

CLASS – X (ENGLISH) HANDOUT

FIRST FLIGHT.....LESSON-2 “NELSON MANDELA -LONG WALK TO FREEDOM”

MODULE 2/2

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CONCEPT AND BRIEF OF THE LESSON

‘Long Walk To Freedom’ has its roots buried deep beneath the surface. It will always represent the real victory against the apartheid, tyranny and colonialism.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, the whites erected a system of racial domination against the blacks, thus creating the basis of one of the harshest and most inhuman societies the world had ever seen. In the final decade, the previous system had been overturned and replaced by one which recognized the rights and freedom of all people regardless of colour of their skin.

Mandela talks very authentically about love and hate. He says that nobody is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin or his background or his religion. He learns to hate here in this earth. And if he can learn to hate, he can be taught to love because love comes more naturally than its opposite. Mandela speaks this through the mouth of his experience. He recalls an event which happened in the prison. In the prison, even when the situation was the grimmest, when his comrades and he were pushed to their limits, he could see a glimmer of humanity or kindness in one of the guards. Mandela hopefully says, that was enough to reassure him and keep him going. He further says man’s goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished.

In life every man has twin duties-to his family and to his community and country. The author found it difficult to fulfil these two duties. It was because a coloured man in South Africa was punished if he lived like a human being. Such a man was

forced to live apart from his own people. So, he was not allowed to do his duties to his family.

The author was born free. He was not born with a hunger to be free. He was free as long as he obeyed his father and abided by the customs of his tribe. But soon he realized that his freedom was an illusion. He began to hunger for freedom when it was taken from him. As a student, he wanted freedom to read and stay out, and as a young man, to earn his livelihood, to marry and lead a family life etc.

Desire to freedom made him bold. He slowly understood that not only he but his brothers and sisters were also not free. The precious freedom was denied to everyone. Then, he joined the African National Congress. His hunger for freedom became great for the freedom of his people. The desire for the freedom of his people to live with dignity gave him power. It emboldened him to live like a monk. The chains on his people became chains for him too.

The author knew that the oppressor must be liberated like the oppressed. A man who takes away another's freedom becomes the hated and despised. No one is free if he denies freedom to someone. Both the oppressor and the oppressed are robbed of humanity.

Nelson Mandela gratefully acknowledged that he learnt the meaning of courage from his comrades-trusted friends, the freedom fighters. They stood up to attack and torture boldly, risking their lives. He realized that courage was not the absence of fear but the victory over it. The brave man is the one who conquers the fear.

Mandela writes “ Democracy means all men to be heard, and decision is taken together. Majority rule is a foreign notion. A minority is not to be clashed by a majority.”
