

## Mahatma Macaulay

Once in India, Lord Robert Clive, more often than not, would be in uniform and battle ready. He would sport long moonboots, ride horses. Conjectural of sorts, he would flash a gun in one hand, and a sword in the other. Conjectural because, when both hands are armed, what body part held the bridle?

The fact is, in 1757 at the battle of Plassey, Clive won India for England. Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay walked into India, as if pacing into a palanquin. Clad in suits and gleaming shoes that appeared as though they had just been procured. Academic D. Shyam Babu describes Macaulay as a Mahatma. With Lord Macaulay-like simplicity, he dislodges the Crown's greatest stamp of honour, "Lord".

India thus turns home to three Mahatmas - Mahatma Macaulay, Mahatma Phule and [Mahatma Gandhi](#). Decades before Gandhiji returned to India in 1915, Macaulay began scripting the path Gandhiji would enact. "Freedom"? Who imagined that enterprise for British India? "It would be far better for us that the people of India were well governed and independent of us, than ill governed and subject to us," argued the would-be-Mahatma in his July 10, 1832 speech in the House of Commons.

His regard for India continues: "Are we to keep the people of India ignorant in order that we may keep them submissive? Or do we think that we can give them knowledge without awakening ambition? Or do we mean to awaken ambition and to provide it with no legitimate vent? It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; that, having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or to retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history." Once in India in 1835, seeding ideas of freedom was Macaulay's mission.

When the British parliament asked the East India Company to set aside one lakh rupees for the education of Indians, the officials were divided: One set insisting to continue with the existing Arabic and Sanskrit education, and the other group, led by the Mahatma-in-making, argued for English education that would be seeped in the sciences. In order to convince his fellow officials who were obsessed with the Arabic/Sanskrit system, Macaulay in his Minute on Education makes fun of 15th century England. "To which I refer is the great revival of letters among the Western nations at the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. At that time, almost everything that was worth reading was contained in the writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Had our ancestors... neglected the language of Thucydides and Plato, and the language of Cicero and Tacitus. Would England ever have been what she now is?"

Macaulay adds, "What the Greek and Latin were to the contemporaries of More and Ascham, our tongue is to the people of India." This Mahatma had won for India not only the English language but the sciences as well. But what about the account that paints Macaulay as a mind-slaver? The slave theorists hate the Lord with the pen more than they hate the Lord with swords.

In his 1832 speech, Macaulay spoke thus: "I fully believe that a mild penal code is better than a severe penal code, the worst of all systems was surely that of having a mild code for the Brahmins... while there was a severe code for the Shudras. India has suffered enough already from the distinction of castes, and from the deeply rooted prejudices which that distinction has engendered." Clive won England an empire but he wouldn't say a word against the "deeply rooted prejudices" that caste breeds. Mahatma Macaulay set the stage for ending not only those

prejudices but the British rule in India itself.

END

Downloaded from [crackIAS.com](http://crackIAS.com)

© **Zuccess App** by [crackIAS.com](http://crackIAS.com)

crackIAS.com