



A FREE EBOOK

BHARAT

*From the first hut at Mehrgarh to the Moon's south pole — an
unbroken 9,000-year journey*

JAI HIND · JAI BHARAT



THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF INDIA

This book tells the story of India's journey — from a small settlement in the hills of Balochistan nine thousand years ago, to the age of space exploration today.

Across kings, warriors, saints, and revolutionaries, every chapter here opens the door to a new age.

A NOTE TO READERS

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book presents thousands of years of Indian history concisely, but with full depth and feeling. Each chapter centres on one era, one figure, or one decisive turning point — so readers can follow this vast journey with ease.

Some dates and details from ancient history remain subjects of scholarly debate. The accounts here draw on both widely accepted historical sources and enduring popular tradition.

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PROLOGUE

THE FIRST BRICK

*Before the kings and their courts, one question — where did it all
begin?*



A 9,000-YEAR JOURNEY

THE FIRST BRICK

We usually begin India's story with kings and empires — the Mauryas, the Guptas, the Mughals. But the real story starts much earlier, in nameless hills where a hunter-gatherer first learned to build a home, grow grain, and live alongside a neighbour.

In this book, we travel from the first hut at Mehrgarh through the orderly cities of the Indus Valley, the hymns of Vedic sages, Chanakya's statecraft, the valour of the Rajputs, the grandeur of the Mughals, and finally the fire of the freedom struggle that birthed modern India. This is not the story of one king or one dynasty — it is the story of a soil that has risen from its own ashes, again and again.

History does not teach us how many times we fell. It reminds us how many times we rose again.

DID YOU KNOW

This book's journey begins in Balochistan roughly 9,000 years ago and ends with a flag planted on the Moon's south pole — from humanity's earliest farming experiments to the space age, on the same soil.

CHAPTER ONE

MEHRGARH — THE DAWN OF CIVILIZATION

When humankind stepped out of caves and ploughed its first field.



C. 7000 BCE

MEHRGARH — THE DAWN OF CIVILIZATION

In today's Balochistan, near the Kachi plain, a settlement called Mehrgarh was home to some of the world's earliest farmers and engineers. These were not wanderers — they built mud-brick homes with dedicated storage rooms for grain, and grew barley and wheat at a time when this was still a wonder anywhere on Earth.

The evidence unearthed here is startling. Human jawbones show marks of fine stone drilling — dentistry was born on this soil. Traces of cotton cultivation suggest the roots of weaving reach back here too. Around 3500 BCE, these hill communities began moving toward the fertile plains of the Indus River — setting the stage for a civilization far larger than anything before it.

Nine thousand years ago, on this very soil, the practice of dentistry was already being born.

DID YOU KNOW

Jawbones excavated at Mehrgarh show teeth treated with fine stone drills — among the oldest known evidence of dental treatment anywhere in the world.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INDUS VALLEY — CITIES AHEAD OF THEIR TIME

*While the world still fought in tribes, India had already built
metropolises.*



C. 3300–1900 BCE

THE INDUS VALLEY — CITIES AHEAD OF THEIR TIME

The Indus Valley Civilization spanned nearly 1.5 million square kilometres. Cities like Harappa and Mohenjo-daro were built on grid systems not unlike modern planned cities — streets crossed at right angles, and brick sizes stayed uniform across settlements thousands of kilometres apart. Every home's drain connected to a covered main sewer, complete with manholes for cleaning.

These were not just farmers but formidable traders — their ships crossed the Arabian Sea to reach Mesopotamia. The Great Bath at Mohenjo-daro was waterproofed with natural bitumen. Yet their script remains undeciphered to this day — one of history's great unsolved mysteries. Around 1900 BCE, the civilization began to fade, likely due to shifting river courses or prolonged drought, and its people gradually moved east toward the fertile plains of the Ganga and Yamuna.

The day we finally read that script, we will learn who they truly were — and how they grew so wise.

DID YOU KNOW

The Indus script remains undeciphered to this day. Until it is read, the language and identity of this civilization stays one of archaeology's greatest open mysteries.

CHAPTER THREE

THE VEDIC AGE — HYMNS, IRON, AND TEN KINGS

The age that gave India its very name.



C. 1500–600 BCE

THE VEDIC AGE — HYMNS, IRON, AND TEN KINGS

As the cities of the Indus fell silent, a new sound rose along the banks of the Saraswati and Indus — the Vedic Age. Its great turning point was the discovery of iron. Iron axes cleared dense forests, iron ploughshares strengthened farming tools, and harvests multiplied. This new prosperity, in turn, sparked fierce rivalry among tribes for dominance.

The Rigveda describes the Battle of the Ten Kings, fought on the banks of the Ravi river, where King Sudas of the Bharata tribe defeated a confederation of ten rival tribes. This victory established Bharata dominance over northern India — and gave our nation its name, Bharat. This was the age when the four Vedas were composed, knowledge passed orally through gurukuls, and the foundations of astronomy and mathematics were laid.

It was this proud victory that gave our nation its name — Bharat.

DID YOU KNOW

The name 'Bharat' traces back to the Bharata tribe of the Rigveda, whose victory in the Battle of the Ten Kings established their dominance over northern India.

CHAPTER FOUR

SIXTEEN KINGDOMS, TWO AWAKENINGS

*When two men chose to conquer the world with wisdom, not the
sword.*



C. 600 BCE

SIXTEEN KINGDOMS, TWO AWAKENINGS

Over time, small chiefdoms grew into vast Mahajanapadas. By around 600 BCE, northern India was divided into sixteen such kingdoms, with Magadha, Kosala, Vatsa, and Avanti the most powerful. Magadha, nestled between the Ganga and Son rivers, grew rich on fertile soil and iron mines to become the mightiest of them all.

This era also gave birth to two men who chose wisdom over the sword. Siddhartha Gautama renounced his throne in search of truth and became the Buddha, teaching compassion and non-violence. Around the same time, Mahavira taught self-restraint and the principle of 'live and let live.' This was a golden age for Indian philosophy and spirituality — though this echo of peace was soon to collide with the drumbeats of war.

While society was tangled in ritual, Siddhartha gave up his throne to search for truth instead.

DID YOU KNOW

The Buddha and Mahavira were near-contemporaries, both emerging from the same region within roughly the same century, each founding a philosophy of non-violence that still guides millions today.

CHAPTER FIVE

ALEXANDER AT THE INDUS

Where a would-be world conqueror was finally forced to stop.



ALEXANDER AT THE INDUS

In 326 BCE, Alexander of Macedon crossed the Khyber Pass and reached the Indus. On the banks of the Jhelum, he faced the valiant King Porus of Punjab in what became known as the Battle of the Hydaspes. Porus's war elephants gave Alexander's army resistance unlike anything it had faced before. Porus lost the battle, but his courage so impressed Alexander that he restored his kingdom and made him an ally.

Yet here, Alexander's march of conquest finally stopped. His exhausted army refused to cross the Beas river — word of Magadha's vast army and its king, Dhana Nanda, had reached them. The would-be conqueror of the world was forced to turn back, and he died on the journey home. Alexander was gone, but he left behind a fractured north-west India — and a population groaning under an arrogant king.

The conqueror of the known world was, at last, forced to turn back at India's frontier.

DID YOU KNOW

Alexander's troops encountered war elephants for the first time at the Battle of the Hydaspes — an experience so unsettling that his own army later refused to march further into India.

CHAPTER SIX

CHANAKYA'S VOW AND THE BIRTH OF AN EMPIRE

How one insulted teacher's vow reshaped the map of India.



CHANAKYA'S VOW AND THE BIRTH OF AN EMPIRE

When the arrogant King Dhana Nanda of Magadha insulted the scholar Chanakya of Taxila, the teacher vowed not to tie his hair back until the empire was uprooted. He trained a gifted young man named Chandragupta in both statecraft and combat. Together, Chanakya's strategy and Chandragupta's courage brought down Dhana Nanda and laid the foundation of the Maurya Empire.

Seleucus, one of Alexander's generals, attempted to reclaim territory in India, but Chandragupta's army handed him a decisive defeat. In the treaty that followed, Seleucus ceded regions including Kabul and Kandahar and gave his daughter in marriage to Chandragupta — for the first time, India's borders reached into Iran. Thus was founded India's first great unified empire, one soon to be inherited by an even greater emperor.

Chanakya vowed not to tie his hair back until the cruel empire was uprooted completely.

DID YOU KNOW

After the treaty with Seleucus, the Maurya Empire's borders extended into present-day Iran — the first time an indigenous Indian empire established influence that far west.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ASHOKA — FROM
KALINGA'S BLOOD TO
THE WHEEL OF
DHARMA

The conqueror who threw down his sword on the battlefield itself.



ASHOKA — FROM KALINGA'S BLOOD TO THE WHEEL OF DHARMA

After Chandragupta came Bindusara, and then Emperor Ashoka. Ashoka expanded the empire considerably, but the Kalinga War of 261 BCE became history's great turning point. Nearly a hundred thousand people died in that battle. Seeing the blood and bodies on the battlefield, Ashoka's heart broke — he laid down his sword and embraced Buddhism.

Ashoka erected edicts and pillars across India, and the Lion Capital at Sarnath remains India's national emblem to this day. Under his reign, India's message reached Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Central Asia — not by the sword, but through wisdom and compassion. Yet after Ashoka, his successors proved weak, and the Maurya Empire gradually began to unravel.

A conquering king made a vow — no longer the drumbeat of war, but the drumbeat of Dharma.

DID YOU KNOW

The Ashoka Pillar at Sarnath, with its four carved lions, is India's national emblem today — and the wheel at the centre of the Indian flag also traces back to this emperor.

CHAPTER EIGHT

TRADERS, KINGS, AND THE SILK ROAD

When India's power ran through toll posts, not just swords.



C. 100 BCE – 300 CE

TRADERS, KINGS, AND THE SILK ROAD

After the Maurya decline, the Satavahana kings rose in the south, commissioning the earliest caves at Ajanta and Ellora, and appending their mothers' names to their own — as in Gautamiputra Satakarni — reflecting the respect accorded to women in that society. Meanwhile, the Kushans, who arrived from Central Asia, produced their greatest emperor in Kanishka, who in 78 CE began the Shaka calendar era still used as India's national calendar today.

Kanishka's real strength was trade. He controlled sections of the famed Silk Road and taxed silk moving from China to Europe, flooding India with gold. His court hosted scholars like Charaka, father of Ayurveda, and the poet Ashvaghosha. This was also the era when Gandhara and Mathura art first depicted the Buddha in human form.

Every strand of silk travelling from China to Europe passed through Kanishka's toll posts.

DID YOU KNOW

The Shaka calendar era, begun with Emperor Kanishka's coronation in 78 CE, remains the Government of India's official national calendar to this day.

CHAPTER NINE

THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE GUPTAS

When zero was born, and iron somehow never rusted.



C. 320–550 CE

THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE GUPTAS

In the fourth century, the Gupta dynasty rose on the same soil as Magadha. Samudragupta — often called India's Napoleon — expanded the empire vastly. His son, Chandragupta II Vikramaditya, held a court adorned with nine gems: the poet Kalidasa composed *Abhijnanashakuntalam*, and the mathematician Aryabhata declared that the Earth was round and rotated on its axis. He also gave the world the concept of zero, without which modern science would be unthinkable.

Engineering from Vikramaditya's era still stands in Delhi today — the Iron Pillar at the Qutub complex, which has not rusted in 1,600 years. His son Kumaragupta founded Nalanda University, where 10,000 students studied under 2,000 teachers. But repeated Hun invasions and weakening successors dimmed this golden age by around 550 CE.

Without the concept of zero, modern science and computers would simply be impossible.

DID YOU KNOW

The Iron Pillar at Delhi's Qutub complex has weathered sun and rain for 1,600 years without rusting — its metallurgy still puzzles modern science.

CHAPTER TEN

HARSHA, NALANDA,
AND A TRAVELER'S
DIARY

The king who gave away everything he owned, every five years.



HARSHA, NALANDA, AND A TRAVELER'S DIARY

After the Gupta collapse, chaos spread across northern India until Emperor Harshavardhana made Kannauj his capital and restored order. Harsha was famed for his generosity — every five years, at a grand assembly in Prayag, he gave away his own jewels and clothes to the poor. The Chinese traveler Xuanzang visited India during this time and wrote that people here were true to their word, homes had no locks, and free rest-houses lined the roads for travelers.

Nalanda University was at its peak in this era. Gaining admission required passing a rigorous oral exam at the gate — fail to answer the gatekeeper's questions, and you simply weren't let in. When Harsha attempted to push south, the Chalukya king Pulakeshin II stopped him at the Narmada river, which became the enduring boundary between north and south India.

If the gatekeepers were this learned, imagine how brilliant the teachers inside must have been.

DID YOU KNOW

Indian muslin was woven so fine that an entire bolt of cloth could pass through a finger ring — a detail recorded by the Chinese traveler Xuanzang himself.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THREE CROWNS, ONE CITY

*When armies from three corners of India collided over a single
throne.*



C. 700–900 CE

THREE CROWNS, ONE CITY

With Harsha's death leaving no heir, the throne of Kannauj sat empty — and to hold it meant ruling all of India. The Palas of Bengal, the Pratiharas of Rajasthan, and the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan fought for nearly 200 years in what history calls the Tripartite Struggle. Amid this, in 712 CE, the Arab general Muhammad bin Qasim invaded Sindh — the first time foreign invaders gained a foothold on Indian soil.

But when invaders pushed toward Rajasthan, they met Bappa Rawal, who not only drove them back but pursued them to the borders of Afghanistan and Iran. It's said his reputation was so fearsome that no foreign force dared cross India's frontier for decades. In this same era, the Rashtrakuta king Krishna I commissioned the Kailasa Temple at Ellora — carved from a single rock from the top down, still a puzzle to modern engineers.

Bappa Rawal's name alone, it's said, kept foreign armies from India's frontier for decades.

DID YOU KNOW

The Kailasa Temple at Ellora was carved from a single massive rock, top to bottom. How nearly 200,000 tonnes of stone were removed with such precision — without machines — remains a puzzle for modern engineers.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE PLUNDER OF SOMNATH

The deepest wound struck upon a nation's faith.



THE PLUNDER OF SOMNATH

Between 1000 and 1027 CE, Mahmud of Ghazni invaded India seventeen times. The most painful chapter came when he attacked the Somnath temple in Gujarat — a centre of faith for millions of Indians. Thousands of unarmed devotees were massacred, the sacred lingam desecrated, and the temple's jewels and golden doors carried away.

Ghazni took more than gold from India — he took its dignity. Thousands were enslaved and marched off to distant, freezing deserts. But India's soil was not so easily broken. King Bhoja of Malwa and King Suheldev of Shrivasthi rallied the fractured resistance. At the Battle of Bahraich in 1033, Suheldev inflicted such a defeat on Ghazni's forces that no foreign invader dared challenge India again for nearly 150 years.

Ghazni took more than gold from India — he took a piece of its dignity as well.

DID YOU KNOW

After King Suheldev's victory at the Battle of Bahraich in 1033, no foreign invader attempted to challenge India again for roughly the next 150 years.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE BLIND KING'S LAST ARROW

One couplet, one voice, and history's most poignant revenge.



THE BLIND KING'S LAST ARROW

Emperor Prithviraj Chauhan of Delhi-Ajmer was celebrated for his skill in shabdabhedhi baan — striking a target by sound alone. In 1191, at the First Battle of Tarain, he decisively defeated Muhammad Ghori and, showing magnanimity, spared his captured enemy's life. But in 1192, Ghori returned — this time aided by the treachery of Kannauj's king, Jaichand. Attacked by deceit under cover of night, Prithviraj was captured and taken to Ghazni, where his eyes were blinded with hot iron rods.

Yet history's most poignant moment followed. Prithviraj's friend, the poet Chand Bardai, persuaded Ghori to let the blind emperor demonstrate his skill one last time. Handed a bow, Prithviraj judged the direction of a voice from a single coded couplet and loosed the arrow that pierced Ghori's chest. The two friends then took their own lives rather than face capture again. With Prithviraj gone, the gates of Delhi lay open to foreign rule.

Four bamboo-lengths, twenty-four yards, eight fingers more — the Sultan stands above; don't miss, Chauhan.

DID YOU KNOW

Even after being blinded, Prithviraj Chauhan fired his final, fatal arrow guided only by the direction of a voice, cued by a single coded couplet from his poet-friend.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE FIRE THAT WOULD NOT DIE

When a library burned for three months without stopping.



THE FIRE THAT WOULD NOT DIE

After Prithviraj's fall, Bakhtiyar Khilji burned Nalanda University in 1193 — a library holding thousands of years of accumulated knowledge burned for three months. After Ghorī's death in 1206, Qutubuddin Aibak founded the Delhi Sultanate. Later, in 1303, Alauddin Khilji laid siege to Chittorgarh. Despite the brave resistance of Maharawal Ratan Singh's forces, when defeat seemed certain, the Rajput warriors chose saffron death in battle, while Rani Padmini led thousands of women in jauhar rather than face capture.

It remains one of the most searing chapters in Indian history — where honour was defended with life itself. Yet from this devastation, a new power was about to rise. On the banks of the Tungabhadra river, two brothers, Harihara and Bukka, founded the Vijayanagara Empire — one that would protect South Indian culture for the next three hundred years.

There were no screams — only silence, and the chant of Har Har Mahadev.

DID YOU KNOW

Nalanda's Dharmaganj library held so many manuscripts that when it was set ablaze in 1193, it reportedly burned continuously for three months.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE CITY OF DIAMONDS — VIJAYANAGARA

*Where diamonds and pearls were sold in the markets by the
sackful.*



THE CITY OF DIAMONDS — VIJAYANAGARA

Hampi, capital of Vijayanagara, was counted among the world's most beautiful and wealthiest cities. The traveler Abdul Razzaq wrote that in all his journeys across the world, he had never seen a city as magnificent. Its greatest king, Krishnadeva Raya, was as great a scholar as he was a warrior — the Mughal emperor Babur himself, in his memoirs, called him the most powerful king in India. The Vittala Temple's musical stone pillars remain a puzzle for engineers even today.

Vijayanagara was more than a kingdom — it was a refuge, sheltering scholars and artists fleeing the north. But its prosperity unsettled neighbouring sultanates. At the Battle of Talikota in 1565, betrayal led to Vijayanagara's defeat, and invaders looted and burned Hampi for six months. Still, Vijayanagara had done its work — South Indian culture and its temples stand today as testimony to its warriors' sacrifice.

I have traveled the whole world, but never has my eye seen, nor my ear heard, of a city like Vijayanagara.

DID YOU KNOW

The stone pillars of Hampi's Vittala Temple produce musical notes when tapped — an architectural feat still unexplained by modern science.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

BABUR'S CANNONS
AND A FALLEN
CROWN

When gunpowder made even war elephants helpless.



BABUR'S CANNONS AND A FALLEN CROWN

In 1526, on the plains of Panipat, Sultan Ibrahim Lodi's army of a hundred thousand faced Babur's force of just 12,000, freshly arrived from Kabul. But Babur carried a new weapon — cannons and gunpowder. For the first time on Indian soil, cannon fire terrified war elephants, Lodi's own army was crushed beneath its own animals, and the Mughal flag rose over Delhi.

Yet the real challenge remained. Maharana Sanga of Mewar — who bore eighty battle scars, missing an eye and an arm — rallied the Rajputs together. At the Battle of Khanwa, Rajput victory seemed near-certain, until a last-minute betrayal by an ally left Sanga wounded and the army scattered. With Babur's victory, a new foreign power began putting down roots in India.

For the first time on Indian soil, the roar of cannon fire terrified even the war elephants.

DID YOU KNOW

Maharana Sanga carried eighty battle scars on his body, along with a missing eye and arm — and still personally led his army into battle.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE KING WHO CHOSE THE FOREST

A meal of grass bread, and a vow that never broke.



1572–1597 CE

THE KING WHO CHOSE THE FOREST

When Akbar captured Chittor, he ordered the massacre of 30,000 unarmed civilians — a wound Mewar never forgot. From these ashes rose Maharana Pratap, who gave up royal comfort to make the Aravalli forests his home. Once, as his starving daughter reached for a piece of grass bread, a wild cat snatched it away — the pain of that moment hardened his resolve never to eat off gold or silver until Chittor was free.

The local Bhil tribespeople treated Pratap as their own son and taught him the art of surviving in the forest. At the 1576 Battle of Haldighati, his horse Chetak, despite a severed leg, leapt across a 25-foot ravine to save his master's life before finally collapsing. Pratap never bowed — despite all his wealth and armies, Akbar could never make him kneel.

Until Chittor is free, I will not eat from a plate of gold or silver.

DID YOU KNOW

Maharana Pratap's horse, Chetak, leapt across a 25-foot ravine at the Battle of Haldighati despite a severed leg, saving his master's life before finally succumbing.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

MARBLE AND MISERY — SHAH JAHAN'S EMPIRE

A monument as beautiful as its true cost was heavy.



1628–1658 CE

MARBLE AND MISERY — SHAH JAHAN'S EMPIRE

Shah Jahan had a deep passion for grand architecture. He built the Red Fort in Delhi, whose Diwan-i-Khas housed the Peacock Throne, studded with the Kohinoor diamond. In Agra, he built the Taj Mahal in memory of his wife Mumtaz — 20,000 labourers working day and night for 22 years. But this beauty came at a heavy cost to ordinary people, paid through crushing taxes; even as famine struck several parts of the country, the treasury poured money into marble like water.

History's great irony followed: the very Shah Jahan who gave the world the Taj Mahal was imprisoned by his own son, Aurangzeb. Hungry for the throne, Aurangzeb spilled his brothers' blood to seize it. On taking the throne in 1658, music was banned, the arts were stifled, and temples began to fall — but in the hills of the Deccan, a new roar was about to be born.

The very man who gave the world the Taj Mahal was imprisoned by his own son.

DID YOU KNOW

Building the Taj Mahal took roughly 20,000 labourers 22 years, using marble from Makrana and precious stones imported from as far as Sri Lanka and Baghdad.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE TIGER OF MAHARASHTRA — SHIVAJI

At sixteen, he took a fort and stole an empire's sleep.



1630–1680 CE

THE TIGER OF MAHARASHTRA — SHIVAJI

Raised on the teachings of his mother Jijabai and his guru Kondadev, Shivaji captured Torna Fort at just sixteen years old, unsettling both the Mughals and the neighbouring sultanates. Rather than seeking royal allies, he built a new fighting force from ordinary farmers and highlanders, the Mavalas. When Bijapur's giant general Afzal Khan tried to kill him through treachery, Shivaji struck first with his tiger claws, ending the threat himself.

Aurangzeb lured Shivaji to Agra under false pretenses and placed him under house arrest, but he escaped hidden in baskets of sweets. In 1674, he was crowned at Raigad Fort, becoming Chhatrapati — he laid the foundation of the Indian navy, promoted Sanskrit, and decreed that not a single soldier of his army should take even a leaf from a farmer's field without asking. When he died in 1680, all of India wept.

Not one soldier of this army shall take even a single leaf from a farmer's field without asking.

DID YOU KNOW

The navy Shivaji established is considered the foundation of the modern Indian navy — he personally developed an entire strategy of coastal forts and warships.

CHAPTER TWENTY

SAMBHAJI — SKIN FLAYED, FAITH UNBROKEN

Forty days of torture, without a single word of complaint.



SAMBHAJI — SKIN FLAYED, FAITH UNBROKEN

Shivaji's elder son, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, fought over 120 battles in his nine-year reign and lost none. But betrayed by his own brother-in-law, he was captured. Aurangzeb offered him three conditions — surrender his treasury, his forts, and his faith. Sambhaji declared that even if offered an entire empire, he would never abandon his faith or his honour.

What followed crossed every boundary of cruelty — for forty days, his skin was flayed and salted, before he was finally executed. Not once did he cry out. His sacrifice lit such a fire across Maharashtra that a warrior rose from every household, and Aurangzeb spent the next 27 years wandering the Deccan forests, losing his wealth and army, ultimately buried on that very soil.

Even if you offer me your daughter and your entire empire, I will never give up my faith and my honour.

DID YOU KNOW

After Sambhaji's martyrdom, Aurangzeb spent the next 27 years battling Maratha resistance in the Deccan, and was ultimately buried on that very soil.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE COMPANY THAT BECAME A CROWN

How humble traders slowly became the masters of a nation.



1600-1857 CE

THE COMPANY THAT BECAME A CROWN

After Aurangzeb's death, the Mughal fortress of power began to crumble. Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali plundered Delhi mercilessly — Nadir Shah carried away both the Kohinoor diamond and the Peacock Throne. Amid this chaos, the English traders of the East India Company steadily gained ground. In 1757, the treachery of Mir Jafar, commander to Bengal's Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah, handed the British victory at the Battle of Plassey — Bengal was now in their grip.

The British plundered Bengal's treasury so thoroughly that famine followed. Weavers had their thumbs severed to cripple India's textile industry, and farmers were forced to grow indigo instead of food. The British sowed discord among Indian rulers, extracted heavy taxes under the guise of protection, and gradually annexed kingdom after kingdom. India, once a centre of knowledge and wealth, was slowly turning into a vast prison.

India, once a centre of knowledge and prosperity, was slowly turning into a vast prison.

DID YOU KNOW

At the 1757 Battle of Plassey, half of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah's own army never fought at all, due to the betrayal of his commander Mir Jafar — Britain's first major political victory in India.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

1857 — THE FIRST SPARK

*When Hindus and Muslims stood together against the British for
the first time.*



1857 — THE FIRST SPARK

When rumours spread that new Enfield rifle cartridges were greased with cow and pig fat, sepoy Mangal Pandey of Barrackpore sounded the call to revolt. He was hanged, but his death lit a fire across the country. On 10 May 1857, soldiers at Meerut rebelled, marched to Delhi, and declared the aging Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar their sovereign once more. The revolt's brightest sword was Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi, who fought with her adopted son strapped to her back and a sword in each hand.

In Kanpur, Nana Saheb and Tatya Tope also challenged British rule. This was not a rebellion of soldiers alone — village farmers, too, attacked outposts armed with axes. The British crushed the revolt with brutal force, publicly hanging thousands. The uprising was suppressed, but India's soul had awoken — direct rule by the British Crown began in 1858, and law and education replaced the gun as instruments of control.

If there was one man among the rebels, it was this woman — so said General Rose, her own enemy, of Rani Lakshmibai.

DID YOU KNOW

During the 1857 revolt, Hindu and Muslim soldiers fought shoulder to shoulder against the British for the first time — both communities rallied around the aging Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar as a symbolic leader.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

SALT, CLOTH, AND A MAN WITH A STAFF

Without firing a single shot, he brought an empire to its knees.



1915–1930 CE

SALT, CLOTH, AND A MAN WITH A STAFF

In 1915, a slender man returned to India from South Africa — Mahatma Gandhi. He raised his voice for the farmers of Champaran, Bihar, and forced the British to bend without ever taking up arms. Slowly, all of India rallied behind him — foreign cloth was burned in public bonfires, and khadi became the uniform of freedom. But on 13 April 1919, General Dyer ordered troops to fire on unarmed civilians at Jallianwala Bagh — a wound etched forever into every Indian heart.

In 1930, when the British taxed even salt, Gandhi led the Dandi March — thousands walking beside him on foot. Women who had never stepped outside their homes now picketed liquor shops. India had stopped being afraid. Gandhi's non-violent movement proved so powerful that, without firing a single shot, it shook the foundations of the largest empire in the world.

Foreign cloth burned in public bonfires, and khadi, spun from Indian soil, became the uniform of freedom.

DID YOU KNOW

During the 1930 Dandi March, Gandhi and his followers walked roughly 390 kilometres over 24 days to the sea, where they made salt by hand in open defiance of British law.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE REVOLUTIONARIES — BLOOD FOR THE MOTHERLAND

Young men who kissed the noose smiling, at just twenty-three.



1928–1931 CE

THE REVOLUTIONARIES — BLOOD FOR THE MOTHERLAND

Alongside Gandhi's path of non-violence, another kind of fire was rising in India. When Lala Lajpat Rai was fatally beaten by police lathis, Bhagat Singh and his comrades avenged him. Bhagat Singh later threw a bomb in the Central Assembly — not to kill, but to 'make the deaf hear,' to awaken a sleeping nation. Rather than flee, he offered himself for arrest, and on 23 March 1931, at just 23 years old, he walked to the gallows singing, smiling to the end.

When Chandrashekhhar Azad was cornered at Alfred Park in Allahabad, he kept his vow — free he had lived, free he would remain — and turned his last bullet on himself. Udham Singh, who as a twelve-year-old had vowed revenge after seeing the blood-soaked soil of Jallianwala Bagh, traveled years later to London and struck down the official held responsible for the massacre. These young martyrs turned an entire generation of children into revolutionaries.

Free we have lived, and free we shall remain — Chandrashekhhar Azad's final vow.

DID YOU KNOW

Bhagat Singh and his comrades deliberately threw their Assembly bomb where it would harm no one — their goal was never murder, but to 'make the deaf hear.'

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE AND THE ARMY OF THE FREE

Give me blood, and I promise you freedom.



1943-1945 CE

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE AND THE ARMY OF THE FREE

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose believed freedom was seized, never begged for. Slipping out of India in disguise, he reached Germany and then Japan, where he raised the Azad Hind Fauj — the Indian National Army. For the first time, India's daughters, too, took up arms, joining the Rani of Jhansi Regiment. When the INA planted the tricolour on Indian soil via Manipur, the ground shifted beneath British feet.

Though Netaji vanished in a plane crash, his rallying cry of 'Jai Hind' had already planted rebellion inside the British Indian Army itself. The very soldiers on whom British rule had depended now began to mutiny. Sailors raised the tricolour on naval ships in Bombay. The British finally understood — ruling India was no longer possible.

Give me blood, and I promise you freedom.

DID YOU KNOW

The INA's Rani of Jhansi Regiment was India's first women's combat unit, trained and armed on foreign soil to fight for the country's freedom.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

MIDNIGHT, 1947

They slept in one country and woke in another.



MIDNIGHT, 1947

A British officer named Cyril Radcliffe, who barely knew India's geography, drew a single line on a map that split thousand-year-old bonds into two nations. On the night of 14-15 August 1947, people went to sleep in one country and woke in another. Millions became strangers in their own homeland — trains arrived at stations filled with bodies, children were separated from families, blood ran in the streets. That freedom came soaked in the blood and tears of our ancestors.

At the stroke of midnight, while the world slept, India awoke to a new dawn of freedom. Pandit Nehru raised the tricolour at the Red Fort. There were two kinds of tears in people's eyes that day — tears of joy for freedom, and tears of grief for homes lost forever. Mahatma Gandhi was absent from the celebrations — he was in the villages of Bengal, working to douse the flames of communal violence.

There were two kinds of tears in people's eyes that day — one for freedom, one for a lost home.

DID YOU KNOW

Cyril Radcliffe, the British officer who drew the line of Partition, had almost no prior first-hand knowledge of the subcontinent's geography, yet was given barely five weeks to decide the border.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

BUILDING BHARAT — SARDAR PATEL AND THE UNION OF STATES

The Iron Man who stitched 562 kingdoms into one nation.



1947–1950 CE

BUILDING BHARAT — SARDAR PATEL AND THE UNION OF STATES

The British left India bankrupt — some had even predicted the young nation would fall apart. At independence, India was divided into 562 princely states, and the British had schemed that any ruler who wished could remain independent. From Junagadh to Hyderabad, rumblings of rebellion rose. But Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, through sheer force of will, stitched these fragments into a single nation.

If one can travel today from Delhi to Kanyakumari without a passport, it is thanks to this Iron Man. This same period saw India draft its Constitution, granting equal rights to every citizen. Where the British had expected collapse, India proved itself a strong, unified republic instead.

The British predicted India would fall apart. They had no idea what our Iron Man was capable of.

DID YOU KNOW

At independence, India was fragmented into 562 princely states — through Sardar Patel's diplomacy, nearly all of them joined the Indian Union with remarkably little bloodshed.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

THE REPUBLIC RISES — WARS, ROCKETS, AND THE MOON

*A nation that once carried rockets on bicycles later planted a flag
on the Moon.*



THE REPUBLIC RISES — WARS, ROCKETS, AND THE MOON

After independence, India faced several wars. Resources were scarce, but soldiers at places like Rezang La fought to their last breath, showing the world the true courage of the Indian soldier. In 1971, the surrender of 93,000 Pakistani soldiers marked one of history's largest military capitulations. When the country faced a grain shortage, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri himself fasted for a day and rallied both farmers and soldiers together.

The same India that once carried rocket parts on bicycles conducted nuclear tests at Pokhran in 1974 and 1998, announcing its strength to the world. Today, India is the first nation to land on the Moon's south pole, achieved at a remarkably low cost. India now stands as the world's fifth-largest economy — building temples and spacecraft alike, carrying yoga and Ayurveda to the world, while advancing in AI and technology too.

Where wealthier nations like the US and Russia failed, our scientists pulled off a miracle with low-cost technology.

DID YOU KNOW

India once transported parts for its first rocket by bicycle. Decades later, the same nation landed on the Moon's south pole — a feat that had eluded even the United States and Russia.

EPILOGUE

ASH AND RENEWAL

The story of a soil that always found its way back up.



ASH AND RENEWAL

This has been the thousands-year journey of our beloved Bharat — from stone tools to the Moon's south pole. This soil has borne countless wounds, been plundered and burned more times than can be counted. Yet it is the very soul of India that has risen from its ashes every single time. We have seen Chanakya's statecraft, the pride of the Maharanas, Shivaji's vision of self-rule, and the immortal sacrifice of Bhagat Singh.

History does not teach us how many times we fell. It reminds us how many times we rose again to fight. Today, as you breathe this free air, remember that behind it lies the blood and sweat of countless unnamed heroes — names perhaps buried in the pages of history, but whose debt this soil will carry forever.

History reminds us not of how many times we fell, but how many times we rose again.

JAI HIND

From the first hut at Mehrgarh to Chandrayaan's landing on the Moon — it is the same soil, the same spirit, returning every time stronger than before.

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JAI HIND, JAI BHARAT

We hope this book has stirred in you a sense of pride for a soil that, across thousands of years of struggle, never truly gave up.

This book is free to read, keep, and share.



JAI HIND

This ebook is free — read it, keep it, and share it with anyone who
might love this story of India.

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