



# Virchand Gandhi

Great Hero who represented Jain community in

1st Parliament of World Religions held in CHICAGO, 1893.

Great Patriot who defended Indian Religions, Culture and Civilization.

Esteem Mark of Respect by:





# Memories



Shri. V. K. Mehta  
 To  
 Vishnuji K. Gandhi, Esq.  
 London.  
 Dear Sir,  
 We authorize you to act as  
 Special Commissioner to the Jain Com-  
 munity in all matters relating to  
 our Sacred Hall of Shikharji,  
 which you are in England  
 yours truly  
 Manojji Khimantiaji



HISTORY OF JAINISM IN GREAT  
 BRITAIN  
 BY  
 THE  
 REV. DR. J. H. WILSON  
 D.D.  
 LONDON  
 1908

(૬) કવિતા

જૂના વિચાર સહ મૌન ન અર્થમુક્તિ  
 રંજકતી પ્રિયતમા તવ પ્રેમ ઉક્તિ  
 માધુર્યયુક્ત કવિતા જવ તારી દીકી  
 લાગે અતિ શરકરા સમ તેહ મીકી !



Family members of VRG  
 with Mrs. Indra Gandhi







# VIRCHAND GANDHI

## Short illustrious but volcanic life of only 37yrs.

Birth date:  
25th Aug 1864

Birth place:  
Mahuva, Gujarat (India).

Mother : Manbai

Father :  
Raghavji- a Jewelers,  
religious minded, but  
reformer against irrational or  
unwholesome social evils.  
Courageously opposed the  
tradition of "weeping &  
breast beating"  
after death of a relative.



Primary education in Mahuva,  
matriculation from Alfred  
high school, Bhavnagar in  
1880. Married to Jiviben in  
1879.



B.A. with Honors in 1884 from  
Elphinstone college,  
University of Bombay, first  
known Jain graduate.



Diligent, Brilliant &  
Industrious academic career.  
Signed articleship with M/S  
Little & co for Solicitor's  
Examination but religious  
causes were dearer to his  
heart.

Became honorary Secretary of  
Jain association of India(1884).  
Strived to prevent slaughter of  
cattle.



He put strenuous efforts to  
remove unjust pilgrim tax of  
Rs. 2 per person at  
"Shatrunjaya Tirth" to pay  
homage to sacred shrine of  
Lord Adinath, the first Jain  
Tirthankar of this era. He won  
the respect and confidence of  
his Jain community and  
became young educated  
brightly shining social star of  
Jain community.

One more achievement was to  
remove tallow factory from  
the hill of "Samet sheekhar



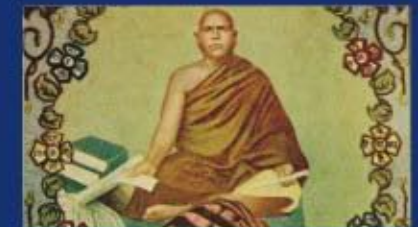
"Tirth" a most sacred hill of  
Jains where 20 Tirthankars  
(Religious Guides) attained  
Nirvana, an event of  
Liberation. Jains are known for  
their concept of "Ahimsa"  
(Non Violence) & Slaughter  
house at such sacred hill was  
great sentimental issue for  
them. Known as popular  
"Piggery case", he fought this  
case right up to the top most  
Judiciary with all legal,  
religious and social means.  
Court at last had to respect the  
religious sentiment. This was  
his 2nd great triumph for  
Jains.

Again in 1887-88 he settled the  
dispute over Makshiji Tirth.

Along with Columbia  
Exposition, the third largest  
world fair, to be held in

Chicago in, 1893 it was  
decided to hold first  
Parliament of World Religions  
where religious heads from all  
over the world were to  
assemble.

For this His Holiness  
Munishree Atmaramjee, a well  
known scholar & Jain priest  
was invited. Munishri could  
not honor this invitation due  
to strict code of conduct for  
Jain ascetics.



Who can shoulder the  
stupendous task to represent  
the subtle philosophy of  
Jainism with courage &  
correctness? Yes the only one  
"Virchand", was the  
unanimous voice of 5 million  
Jains. The responsibility only  
he could shoulder.



# Virchand Gandhi in USA

1893 to 1895

Eloquent Oriental speaker



In spite of protest from orthodox Jains to cross the sea, he went to USA for this laudable cause of Jains with strong determination.

In USA, he delivered numbers of illuminating lectures on Jainism, Religions of India, Indian Heritage and Traditions. He firmly and with forceful & fearless speeches removed the mistaken identity of Great mother India. His defense for homeland and attack on some scrupulous missionary motives were well understood by people of USA. He won many medal & awards but more important was his courageousness with unblemished honesty, integrity and simplicity.

While returning from USA he stopped over at London and gave few lectures.

11th Sept. to 27 Sept. 1893

Parliament of World Religions Chicago



First to introduce Jainism to western world.



## Welcome back to India

On his arrival from USA in 1895 he was received by Jain community with great praise though some orthodox Jains insisted to do "repentance" for his sin committed to cross the sea in the name of religion. Mangrol Jain Sangit Mandal organized grand welcome function. He started "Hemchandra classes" and taught subjects like doctrine of Karma, Reincarnation, Matter & Spirit, Ultimate Principle etc.

Attended Indian National congress in Pune as representative of Bombay province

Attended "Dharma Mahotsava" held at Ajmer in 1895 as representative of Jains

## A polyglot

Knew 14 languages & was a great scholar of Vedant and Buddhism. He also had good knowledge of various religions of world, Yoga & occultism. He had done in-depth comparative study and understanding of various philosophies. This is what made his speech deep & abiding. His voracious reading habit of

the best literature of world with concentration and analysis made him most eloquent orator and skilled writer. He was one who could put "Jainism" in simple English language.

## His Writings :

VRG wrote many books and articles in Gujarati and English.

He wrote various articles on religions of India, Yoga, cultural reforms like education for women, irrational customs etc.( the list is exhaustive). VRG translated few publications, including "Unknown Life of Jesus Christ" from French to English in 1894, which was originally written in French by Nicholas



Notowitch from an ancient manuscript found in Tibet. Various authors have edited his writings and speeches in book forms, eminent amongst those are Bhaghubhai Karbhari, Herbert Warren, K. K. Dixit, Pannalal Shah & Dr. Kumarpal Desai.

## Charming Personality

**Tall & well built figure with lustrous face. His royal purple robe & gold coloured turban with white sash added to his personality.**

**Pure like priest, serene and sober, patience & peaceful a personality found very rarely.**

## A true humanitarian

Sent Rs 40000 & ship load of grains from USA during worst famine of India in 1896-97.

Established a "Society for the Education of Women of India (SEWI). It promoted women community from India to USA for higher education.





# 2nd Visit to USA & England 1896 to 1901



## The Asian Representative At Intl' Commerce Conference

In 1899, Shri Virchand Gandhi attended the International Commerce Conference as a representative of the whole of Asia, and represented 350 million people. He suggested improvement in and expansion of our postal system which handled the parcels, so that all the countries in the world can be covered. He opened our eyes by emphasizing this and reminded us that we need to impart detailed and complete education about commerce".



Completed Bar-at-law at Gray's Inn Institute (London)

Herbert Warren (London)  
A disciple of Virchand Gandhi  
Wrote a book on "Jainism"  
Adopted Jainism & Vegetarianism



Mrs Howard (USA)  
A disciple of Virchand Gandhi,  
Adopted Jainism, became Vegetarian  
and used to practice  
"Samayik" a ritual of Equanimity



During this period he gave numerous lectures in USA and England. Also visited France & Germany and gave Lectures.

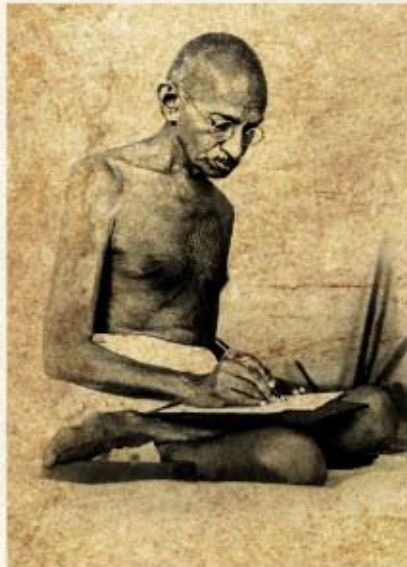
Institutions established by him outside India.

1. Gandhi Philosophical Society (USA)
2. Jain literature Society (UK)
3. Mahaveer Brotherhood or Universal Fraternity (UK)
4. School of Oriental Philosophy and Esoteric Studies (USA)
5. Society for Education of Women of India (SEWI-USA)

Through his lectures, writings and institutions he introduced various religions of India to westerner and upheld the glory of Indian philosophies, heritage and traditions.

During this period he came once to India for a matter related to "Shatrunjay Tirth" His well drafted appeal and his victory was noteworthy and well deserved success of his genius.





## Mahatma Gandhi's relationship With VRG

Mahatma Gandhi in his Autobiography, "The Story of My Experiments with Truth" (Translated from Gujarati by Mahadev Desai) on page 47, Chapter 28, wrote:

"While in Bombay, I began, on one hand, my study of Indian law and, on the other, my experiments in dietetics in which Virchand Gandhi, a friend, joined me. My brother, for his part was trying his best to get me briefs. The study of Indian law was a tedious business. The Civil Procedure Code I could in no way get on with, not so however with the Evidence Act. Virchand Gandhi was reading for the Solicitor's Examination and would tell me all sorts of stories about Barristers and Vakils."

### Shrimad Rajchandra and VRG

Shrimad Rajchandra was a divine man following strict Jain code of conduct. To one of his follower's question about crossing the sea by Mr Virchand Gandhi for the cause of religion, he not only defended Mr. Virchand Gandhi but also criticized those who were expressing such views in the name of religion.



## Courage & efforts

Some people had threatened him, some fanatic Jains outcasted him but he never lost his courage. In those days the travel, communication and other required facilities were insufficient but in spite of all these shortcomings he moved all over India and in many parts of the world to carry out his laudable mission for India and Jains without any fear. He sacrificed his brilliant career as lawyer and worked for the cause of his motherland and Jain Community.

## Strict follower of code of conduct

Traveling extensively poses various problems for religious rules of diet and other rituals. Virchand Gandhi strictly followed the rules of his religion. Important example of this is to take his own cook and other required things while traveling in a steamer from Bombay to New York. Even Vivekanand appreciated his vegetarianism which he practiced even in severe cold climate.





# 7<sup>th</sup> Aug 1901

## Flame extinguishes

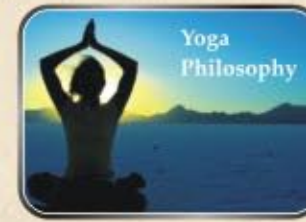
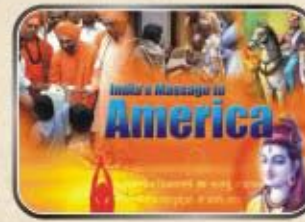
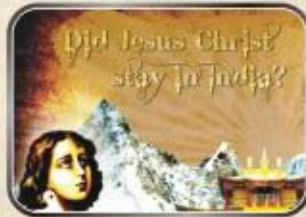
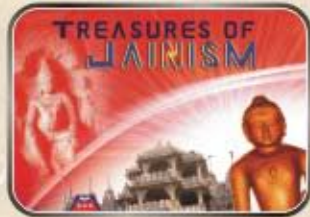


A great champion of Indian  
Cultural heritage & Jainism

In 1901 he returned to his native land with a heart full of hope and a determination to devote all his life to the services of his co-religionists and countrymen. But, truly, "Man proposes and God disposes." Little did the comparatively young man that India could dream, the news of Mr. Gandhi's tragic premature death and his pilgrimage on Earth had almost come to end. "Quiet," says the Poet, "to quick bosom, rest is a Hell." The same was the case with Mr. Gandhi. His spirit was too volcanic to allow him to think of rest. From his youth upwards, his brain and mind were always working with high pressure and the frail body proved too weak to sustain the phenomenal activity of the man. He returned to India but as a mere shadow of his former self, a total physical wreck. Only two weeks after he landed at Bombay the end came on 7<sup>th</sup> of August, 1901; he had returned to his native country only to die. A chill almost of horror passed through the Jain community all over on his demise. But of what avail are such vain regrets! He had played his short but eventful part on the stage of this world, tried to fulfill what he thought to be his mission, and left "for that journey from where no traveler returns," leaving behind him for his community and his countrymen in general the noble example of a useful and unblemished life, of what amount of enduring work can be done within the brief span of 37 years. May his soul rest in eternal peace and continue to inspire his co-religionists and countrymen with high ideals is our only prayer.



# Major Topics of his speeches



Mr. Bhagubhai Karbhari - greatest contributor to VRG's literature.



His magnanimous contribution is collections of VRG's speeches and writings from which he published three books 1) Jain Philosophy (year, 1910). 2) Yoga philosophy (year, 1912) and 3) Karma philosophy. (Year, 1913). One will express without exaggeration that he is the one who has all credits to keep Mr Virchand Gandhi alive in our heart and mind.

## Foreign Friends and Followers





# Gandhi before Gandhi

BY : DR. BIPIN DOSHI and PRITI SHAH

A Star medal to Virchand Raghavji Gandhi from the Spiritualist of the Cassadaga Camp, August 25th, 1894

Poster announcing 'The World's Congress of Religions at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago 1893', 11-27 September, U.S.A.

"Jain" Pratik Symbol

"Jain" Manuscript text from Uttaradhyayana Sutra

Jain Pratik: Symbol of the Jain Faith. The palm of the hand bears the word ahimsa; the swastika topped by three dots and the crescent represents the four destinies, the threefold path and the abode of the liberated souls, respectively; the slogan below the figure 'लोको-कस्तुमो' inter- usefulness of the souls."

Symbols of various Faiths/Religions: Clockwise from top centre-  
 • Buddhism  
 • Christianity  
 • Sikhism  
 • Bahá'í Faith  
 • Judaism  
 • Islam  
 • Jainism  
 • Taoism

Star medal inscription: 'A token of Esteem and Unity, The Occident to the Orient, from the Spiritualist of the Cassadaga Camp', 25th August 1894 to Virchand Raghavji Gandhi, at U.S.A.

Silver Round Cascade addressed to Virchand Raghavji Gandhi Esq. B.A.M.R.A.S. from Shri Mangrai Jain Sangli Mandal, Bombay, 20th Aug 1896

Elphinstone College, Bombay where Virchand Raghavji Gandhi studied B.A. with Hons and in 1884 became the First Graduate of the Jain Community

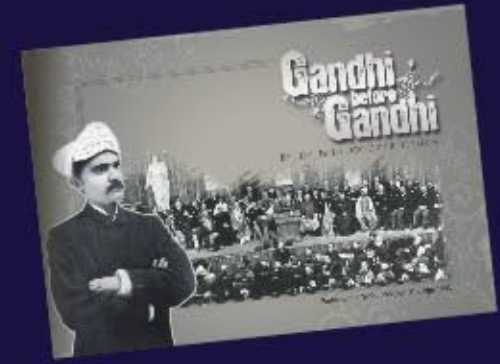
Virchand Raghavji Gandhi commenced his journey from Bombay Harbour on 4th Aug, 1893, for America by S.S. Assam

"Namaskar" Mahamantira Virchand Raghavji Gandhi

An Original Poster circulated in America announcing Virchand Raghavji Gandhi's Lectures

Virchand Raghavji Gandhi, in session (seated fourth from right) circled, representing the Jain religion from India, at the First Parliament of World Religions at Chicago, 1893

The Art Institute at Chicago, U.S.A. The Venue of the First Parliament of World Religions at Chicago, 11 September, 1893 in session



## Brilliantly Designed Coffee Table Book on Mr. Virchand R. Gandhi

Great Hero who represented Jain community in 1st Parliament of World Religions held in CHICAGO, 1893. Great Patriot who defended Indian Religions, Culture and Civilization.

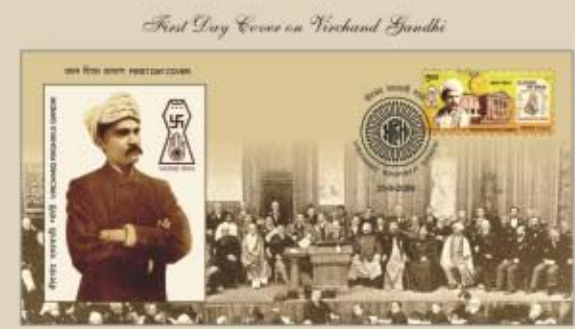


Vimochan of Book " Gandhi before Gandhi" by Shri Naredra Modiji, (CM, Gujrat) in presence of about 7000 people on 26th Dec 2009 during JITO's Global Summit held at Mumbai.

## Commemorative Postage Stamps and Minisheet on Virchand Gandhi



Proposed design for miniature sheet, 1st day cover and stamps at the occasion of release of commemorative postage stamp on Virchand Gandhi on 8th November, 2009



The book "Gandhi before Gandhi" receives Transmedia 2009 Special Award





Completed more than 100 shows &  
appreciated by more than 100000 audience

## Rangat Production

Chandresh Shah & Sachin Shah Presents  
in association with JJC North East

Based on life & deeds of  
VIRCHAND RAGHAVAJI GANDHI.

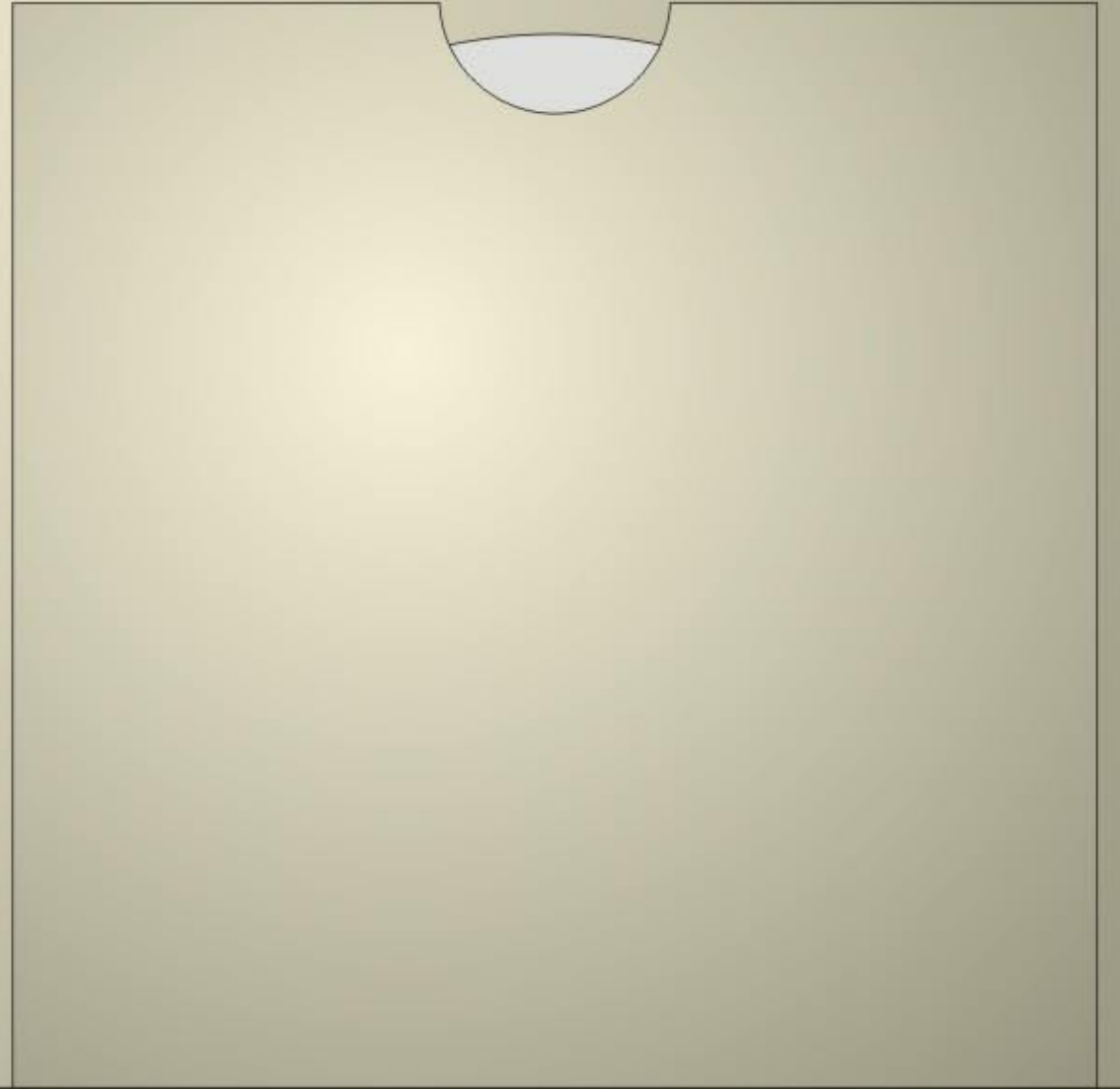
# ગાંધી Before ગાંધી

ગુજરાતી નરકેસરીની સિંહગર્જના !

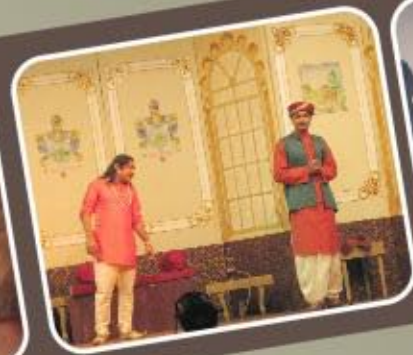
Based on the Book "Gandhi before Gandhi"  
by Dr. Bipin Doshi & Priti Shah

મહાત્મા ગાંધીના પરમમિત્ર તથા સલાહકાર  
સ્વામી વિવેકાનંદના સમકાલીન  
શિકાગો વિશ્વધર્મ પરિષદમાં  
જૈન ધર્મના રીપ્રેઝન્ટેટીવ  
તથા ભારતની અસ્મિતાનો  
પ્રાણ ધબકતો રાખનાર  
ગુજરાતી યુગ-પુરુષની યશગાથા

વિશ્વમાં ત્રણ પ્રકારના મનુષ્યો હોય છે !  
એક: જે ઈતિહાસ વાંચે  
બીજા: જે ઈતિહાસ લખે  
અને ત્રીજા: જે ઈતિહાસ રચે







ગુજરાતી તપ્તે પ્રથમવાર ૮ જાજરમાન સેટ, ૩૫ કલાકારો, ૨૫ ટેકનીશયન્સ એક ઐતિહાસિક આલ્હાદક અનુભૂતિ સંસ્કાર તથા સાહસિકતાનો નખશીખ સુમેળ ધરાવતા ગુજરાતી વીર પુરૂષની વીર કથા

STORY & CONCEPT- Sachin Shah  
 WRITER - Ashok Same/Ashok Parmar  
 RESEARCH - Dr Bipin Doshi & Priti Shah  
 SET DESIGN - Jaysukh Ravrani  
 COSTUME DESIGN - Rajeev Bhatt  
 LIGHT DESIGN - Pritesh Soda  
 ASST. DIRECTOR - Chirag Vora  
 MUSIC - Sachin/Jigar  
 MAKE UP - Rupesh  
 PUBLICITY - Deepak Somaiya

CAST : CHETAN DHANANI, JEETU KOTAK,  
 HEMANT BHATT, ASHOK PARMAR,  
 MUKUND PANCHAL, POOJA DAMANIA,  
 ALPESH DHAKAN, JIGAR BOOCH,  
 KETAN TRIVEDI, CHANDRESH SHAH,  
 SACHIN SHAH, MALHAR THAKKER,  
 PAURAV SHAH, NAIMESH,  
 VAISHALI PANCMATIA, NAIMISH.

Special thanks Shri Nitin Sanghavi & Shri Ramesh Morabia - JJC North East



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