

**Sarojini Naidu's Journey as a freedom fighter
(Including her letter writings to the independence fighters)**

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Abstract

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu was the most prominent woman among the leaders of the moss movement who fought for the independence of India. She was not only the first native woman to become the president of Indian national congress but also become the first woman governor of the state in independence of India. This paper deals with sarojini Naidu's Journey as a freedom fighter and she her letter writings to GopalakrishnaGokhale and Gandhi etc.

Introduction

Mrs.Sarojini Naidu was a gifted child, and more than a poet, composed beautiful children poems, nature poems, patriotic poems, love poems, striving to redeem the mother and redeem the time, in course of time the patriotism exceeded the poet. She has more than a profession of beautiful things.

At thirteen she wrote a long poem a 'Lady of the Lake'—1300 lines in six days. At thirteen she wrote a drama of 2000 lines, a full-fledged passionate thing. The Doctor said that she was very ill and must not touch a book. Her health broke down permanently about that time,

and her regular studies being stopped. She supposes the greater part of her reading was done between fourteen and sixteen.

Sarojini Naidu's entrance into freedom Movement

The partition of Bengal in 1905 drew her to join the Indian freedom struggle, was influence of Gopalakrishna Gokhale and Gandhi. Gokhale advised her to spare all her energy and talents for nation's cause. This was how she had started her political journey and supported and fought for an independent India. She gave up writing poetry and fully devoted herself to emancipation of women, education, Hindu-Muslim unity etc. She became a follower of Gandhiji and accompanied him to England. When she was in England, she openly criticized British rule in India which caught the attention of scholars and intellectuals.

During this she met with Rabindranath Tagore, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Annie Besant, C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, and Jawaharlal Nehru

During 1915–1918, she travelled to different regions in India delivering lectures on social welfare, women's empowerment and nationalism. She also helped to establish the Women's Indian Association (WIA) in 1917. She was sent to London along with Annie Besant, President of WIA, to present the case for the women's vote to the Joint Select Committee

She presided over the annual session of Indian National Congress at Kanpur (1925). It was a great honour. The president was all powerful and had to work out many constructive projects for the entire country for full one year. She earned a name as a remarkable organizer with originality. She had a leading role in Salt Satyagraha and consecutive struggles. She was jailed with Gandhiji and other leaders. She was President of National Women's' Conference for many years and could train many volunteers who took up women's cause.

She was appointed Governor of Uttara Pradesh, a large province of India, as soon as India became independent. "I am a Governess!" she used to joke.

Sarojini had very fine aesthetic sense and was known for selection of exquisite silks and jewellery. But she gave up everything for the sake of national struggle and began to wear coarse Khadi.

Sarojini Naidu's meeting with Mahatma

After she had met Mahatma Gandhi in 1916, she completely aimed to fight for the freedom of the nation. Sarojini Naidu was solely responsible for awakening the women of India and

brought them out of their kitchen. She travelled from state to state, city to city and fought for the rights of the women which made her reinstate her self-esteem among the women of India. When Gandhiji was arrested for a protest in 1930, she took the helms of his movement. In 1931 along with Pundit Malaviyaji and Gandhiji took part in the Round Table Summit 1931. During the "Quit India" she was arrested in the year 1942 and stayed in jail for 21 months along with Gandhiji.

She worked as a Congress party president

In 1925, Naidu presided over the annual session of Indian National Congress at Cawnpore (now Kanpur).

In 1929, she presided over East African Indian Congress in South Africa. She was awarded the Kaisar-i-Hind Medal by the British government for her work during the plague epidemic in India.

In 1930 during the salt satyagraha she was one of the women protesters at the Dharsana salt works, Gujrat. Hundreds of satyagraha were beaten by soldiers under British command at Dharasana. The ensuing publicity attracted world attention to the Indian independence movement and brought into question the legitimacy of British rule in India.

In 1931, she participated in the Round table conference with Gandhi and Madan Mohan Malaviya.

She played a leading role during the Civil Disobedience Movement and was jailed along with Gandhi and other leaders. In 1942, she was arrested during the "Quit India" movement.

Sarojini Naidu's Letter to GopalakrishnaGokhale

Hyderabad, Deccan

24 December 1914

Dear Mr Gokhale

I have no news of or from you for some time now and in spite of my own stern and unselfish prohibition to you, feel both aggrieved and anxious at your silence. I hope it means that you are so much better that you have no time to write instead of so much worse that you have not the strength!, in which case of course the illness would have been blazoned abroad with the true journalistic flair for 'personal items' concerning the Great Ones of the earth.

I should have written myself but my own health is in a most unsatisfactory condition: daily attacks of fever and perennial attacks of people! - both of which in their excess play havoc as you know with one's time and temper, not to speak of one's constitution. I don't seem to see any very successful remedies against the onslaught of both men and mosquitoes for some time to come. Both have one thing in common: they can sting: but fortunately that species of men that approximates to the local mosquito I have left behind to poison the air of London - perhaps next week of Madras! (That is malicious of me but true!)

Here the men are ([illegible] in its vague sense) strange as it may sound of Hyderabad!, decent and kind only: they live and let live. I wonder if it is because they have no ambitions to be Leaders - 'Our Leaders' as my boys ironically call them. Now laugh: relax your solemn brain and laugh - whole heartedly as I do at the mosquito - like, malarial, malicious men who disturbed your peace, not long ago!

Oh, we want a new breed of men before India can be cleansed of her disease. We want deeper sincerity of motive, a greater courage in speech and earnestness in action. We want men who love this country and are full of yearning to serve and succour their brothers and not to further aid in their degradation by insincerity and self-seeking. O how I hate shams and prejudices: how I hate all sectarian narrowness, all provincial limitations of vision and purpose, all the arrogant sophistries of man-made divisions and differences: how tired I am to death of the reiterated resolutions that have become almost meaningless by lip repetition: uncorroborated by the heart's conviction and unsustained by practical action - all this stirs me more deeply just now because of the coming national week. What a week of inspiration it should be to all partaking in the various activities, if only all those activities could be so co-ordinated and realised as intrinsic parts of the same many-sided work of progress: the radii of one unshifting centre.

One needs a Seer's Vision and an Angel's voice to be of any avail. I do not know of any Indian man or woman today who has those gifts in their most complete measure.

I was to have gone to Madras: or rather they made up their minds at the various conference committees that must speak, and I would gladly have done so, striking in my own way, humbly and sincerely, the very note of co-ordination, but my health makes it impossible (and not safe) for me to face the exertions and excitements of so many activities. But I do not regret my inability to be present at the conferences half so much as my inability to accept the invitation - how cordial, how touching and how generous [?] of the student world who were

hoping to organise all sorts of things in my honour. The students and the women of Madras: the two sections of the nation which are to be my special concern in all my future work.

I am afraid your absence again this year from the Congress will be a source of great disappointment and rob of it much of its dignity and authority. But your health is of far more urgent importance than even the Congress.

When do you go to Delhi: will it not be too severe a climate for your health? Are you taking your own doctor with you? And does he think you are really well enough to face such an ordeal of work and weather?

Please write to me or ask one of your chelas to send me a line before you leave for Delhi.

My husband is exceedingly busy. For some time the talk of his going had been slack, but just now again there seems to be a move to get him sent to the front! I suppose he would have to go as some General's staff. Meanwhile I fear my health causes him more anxiety than a whole field hospital full of (the) wounded is likely to cause him! He sends you or rather entrusted me some time ago with a message for your of most anxious good wishes for your speedy recovery. My children send you their respects. They think you must be a phenomenally wise and venerable person because I always speak of you with so much, shall I say respect or shall I say affection? Perhaps both would be true: but that does not prevent me from taking you to task when you are unwise and unmemorable enough to do foolish things that hurt your health. I am always guilty of such folly, but my children never suffered from any illusion about my wisdom and venerable qualities: I am their Pal and Comrade and fellow sinner in all things human and delightful.

Remember me to your daughter and to your sister also. And send me a potent Brahminical charm against the ills of flesh -- and the wars of my spirit!

Yours affectionately,

Sarojini Naidu

Sarojini Naidu's Letter to Mahatma Gandhi

Duke's Hotel,

St James's Place,

London SW1, 1920

My dear friend:

I have not written to you for a long time but you have been as usual in my thought and speech. I am in very bad health but the twin questions of the Punjab and the Khilafat absorb all my energies and emotions: but it is in vain to expect justice from a race so blind and drunk with the arrogance of power, the bitter prejudice of race and creed and colour, and betraying such an abysmal ignorance of Indian conditions, opinions, sentiments, and aspirations... The debate on the Punjab in the House of Commons last week shattered the last remnants of my hope and faith in British justice and goodwill towards the new vision of India... The discussion in the house was lamentable and indeed tragic: our friends revealed their ignorance, our enemies their insolence and the combination is appalling and heartbreaking. Mr Montague has proved a broken reed... I enclose a copy of my correspondence with him on the subject of the outrages committed during (the) Martial Law regime upon women as embodied in the Congress Sub-committee's report and evidence. I naturally assume that no single statement contained in the evidence has been accepted without the most rigorous and persistent scrutiny but the general attempt seems to be to discredit the Congress Sub-committee's findings and to shift responsibility of an outrage which cannot be denied to Indian shoulder - The Skin Game with a vengeance. Speaking at a mass meeting the other day, I said that what we Indians demanded was reparation and not revenge; that we had the spiritual force and vision that enabled us to transcend hate and transmute bitterness into something that might mean redemption both for ourselves and the British race: but that freedom was the only true reparation for the agony and shame of the Punjab.

Are you well? The specialists think that my heart disease is in an advanced and dangerous state: but I cannot rest till I stir the heart of the world to repentance over the tragedy of martyred India...

With greetings to all my friends, I am, as ever,

Your loyal and loving friend,

Sarojini Naidu

Sarojini Naidu's Letters to Jawaharlal Nehru

Lucknow

29 September 1929

My beloved Jawahar:

I wonder if in the whole of India there was yesterday a producer heart than your father's or a heavier heart than yours. Mine was the peculiar position of sharing in almost equal measure both his pride and your pain. I lay awake until late into the night thinking of the significance of the words I had used so often in reference to you, that you were predestined to a splendid martyrdom. As I watched your face while you were being given the rousing ovation on your election, I felt I was envisaging both the Coronation and the Crucifixion - indeed the two are inseparable and almost synonymous in some circumstances and some situations: they are synonymous today especially for you, because you are so sensitive and so fastidious in your spiritual response and reaction and you will suffer a hundred-fold more poignantly than men and women of less fine fibre and less vivid perception and apprehension, in dealing with the ugliness of weakness, falsehood, backsliding, betrayal... all the inevitable attributes of weakness that seeks to hide its poverty by aggressive and bombastic sound... However I have an abiding faith in your incorruptible sincerity and passion for liberty and though you said to me that you felt you had neither the personal strength nor a sufficient backing to put your own ideas and ideals into effect under the turmoil of so burdensome an office. I feel that you have been given a challenge as well as offered a tribute: and it is the challenge that will transmute and transfigure all your noblest qualities into dynamic force, courage and vision and wisdom. I have no fear in my faith.

In whatever fashion it is possible for me to help you or serve you in your tremendous and almost terrible task, you know you have but to ask...if I can give no more concrete help, I can at least give you full measure of understanding and affection...and though, as Khalil Gibran says, "The vision of one man lends not its wings to another man", yet I believe that the invincible faith of one's spirit kindles the flame of another in radiance that illumines the world...

Your loving friend and sister,
Sarojini Naidu

The letter was written on Nehru's election

As Congress president at Lahore

'Remember Liberty is the ultimate crown of all your sacrifice'

The Mahatma's Camp

Calcutta

13 November 1937

My very dear Jawahar:

I am writing from the modern version of the Tower of Babel. The Little Man is sitting unconcernedly eating spinach and boiled marrow while the world ebbs and flows about him breaking into waves of Bengali, Gujarati, English and Hindi. Bidhan and his colleagues are in despair over his stubborn indocility as regards his health. He is really ill... not only in his brittle bones and thinning blood but in the core of his soul...the most lonely and tragic figure of his time... India's man of destiny on the edge of his own doom...

To you, the other man of destiny, I am sending a birthday greeting... It will not reach you in time because of intervening eyes that must scan your correspondence. I have been watching you these two years with a most poignant sense of your suffering and loneliness, knowing that it cannot be otherwise.

What shall I wish you for the coming year? Happiness? Peace? Triumph? All these things that men hold supremely dear are but secondary things to you...almost incidental... I wish you, my dear... unflinching faith and unfaltering courage in your via crucis that all must tread who seek freedom and hold it more precious than life... not personal freedom but the deliverance of a nation from bondage. Walk steadfastly and along that steep and perilous path... if sorrow and pain and loneliness be your portion. Remember Liberty is the ultimate crown of all your sacrifice... but you will not walk alone.

Yours loving,

Sarojini

Sarojini Naidu's Letters to Rabindranath Tagore.

Hyderabad, Deccan

12 August 1940

Greetings to you, Poet in whose verses flow rivers of ancient wisdom and perennial youth, latest among those whom the old mother of learning far way has chosen to honour with the

highest tribute in her gift... We have been reading with infinite delight, your beautiful reply and acknowledgement. It is poetry and prophecy in one.

I do not know how many more years of physical life may be added to your fourscore so richly attained, so superbly sustained, but when your now fragile and delicate body become a handful of scented ashes retrieved from the sandalwood pyre - unlike us - you'll still be triumphantly alive and immortal, your words will be the ever-loving symbol and indeed - reality of you, your very self...

May I thank you or is it the gods that I should thank for the loveliness and enchantment of your genius - Poet whose words have given so exquisite a treasure to the world and in your own words brought honour to India - an exalted service that none but two or three have been able to perform in like measure though in other ways... But your service is unique and inimitable and India in her day of peace will remember and cherish it.

Yours loving,
Sarojini Naidu

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