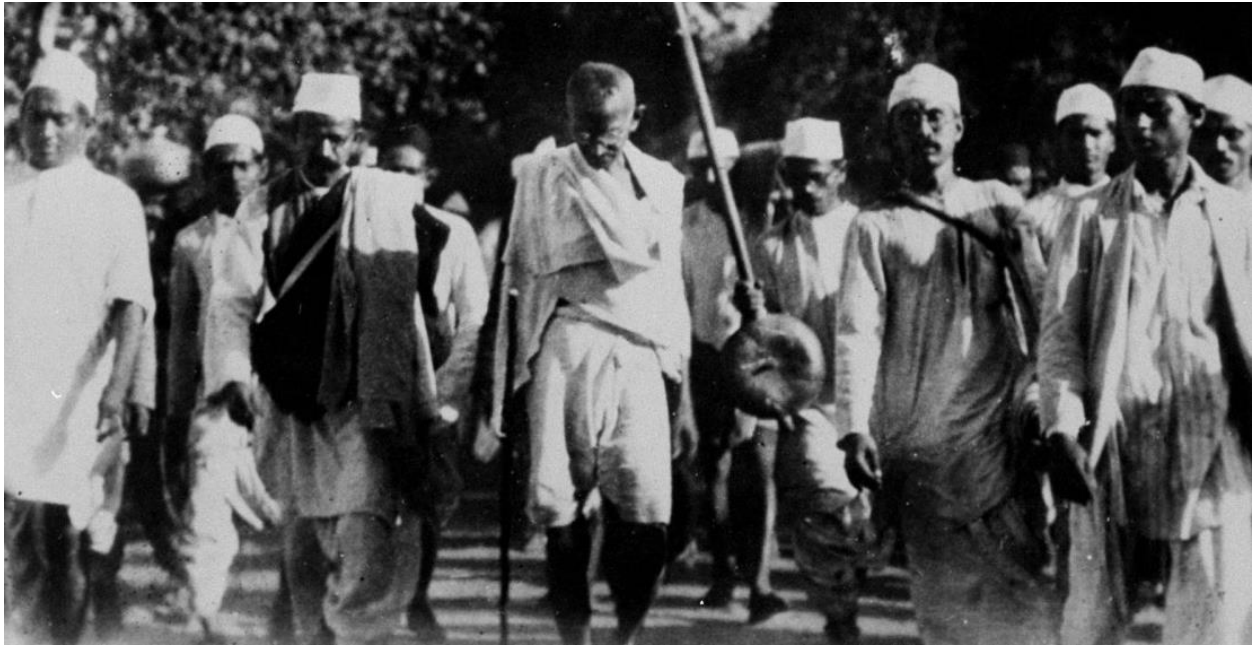
improve the position of people of colour in South Africa. He wasn't at all successful - that job was reserved for the man we are going to talk about on Friday - but in thinking about how the South African government could be convinced to treat people of colour better, Gandhi realised something HUGE.

What Gandhi realised was that GOVERNMENTS CAN ONLY DO THINGS IF THE PEOPLE THEY RULE OVER AGREE TO BE RULED OVER BY THEM. Gandhi realised that the people of colour who lived in South Africa were basically helping the government treat them badly by doing what the government told them to do. If they ALL started disobeying the government's rules, then the government would lose its power - it simply would not be able to force EVERYONE to obey the rules. So, for example, at the moment the British government is telling the British people to do lots of things that they say will help stop people getting ill with the coronavirus. Only today there has been an announcement that from July 24, everyone will have to wear a mask when they walk into a shop. But the British government only gets the power to tell the British people what to do, like 'Wear a mask!', because most people go along with what the British government tells them to do. If EVERYONE simply said 'No' and disobeyed the government's instructions - if there was MASS CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE - the government would lose all its power instantly. There wouldn't be enough policemen to arrest EVERYONE who was disobeying the law - and so the government would no longer be able to get people to do what it told them to do. And so Gandhi thought - if all people of colour refuse to go along with what the South African government tells them to do, the government will lose all its power and will only be able to get it back by treating people of colour nicely.

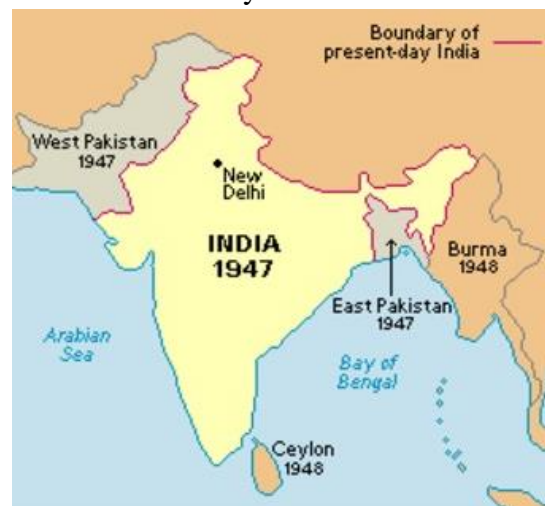
Now the only reason Gandhi realised all this was that he refused to have anything to do with people who said, 'I know how to get the South African government to be nicer to us! Let's blow up some government buildings, and kill some of the leading people in the government! Then they'll have to listen and change their ways!' Gandhi refused to use VIOLENCE to try to make things better. He was a man of peace who thought that there was a peaceful way of persuading bad governments to be nice. And that was through NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE - just refuse to do what the government tells you to do, and take the consequences. If everyone did that, Gandhi argued, then you could bring about huge changes in the world without killing anyone or destroying anything. Gandhi didn't have time to use this idea to help improve the position of people of colour in South Africa because he went back to India in 1915. But when he went back to India, he got very busy, trying to persuade the Indians that they could get independence for India through nonviolent resistance.

It took a long time for Gandhi to persuade people to accept this. Every time the British government did something terrible to the Indians - like when they killed hundreds of Indians in one day who had gathered in a park to protest against the British - the Indians wanted to strike back with violence. But Gandhi said, 'No - an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind' and insisted that peaceful resistance to the British government was the only way to get independence for India. Gradually, people started to agree with Gandhi. In 1930, when he was 61 years old, Gandhi said that he would no longer pay the tax that the British made Indians pay whenever they bought SALT, which they needed to keep food fresh (they didn't have fridges then). And he marched almost 250 miles to the sea, so that he could get some salt from the sea without paying any tax to the British. (Do you know how to do this? Seawater is naturally very salty - which is

why you should never drink it because the salt will dry you up inside. To get the salt out of the seawater, you just collect some in a pan, heat the pan up - the water gets so hot it EVAPORATES and BOILS and turns into a gas and floats away into the air. And then the salt in the seawater is left at the bottom of the pan.) When he started the march, he had 78 people walking with him. By the end - 25 days later - thousands of people had joined Gandhi's march, all refusing to pay the tax on salt.



In the end, the British government had to give up. It took them a long time to let India go - WINSTON CHURCHILL, who was Prime Minister for most of World War II, until 1945, really hated the idea of losing India. But when Churchill lost the 1945 General Election, the way was opened for India to become independent. But just when independence was within reach, there was a problem. India was made up of people belonging to two different religions - there were the Hindus (pronounced 'Hin - doos') and the Muslims, and there were a lot more Hindus than Muslims. Gandhi was a Hindu, and the Indian Muslims were led by MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH (do you remember another person called MUHAMMAD ALI?). JINNAH said, 'If India is simply made independent, then we can't trust the Hindus not to start treating the Muslims badly. The only way the Indian Muslims will be safe is if they live in their own country.' And the British said, 'Okay - we will PARTITION (pronounced 'part - ish - on'), or split up India when it becomes independent. In the north, we will create a small country where the Indian Muslims can live and we will call that PAKISTAN. The rest of India will be where the Indian Hindus will live - and that will obviously be called INDIA.' The problem with this was that there were a lot of Indian Hindus living in the area which



was going to become Pakistan. And there were a lot of Indian Muslims living in the rest of India. So the Indian Hindus living in the north of India had to travel south so that they wouldn't end up living in Pakistan. And the Indian Muslims living in the south had to travel north to get to Pakistan so that they could live there. And when you have a lot of people travelling in opposite directions, and they have different religions, fights break out. And terrible fights broke out, with thousands of people being killed as they were travelling either south or north.

Gandhi had never wanted India to be split up in this way and he was appalled at the violence and killing that PARTITION had created. So what did he do? He went on HUNGER STRIKE - he made it clear that he would not eat any more food until the violence ended. Imagine a politician doing that nowadays! I don't suppose it would work if President Trump said 'I am not going to eat any more until people stop rioting in the United States' (even though he could lose a few pounds) - the rioters would be really pleased and say, 'Right, we're carrying until you die of starvation!' But everyone loved Gandhi - including the Indian Muslims - and when they heard that Gandhi was refusing to eat until the violence stopped, they stopped. Once again, Gandhi had found a non-violent way to bring peace to the world.

But he couldn't bring peace to everyone, and on 30 January 1948 he was shot and killed by an angry young man who thought that Gandhi had been too nice to the Indian Muslims. In 1982 a brilliant film was made about Gandhi's life, simply called GANDHI. This clip is from the start of the film and shows Gandhi being shot, and then his funeral, which was attended by millions of people:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRHjpHzpg8c>

I strongly recommend you watch the whole film - it's a perfect film to watch on a Sunday afternoon when it's rainy outside, and learn about one of the greatest men who ever lived, perfectly portrayed by BEN KINGSLEY, who won an Oscar for his performance.