

GREAT INDIANS



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PERFACE

Not gold but men can make a nation great and strong

–Emerson

I beseech (pray) you to spare a few minutes of your valuable time and go through the book “Great Indians” which I have penned for you after a lot of labour and profound thinking. Do not just glance through it cursorily, but savour it with your heart. Your time will not be wasted rather gain fully utilized. A deep study of it will compel every reader to put the precept (command) into daily practice and the same will definitely bestow on the seeker great peace and prosperity, health and happiness in the modern age of tension and stress.

It is really a valuable and excellent anthology (collection) of prose containing 25 different “Great Indians” provided for the readers. It offers comfort and consultation, enlightenment and elucidation (explanation) in such a manner as to make a direct appeal to the modern young and old alike. Optimism is the key note of this book. Its pages abound in constructive suggestions for a fuller and happier life. I hope it may inspire many thirsting and aspiring souls in humble and sincere prayer.

It is our hope that 25 great Indians will be read with enjoyment and satisfaction by those who wish to use it for leisure reading and by those who are more specifically motivated to seek authoritative information about selected “Great Indians”.

I am very thankful for Sharvshri Sardari Lal ‘Kamal’, Naresh Bansalji, Jai Kishanji etc. for their help in publication of this book. Perhaps I would have not able to do so without their valuable co-operation. I am also indebted to God who inspired me to do it.

I have tried my level best to write this book correctly according to my capacity and ability. But no body on the earth is perfect except God. Actually man is a mannequin of mistakes to error is human. I, therefore, am not an exception. If, there, is any mistake, I beg pardon from the readers. Any suitable suggestions from the readers are keenly awaited and welcome from the very core of my heart.

In the end, I am very grateful to all those authors whose books have inspired me to write this book and whose thoughts have quoted in this book.



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Reviewer's Views

Shri Dharam Pal Kapoor is a born bachelor having a sacred soul, pious pen and roams in religions realms. If God has been benevolent upon him, he is equally charitable towards the poor, be they relatives or strangers. That is why he spends a lot on writing, publishing and free distribution of his instructive/religious books for the benefit of society and humanity. Whatever he preaches, he practices; he does not simply deliver precepts (maxiams) and sermons (discourses). This book entitled "Great Indian" is a speaking example.

The views, ideas and ideals have been backed profusely by quotations of well known writers/poets, thinkers and philosophers so as to make them acceptable. At some places, the writer's views may be at variance with the readers but that shows his individual personality and free thinking and should be welcome.

I can only wish the writer's mission of teaching and preaching of great ideals a sure success.

Sardari Lal Dhawan 'Kamal'

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Special Message

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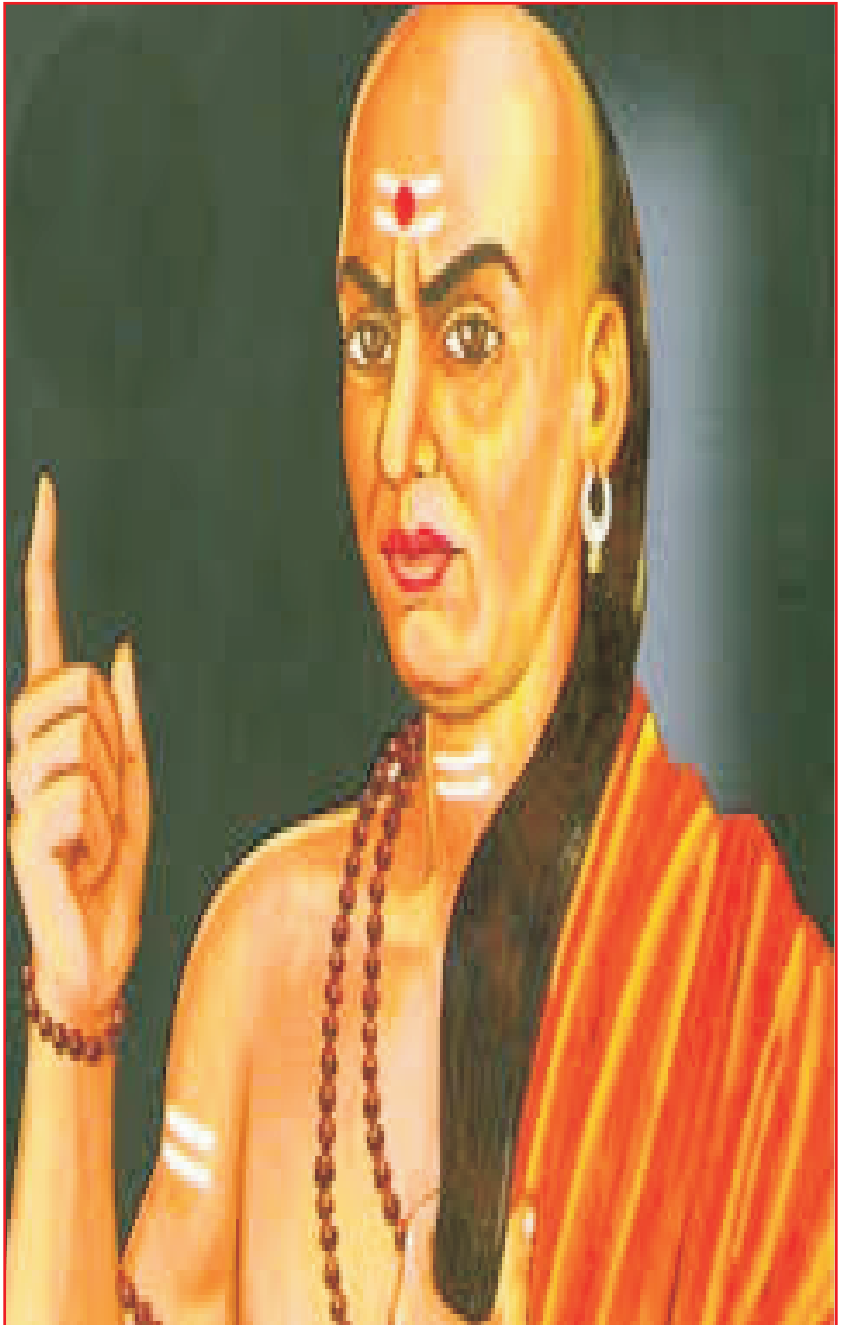
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MAHATMA BUDHA



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KALIDASA



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SWAMI VIVEKANAND



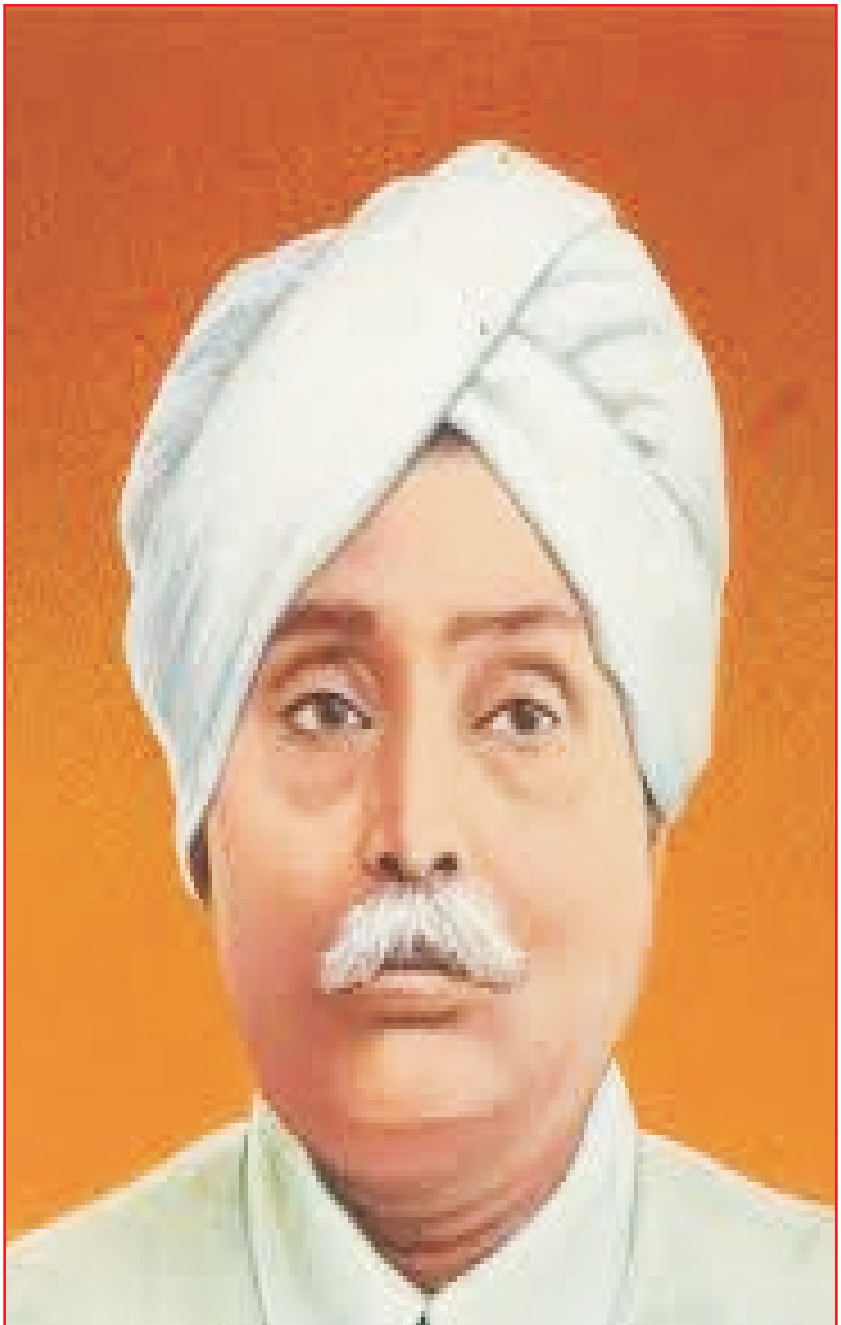
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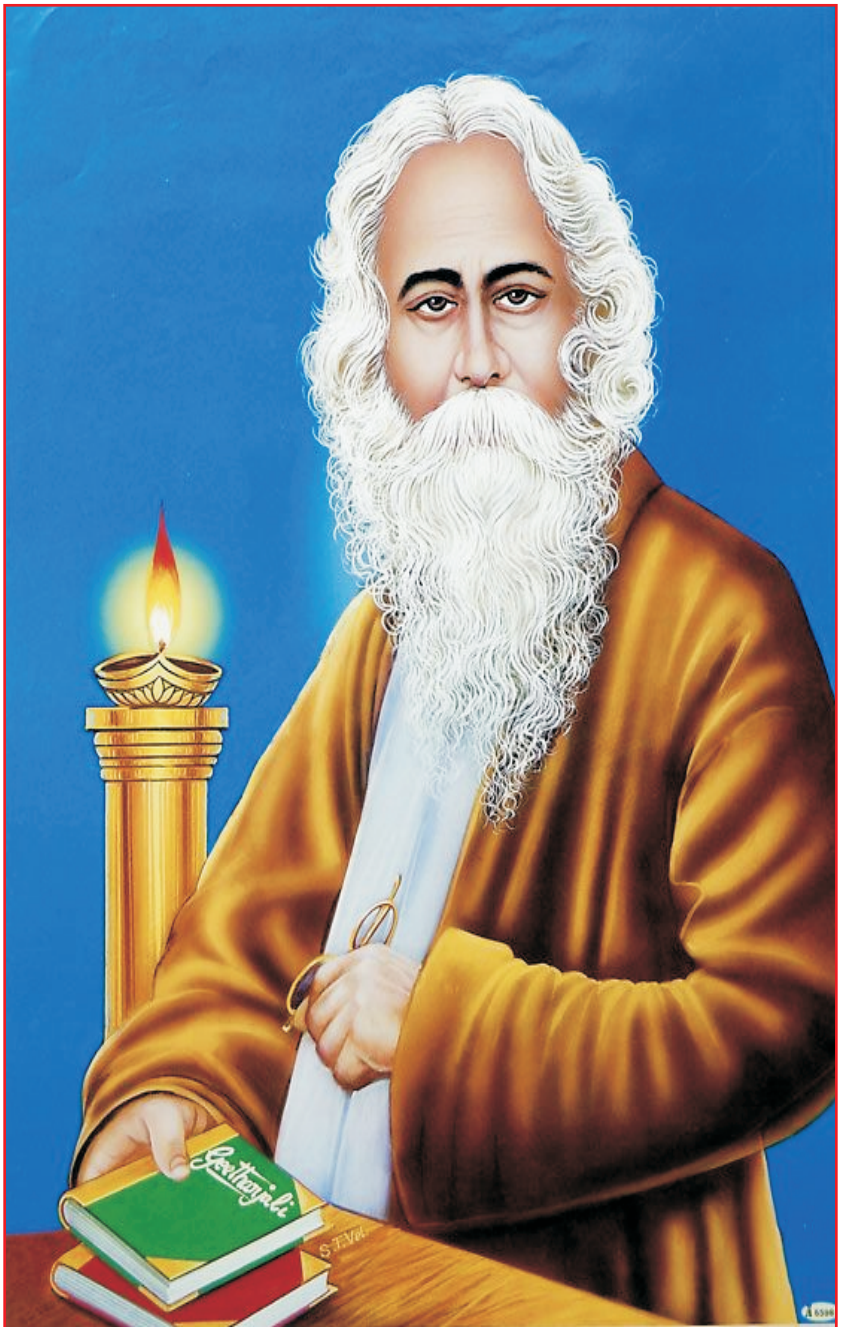
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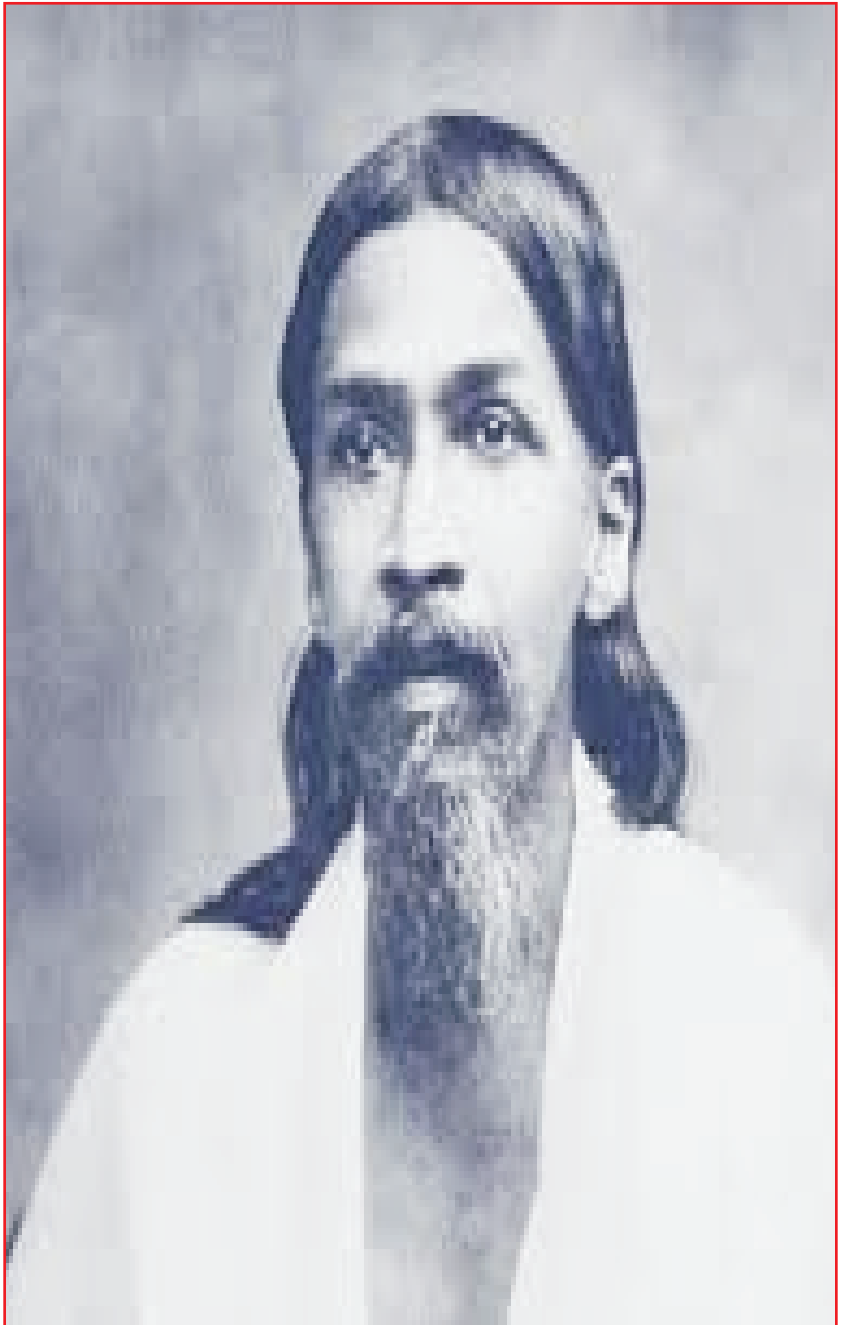
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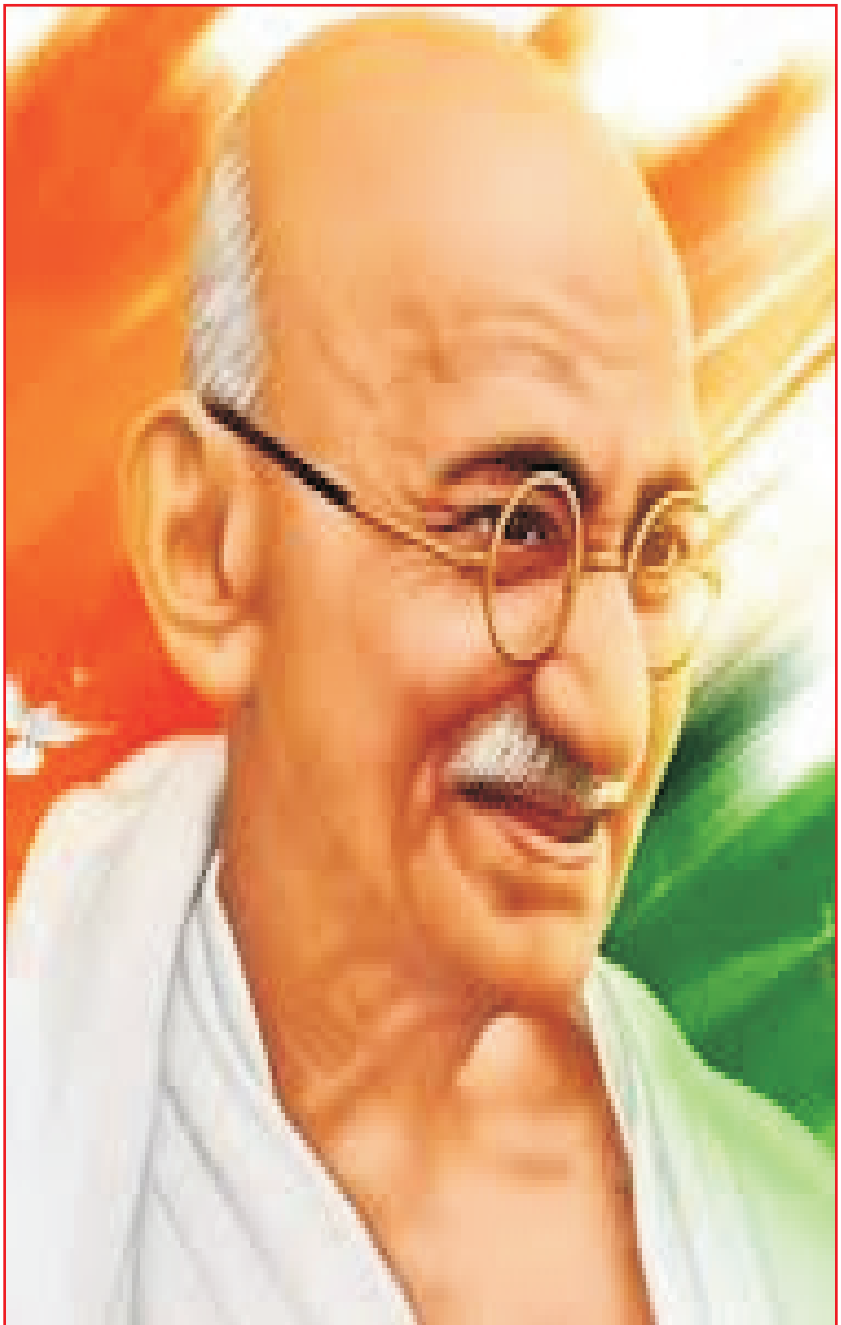
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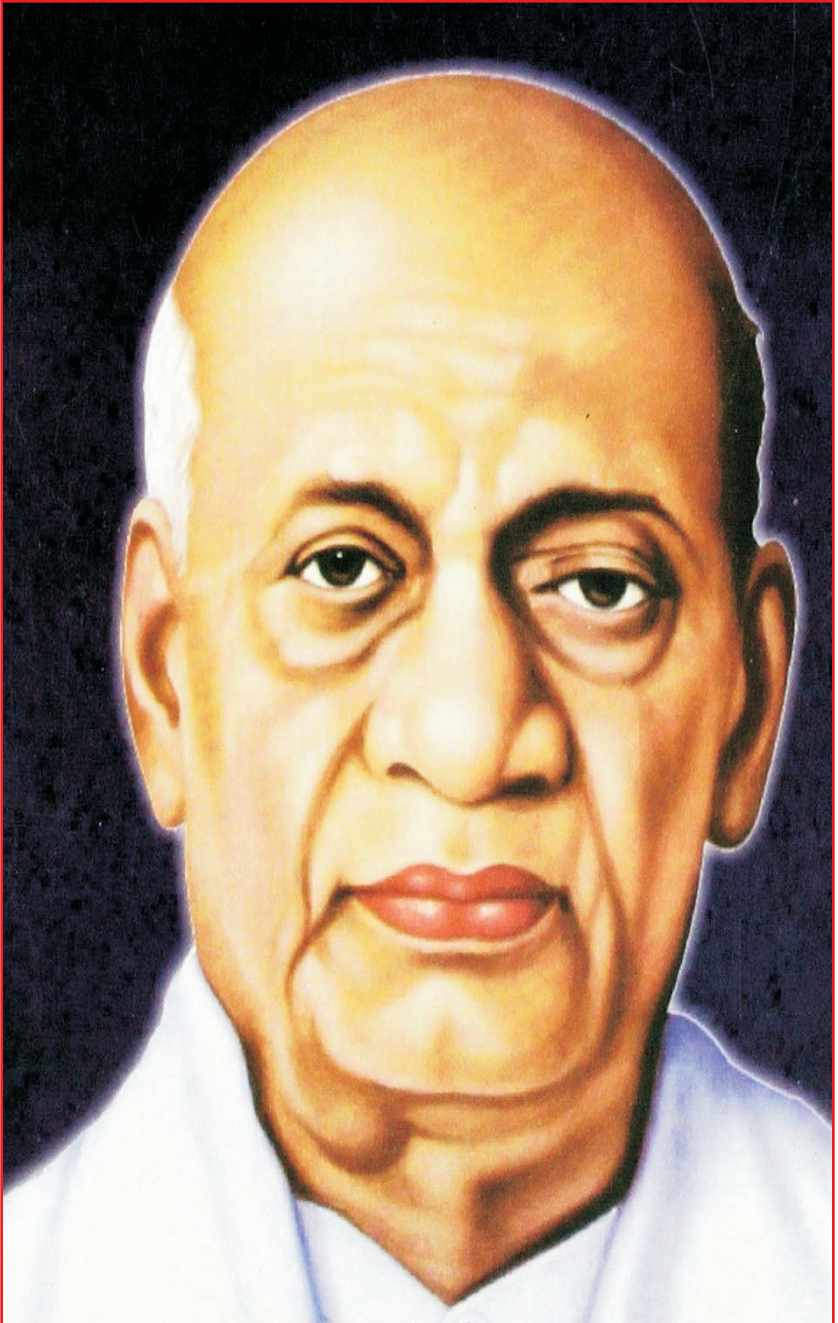
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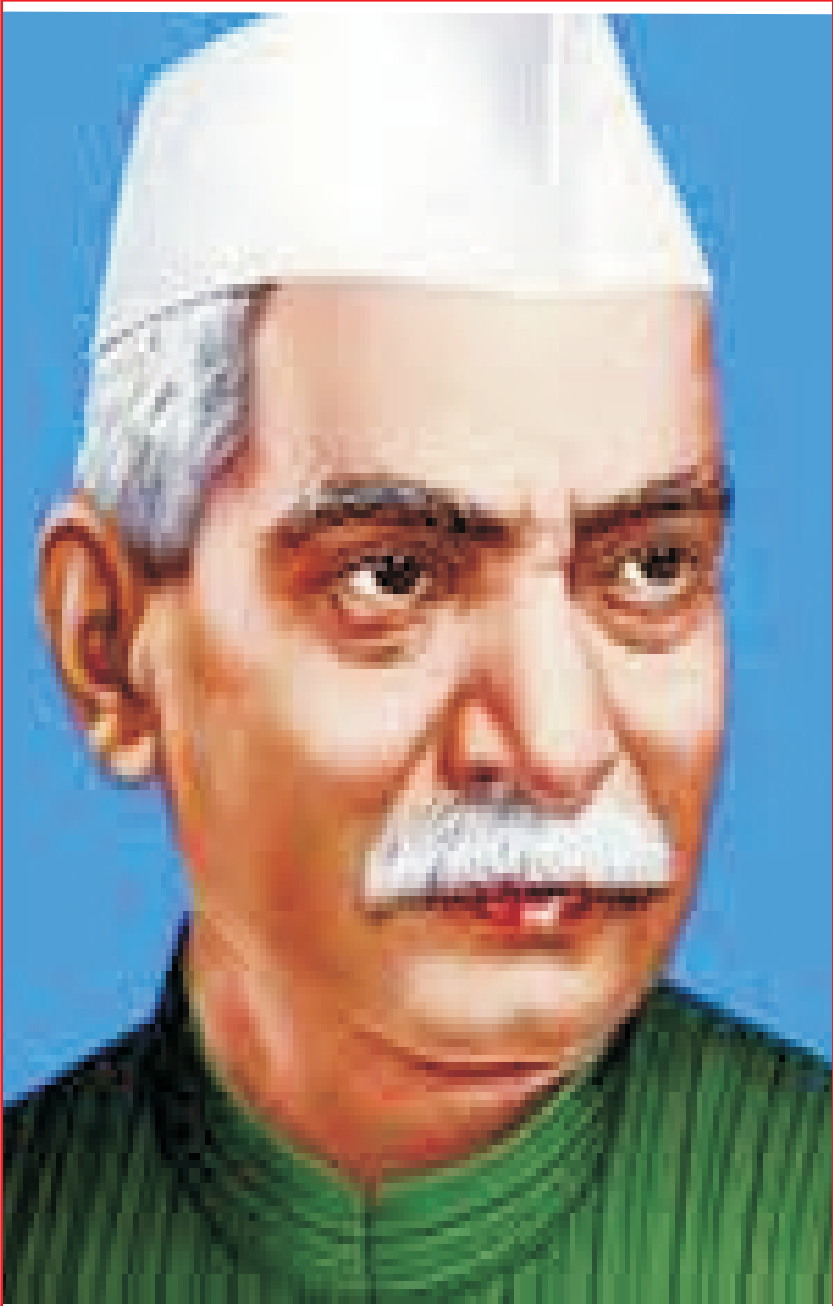
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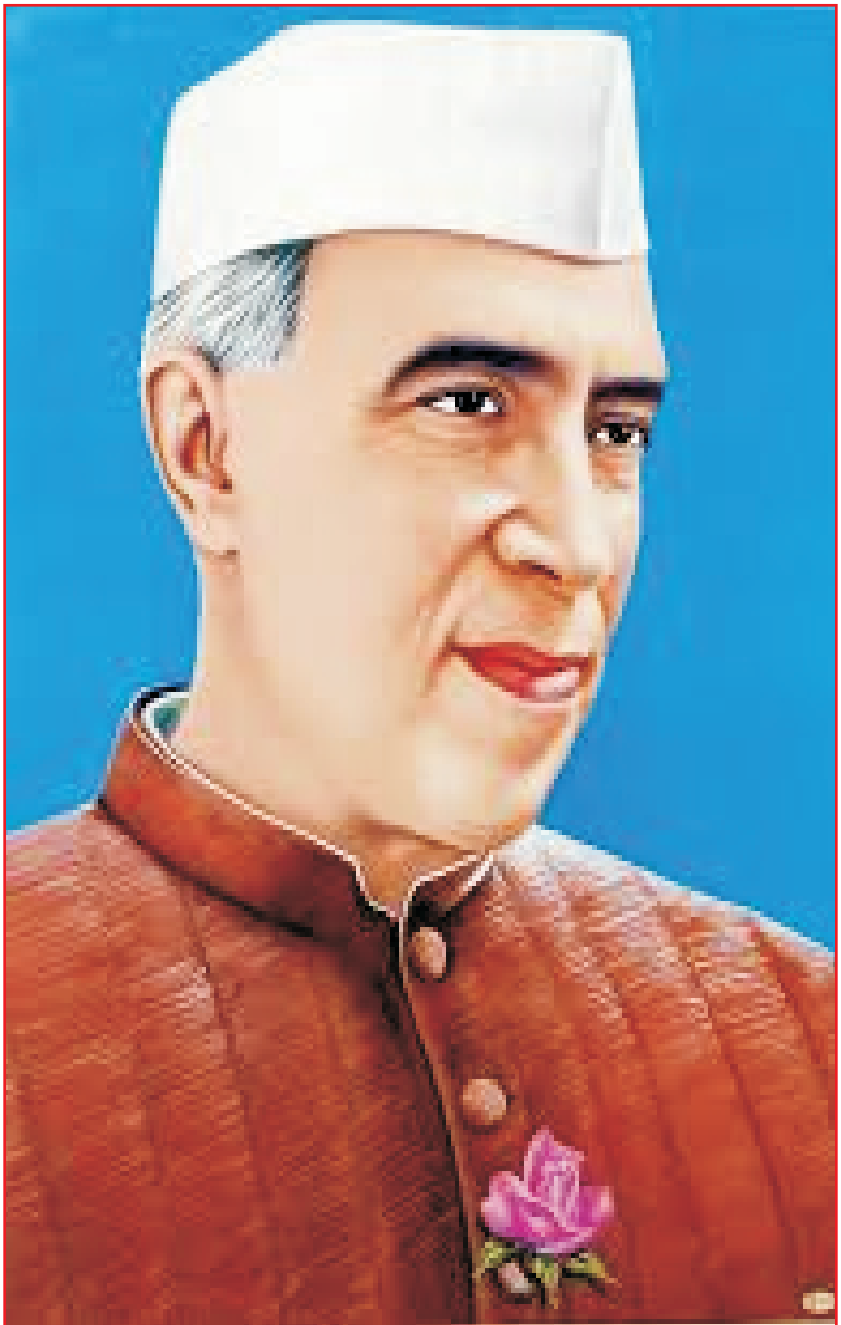
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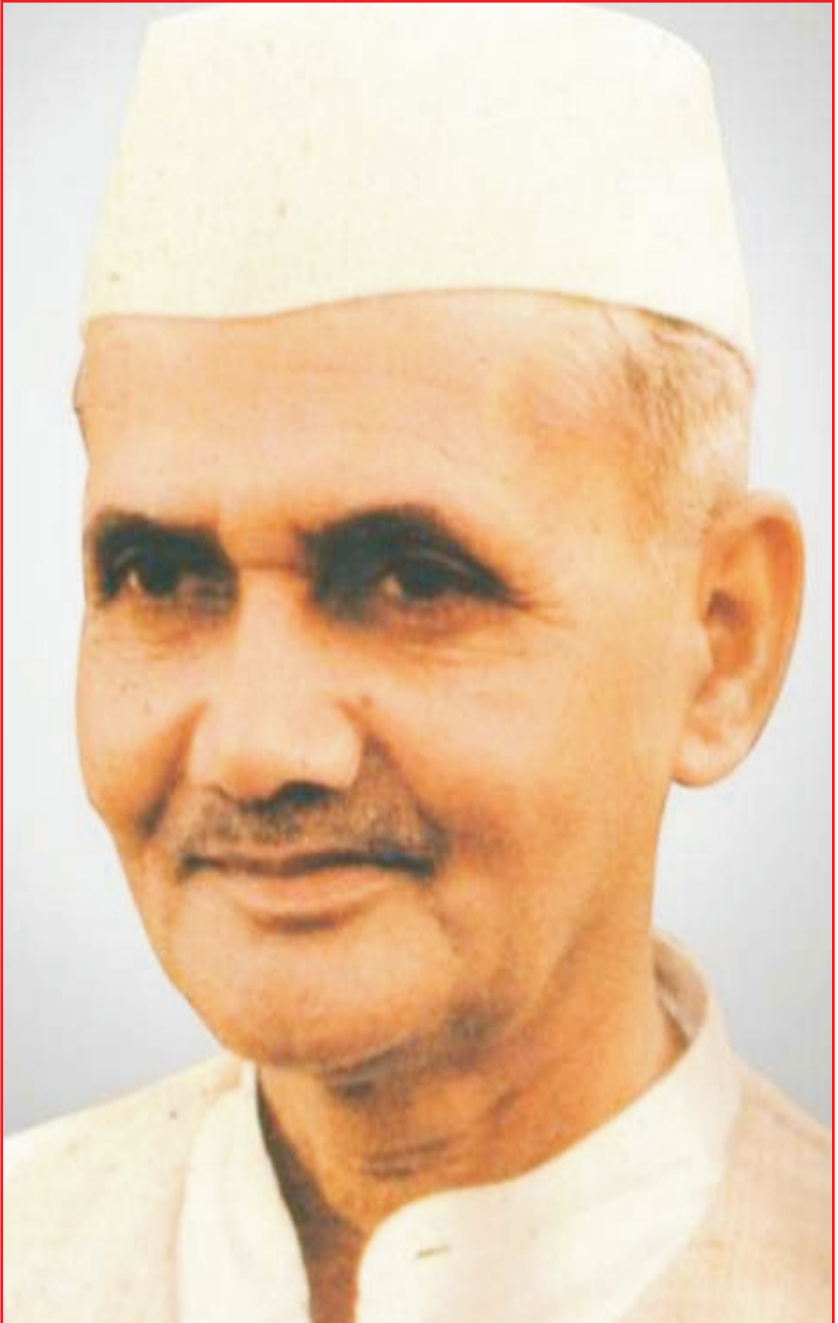
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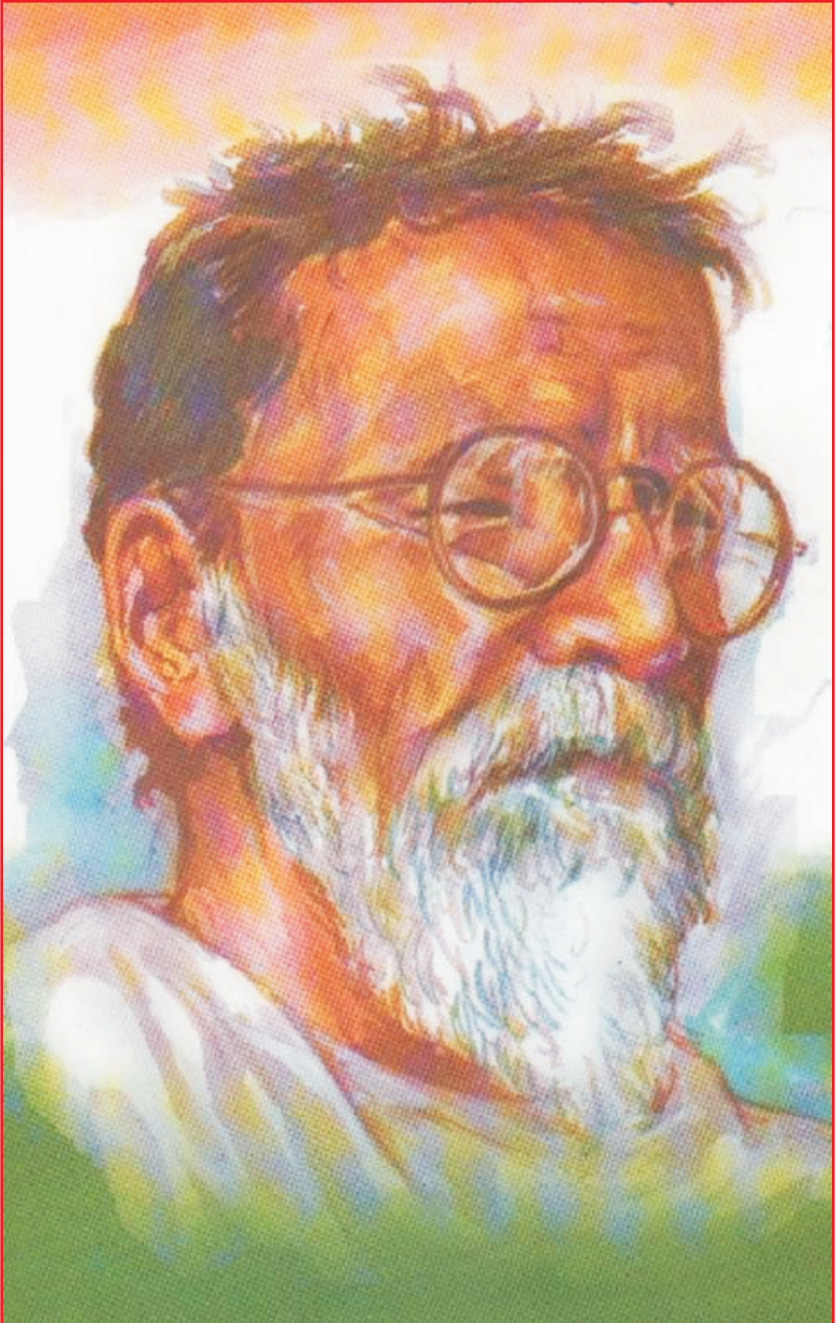
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LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI



VEER SAVARKAR



ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE

1. MAHATMA BUDHDA

Mahatma Buddha is among the greatest religious teachers of the world. He gave the message of truth, peace, humanity and equality. He founded Buddhism. It is followed in China, Japan, India, Burma and the countries of South East Asia. He was born in 563 B.C. at Lumbini, the terai area of Nepal. His father, Suddhodana was the ruler of Kapilvastu and the chief of the Sakya clan (tribe). His mother was Mahamaya. His childhood name was Siddhartha. Buddha was a child with a contemplative (thoughtful) bent of mind. His father always worried that his son might leave home to become a wandering ascetic (Hermit) as the Brahmans had predicted. So he took every care to influence him in favour of a worldly life. He was married at the age of 16 to a beautiful princess, Yashodhara. He lived in luxury and comfort. A son, Rahul, was born to him.

A tuning point in prince siddharatha's life came when he was 29 years old. Driving with his charioteer, one day, he saw an old man, as bent as a gable-roof. He also saw a sick man, suffering and very ill. On another occasion, he saw a dead body. All dying sick man and mysteries of death puzzled and haunted Buddha's thoughts. He felt that life was an imitation (resemblance) cover only. The actual

essence was missing and that he must look for the real. One night he departed from the palace quietly leaving his wife, infant son, and all the royal comforts in search of peace and truth.

He visited many places, met many scholars and saints but was not satisfied. After six years of wandering and meditation, at the age of 35, he got enlightenment at Bodh Gaya. He got transferred into the 'Buddha' or the 'enlightened' one. The pipal tree under which he got enlightenment came to be known as the 'Bodhi Tree'. He delivered his first sermon at Sarnath called 'Turning of the Wheel of Law'. After his first sermon (religious lecture) at Sarnath Buddha continued to wander and to preach for another forty-five years. He passed away peacefully in the presence of his followers during the reign of Ajatsatru of Magadha.

Buddha's teachings form the basic of one of the world's great religions, Buddhism. His teachings were ethical rather than metaphysical (pertaining to spiritualism), psychological and philosophical. His first sermon, called Turning of the Wheel of Law, was the nucleus (centre) of his teachings. Briefly, it incorporated the four Noble Truths. Buddha taught that the root cause of suffering is desire. The essence of Buddha's preaching is based on the Four Noble Truths which are as under—

- (1) Life is fundamentally disappointment and suffering (duhkha) ;
- (2) Suffering is the result of one's desires for

pleasure, power and continued existence (duhkha-samudaya) :

- (3) In order to stop disappointment and suffering, one must stop desiring (duhkha-nirodha) :
- (4) There is path which leads to the cessation (ceasing) of suffering (duhkha-nirodha marga). The way to stop desiring and suffering is by following the Noble Eightfold Path (ashtangika marg). The Eightfold Path is : right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, (religious lecture) right awareness and right concentration.

The consisted of a balanced, moderate life. The Buddha opened the way to salvation, defined as nirvana or liberation from the cycle of rebirth, to all, irrespective of birth. While the doctrine of karma was part of the Buddha's teachings, he did not use it to explain caste and postulated (granted) nirvana at attainable by any person with in understanding of reality and moral preparation.

The Buddha also attacked some religious and social practices of his times. He refused to recognise the religious significance of caste system. Buddhism was a non-theistic religion as no god was postulated and it gave no privileged position to a priestly caste. But he recognised the connection between economic welfare and moral development. According to the Buddha, trying to support crime through punishment

is futile (producing no result).

The Buddha was man of great wisdom and



2. SWAMI MAHAVIRA

Swami Mahavira was an Indian ascetic (hermit) and philosopher. He was the twenty-fourth and the most influential Jain Tirthankara. He laid great emphasis on ahimsa or non-violence, truth and purity in life.

Mahavira was born around 599 BC at Kundgram, near Vaishali. His father was Siddhartha, who was the chief of the Jnatrika clan. His mother was Trishala. Mahavira's original name was Vardhamana. Since his very childhood, he started showing a strong spiritual leaning. At the age of 5, he was sent to gurukul for education. He grew up as a great scholar of Sanskrit. Mahavira married Yashodhra and had a daughter named Priyadarshini. He led a family life upto the age of 30. Despite a royal upbringing and a luxurious life, religious sensibilities drove Mahavira to renounce his worldly ties.

He embarked (began) on a search for the ultimate spiritual truth. He wandered as a naked monk for 12 years. Finally, in the thirteenth year, at the age of 42, he attained enlightenment under a sal tree, by the side of the river Rijupalika, near a town called Jrimbhikagrama. Vardhamana was then transformed into 'Mahavira' or the 'Great Hero' who conquered his ownself, freeing himself from the

bondage of pain and pleasure.

Mahavira spent the rest of his life in preaching the tenets (doctrines) of Jainism. He preached that there is an immortal soul (jiva) within all living beings, which is why it is important to avoid hurting any living creature. The soul is, however, bound by the efforts of karma, which causes it to suffer repeated rebirths. This suffering ceases only when the cycle of rebirth is broken after a person attains moksha or liberation, which is possible through penance (repentance), abstinence (self-denial) and asceticism (Austerity).

To liberate one's self, Mahavira taught the necessity of right faith (samyak-darshana), right knowledge (samyak-gyana), and right conduct (samyak-charitra). At the heart of right conduct for Jains lie the five great vows :

- * Non-violence (Ahimsa) - to cause no harm to any living being :
- * Truthfulness (Satya)-to speak the harmless truth only;
- * Non-stealing (Asteya)-to take nothing not properly given;
- * Chastity (Brahmacharya)-to indulge in no sensual pleasure;
- * Non-possession/Non-attachment (Apri-graha)- to detach completely from people, places, land and material things.

The vows cannot be fully implemented without accepting the philosophy of non-absolutism (Anekantvada) and the theory of relativity (Syadvada, also translated "qualified prediction"). Monks and nuns adhere strictly to these vows, while the laypeople observed them as best they can. Mahavira taught that men and women are spiritual equals and that both may renounce the world in search of moksh or ultimate happiness.

Mahavira taught that a man can save his soul from the contamination (pollution) of matter, by living a life of extreme asceticism and by practising non-violence towards all living creatures. This advocacy of non-violence, encouraged his followers to become strong advocates of vegetarianism. In the course of time, this helped to bring about a virtual end to sacrificial killing in Indian rituals. Mahavira laid supreme emphasis on ahimsa, non-violence, vegetarianism and the acceptance of the five great vows of renunciation. Mahavira also met the Magadha ruler, Bimbisara on a number of occasions and gave sermons to him. Mahavira attracted people from all walks of life, rich and poor, men and women, touchable and untouchable. He organized his followers into a fourfold order: monk (Sadhu), nun (Sadhvi), layman (shravak) and laywoman (Shravika). This order is known as Chaturvidh Jain Sangh.

Mahavira's sermons were preserved orally by his immediate disciples in the Agam Surtras. With the passing of time, many Agam Sutras have been lost, destroyed, or modified. About one thousand years after Mahavir's time the Agam Sutras were recorded on Tadpatris (palm leaf paper used then to form books). Svetambar Jain accept these sutras as authentic teachings while Digamber Jains use them as a reference. A few centuries after Mahavira's nirvana, the Jain religious order (Sangh) grew more and more complex, although these did not affect Mahavira's original doctrines.

According to Jain teachings the universe continually passes through cycles of progress and decline. All things are composed of matter and jiva, or soul. The purpose of living is to purify the soul and release it from matter so that it may reside in bliss. Mahavira advocates for a life of virtue and morality. The three essentials of good life are right faith, right knowledge and right action. These are called three jewels (triratna) and the way to nirvana lies through these three jewels.

Mahavira, also called Jina or conqueror, attained nirvana in 527 BC at Pava in Bihar. Though Rishabhdev, the first Jain Tirthankara, is considered to be the founder of Jainism, it was Mahavira who organised Jainism into its present form.



3. ACHARYA CHANAKYA

Acharya Chanakya is famous in the history of India as a sage like person who by his political shrewdness (sagacity) and expedience (fitness) helped in the establishment of the mighty Mauryan Empire. Compared to Plato and Aristotle for his knowledge about the affairs of the state and to Machievelli for his political acumen (sharpness), his views and theories are documented in the "Arthashastra". This is regarded as a classical treatise comparable to Machievelli's The "Prince".

Actarya Chankaya lived around 300 BC but no specific dates are available. He was born in a poor Brahmin family. His real name was Vishnugupta and he was educated at Taxila University. In ancient times scholars received their education at the universities at Taxila Vikramshila and Nalanda. But graduation from a university did not mean much. They had to prove their knowledge at a king's court through debates.

Acharya Chanakya was wise, clever, foresighted, determined and deeply read in economics, diplomacy and politics and was suffering from superiority complex. Once he went to the court of Dhananada, the Namnda king of Magadha, to contest a seminar. There he felt extremely insulted as he did

not receive proper status and respect from the king. This insult injured the scholar so much that he untied his much nurtured long hair-knot (the symbol of a scholar) and pronounced–

I shall not oil my hair nor shall I tie the top-knot once again until the king is dethroned.

He met the young adventurer Chandragupta Maurya whom he inspired for the throne of Magadha. Acharya Chanakya trained men and women to form an efficient network of spies. He trained a girl named Basanti as a super spy (scout). As planned, Basanti infiltrated (intered) into the palace to become the chief kitchen maid. She served poisoned food to the queen and all the princesses which resulted in their death.

Acharya Chanakya also arranged a girl dancer to entertain the king in his bedroom, with a snake hidden where, an the snake bit the king to death. At the same time, he signalled Chandragupta to march towards Magadha. The planning and strategy worked perfectly. Acharya Chanakya succeeded in destroying the Nanda dynasty. He then oiled his hair and ted up his hair knot.

Acharya Chanakya became the counsellor and adviser to Chanragupta (reigned 321 BC-297 BC) the founder of Mauryan Empire. His "Arthashastra" was a compilation (collection) of everything that had been written in India up to his time on artha (property,

economics or material success). This came to be Chandragupta's guide. It lays down rules of government and also gives a detailed account of the contemporary state administration. Each of its 15 sections deals with a phase of government, which Kautilya sums up as 'science of punishment'. He openly advises the development of an elaborate spy system permeating (spreading) all levels of society and also encourages political and secret assassinations (Killings).

He was called Kautilya because of his mastery of 'Kutniti' or diplomacy. He is known to have had a knowledge of medicine and astrology, and it is believed that he was familiar with elements of Greek and Persian learning. A very famous Sanskrit play, Mudrarakshasa has for its theme one of the diplomatic feats of Acharya Chanakya.

Kautilya is alternately condemned for his ruthlessness and trickery and praised for his sound political wisdom and knowledge of human nature. However, it cannot be denied that it was mainly because of Kautilya that the Mauryan empire under Chandragupta and later under Ashoka became a model of efficient government. Hence he was a great man.



4. KALIDASA

Kalidasa was a great poet and dramatist. He demonstrated the expressive and suggestive heights of which the Sanskrit language is capable and revealed the very essence of an entire civilization. He is probably the greatest Indian writer of any epoch. The six works identified as genuine are the dramas *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* (The Recognition of Sakuntala), *Vikramorvasi* (Urvashi won by valour), and *Malvikagnimitra* (Malavia and Agnimitra), the epic poems *Raghuvamsa* (Dynasty of Raghu), and *Kumarsambhava* (Birth of the War God), and the lyric *Meghaduta* (Cloud messenger).

As with great Indian authors, little is known about Kalidasa, the person or his historical relationships. Kalidasa was celebrated as a major literary figure in the first half of the 7th century. The scholarly consensus (agreement) outside India is that Kalidasa flourished in the time of Chandragupta II (reigned 380-415). A traditional Indian view would have it that, he adorned Vikramaditya's court in the 1st century BC. Although he was especially found of the Gupta capital city, Ujjain, though there is no proof that he was born there.

His poems suggest but nowhere declare that he was a Brahman (priest), liberal yet committed to the orthodox Hindu worldview. His name, literally 'servant of Kali', presumes that he was a Saivite (follower of the God Siva, whose consort was Kali), though occasionally he eulogized (praised) other

gods, notably Vishnu. It is impossible to establish the order in which his works were composed or to show the development therein. His six major works are important. The epic poem Kumarsambhava (Birth of Kumara, the prince, was the war god son of Siva) boldly recounts the divine romance that led to the birth of Siva's son. Another epic poem, the Raghuvamsa, praise the origins and life of Rama. The canots (chapters) devoted to Rama show Kalidasa's brilliant condensation and modulation (adjustment) of the Valmiki Ramayana.

The legend goes that early in his life, Kalidasa was illiterate and a dullard (slow willed person). Some Pandits who had been defeated in discourse by a highly intelligent princess Vidyottma, got her married to Kalidasa in a deceitful manner, out of jealousy. When the reality came out, she felt very disturbed and annoyed. It is said that she strongly admonished (urged) Kalidasa for his ignorance. On getting admonished by his wife, Kalidasa was very much shocked and he then took a vow to become a learned man. So he left his home in this pursuit and returned only after he had become a man of profound learning.

Kalidasa was one of the Navratnas (nine gems or the most accomplished men of their times) at the court of Chandragupta Vikramaditya. His works are judged by the Indian traditions as realization of literary qualities in the Sanskrit language and its supporting culture. Kalidasa has become the archetype (original model) for Sanskrit literary tradition.

As far as literary merits are concerned, Meghaduta is an excellent work. The readers are fascinated by the simplicity of its diction (style), portrayal of nature and delicate expression of love and the agony of love. In drama, his Abhijnana Shakuntalam is the most famous and is usually judged the best Indian literary effort of any period. Both the works had been translated into various languages of the world. Kalidasa's efforts in Kavya (strophic poetry) are of uniform quality and he shows two different subtypes: epic and lyric and the society reflected in Kalidasa's work is that of a courtly aristocracy, sure of its dignity and power.

A Sinhalese tradition says that Kalidasa died in Sri Lanka during the reign of Kumaradasa. Kalidasa has perhaps done more than any other writer to wed the older, Brahmanic religious traditions particularly its ritual concern with Sanskrit to the needs of a new and brilliant secular Hinduism. The fusion (the operation of melting) which epitomizes (condenses) the renaissance (period of revival of Arts-letters) of the Gupta period, did not however, survive its fragile (weak) social base : with the disorders following the collapse of the Gupta Empire, Kalidasa became a memory of perfection that neither Sanskrit nor the Indian aristocracy would know again. He is, undoubtedly the greatest poet of Sanskrit literature.



5. GURU NANAK DEV

Guru Nanak Dev founded Sikhism. He was a great reformer and one of the leading lights of the Bhakti Movement. During Nanka's time, Indian was facing social and spiritual crisis (suspense). At such turbulent (riotous) time. Guru Nanak appeared as a spiritual leader. He pleaded for liberalisation. His message was a great blessing at that time. He showed the right path to the suffering humanity.

Guru Nanak was born in the year 15 April, 1469 A.D. His birth place was Talwandi, 40 miles away from Lahore. The place is now called Nankana Sahib. His father, Mehta Kalu belonged to the Bedi Caste of Hindu Khatri. His father wa employed as a patwari with the local Muslim chief. Rai Bular. His mother was Tripta. Bibi Nanki was his elder sister and his first disciple. Rai Bular became his second disciple.

In his childhood, Guru Nanak was of a contemplative (thankful) and withdrawn nature. He loved spending time with religious people. His parents wanted him to be in some trade. But he was happy in the company of wandering mystics (secrets). Nanak devoted most of his time in meditation.

When Nanak reached nine years of age, the age of confirmation among the Hindus, he refused to partake in that part of the ceremony which included the binding around his neck of a sacred thread, called

a janeu, which he was to wear always as the symbol of his religion to ward off wickedness and evil. According to Nanak's followers, he refused to have the janeu, calling it a meaningless amulet (taviz). This thought was one that became basic to his later protestantism, when he protested that righteousness of inner spirit and mind must be emphasized and that amulets and tribal rituals were worthless vestments (garments).

At the age of eighteen, he got married to Bibi Sulakhni. Two sons named Lakhmi Dass and Siri Chand were born to them. Nanak Dev still had no attachment to worldly life. He got an appointment as a store-keeper to the chief of Sultanpur. During this period a divine revelation (disclosure) came to him. One morning, he went to have a dip in the Bein, a small river near Sultanpur. Then he returned after three days. By then, he had already determined to leave home and travel worldwide. Nanak realised that humanity being all one, and all being the children of God, divisions of creeds are false.

Nanak denounced (informed against to prophesy evil) all forms of ritualism, ceremonialism and superstitions prevalent in the contemporary society. He laid supreme stress on true faith, simplicity and purity of life and religion tolerance. He founded a new religion called Sikhism. In this, he focused on the fundamental and essential precepts (moral instructions) of Hinduism and Islam.

Love and equality were the foundation of Sikhism. To propagate his religious views and

understanding. Nanak travelled to various places in India. He also went to the remote Himalayas, Afganistan, Iran, Baghdad and Mecca. In some places which he had visited, Gurudwaras have been built in his memory. One Gurudwara in Kabul, one at Askara, nine miles from Kabul, and one at Hassan Abdal, near Taxila were built. The Gurudwara at Hassan Abdal is now in Pakistan. It is called the Punja Sahib.

On his many journeys, he was accompanied by a Muslim minstrel (musician) who sang his rabab, the hymns of 'Divine devotion'. Nanak made four Udisis. During his course of journeys, he composed most of his hymns and Shabads (songs). The voluminous compositions of Guru Nanak are enshrined in the Gurugranth Sahib. After travelling extensively for about 25 years, at the age of about 52, Nanak settled at Kartarpur. There he rejoined his family. He continued to preach from there. He breathed his last on 22 September, 1539 at the aged of 71 years and merged with eternity (being enternal).

Guru Nanak preached to man his duty towards God, to his brethren and to his own self. He condemned the caste system. He was a strong advocate of the empowerment of women. He said, "It is from women that we are conceived and it is from her that we are born". He was against ascetic (recluse) isolation. He said, his followers could achieve enlightenment while still living in the house or leading a householder's life. Guru Nanak laid special emphasis on three values : Nam, Krit and

Wand. The meaning is, meditation upon God; honest labour; and the sharing of one's possessions with others.

The earliest biographies of Guru Nanak Dev are popularly known as Janam Sakhis. The Shri Gurugranth Sahib is the holy book of the Sikhs. The first words in the Shrigurugranth Sahib are attributed to Nanak, ek omkar or God is one. The text of Shrigurugranth Sahib begins with the first morning prayer known as 'Japji'. It is termed as the key to Sikh Scripture (religious book) and contains the fundamentals of the religion. 'Japji' is preceded by 'Mul Mantar' (the Basic Formula). This is the most important part of the teachings of the Sikh religion. Nanak's uncompromising monotherism (oneness of God) is clear in his religious vocabulary which is drawn from both the Sanskrit and Arabic traditions i.e. from both Hindu and Muslim religions.

He gave expression to his mission by saying-

There is no Muslim and no Hindu. There is but one God who rules the earth, the heavens, and the entire universe, and I have been chosen Guru (teacher) to carry His message to all men.

Thus did he found the religion of Sikhism as a protestant attempt to fuse Hinduism and Islam. The word, Sikh, in Hindu means "disciple."

Fix the attention on God. Repeat His name at every inspiration and expiration. And thy soul shall be absorbed in the light of God.

Hence it is stated that main teachings of Guru Nanak Dev are as under –

1. Guru Nanak laid special emphasis on three values : Nam, Krit and Wand i.e. meditation upon God, honest labour and the sharing on one's possessions with others.
2. God is Formless and He is to be found within through the grace of the Guru – the spiritual teacher.
3. People should not renounce the world and go to forests or secluded mountains to realise God. Just as a lotus grows in water and yet remains out of it, similarly a man should lead a worldly life yet he should be above all worldly attachments.
4. God's love can be realised only through faith, sincere, devotion, love, righteous life, and above all turning oneself to the God's eternal word.
5. A devotee needs a spiritual teacher or Guru to help him on the spiritual journey.
6. Fanaticism and narrowness of all kinds, engendering hate for any section of humanity, is irreligious.



6. TULSIDAS

India is rightly known as the land of saints and warriors. Even Indian warriors at least most of them, were saints at heart. Thus, as pointed out by Swami Vivekananda, India is a land of spirituality.

Tulsidas was one of the greatest saints of India. He lived in a period when the Bhakti Movement was in full swing. He was born in 1540 at Banda in Uttar Pradesh.

On his birth, the astrologers declared that the child was a scourge (divine evil) and would bring misfortune to his parents. Hence he was abandoned by them and he actually lost them when he was child. Though child's misfortune as regards his parents might be deemed to have been predicted accurately, his own destiny was perhaps beyond the ken (knowledge) of astrologers. Hence, they could not predict that he would become one of the greatest men in history. As far as the current circumstances were concerned. Tulsidas was actually in most straitened (difficult) circumstances. He was a discarded child and as such penniless and friendless. There was nobody to support and help him.

He grew up somehow, mostly begging and working hard in fields. The only target before him at that tender age was to exist some how, and even that minimum requirement was not easy to be fulfilled. All the time death stared him in the face. Curious

though it may seem to all of us who are habituated to leading a life of cosiness, luxury and surfeit (overfeed) that this little child or young boy did not even know how to beg, not to speak of having been endowed with any other inborn quality or acquired art of skill. This becomes vivid (clear) when we learn that he was considered so unlucky even by the beggars that they would not let him accompany them or sit near them while begging outside a temple.

Even if, while living in this scientific age, we do not believe in miracles (transformation), we have to admit that they do take place, at least in the metamorphosis (change) of human personalities and fates, and this is what happened with Tulsidas by whatever turn of events (knowledge).

At that time, a saint Guru Narhari Das, was preaching the worship of Lord Rama to people with a spirit of great devotion and dedication. Tulsidas came into contact with him, and just as in modern times Vivekananda's life was changed with just one meeting with his guru Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Tulsidas's life was no longer the same as it was a moment earlier.

There was, however, a little difference between the two happenings. Tulsidas was perhaps not totally transformed. He needed another dose of spiritualism and that a much stronger one and again from a much lesser person. It was, in reality, from Ratnavali, the girl he married.

Psychologically studying, we know that Tulsidas was a lonely person and so he had been all his life. He hadn't been lucky enough to have the love and affection of his parents even friends of nominal stature (natural height at the body). Hence, his loneliness was stark (strong) and his feeling of it even stronger.

The net result of the state in which Tulsidas was living was that he actually got enamoured (inspired with love) of Ratnavali such that he couldn't live for a moment without her company. This had a devastating effect on his personality, which was now virtually haunted by uxoriousness (excessively fondness of one's wife).

When once Ratnavali had gone to her parents house and Tulsidas followed her, she said to him tauntingly, "you have come after me recklessly (carelessly). Had you loved and worshipped Lord Rama with the same spirit of devotion, you would have been able to realize him by now."

Hearing these words from an ordinary girl as Ratnavali was, Tulsidas felt ashamed of his pursuit of sensual love and lust. Some say that he had even climbed up to the house of his wife at midnight with the help of a snake, taking it for a rope or using it as such. In any case, his eyes were opened and he was an entirely changed young man, never to revert to any carnal (sexual) desires in life henceforward. Now, his only pursuit and hobby was love and worship of Rama.

Rama now became the very breath of his life and without his name he could not live. It became the aim of his life to love Rama, worship Rama, sing and write of Rama. He worked hard to write the life and praises of Lord Rama of Ayodhya who was now the omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent God for him. If Surdas and Mira Bai are known for their undying love for Lord Krishna, Tulsidas is remembered for his great devotion to Lord Rama, so much so that later when he wrote some work in praise of Lord Krishna, he could not help giving him bow and arrow as Rama had.

Tulsidas wrote about Rama with matchless devotion and succeeded in producing a matchless work, "Ramcharitmanas" which is loved, read and worshiped in all Hindu homes all over the world with utmost reverence. He completed this great epic within 2 years 7 months and 26 days which have considered the best and immortal epic of Hindi literature. It is said that after the completion of this immortal monuments work even the great rulers of the period touched his feet. His other works are "Kavitawali", "Geetawali", "Vinayapatrika", etc. His contribution to the Indian religious and spiritual heritage is immense and immortal. Moreover, his works are all perfect pieces of literature and their contribution from purely literary angle is matchless.

Tulsidas also felt the need of certain norms to be adopted in life. That is why in Ramcharitmanas, he

presents ideals characters before society – Maryada Puroshottam Rama as the ideal son : Lakshman as the ideal brother; Sita as the ideal wife and Hanuman as the ideal follower.

Tulsidas was a religious leader of the Hindus. He passed away in 1623 as Asighat in Varanasi. His work is read and recited throughout the Hindu belt with great reverence and faith.

It is a fact that greatness of a person is judged by his great and good deeds and not by pelf, power and position. That is way V.A. Smith has written in his world famous book "Akbar the great".

**Tulsidas was the greatest man of his age.
He was greater than "Akbar the king".**



7. MAHARISHI DAYANAND

Maharishi Dayanand the founder of Arya Samaj, was born in a Brahmin family at village Tankara in Gujarat on February 12, 1824. In his childhood, he was known as Moolshankar. His father, Karsanji Trived, was a Tehsildar in Morbi, Kathiawar in Gujrat. He was raised in the orthodox Hindu tradition but soon found himself unsatisfied with the old teaching and practices. At a very young age, he lost faith in idol worship, when on Shivaratri night, he saw mice running over the idol of Shiva. This greatly shocked him and he could not reconcile with the idea of an omnipotent living God, with this idol, which allowed mice to run over his body. Thus, in a flash, the maladies (diseases) which afflicted Hinduism in those days, appeared before him. Hindu religion should be freed from superstitions, dogmas (principles), excess of ritualism and a new social order should be striven for, which would be free from the shackles (coupling links) of casteism, idolatry and other such ills. That is why Sardar Patel said–

The greatest contribution of Swami Dayanand was that he saved the country from falling deeper into the morrass (confusion) of helplessness. He actually loved the foundation of Indian freedom.

While his father was contemplating his marriage, Moolshankar left his home IN 1845 and joined the Saraswati order of ascetics. For the next 15 years, he travelled all over India as a sanyasi in search of a religious truth. During these travels, he came in contact with scholars like Lala Bhagat, Brahmananda, Parmananda Parmahansa and Swami Virjananda. He held numerous discourses (lectures) with these scholars, about the Vedanta Philosophy and finally became the disciple of Swami Virjananda. He also studied about the secrets of Yoga Vidya. In his religious teachings, he accepted the old doctrine of karma and transmigration (Rebirth), but he developed a highly sophisticated monistic (oneness of God) philosophy, which stressed the ideals of self perfection and ethical universalism. Dayanand concluded that, current religious beliefs and social institutions were hopelessly corrupt. With this conviction, he began to preach an aggressive reforming doctrine which urged a return to the ancient Vedic tradition.

Dayanand established the Arya Samaj on April 10, 1875 at Bombay. The Arya Samaj was an outcome of the reaction to Western influences. Swami Dayanand rejected western ideas and sought to revive the ancient religion of the Aryans. He aimed at creating a classless society and gave the call back to the Vedas. He gave his own interpretation

(explanation) of the Vedas. He disregarded the authority of the later Hindu scriptures like the Puranas and described them as the work of lesser men, and responsible for the evil practices of idol worship and other superstitious beliefs in Hindu religion. Dayanand condemned idol worship. While his commitments seemed basically 'fundamentalist' and somewhat orthodox, in fact, he advocate radical reforms. He decried (condamned) untouchability and casteism, as not sanctioned by the Vedas. He condemned child marriage. He advocated widow remarriage and a high status for women in society.

He translated one and half of the Vedas in Hindi. His teachings on religious and social issues are contained in his works "Satyarth Prakash" and "Rig Vedadi Bhashya Bhumika". The contribution of Swami Dayanand and his followers to education in modern India, is unparalleled, Arya Samaj, founded by Dayanand, established a large number of educational institutions, like Gurukuls, Kanya Gurukuls and D.A.V. (Dayanand Anglo Vaidic) Schools and Colleges, specially in northern India which did a commendable (deserving praise) and job of imparting education to males and females. Arya Samaj made remarkable contribution to reform Hindu religion and Indian society, by eliminating (expelling) the prevailing evils. It started the Shudhi

movement to convert non-Hindus to Hinduism. It also contributed to the growth of enlightenment and political consciousness through its educational activities.

His outspoken criticism of Hindu tradition and his reforming interests, provoked the hatred of many orthodox and conservative circles. Numerous attempts were made on his life, and he was finally poisoned in 1883 and 30th October 1883 at Ajmer in Rajasthan. Dayanand wanted to collect the good points from all religions and create a divine religion. His emphasis on self-reliance made some of the Arya Samajist institutions, almost a challenge to British authority. But the chief achievement of Dayanand was in imparting in his followers a passion for reforms. Dayanand's personality and purifying reforms earned him the epithet (Special title) Martin Luther of India.

Ten principles of Arya Samaj which are called the Bible of Arya Samaj are as under –

1. God is the primary source of all knowledge.
2. God alone is worthy of worship.
3. The Vedas are the books of true knowledge.
4. An Arya should always accept the truth and abandon untruth.
5. All actions must conform to dharma.

6. Promotion of material, social and spiritual well being of the world.
7. All persons should be treated with love and justice.
8. Ignorance should be dispelled (dispersed) and knowledge increased.
9. Everybody should consider his own progress to depend on the uplift of all others.
10. Social well being of mankind should be placed above the individual's well-being.



8. SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

All the strength and succor (help) you want is within yourselves. Therefore make your own future. Vol -II P. 225

Swami Vivekananda was a great social reformer and spiritual leader. He preached about the oneness or unity of all religions. During the freedom movement, he raised his voice against the existing social evils in Indian society. He generated intense patriotism and paved the way for the Swadesi movement.

His original name was Narendra Nath Dutta and he was born on 12 January, 1863 in Kolkata). Like Gandhiji and Shivaji and even Mother Teresa, it was his mother who had the earliest and perhaps the greatest influence on him in his life.

Before becoming a monk, he had got much drilling in several fields. For instance, he had got a very good education, according to the standards of those times. Then he had got himself groomed (took part) in various youthful activities such as riding, swimming, wrestling, boxing, etc. He was a great lover of music besides sports.

Even as a young, boisterous (stormy) boy, he had streaks (strips) of love for certain things, which foretold about the things to come to him and about him. Such were his love for English poetry, that of romantic poets of Nature like Wordsworth and Shelley and for philosophers like Herbert Spencer

and John Stuart Mill. Thus his mental make-up had the formative elements of both head and heart, emotion and intellect in equal balance and this made him perhaps after the Buddha, the greatest rationalist thinker of India, if not of the world, who drew immense admiration ever from stalwarts (braves) like Tagore.

The story of his first meeting with his Guru Ramakrishna Paramhans is well known. When he went to his master, he put the straight question. "Have you seen God, sir?" Straight came the answer, "Yes, I have an much as I see you now." Young Vivekananda perhaps never expected such an answer and even if we do not need to lay much stress on the effect on Vivekananda of the miraculous (magical) touch of his body by the great saint, we can realize the influence of such a forthright reply and the fact that the young Vivekananda instantaneously (in a moment) began to see the whole world in a new light where every object living or non-living seemed to be bathed in divine glamour (magic), should be no wonder to us.

New, the young Narendra Nath Dutta was no more the same young man. He was a monk, named Vivekananda and his aim onwards was to serve his motherland and the whole world, particularly the poorest sections of society. He was to spread the messages of the ancient Indian philosophy of the Vedanta and be a true heir to the Advaita of Shankaracharya with the anti-superstious mind of

the Buddha. Accordingly, he set out with a band of monks to deliver his great mentor's (trustworthy) message in all corners of the world.

The great opportunity for swami Vivekananda was not far to seek. In 1893, the great Parliament of Religions was going to be held in Chicago and the great Swami fully availed himself of this opportunity. He sailed from Mumbai on May 31, 1893 to be at the venue (place) in time.

When he spoke about Hinduism and Universalism in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago on September 11, 1893. He projected the Indian spirit of universality and broadmindedness. The audience was overwhelmed when Vivekananda said,

All rivers and rivulets flow down into the ocean by losing their entire nature and character. Similarly, all ideologies of different religions get finally lost in the greatness of God.

Vivekananda's speech hit the headlines of all the morning dailies. The New York Herald wrote :

Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation.

Thereafter, this wandering monk visited various parts of Europe and America as a cultural ambassador of his country. He lectured throughout the United States and England, making converts to

the Vedanta movement. Vivekananda stayed in America for some time and founded Vedanta societies.

As an aftermath many local priests who claimed to be great spiritualists and almost divine figures, lost their ground and grew jealous of Swamiji. They fabricated (constructed) several rumours about him and tried their best to spread them.

However, Swami Vivekananda was not just a speaker. He practised what he preached. When his disciples advised him to retaliate (revenge) against the priests vilification (defaming) of him, he calmly said, "Truth has the inherent power to uphold and prove itself." Today, we know that truth has prevailed and Swami Vivekananda is held in high esteem all over the world while those crafty priests who tried to nail him have gone into the dustbin of history.

It was the time when the westerners were trying to denigrate (to blacken a man as character) the Indian culture and civilization, and were busy trying to bring about a revulsion against the Indian heritage among the native population. Vivekananda probably understood this game, and without ever mentioning this mischief and without being a political leader, he raised his forceful voice arousing them of the Indian masses and reminding ancient Indian the great resilient (relounding) philosophy and culture which still had the potentiality to overwhelm the world.

There was convincing power in his words and his voice could not be ignored and all and sundry were

influenced by it. He was a great lover of the poor and wanted their upliftment in right earnest. He also expressed his spiritual experiences through his poems in English. He believed in real experience and realization rather than empty knowledge. He was master of Raj Yoga and in this respect his findings are invincible.

Vivekananda, along with some of his western followers, founded the Ramakrishna Mission on 1st May 1897. This was founded at the monastery of Belur Math on the river Ganges, near Kolkata. The Mission rendered valuable services to the propagation of Indian culture all over the world. The followers of the Ramakrishna Mission acknowledge the utility of idol worship unlike the Arya Samajists. However, like Arya Samajists, they give more importance to the spiritual aspect, rather than the rituals of worship.

Vivekananda wrote the famous Jnana-yoga, Bhakti-yoga, Karma-yoga and Raja-yoga on hindu philosophy. His contributions to Indian society as a social reformer are enormous (great). He dedicated his life to stop child marriage and eliminate illiteracy. He was also determined to spread education among women, backward and lower castes. As a spiritual leader, he highlighted the weaknesses of the Hindu religion and society. Vivekananda inspired people to

give up superstitions, orthodoxy and evil social practices.

He had been straining too hard even when he was suffering from 31 various diseases. Overwork told upon his health and death overtook him on 4th July, 1902 in Belur Monastery at the aged of 40. His swan song was–

Man should do his duty like a worm from day to day.



9. BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

IF the march of the Indian Independence Movement is studied dispassionately, the name of Bal Gangadhar Tilak will emerge at the top or next only to Gandhiji. In certain respects, Tilak was the progenitor (ancestor) of Gandhiji's views on Swaraj even though many consider Gopal Krishan Gokhale to be the real mentor (adviser) of Gandhiji. It was perhaps because where as Tilak belonged to the extremist group, Gandhiji, in spite of his boundless capacity to arouse the masses in his own way, was basically a passivist like Mr. Gokhale who believed in non-violence and peaceful ways for the attainment of freedom.

Tilak was the real father of Indian nationalism and political unrest, a fact which cannot be denied in view of his undying patriotic fervour (passion), which took him to address the Indian masses straightaway with his pen as much as with his voice. His undying words, "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it," will keep ringing in the heart of every Indian forever.

He was born at Ratnagiri on July 23, 1856. Ratnagiri lies on the Konkan coasts. He belonged to a Brahman family, which claimed its connection with the maratha rulers. The members of the Brahmin sect to which he belonged were strictly orthodox in their living style. This had its positive effects on Gangadhar and made him by nature a strict

disciplinarian who would not tolerate any deviation (error) from the right and righteous path.

Though the Brahmin sect to which he belonged once had some connection with the Maratha rulers, now it was not the same thing for the family in which he was born, his father being an ordinary school teacher drawing a meagre (small) salary even though, later, he rose to be an inspector of primary schools.

Tilak was very fortunate in having a grounding of Sanskrit and mathematics from his father who was very fond of these subjects and later when Tilak wrote his famous book "Gita Rahasya" when he was in jail and when he even advocated his theory of the Aryans actually belonging to the North Pole, basing his theory on some Vedic description and calculation, it should not be a matter of surprise for us.

Like Mahatma Gandhi, he was married at an early age when he had just passed his matriculation Examination at the age of sixteen. After doing his matriculation from Poona High School, he joined the Deccan College, Poona, for higher studies. After doing graduation in 1877, he took the degree of law in 1879.

In those days, there were not many highly educated young men in India and if Tilak wanted, he could easily join some service. But, he was highly patriotic at heart and he wanted to do something really good and great for his motherland. The fire of love for the country was burning brightly in his heart

and he was determined to take full advantage of his capacity and circumstances, when, fortunately, he had some very good and like-minded friends including Agarkas and Chiplunkar.

He believed that it was only education, which could bring about an awakening among India masses. Hence, he with the active help of his friends opened the new English School at Poona. He really believed that the knowledge of English was essential for the Indians to know the temperament, way and living styles of the western people and for attaining modern knowledge in various branches of study. Keeping in view his and his friends sincerity of purpose and their being imbued (dyed) with the spirit of dedication and devotion, it should be no surprise to us that the venture proved a great success when it got an overwhelming response from the common people who flocked in large numbers to join it. Moreover, endless devotion, self-sacrifice were the models of the teaching staff.

The main aim of Tilak was to arouse the masses and besides laying stress on education, he wanted to reach the masses through written word also. For this, he started two weeklies one in English and the other in Marathi. Both started their publication in 1881: The English weekly was named "Maratha" and the weekly in Marathi was captained "Kesari." The word Kesari means "lion". Like the New English School, the popularity of these weeklies was tremendous and Tilak was unquestionably successful in his aim. In

1885, he established the Deccan Education Society.

Tilak was a nationalist to the core. He could not tolerate any government interference in the Indian people's social life and accordingly, he opposed tooth and nail the "Age of Consent Bill". He was very eager to instil (to infuse gradually) into the minds of the Indian people genuine love for the country. He wanted them to be proud of their cultural heritage. He wanted to bring before them the revival of the glorious past of India in the bygone days. On the religious or mythical plane, he gave a reorientation to the Ganapati festival and on the heroic historical Indian plane, he started the Shivaji festival to enable people to be able to recall the achievements and exploits of the great Indian hero Chhatrapati Shivaji.

Tilak was an extremist who could not tolerate any injustice and hence he opposed with full might the partition of Bengal in 1905 which had drawn loud protests from all quarters in India. The occasion proved an opportune moment to arouse the Indian masses against the British rule and like Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal in their respective regions took full advantage of the movement and denounced (informed against evil prophesy) the partition of Bengal vehemently (strongly).

Tilak's activities were being monitored by the British rulers and they considered them to be nefarious (wicked). The result was that Tilak was arrested and sent to Mandalay in Burma to serve a term of six years rigorous imprisonment. It was there

in jail that he wrote his celebrated "Gita Rahasya". Tilak's imprisonment was not taken lying down by the Indian masses and there were riots at various places which continued for days but were finally quelled (crushed).

Two of the dearest words to Tilak were "Swaraj" and "Swadeshi". In this respect, he was a forerunner of Ghandiji and other leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, when the former in particular, laid stress on Khadi and the spinning wheel. Tilak was quite forthright and fearless in expressing his demand for Swaraj. Accordingly, as he returned from Mandalay after completing his jail term, he started the Home Rule Movement. The Home Rule League played an important role in India's Independence Movement and he visited England in 1918 as a delegate of this League.

It was on August 1, 1920 that he breathed his last amidst an atmosphere when his accomplishments as a great Indian statesman, educator and journalist were fully recognized and reciprocated (interchanged) by the masses. Lokmanya, as he is called by his countrymen, will be remembered by them for generations to come for his selfless and ceaseless work for their freedom and upliftment. Indeed, his entire life was a saga (history) of sufferings and sacrifices made for the Indian people.



10. GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE

Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Mahatma Gandhi's political guru, was born on Mya 9, 1866 at Kotluk in Ratnagiri district in the Kolhapur State of Bombay Presidency. He belonged to a Maratha Brahmin family. In 1884, he graduated from Elphinstone College, Bombay. His academic career was brilliant. He was hardworking and his style of writing and speech was forceful. Gokhale's brother wanted him to go to England and complete for the ICS, but he chose the humbler profession of teaching.

Gokhale was a follower of Mahadev Govind Randad. He joined the Deccan Education Society founded by Ranade, and soon became its active member. He served the Society in various capacities. He became the principal of Fergusson College, Poona and with the missionary spirit worked on a nominal salary of Rs. 70 per month for about 20 years. he also edited the quarterly journal, Poona Sarvajanik Sabha. He was an eminent educationist and did much for the intellectual uplift of the people.

Gokhale became the member of the congress in 1889. He had immense faith in British liberalism. He believed in harmonious cooperation of India with England. To Gokhale, the goal of the Congress was to attain self-government of the type prevailing in other

British colonies. Petitions appeals for justice and passive resistance were Gokhale's methods of constitutional agitation. He explained constitutional agitation thus, the field of the constitutional agitation was a very wide one

Three things were excluded-rebellion, aiding or abetting (assisting) a foreign invasion, and resort to crime. Roughly speaking, barring these things all else was constitutional.

He was a strong believer in the policy of moderation and reasonableness. In his political philosophy, he was a true liberal. He firmly believed that the regeneration of the country could not be achieved 'amid a hurricane (vailent storm) of political excitement.' He believed in the purity of aims and of actions. Gokhale supported the indianisation of civil services, reduction in salt duty and spread of education in advanced technology, administration and health.

In 1902, Gokhale was elected to the Bomaby Legislative Council and later to the Imperial Legislative Council. Gokhale made his mark as an eloquent (expressive) speaker who could say the hardest things in the gentlest language. He relied primarily upon detailed knowledge and the careful, cool and logical (collecting), marshalling and analysis of data. His budget speeches in the

Legislative Council were authoritative commentaries on the prevailing economic conditions.

He exposed the hollowness of the British pretensions (claims) in the matter of appointment of Indians to higher services on the floor of the House. In 1905, Gokhale presided over the Banaras session of the Indian National congress. He opposed the Partition of Bengal, and in 1906 went to England to persuade English politicians not to give effect to it. He criticized the bureaucracy for its harshness towards people and their down-right suppression. He was greatly instrumental in the formulation of the Minto-Morely Reforms of 1909. He strongly stressed the need of separation of executive from the judiciary. He championed (fought) the cause of women education. In 1910, Gokhale was again elected to the Imperial Legislative Council.

Gokhale also took up the cause of impoverished Indians living in South Africa. He supported their agitation in South Africa against the humiliating restraints imposed upon them. This interest in the South African problem brought him into close contact with Gandhi. As the member of the Imperial Legislative council, he moved resolution for reduction in excise duty, relief to the bonded labour in Natal (South Africa), revival of the village Panchayat and other local bodies as the effective units of self-government at the grass-root level.

Gokhale opposed the ill-treatment of untoucha-

bles, or low-caste Hindus. His deep concern with social reform led him to found, the Servants of India Society in 1905. Its aim was to train workers for the service of the people. Its members took vows of poverty and lifelong service to the underprivileged. Gokhale wrote in the preamble to the constitution of the Society : A sufficient number of our countrymen must now come forward to devote themselves to the cause in the spirit in which religious work is undertaken. Public life must be spiritualised. Love of the country must so fill the heart that all else shall appear as of little movement by its side.

Gokhale played the difficult role of an intermediary between the rulers and the ruled. He interpreted popular aspirations to the British rulers and the Government's difficulties to the congress. This, on occasions, made him unpopular with both. The Extremists dubbed (smothered) him a 'faint-hearted Moderate' and the government 'a seditionist in disguise'. He advocated moderate and constitutional methods of agitation and gradual reforms. He did not like that people should resort to violence to achieve political objectives. That is why he was prepared to support the government on the question of enactment of India Press Act of 1910 which sought to stop incitement to violence through the Press. Hoyland has rightly said about Gokhale-

He was a great master of the possible, a

constructive statesman of the first rank, a bringer together of East and West in the common service of the needy; above all an idealist, a foreseer, a prophet of new era of inter-racial goodwill and co-operation. He knew how to play on the national lyre without offending the official ear.

Lord Morley once remarked that Gokhale had a politician's head and a sense of executive responsibility. Gokhale played a significant role in India's freedom movement. He led the moderate nationalists in the early years of the Indian independence movement. His contribution may be regarded as the legacy of spartanization of public life, unity of end and means, secularism, a deep sense of national mission, faith in peace, justice, conciliation (pacification) and progress. Nothing can better sum up the contribution of Gokhale than to say, 'Gandhian legacy in part belongs to Gokhale'. Gokhale than to say, 'Gandhian legacy in part belongs to Gokhale than to say, 'Gandhian legacy in part belongs to Gokhale'. Gokhale died in February, 1915. Bal Gangadhar Tilak who was an extremist and ridiculed Gokhale for his moderate views, paid great tribute to him at his funeral. He said—

This diamond of India, this jewel of Maharashtra, this prince of workers, is taking eternal rest on the funeral ground.

**Look at him and try to emulate (Rival) him.
Like a triumphant hero he is passing after
having made his name immortal.**

The words of John Milton are applicable to him—

**Hail, holy lights, offspring of Heaven first born
Or of th'Eternal coeternal beam**

May I express thee unblamed?

Since God in light,

And never but in unapproached light

Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee,

Bright effluence of bright essence increate.

Or hear'st thou rather pure ethereal stream,

Whose fountain who shall tell?

Before the Sun.

Before the Heavens thou wert, and at the voice

Of God, as with a mantle didst invest

The rising world of waters dark and deep,

Won from the void and formless Infinite.



11. ISHWARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR

The social reformer primarily responsible for drawing the attention of the society to the plight (condition) of widows and advocating their right to remarriage, was none other than Vidyasagar. Along with Rammohan Roy, he was concerned with the upliftment of women in society. Vidyasagar was also an educator and a scholar as well as a literateur in his own right. He is also considered the 'father of Bangali prose'.

Ishwarchandra was born in an orthodox high caste Brahmin family of Bengal, in September 1820. The family was poor but educated and Ishwarchandra was very intelligent. After completing his initial education at his village school, he joined the Sanskrit College in Calcutta for higher education. He was a brilliant student at the Sanskrit College and received the title Vidyasagar ('Ocean of Learning').

In 1856 he was appointed head pandit (scholar-teacher) of the Fort William College, Calcutta. A year later he became the principal of the Sanskrit College, where he promoted the study of English and admitted students of lower castes. He also worked in the Education Department for a period of time.

Vidyasagar was well-read in English literature and was influenced by western ideas. Although an orthodox, high caste Brahmin, he took a leading part in the social reform movement, notably a successful

campaign to legalise remarriage of widows, many of whom had been married in their childhood. He wanted to bring in the practice of widow remarriage. He said that widow marriages must have been permitted in our vast Vedic literature. But Brahmin scholars not only disbelieved him but also put up a challenge.

Vidyasagar started reading, the Vedic literature one by one and by day and night. He was frantically (panically) looking for such lines which recommended widow remarriage.

At last after months of sweating and slogging (stiking) he found a verse in Parashar Samhita which said "Naste Mrite Prabrajitie Klibe Cha Patite Patau, Panchasaptasu Narinang Patirannaya Vidhiyate." The translation stands to explain :

Name : *When the husband is missing and not traceable*

Mrite : *When the husband is dead*

Prabrajitie : *When the husband has become a sage*

Klibe : *When the husband is sexually deficient or defective*

Patite Patau : *When the husband has lost all his character*

Panchasaptasu : *Of these five reasons*

Narinang : *All women of such husbands*

Patirannaye : *to take other husbands*

Vidhiyate : *rightful act*

He banked on these verse and succeeded in getting legalised the widow remarriage through Hindu Widow's Remrriage Act, 1856. The widows were a neglected lot in the Indian society. They could not remarry even if they lost their husbands in their early youth. It was to restore this right of the widows to remarry and thereby improve their social lot that Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar took up the fight. As the Principal of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta he dug up old references in Sanskrit and proved that vedic texts sanctioned widow remarriage. He sent a petiition signed by 987 persons to the Government of Indian urging it for legislative action. It was due to his efforts that the Hindu Wodows Remarriage Act (Act XV of 1856) legalised marriage of widows and declared children born of such marriages as legitimate.

He also opposed child marriage and polygamy and did much to promote the education of girls. He founded quite a number of girls' schools. He was an educator and set up 62 high schools and four colleges. His reforming zeal met with much opposition from the orthodox Brahmins but he carried on, nevertheless.

Vidyasagar was erudite (learned) and scholarly and the best of scholars in India had to bow to his commentaries on classical texts. He wrote a Bengali Alphabet primer (beginners book) Barna Parichoy which is still used in many schools for the introduction of the alphabet to the child. Vidyasagar

was a prolific and vigorous writer. Among his works are *Betal Panchavimsati* (1847: Twenty-five tales of a Goblin): *Shajuntala* (1854), which is based on the famous play by the Sanskrit poet Kalidasa and *Sitar Banabas* (1860, 'The Exile of Sita' based on the Ramayana).

He spent his isolated last years in an interior village in Bihar. There he kept himself occupied by practising homeopathy. Even there he became classified as one of the pioneers of homeopathy in India. He passed away in 1891 but will be remembered as a revolutionary for the emancipation (freedom) of women by his protest against a heartless society. As an educator his contributions are remembered even today through the schools and colleges he started. The plight of widows has changed since his time but still greater social awareness and sympathy is required in our understanding and attitude towards them.



12. LALA LAJPT RAI

IF one were inclined to find a byword in Indian Independence Movement, it would be found in the term "Bal, Pal, Lal." "Lal" here refers to Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal to Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Pal to Bipin Chandra Pal. All the three were extremists and they fought fiercely against the British imperialism. In this struggle, however, Lala Lajpat Rai had to give the supreme sacrifice of his life, which he did most valiantly. There is, thus full justification for his being called "Punjab Kesari" or "The Lion of Punjab".

He was born on 28th January, 1865 at Dhudike in the Ferozepur district in Punjab. He belonged to an average family, his father, Lala Radha Krishan, being a school teacher. His mother was a highly religious lady. There was a pleasant confluence of all the religions in his family and no religion was considered inferior. Looking from another angle, we can say that Lala Lajpat Rai developed a highly secular bent of mind, though his inclinations later to Arya Samaj were clear and active, but they were not based on any religious consideration but on nationalistic and reformative consideration.

Lala Lajpat Rai had his early education at his village school. Then he joined the Mission High School, Ludhiana; He however, matriculated from a school at Ambala in 1880. He joined the Government College, Lahore for higher education. He passed his

Intermediate Examination from there. Later after taking the degree in law, he started practising at Hissar where he achieved great success as a lawyer.

Those were the days when Arya Samaj founded by Swami Dayanand was in its formative years. The main aim of this movement was social reform through dedication and self-sacrifice and those were the ideas which were dearest to the heart of Lalaji. As such, he jumped headlong into it and continued working all his life to fulfil its cherished targets.

The most important aspect of the Arya Samaj Movement which affected the common people in the most positive manner was its genuine commitment of the cause of education. Moreover, the movement was nationalistic in character and laid great stress on Indian cultural heritage. Quite in tune with the ideals of Arya Samaj, Lalaji founded a Sanskrit School at Hissar. At that time, hectic activities among the Arya Samajists were going on to establish a Dayanand Anglo Vedic (DAV) College at Lahore. Lalaji devoted all his energy to find this turn into a reality. In fact, social service was a 'mantra' with Lalaji and he never gave it up whenever an occasion arose, as it arose, for instance, in 1899 when a major part of India was under the spell of unprecedented famine. Lalaji did whatever he could to mitigate (reduce) the sufferings of the people.

So far Lalaji had risen high on the social ladder mainly, not only as a man of high status, a successful lawyer as he was, but also as a great social reformist.

Now, time had come for the great political role he was to play in the history of India particularly in the struggle for freedom. The start of his political career came when in 1888 he attended the Congress conference at Prayag and became a member of this party. In 1905, he went with Gopal Krishan Gokhale to England on behalf of the Indian people or the Congress to offer a strong protest to the authorities there against the partition of Bengal which was opposed by almost all the great Indian leaders and intellectuals, including Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Rabindra Nath Tagore.

Lalaji and Gokhale were able to mould the opinion of the British authorities about the Indian people to a great extent and thus, Lalaji's persuasive (influencing the mind of persons) and convincing powers were patently demonstrated. In spite of the frequent bouts of dyspepsia from which he suffered almost all his life, his oratorical powers were ever later recognized as he often held the audience spell-bound during his speech. Lalaji was not only a great orator but also a great writer, and a great journalist. He wrote elaborately on national themes in his monthly paper "Young India". His main aim was to arouse the people of Indian and make them conscious of necessary for independence from the clutches of the cruel British rulers.

Lalaji was a great nationalist and reformist at heart. He was a great socialist and humanist also. He was a lover of the poor and the lowly and wanted to

uplift them. He was very conscious of the welfare of the working class and wanted to save them from the exploitative methods of the capitalists. It is important to remember here that it was he who was the first president of the Indian Trade Union Congress. His stiff opposition to the colonization Bill led to his being transported and incarcerated (imprisoned) for six months.

During those days, the Swaraj Party, started by Moti Lal Nehru and Deshabandhu Das was gaining popularity. Lalaji joined this party and on its tickets fought and won the elections to the Central Legislative Assembly.

At that time, the whole country was in turmoil (trouble) due to the visit of the Simon Commission which was an all-white commission without any Indian being its member when its avowed aim was to study the political condition here as to how far they were favourable for a change or devolution (degradation) of power.

All the nationalist leaders of Indian opposed the Simon Commission. Lalaji being one of the greatest among them was totally opposed to it. Accordingly, when on October 31, 1928, the Commission reached Lahore. Lalaji led a massive peaceful demonstration against it. But, the British rulers, who always thought otherwise, declared the gathering illegal. The police was ordered to resort to a lathicharge. The police let loose a reign of terror on the demonstrators. An English officer himself assaulted Lalaji who was at

the forefront of the demonstration. He inflicted heavy, relentless blows on Lalaji on the chest. Lalaji received fatal injuries and died on 17th November 1928 as a result of these injuries. Lalaji's prophetic words which he spoke at a mammoth congregation of people will ever remain engraved in the hearts of his countrymen :

Every blow hurled on me will prove a fatal nail in the coffin of the British imperialism.

Later, it was left to Bhagat Singh to wreak the revenge of Lalaji's death and this he did when he shot dead Mr. Saunders.

In conclusion, we can say that Lalaji was a fearless, selfless, sincere patriot, educationist, social servant and journalist whose name will ever shine in the annals (records) of Indian history as an immortal martyr who laid down his life for the country's freedom.

Lajpat Rai had the fighting spirit and pride in his motherland which is the characteristic of a true nationalist. It was this spirit which led him to protest against the Simon Commission when it visited Lahore. Lajpat Rai was a staunch Arya Samajist. Though committed to upholding Hindu interests, he was not averse to the idea of Hindu-Muslim unity. Hence he was really a great Indian.



13. RABINDER NATH TAGORE

IF one wants to find a confluence (concourse) of the past and the present, traditionalism and modernity, the orient and the occident in one person, one should turn to Rabindra Nath Tagore, the greatest man of letters of the modern age. He was borne at Jorasanko in Kolkata on May 7, 1861. He was he youngest of the fourteen children in the Tagore Family. His father name was Maharishi Debendranath and his mother's name was Sharda Devi. His father was fond of going to the Himalayas and Tagore must have imbibed (assimilated) a lot of which spirituality from him. Even otherwise, the atmosphere in the Tagore house, though western in certain respects was one of great discipline and austerity, one based on precious Indian cultural ethos (characterstics). Music and the pursuit of several kind of art values was a routine there. It was in such an atmosphere that young Rabindra Nath was brought up.

Rabindera Nath Tagore though most commonly known as a poet, is a versatile genius. He is many things roled into one, being all at once a novelist, playwright, musician, painter, educationist, statesman, actor, freedom fighter and philosopher, besides being a poet. When considered as a poet, though he is sometimes called "The Shelley of

Bengal", he is not only an Indian poet but also a world poet of very high stature. Thus, it was no wonder when he got the Nobel Prize in November 13, 1913. The price brought to win Rs. 10,800. Money did not matter much because he belonged to a very rich family, but it was a great well deserved honour. In 1913 for his pioneering poetic work the Gitanjali, preface for which was written by W.B. Yeats, the most famous poet of England of the time. The book comprises spiritual and mystic lyrics which are written in poetic prose. Tagore wrote the lyrics originally in Bengali and later himself translated them into English. He got the Nobel prize for the English version. The literal meaning of the word "Gitanjali" is "offering of songs" (to the deity).

In Tagore's poetry and other works, certain aspects are quite discernible such as love for spirituality, Nature, motherland, humanity, childhood, poor people, etc. He has the magic power of transmuting even ordinary ways, things and incidents of life into ones bathed in divine glory and broad humanity. Tagore father was a saintly person who could not devote much time to him. His mother died when he was quite young. So, in certain respects such as schooling, he could not get the proper guidance. Hence he had mainly to depend upon the sort of education he was given at home by a tutor and his sensitive and dreamy nature naturally made him inclined more towards things of the mind

and spirit than of the world.

Rabindranath was a great patriot. He protested against the Sedition Bills of 1898. In 1899, he also worked with Sister Nivedita in organising relief for the plague victims in Calcutta. Tagore composed the National Anthem, 'Jana Gana Mana'. This was sung at the Calcutta Congress Session in 1911 for the first time. During the anti-partition Swadeshi movement, his songs led the patriotic upsurge among people. After the Jallianwallah Bagh massacre (1919) Tagore renounced his knighthood as a mark of protest.

By all means Tagore was a great writer. He had developed a distinct style of his own which was discernible (pencepsidle) even in his early writings. While he was a Romanticist and Mature-lover at heart, he did not ignore the claims of humanity. Various aspects of his personality merged to form a homogeneous whole.

In his poetry, he used free verse. But he did not take the liberty of fine excess in the Keatsean phrase, nor he resorted to egotistical sublimity of Wordrworth. His approach was objective, greatly Shakespeare an in essence, but more humanitarian than that of the great Bard-at-Avon's. His essential love of man was palpably visible in his novels, short stories and dramas. He was a patriot to the core but also a universalist and internationalist at heart. He vehemently opposed the partition of Bengal in 1905 as all the nationalistically-minded leaders of the time

did.

Being a versatile genius, he wrote on varied topics such as education religion, social reforms, eradication of superstition, literary criticism music and even science. He always used the right word at the right place in his writings. He was virtually a magician of words which were generally simple, sweet, harmonious and appealing to the ear. Hardly ever he used a jarring (discontent) word. He was consummate (complete) master of his art and he knew it. At the same time, he was the earth, earthy and never longed to have unwarranted ethereal (airy) height in the void, though his cosmic vision remains unchallengeable. He believed that a poet and for that matter every writer owes a responsibility to the society and as such he should not live in an ivory tower.

He was also a good administrator and manager of his estate. He was born in a family of landlords and he managed the affairs of the state with uncommon efficiency. All the workers at his estate were greatly pleased with his kind, honest and transparent treatment and dealing and were highly appreciative of him.

Even while being mostly within the four walls of Calcutta, he had a great love for the fields, rivers, the sea and the mountains. He was all the same a great scholar, being full of knowledge of ancient scriptures such as the Vedas and the Upanishadas, the latter in

particular. It is also obvious from his writings that he was a great lover of the teachings of the Buddha, which had strongly influenced his mental make up. Among his famous works, besides the Gitanjali, we have Gora, The Wreck, Muktheadhara, Sonar Tari, Puravi, The Morning Songs, The Evening Songs, Cabuliwallah, The Postmaster, Homecoming, The Castaway, etc.

With the money received for the Nobel Prize, he set up the famous Shantiniketan where education was intended to be imparted in a natural atmosphere. The institution later grew up to be the present Vishwabharti University. After he received the Nobel Prize, he toured a good number of countries spreading India's message of peace, love and universal brotherhood, based on an ancient Indian cultural heritage. He was brotherhood, based on an ancient Indian cultural heritage.

He was honoured with the honorary degree of D. Litt, by many universities and he came to be recognized as the Cultural Ambassador of India. He was knighted with the title of "Sir" by the British Government in view of his great achievements. But his patriotism had the better of him and when the Jallianwallah Bagh massacre took place in 1919, he returned his title to the government. The whole world was plunged into sorrow on his death on August 7, 1941.

He will always be remembered as one of the

greatest sons of India. Indeed alongwith Gandhiji, he may rightly be regarded as the greatest man of modern Indian who lived and died not only for India but also for the whole mankind. One may find certain faults in his writings, for instance, the lack of tragic vision which Shakespeare had in abundance, and one might find his political philosophy flawed at times, for instance, when once he refused to give his blessing to Gandhiji which the latter sought from him while starting the Non-Cooperation Movement. Still, his towering personality as a man of people and overflowing humanity and humanism can never be held in doubt by anybody.



14. AUROBINDO GHOSE

Aurobindo Ghose was born on August 15, 1872, in a family having a completely western ambience (surroundings). His father was completely westernised in habits, ideas and ideals and wanted his sons to follow suit. However, he would not know that his son would become one of the leading revolutionary activists of India.

Aurobindo was educated at an elite English school and college in England. He also qualified for the Indian Civil Service, a great honour for an Indian under the British rule. However, he deliberately skipped the mandatory (compulsory) horse riding test and was disqualified. During his stay in England he was educated in English, Latin and French as well as in English and European literature.

Aurobindo ghose was not merely a politician who became a hermit but he was also a hermit who became a politician. It is hard to say whether politics was his first love and philosophy was second or whether philosophy was his first love and politics was the second. If politics and philosophy were not well-blended in his blood, he would not have become what he did. He became what he did because politics and

philosophy were well-blinded in his blood. Aurobindo was a Man of Man who became a Man of God. He became a Great Man of God so that he should become a Greater man of Man.

Aurobindo Ghose said that he would emerge from his hermitage when he had perfect knowledge to lead the world out of the political jungle. He did not come out of his hermitage to lead the world out of the political jungle because he was never confident of perfect knowledge from a Scholar to a Politician, from a Politician to a Revolutionary, from a Revolutionary to a Hermit, formed the four spokes in the wheel of Ghose's career. We only miss the fifth spoke : From the Hermit to the Scholar, Politician and Revolutionary.

In his youth there were no signs of this. His father early packed him off to England to obtain a through western education and till his return at twenty-one he was unaware of India's cultural and spiritual heritage. While in England he proved himself proficient in Greek and Latin, winning several scholarships. He drank deeply of the ancient classics and was early moved by French culture. He knew Italian and German well enough to read his adored Dante and Goethe in the original.

Rightly enough, his own first literary efforts were

poetic effusions (Act of pouring out) on themes taken from Indian literature and in which echoes of Keat's sensuousness and Shelly's idealism tastefully mingle. However, his mature poetry is deeply mystical and a difficult to understand as Blake's Prophetic Books. His epic poem, Savitri (a legend of the past and a symbol of the future) is partly autobiographical, being a record of his own inner development. Since his philosophical ideas from the warp (thread) and woof (cloth) of Aurobindo's poetry, it would be fruitless reading Savitri without a knowledge of his prose works.

After graduation, as he felt no call for Government Service, he managed to fail in his riding test for the Indian Civil Service and on his return to India in 1893 took up a professorship in English and French at Baroda University. At this time he had his first unsought for spiritual experience. As he set foot on the Bombay harbour, an infinite calm descended on him and remained with for months.

During his professorship he knocked up an acquaintance with Indian literature and thought. He read voraciously and widely so that at thirty he seemed to have squeezed dry the orange of learning. About this time a wave of nationalism was sweeping over India and Aurobindo played an active role in his

country's struggle for freedom. It must be remembered that it was he who originated the doctrine of passive resistance which was later taken up by Gandhiji and was instrumental in freeing India without bloodshed. At their first meeting, the poet Tagore had written of Aurobindo –

At the very first sight I could realise that he had been seeking the soul and had gained it, and through this long process of realization had accumulated within him a silent power of inspiration. His face was radiant with an inner light.....I said to him, "You have the word and we are waiting to accept it from you. India will speak through your voice to the world.

And in 1914, for the next seven years, in bold, clarion clear accents, the voice spoke to a wondering world that listened and thrilled as it listened to the Word of Life. The physical vehicle for the Word was a magazine named 'Arya' jointly published by Aurobindo and two French mystical students. Paul and Mira Richard, It ceased publication in 1921 but during those seven years most of Aurobindo's writings were published in this journal. The Arya caused quite a stir in intellectual circles the world over; admirers flocked to Pondicherry and many remained behind as

students of his Integral Yoga thus establishing what is today the huge Aurobindo Ashram.

From 1924, Aurobindo devoted the rest of his life to an attempt to bring down the Supermind into the earthly life. This necessitated a total seclusion, even from the Ashram-activities which were carried on by his spiritual co-pastner, Madame Richard now known as the Mother. Apart from a heavy correspondence with the Ashram's pupils and the publication of several books all Aurobindo's contacts with the outside world were through the Mother, till his transition on 5th December, 1950.

Now that the halo of his presnce has melted into a fragrant memory we have only his writings to fall back upon. Aurobindo is rewarding but difficult to read. His works cover a wide range of subjects. Politics, philosophy, education psychology, art, literature and yoga all enter his purview. Throughout, he reveals himself a supreme master of English prose. Words like 'elevated' and 'Miltonic' best describe the majestic sweep of his complex parenthetical prose-style, which beginners sometimes find fatiguing. Yet a closer persual reveals passages with great beauty of style and deep mystical import that ring along the corridors of the mind long after the book has been laid aside.

In no book of his is all this more evident than in his magnum-opus (great work). The Life Divine. The Divine is only an intellectual statement of spiritual problems : the actual technique of attainment is relegated to his 2000 page Synthesis (chain) of Yoga. The three cardinal questions any spiritual aspirant can ask himself albeit (chain) in different ways are – Who am I? What is my goal? How can I attain it? These queries posit the trinity of Man God, Nature. As he progresses on the path, he may answer –

I am Man the thinker labouring to ascent to a spiritual awareness of things, whereby I can enter into conscious union with God or Ultimate Reality, by the process of a gradual evolution of consciousness through the various forms of Nature.

Sri Aurobindo discusses this possibility of man the mental bring living a divine life in this temporal world. All such attempts in the past have floundered between the Scylla of materialism and the Charybdis of asceticism. But both materialism and asceticism, says Aurobindo, are partial solutions arising from a partial view of things. The universe is a manifestation or self-deploying of Brahman or Ultimate Reality. The Supreme Consciousness manifests the objects universe by means of a gradual involution and

voluntary self-gathering in of its force of consciousness. To this creative aspect of the Divine as Lord and Creator of the Worlds, Aurobindo gives the name of super mind. It is keystone of his thought and is explained at great length with a wealth of detail in his works. His influence on men like Tagore, Romain Rolland, Aldous Huxley and Dr. Radhakrishnan has been considerable.

By what ultimate standards can we judge Aurobindo's three major works, "The Life Divine", "The Synthesis of Yoga" and "Savitri"? It is recorded that when Beethoven showed some of the last Quarters to a violinist-friend the latter said, "You don't all this music, do you?" Beethoven replied, "This music is not for you. It is for the future."

Aurobindo was a prolific (productive) writer. He started editing and writing articles in a number of daily papers and journals at Baroda and Calcutta. At Pondicherry he started the publication of a philosophical monthly magazine named The Arya. His books on nationalism, his treatises on the Vedas and the Upanishads, his commentaries on the "Bhagvad Gita", his great prose works like "The Life Divine", "The Supreme Ideal of Human Unity", his literary criticism, poems, translations of Bengali and Sanskrit plays and poems into English have made

him a literateur of the highest order.

His intense spiritual journey–Sadhana–for the freedom and well being of India, and upliftment of all humanity was very famous. The sage of Pondicherry came to be known as Sri Aurobindo to the world. He bequeathed (left by will) the charge of his ashram in Pondicherry to the care of the Mother, Mirra Richard, a French woman and died on December 5, 1950. He took in mahasamadhi in December 9, 1950 when he was 78 years old.



15. SHYAMA PRASAD MUKHARJEE

Shyama Prasad Mukharjee wa one of the great leaders India has produced in the 20th century. He made his mark in the Indian history as a brilliant educationist, social reformer and political ideologue. He was the founder of Bharatiya Jan Sangh, the forerunner of one of the major Indian political parties, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Dr. Mukherjee was born on July 6, 1901. His father was Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, a noted educationist and a Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University. His mother was Jogomaya Debi. He was a brilliant student and stood first in his graduate and post graduate examinations. Dr. Mukherjee went to England to study law and qualified as a barrister. In 1923, he married Sudha Debi. Following the footsteps of his father, he joined Calcutta University and became a fellow and member of the syndicate. He proved his mettle (spirit) there and in 1934, at a young age of thirty three, he became the Vice-Chancellor of the University. He spearheaded many reforms during his tenure as the Vice-Chancellor.

Meanwhile, in 1929 he was elected to the Bengal Legislative Council as a Congress candidate and in 1930 as an independent. In 1936, he was elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly from the University area. Dr. Mukherjee became the Finance Minister of Bengal in the Fazalul Haq cabinet in 1941. He also became an elected member of IIS. Bangalore. For his outstanding contributions to the

field of education and research, Dr. Mukherjee was awarded an honorary D. Lit vby the Calcutta University. He also received an LLD from Benaras Hindu University.

Dr. Mukherjee was greatly pained on seeing the devastating Midnapore floods of 1942. He was denied permission by the British governor to visit the affected areas. Therefore he resigned from the cabinet. With the help of Ramarkishna Mission. Mahabodhi Society and Marwari Relief Society Dr. Mukharjee organized relief for the flood-affected people. From 1942 to 1945, he was the President of the Bengal Asiatic Society. Dr. Mukherjee, in order to arouse the patriotic sentiments of educated Indians, started an English Daily-The Nationalist in 1945.

When riots broke out in Dhaka, Dr. Mukherjee was in the forefront to restore communal amity (friendly relationship) and peace. He held talks with the Nawab of Dhaka to maintain peace. He also organized the Hindustan National Guards to co-ordinate relief measures. Dr. Mukherjee also played an active role in the relief operations after the Bengal famine of 1943. He served as the Vice president of the Relief co-ordination Committee of the famine.

Opposed to the Congress ideology, Dr. Mukherjee joined the Hindu Mahasbha in 1939. he was its President from 1940 to 1944. When India became independent in 1947, he joined the Jawaharlal Nehru Cabinet as a Minister for Industries and Supplies. As a minister he initiated a number of welfare measures. It was Dr. Mukherjee who was the brain behind the Chittaranjan Locomotives and the

Aeroplane Manufacturing Factory in Bangalore. However, in 1950 he resigned from the cabinet, owing to the differences in the Kashmir policy of Jawaharlal Nehru.

During this time, Sheikh Abdullah was the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir and he was called the Prime Minister. The state even had its own flag and the state government had several constitutional powers which were not available for others state governments. When several people under the leadership of Pandit Premnath Dogra attempted to hoist the Indian tricolour in Kashmir they were prevented from doing so by the administration. The situation remained volatile (flying).

In 1951, Dr. Mukherjee founded the political party, Bharatiya Jan Sangh, mostly incorporating those subscribing to the right wing ideology. The Jan Sangh was the predecessor of the modern Bharatiya Janata party. Meanwhile Kashmir was in turmoil (trouble). Dr Mukherjee visited Kashmir to solve the issue. He was arrested and imprisoned in Kathua and was denied all facilities. He was not even allowed visitors. Thus in such deplorable circumstances. Dr. Mukherjee died on June 23, 1953. With his death Indian lost a brave son and nationalist who dared to think different. As a matter of fact he was great patriot who sacrificed his life for the welfare of nation.



16. MAHATMA GANDHI

Swami Vivekananda Said–

This life is short, the vanities (pride) of the world are transient (temporary), but they alone live who live for others the rest are more dead than alive. Vol. IV P-363

Mahatma Gandhi was India, India was Mahatma Gandhi. He was not an individual. He was an institution. He did not belong to our times. He belonged to all times. Verily (certainly) Mahatma Gandhi was Father of the Nation. He was a man of Philosophy. People differed with him. But he never deviated (diverged) from his philosophy. There may be something wrong with him. But there was nothing wrong with his philosophy lives. Today he is dead. But his philosophy live. Gandhi was mortal and so a bullet ended his life. But his philosophy is immortal and no bullet can end its career.

It is wrong to judge Gandhi by those who call themselves Gandhites. Just by wearing a white-cap, one cannot acquire the white-cap philosophy. Gandhi today is dead and his philosophy is misinterpreted by those who claim to be his best followers. But Gandhism will live long after the present generation of Gandhites are dead and forgotten.

Mahatma Gandhi was born on 2nd October, 1869 in Porbander in Gujarat. He belonged to a well-to-do family, his father being attached to the

royal court at Rajkot. He was not quite good at studies but he took a great care of his character. In this, his mother played a crucial (critical) role in his life. She was a highly religiously-minded woman and Gandhiji was greatly devoted to her. She observed so many fasts. It is said that she would not take a morsel (taste) of bread before having the sight of the sun and during the rainy season when the sun was elusive (deceptive), she had to face a lot of difficulty in having the sight of the sun. However, her young son, what Gandhiji then was, would keep glaring at the sky to have a glimpse of the sun in order to convey the message to his mother to enable her to have her meals.

In 1888, Gandhiji left for England for higher studies. The traditional Brahmins created a lot of hindrances in his way as they considered crossing the seas to be against the religious tenets. Gandhiji, however overcome all these obstacles. Still he had to give his mother several vows, including non-consumption of alcohol and meat, celibacy, etc. In England, Gandhiji found a great difficulty in getting vegetarian food, but at last, he was able to locate a restaurant which served such food. In spite of all this, a young man as he was, he was attracted by the outer world and he started certain practices pertaining to western culture such as wearing western dress, including a neck-tie, listening western music, etc.

Gandhiji did law in England and returned to India

barrister in 1891. He started practice at Rajkot and Bombay, but failed as such. He was a young man of shy nature and it is said that when he appeared before the judge for the first time in order to plead for a case, he could not utter a single word. Yet, this young man, by the sheer force of his truthfulness, honesty and sincerity of purpose rose to be one of the greatest leaders and saviours (deliverer) of humanity and then his voice was heard everywhere with utmost regard and reverence and a single word uttered by him became a law to his followers who were not in hundreds or thousands but in millions, not only in India, but across the whole world.

He proceeded to South Africa in 1893 in connection with a case. There he saw the miserable condition of the Indians and other black people. He was greatly shocked, and he resolved to fight for them. He set up the Phoenix Ashram there and formed the Natal Indian Congress. He opposed the white African policy of Apartheid tooth and nail and had his first experience of the practice of Satyagrah. He fought for social reforms, economic reforms and justice and fair and equitable treatment. He taught the Indians the lessons of truthfulness, love, co-operation, fearlessness and cleanliness. He believed in doing one's job oneself and he did not hate physical work and upheld the dignity of labour. He believed in doing some physical, intellectual and spiritual work on daily basis. He taught the children there in accordance with his method of love, devotion

and dedication. He did not believe in corporal punishment.

Once while traveling in a train, he was thrown out by the white occupants of the compartment. He had to suffer lying on the platform the whole night. But he did not develop the spirit of hatred against the whites for this arrogance. He opposed the white rulers of South Africa not as a race but because of their policy of exploitation and persecution, which had perpetuated ghettos and apartheid in residential areas, commercial areas, at eating places and even other places as also in trains and buses. Similarly, once when he was violently attacked by a pathan in South Africa, he bore no grudge against the man even after this incident. Gandhiji was too great to have a revengeful nature or not to forgive even the perpetrator (permanent) of most heinous sin or crime.

Gandhiji was greatly influenced in his ideas such as Satyagraha, civil disobedience and passive resistance by the great Russian philosopher and writer Leo Tolstoy. He had gained a lot of experience in South Africa and when he returned to India in 1915. He was fully equipped for the job he was to undertake. At that time there was a great influence of Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Bal Gangadhar Tilak on Indian politics. While the one believed in passive methods, the other was an extremist. Gandhiji was influenced by both, though he actually evolved his own ideology whom he is said to have given the title

“Mahatma” which actually stuck to his own name instead of that of his mentor (Adviser).

Gandhiji silently toured all over India for almost a year in order to have a first hand knowledge of the things prevailing here. He spoke little but heard a lot, and when he at last spoke, his voice was “low and powerful” as Jawahar Lal Nehru points out. He established in 1916 the Sabramati Ashram at Ahmedabad in Gujarat on the banks of the river Sabarmati and soon it became a place for pilgrimage for all, high and low, rich and poor.

Gandhiji’s first important confrontation (Act of bring face to face) with the British Government came at Champaran in Bihar in 1917 when he raised his voice to demand the cessation of exploitation of cultivators and planters of that place. This was the beginning of the use of the Satyagrah as a mighty weapon which was to show its miraculous (extraordinary) powers in years to come. It was during this movement that Vallabhbhai Patel who was at the forefront of the movement, got the title of “Sardar” from Gandhiji.

Gandhiji, however, attained the stature of an all-India leader of the Independence Movement only when he opposed the enactment of the Rowlatt Act on March 18, 1919. Gandhiji had opposed vehemently (strongly) the Black Bill but the stubborn British authorities did not heed to his protestations, Still, he was able to earn appreciation and acclaim of countless Indians who were now genuinely thinking

the pursuit of the Independence Movement by all non-violent and truthful means.

One of the most important movements started by Gandhiji was the famous Dandi March which was started on 12th March, 1930 to get for Indians the rights of making salt from the sea water. The violation of the Salt Law by Gandhiji and his companions by making salt at Dandi near Gujarat sea-coast, led to his arrest on 5th May, 1930. But, this simple act of Gandhiji aroused Indian masses from their slumber (sleep) and henceforward, they were not afraid of violating any British law which was not based on truth, justice and equity.

The famous Dandi March was the crux (pinnacle) of the Civil Disobedience Movement started by Gandhiji and when on March 5, 1931, a pact known as "Gandhi-Irwin Pact" was signed, Gandhiji is said to have mischievously brought out a pinch of salt from his pocket to be mixed in his tea saying. "It is from Dandi". This also shows the humorous and lighter side of Gandhiji. Indeed, the man was full of humour and may easily be recognised as the most humorous of all the Indian leaders, freedom fighters in particular.

Now, it had become a routine for the Indian people to strike work at the call of Gandhiji. They picketed the stores selling British cloth. Rabindra Nath Tagore objected to such a practice and is said to have even refused to bless the start of Civil Disobedience Movement. But, Gandhiji was not only

a great religious and spiritual leader and saint but also a statesman and a politician who knew his sphere. That is why later Churchill characterized him as "the naked fakir" and when Gandhiji went on hunger strike and fast unto death, Churchill tried (of course, vainly) to misguide the people by saying that "the naked fakir" was secretly taking food.

The most important moment started by Gandhiji was the Quit India Movement. It was started on 8th August, 1942. Almost all the Congress leaders who mattered were arrested and put behind the bars. The workers and employees struck work in factories and offices and students absented themselves from attending schools and colleges. The shopkeepers downed their shutters. As an aftermath, though never desired or intended by Gandhiji, there were signs of revolt in the army and if earlier there had been the Ghadar Party and martyrdom of Bhagat Singh and others, now the Indian National Army led by Subhash Chandra Bose and others, became a reality.

Now it was hard for the British to continue their rule and it was almost certain that India had to be freed at an early date. The only problem arose when the Muslim League leaders taking advantage of the imprisonment of the Congress leaders, around the Muslims and impressed the British to bring about partition of the country and succeeded in their aim. But it had to be deemed unavoidable into the bargain.

Gandhiji was assassinated on 30th January 1948, but his theories of truth, non-violence and supremacy of means over ends cannot be lost sight of. His was, indeed, a practical philosophy which was not based on hollow idealism or Platonism. Though Gandhiji never himself desired, Gandhism became a term and it still exists in political circles. But when considered more profoundly, it is a way of life to be followed more than a set of ideas to be speculated.

One great aspect of Gandhiji's personalities was his broad humanity. He was a genuine lover of man as much as of God and spiritual aspects of life. He was greatly influenced by the Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and loved to read the Gita, an English translation of which had actually changed his life.

He did not discriminate between man and man on any basis racial, religious, casteistic or any other. He was most instrumental in founding a base for the banishment of untouchability from the Indian soil and for the upliftment of the poor and lowly people both in urban and rural areas. He greatly believed in the reconstruction of Indian villages as he knew that real India lives in villages. Hence, he advocated the spread of a network of cottage and small scale industrial units in villages, and he also punished the British rulers for destroying the rural industries in India.

Indeed, Gandhiji was an all-rounder and had his simple, forthright, practical views on every topic and

in every sphere of life, including education, health, morality, politics, wealth, property, business, etc. He believed that politics should be based on truth and morality and welfare of the common people should be the uppermost thing in a leader's mind. He rejected materialism and rat race for money and ostensible living style.

Albert Einstein said on his death—

Generations to come will find it difficult to believe that such a man even walked the earth in flash and blood.

There philosophers influenced Gandhiji; Tolstoy, Thoreau and Ruskin. Ruskin's *Unto This Last* gave Gandhiji a contempt for affluent society which is the unhappy goal of our Five Year Plans and whose harvest of woes we are reaping. Gandhiji took the vow of poverty and he never left his path. He dissuaded the people from giving up their character in search of coins! Jesus taught the lesson of love, of turning the left cheek to him who smites you on the right. Years ago in Africa a pathan made a grievous assault on him and left him for dead. Gandhiji pleaded with the authorities not to punish him and said—

The blood I have shed will I hope and pray cement the bonds of Hindu-Muslim unity.

In Bihar when Gandhiji led a fierce agrarian agitation against the tyranny of the planters, one landlord expressed a desire to shoot him dead, and, so Gandhiji went up to him to receive the

punishment. The enemy became his friend. Like Lord Krishna, Gandhiji faced life's ordeal with euanimity. He knew no defeat, no despondency, no disappointment. He shed the self and surrendered it so the will of the Almighty. He revealed his inner strength by a twenty-one days fast. Gandhiji taught us to be daring and not to be afraid of being absolutely alone, provided we are on the side of right. For Truth is God and with truth on our side we need no moral help. The poet of Free America sang—

**They are slave who fear to seek
For the fallen and the weak,
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.**



17. BHAGAT SINGH

Bhagat Singh was born on September 28, 1907 a Banga village of Lyallpur district in West Punjab, in a reputed Sikh family of freedom fighters. His father and uncles had participated in the freedom movement and this created a positive influence on Bhagat Singh. At school, Bhagat Singh was a very good and disciplined student. When he was in the 9th class, he jumped into the Non-Co-operation Movement launched by Gandhiji. He studied at the D.A.V. College, Lahore where he organised a student's union. Many nationalist leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai and Bhai Parmanand were teachers here and they influenced Bhagat Singh deeply. In 1923, he joined the Secret Revolutionary Party and soon became its leading figure. In 1925, he initiated the militant youth organisation, the Naujawan Bharat Sabha of the Punjab.

When forced to marry, Bhagat Singh ran away from home and came to Kanpur where, he found employment in the newspaper Pratap, run by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. In Kanpur, Bhagat Singh also came in contact with another well known revolutionary. Chandra Shekhar Azad. Convinced that India can gain independence only by a revolution. Bhagat Singh, Azad and Sukh Dev established Naujawan Bharat Sabha in 1924. He also worked in the newspaper Arjun in Delhi under a pseudonym

(fictions name) and worked for some time on the editorial staff of Kirti—a social journal.

But Bhagat Singh was more of an activist than a mere promising intellectual, and in 1926, he was involved in the abortive (unsuccessful) plan of Azad and Kundanlal to rescue the prisoners of Kakori case. When Lala Lajpat Rai succumbed to the injuries he received during the anti-Simon Commission agitation at Lahore, the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (H.S.R.A.) decided to avenge his death and Bhagat Singh shot and killed Saunders (who was responsible for the police attack on Lala Lajpat Rai) on November 17, 1928, aided by Rajguru and Azad. Bhagat Singh was an irresistible speaker endowed with biting sarcasm (anirouicd remark). His tectfulness in dealing with individuals was compensated by his alert instinct, his discriminating sense of history, his finely turned fund of principles and hi hunger for knowledge.

When the party resolved to demonstrate the national disgust against the alien rulers, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutta exploded bombs in the central Legislative Assembly on April 8, 1929. They were arrested and sentenced to transportation for life. When the Lahore Conspiracy Case began in July 1929. Bhagat Singh appeared as the main accused and received the death sentence. On March 23, 1931, Bhagat Singh together with Rajguru and Sukhdev was hanged. They showed no sign of fear of death and kissed the noose (a loop with mining Knot)

chanting 'Inquilab Zindabad'. Bhagat Singh died with his comrades on the gallows (A structure on which criminals are hanged) , but his legend (myth) grew.

His passionate statement from the dock, his contempt for British justice, his plan for using the court proceedings as an act of revolutionary propaganda, his slogan of 'Inquilab zindabad' swayed his countrymen and mesmerised (hypnotized) the youth. Bhagat Singh became famous as Shaheed-e-Azam. His martyrdom gave new momentum to the freedom struggle of India and showed a new path to the younger generations of the country. The entire nation recalls his sacrifice with deep gratitude even today.



18. SUBHASH CHANDER BOSE

Subhash Chander Bose is a great figure in Indian history. His contribution to the freedom struggle made him a brave hero of India. He left his home and comfort with the mission to liberate his motherland. He believed that an armed rebellion was necessary to get independence from the British rule.

Subhash Chandar Bose was the breath of the Indian struggle for Independence. The Indian struggle for Independence was the breath of Subhahs Chandra Bose. He identified himself with the fight for freedom in a mode and manner in which Gandhi or Nehru never did. Gandhiji was more than a freedom-fighter. He was a Man of Spirit, and Nehru was less than a freedom-fighter. He was a Man of the Body. Gandhiji thought of God and Nehru of Man, but Bose only thought of Freedom. Bose was born for freedom. In his childhood he thought of freedom. In his youth he worked for freedom. In his manhood he disappeared from the scene, dreaming only of freedom. Nobody ever identified himself so much with freedom as Bose did. Freedom was his breath, Freedom was his blood. Freedom was his bone.

“Shoo Bosh” banged (thrashed) the Berlin Radio. This is how the Japs and Germans called him. Bose has been the greatest stormy petrel (small sea-bird) of the Indian political arena (place of conflict). This full-veined youngster rocked the ground under

the feet of such a magnetic leader as Mahatma Gandhi. Subhash Bose was a class by himself in the galaxy of the Indian leaders. A dazzling meteor (surprising shooting star), he trod his orbit (path). Unlike Mahatma Gandhi, he was not deterred by moral considerations in the cause of independence. He would rather stake his all on the altar of the Goddess of Freedom. On account of his fearless fight for freedom, Bose was victim of right-wing dictatorship of Mahatma Gandhi and his faithful backbenchers. Subhash Bose belonged to Bengal arsenal (a place where weapons of war are stored) of India's war of Independence.

"Terrorism", said Sir John Anderson, the Governor of Bengal, "is the perverted expression of the extreme love of the Bangali race for their motherland. It would be more correct to say that imperialism was the perverted expression of the extreme love of the British race for their motherland, because terrorism was not love at all, much less perverted love. It was only a weapon of despair. It was a Cuttack that Subhash Chandra Bose was born on January 23, 1897. His father, Rai Bahadur Jankinath Bose, was leader of the bar, the public prosecutor and the chairman of the District Board and Municipality of Cuttack.

The mother of Subhash Bose, Shrimati Prabhavati Bose, was a lady of simplicity, deeply imbued in the spirit of orthodox Hinduism. It was a big family in which Bose had five sisters and half a

dozen brothers. Nearest to Subhash Chandra Bose was his brother Sarat Chandra Bose. They were united by hooks of steel and buttressed (supported) each other like moral giants. Subhash Bose was educated in the Protestant European School. Then he joined the Ravenshaw Collegiate School. Then he passed his matriculation Examination, standing second in the Calcutta University. In 1913 he joined the Presidency College, Calcutta. From there he ran away to the Himalayas in search of a guru. After a year he returned and joined Scottish Church College from where he passed his Degree Examination in 1919 with first-class Honours in Philosophy.

His parents sent Bose to England to qualify for a big post in the Indian Civil Service. After a great fight within myself, he writes, "I gave my consent to go to England (for the I.C.S.) but could not console myself that my decision had been right." There he asserted his patriotism. He wrote back home, "I feel most happy when I see white people serve me and brush my shoes". Having heard a speech of Sarojini Naidu he came to the conclusion that a country which produces such women cannot but have a bright future.

After staying nine months in England, Subhash Bose passed the I.C.S. Examination in August 1920, standing fourth in the competition, even though his preparation was only half-hearted. He also secured Mental and Moral Science Tripos (The final university examination at Cambridge) from the Cambridge

University.

Bose refused the I.C.S. appointment, because he said he could not "serve both masters at the same time" namely the British Government and his own country. He handed over his resignation personally to the Secretary of State for India.

Bose landed at Bombay on July 16, 1921 and straight went to meet Mahatma Gandhi at Mani Bhawan. The Interview lasted for over an hour. Ghandhiji failed to quench the thirst of this youngster in search of independence for India. He left "depressed and disappointed" for Calcutta. There he meet C.R. Das, the intellectual stalwart (brave) of India. A great friendship grew up because there was political affinity between the two. Bose became the Principal of the National College at Calcutta which was started for the benefit of those students who were dismissed in the 1921, Non-Co-operation Movement. On December 25, 1921, Bose was arrested for organising a black flag movement against the Prince of Wales who visited Calcutta. Bose was awarded a mild punishment although he expected a heavier one. "Six months only!" he exclaimed, "Have I then robbed a fowl (cock)?"

When Bose came out of Jail, constructive programme awaited him. Floods had swept over Bengal and done a great damage to the villagers. With a batch of volunteers he rushed to the flooded areas. He organized a relief fund under Sir P.C. Ray. In a short time Rs. 40,000 were raised, to which the

Bengal Government contributed another Rs. 20,000. Lord Lytton personally commended Subhas Bose on his great humanitarian work. In 1922 Swaraj party was formed. As lieutenant of C.R. Das, Bose was at the helm of affairs. He also became the Chief Editor of Forward, the new daily in English. The Swarajists were returned overwhelmingly to the Legislative Assembly.

The Swarajists also secured a solid majority in the Calcutta corporation. C.R. Das became the Mayor of Calcutta and Bose was appointed Chief Executive Officer, at the young age of twenty-seven, to which the Government also objected. "It was not without a great deal of hesitation that they decided to give their approval, as they were required to do under the Statute." The pay of the Chief Executive Officer was Rs. 3000 a month, but Bose voluntarily reduced it to Rs. 1500. Even this pay he distributed among the poor.

On October 25, 1924 Bose was arrested for being, what Statesman called "the brain of the revolutionary conspiracy". The public raised hue and cry, but it fell on deaf ears. He was deposed to Mandalay Jail on January 25, 1925, along with seven other patriots. "We are proud of Subhash", said his father.

The Mandalay Jail was hell on earth. Subhas fell seriously ill. He became victim of Irancho-pneumonia. On May 16, 1927, he was allowed to go to Switzerland for health. At this time C.R. Das died

and the people of Bengal recognised him as the successor of their leader. Shortly after, he was appointed as General Secretary of the Indian National Congress at, its Madras Session under Dr. Ansari. In December 1928, at the first session of the All-India Youth Congress at Calcutta, Bose for the first time openly criticized Gandhiji and linked him up with the passivism of Sir Aurobindo Ghose. He preached activism and pleaded for the modernization of Indian life.

Bose backed by Jawaharlal Nehru, declared that the Congress would not accept anything less than the Complete Independence. Now Gandhiji drove a wedge (link) between Nehru and Bose, winning Nehru to his side. Little wonder, Bose was sore with both, and he never forgave Nehru for this. Bose was arrested on April 21, 1930 and sent to Alipore Jail where he was rendered unconscious because of a lathi charge by Pathan warders. A wave of horror swept all over the country.

Mahatma Gandhi blundered by signing the Irwin Pact without securing the release of Bhagat Singh, Sukh Dev and Raj Guru who were definitely executed on March 23, 1931, exactly when the Congress was holding a session at Karachi. Bose was invited to preside over the All-India Naujawan Conference and a band of agitated young men presented Mahatma Gandhi with a black flower for betraying the case of Bhagat Singh and his comrades.

Early in 1933 Subhash Bose was allowed to

proceed to Europe for reasons of health and on April 11, 1936, he returned to India and was again arrested. "Keep the flag of freedom flying", he said to the people who had come to receive him. He was released in March 1937 and presided over the fifty-first session of the Congress at Haripura on the banks of the river Tapti. To celebrate the first session, fifty-one gates were put up and fifty-one flags were hoisted. The chariot of the presidential procession was drawn by fifty-one bullocks and fifty-one national songs were sung.

During his tenure of one year Bose showed himself to be the uncompromising foe of the British federal scheme for India. He was a canker (corrupting influences) of great anxiety to Gandhiji and his Rightist group. When he was re-elected it was a bombshell for the Rightists. They did not want "a Leftist President who may be a thorn in the way of compromise." He was elected by a majority of 203 votes. "I feel overwhelmed with thoughts about tomorrow", he said "So should everybody feel who voted for me. "I rejoice in this defeat", said Gandhiji. He advised his followers to come out to the Congress. It was a most undemocratic advice. It showed deeply the seeds of discord. So Bose resigned. He formed the Forward Bloc.

Subhash was arrested under the Defence of India Rules for leading an agitation against the Holwell Monument in Calcutta. Tired of politics he decided on a fast unto death. "I shall commence my

fast on November 20, 1940", he informed the Government, "Government has been pursuing a frankly vindictive policy towards me," he said "for reasons that are quite inexplicable." And for his countrymen he wrote out what he called a Political testament. The blood of the martyrs, he said, is the seed of the church. In this mortal world everything perishes but ideas, ideals and dreams. The dreams of one generation become the deeds of the other. What greater solace can there be than the feeling that one has lived and died for a principle?

To my countrymen, I say, "forget not that the greatest curse for a man is to remain a slave. Forget not that the greatest crime is to compromise with justice and wrong. Remember the eternal law you must give if you want to get. And remember that the highest virtue is to battle against iniquity, no matter what the cost may be. The authorities hastened to release Bose. On January 26, 1941, Subhash Bose disappeared from his residence. The news spread like a wild fire. He reached Kabul via the North-west Frontier with the help of Panthan patriots. From Kabul he was flown to Germany. From there he went to Japan in a torpedo boat.

Netaji was a patriot to the last drop of his blood. In his passionate love for the motherland, he was prepared to do whatever it takes to liberate his country. In a speech, he once mentioned—

**All my life, I have been the servant of India,
and until the last hour of my life. I shall**

remain one. My allegiance (support) and loyalty has ever been and will ever be to India alone, no matter in what part of the world I may live.

In Singapore, Subhash Bose organised the Indian National Army and the I.N.A. fought right up to the gates of India. Subhash Bose did the greatest work of his life in South-East Asia. Although the veil has been lifted from his activities in Burma and Malaya of his heroic feats against heavy odds are still shrouded in mystery. Even the material that has come through is bathed in the spirit of supreme sacrifice. The Indian National Army started off with the Great Proclamation. The Struggle for India's Freedom, it said, is being fought continuously for the last two hundred years.

The battle of Plassey was fought in 1757. It was the first battle that the British actually fought and won by foul means. Under the flag of Bahadur Shah in 1857 we fought our last war as free men. Forcibly disarmed, the Indian people lay prostrate for a while. Subhash Bose said—**With the birth of the Indian National Congress, there came a new awakening.** Bahadur Shah, the last king of Delhi, had died in Rangoon. Subhash Bose paid a touching visit to the tomb of Bahadur Shah in Rangoon. The resolve of the Indian National Army to march from Rangoon to Delhi became a symbol of patriotism and great national determination, because Bahadur Shah left behind pathetic memories in Burma.

Subhash Bose said–

With the slogan 'Onward to Delhi, on our lips, let us continue to fight till our National Flag flies over the Viceroy's House in New Delhi and the Azad Hind Fauj holds its victory parade inside the ancient Red Fortress of the Indian Metropolis.

Subhash was first of all called Gandhi "Rashtarpita" on 4th June, 1944. Fighting under the most trying conditions, the Indian Officers and men displayed unusual courage and grit. They reached right upto the gats of Bengal.

Subhash Bose said–

It is the finger of God," that is the pointing the way towards the Indian freedom, we have only to do our duty and to pay the price of India's liberty.

Some of the slogans and expressions are still unforgettable to his countrymen, for instance. "Jai Hindi", etc. His following countrymen, for instance "Jai Hind" etc. His followings words will ever be written in letters of gold :

Give me blood and I'll give you freedom.

After the surrender of Japan to the Allied Powers, he flew from Bangkok to Tokyo. Unfortunately, he died during an air crash in August 18th, 1945 as announced by Radio Tokyo. It was a tragic moment, but an unflinching hero as he had been all his life, his tragic death was nothing short of

a hero's last moment on earth. There is much mention of Mr. Tojo, the Prime Minister of Japan from 1941 to 1944. It is said that he was a great supporter of Subhash Chandra Bose and was one of the motivating forces behind the Indian National Army (INA) led by Bose.

This in the words of Tagore is the india of Subhash Bose's dreams—

**Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high,
Where knowledge is free:
Where the world has not been broken into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come from the depth of truth.
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection ;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is fed forward by
Thee into the ever-widening thought and action.**

—Gitajnali



19. SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

Sardar Patel was discipline and discipline was Sardar Patel. He was a front-rank leader who preferred to work in the background. He was the best man behind Gandhi, but the "worst " man before Nehru. The latter did not like Patel and was almost afraid of him, as a younger brother fears an elder brother. He would have been an ideal Prime Minister but destiny made him only a Deputy Prime Minister. On the contrary, Nehru would have been ideal Deputy Prime Minister but destiny made him the Prime Minister. Jinnah and Muslim Leaguers accepted the challenge of Sardar Patel as Sardar Patel accepted the challenge of Jinnah and Muslim Leaguers. The challenge lasted twenty years and only ended in a draw after the Partition. Jinnah and Muslim Leaguers were afraid of Sardar Patel. His police action in Hyderabad was a master-stroke after the Partition. It caused Jinnah a brain stroke and killed him!

The name of Sardar Patel stands for discipline not only in the Congress but throughout the theatre of Indian politics. He was a schoolmaster of "Colleges and Halls" fame of ancient days. His name was discipline. Learning, Virtue, Piety, and Truth were precious to him. He was one of the most incorruptible men in the Congress. He inculcated (impressed) duty and discipline among the camp-followers of the Indian National Congress. He dwelt like a hermit,

putting self-discipline and party discipline above everything. Self-kindness for him was self cruelty. He merged himself in the party machine. Gujarat gave us Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest apostle of non-violence. And it also gave us Sardar Patel, the great disciplinarian. Non-violence needs wed discipline. With discipline, non-violence is the greatest instrument of the gods. Without discipline, non-violence is a mere battledore for children.

Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel were the two wheels of the chariot of idealism. If one was the spiritual fire, the other was the moral steel. Without Sardar Patel, Gandhiji was an inner fire without steel. Without Gandhiji, Sardar was the moral without fire. Sardar Patel was born in 31st October, 1875 and so he was younger to Mahatma Gandhi by about six years. When Gandhiji came from South Africa in 1915, Sardar Patel was a young promising barrister. First he laughed at Mahatma Gandhi but finally came to be his disciple and finally bade goodbye to the bar for the cause of national independence.

The year 1918 was a year of acute famine. The peasantry was in a great difficulty. Mahatma Gandhi wanted to try his weapon of non-violence. He wanted a lieutenant. And he found him in Sardar Patel. He declared that people should refuse to pay land tax to the Government. Young Patel and his Satyagraha Guru toured the villages. They educated the people. Political education was vital (important) to political movement. The poor people stood up and faced the British Empire. The Satyagraha was a great success!

This was followed by the great strike of the mills in 1918. Sardar Patel was able to knit (join) together the labouring population of Ahmedabad. He formed an efficient Trade Union which served as a model in other parts of the country.

Then there came Gandhiji's Non-Co-operation Movement in 1920-21. He became chairman of the reception committee for the Congress Session in Ahmedabad. It condemned the spilling of the blood in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar. The Congress Session at Ahmedabad was practically a "National Council of War." Then there followed a tug-of-war between the Changers and the Non-Changers. The Changers were led by C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru. The Non-Changers were led by Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel. Gandhi had the service of the third giant C. Rajagopalachari. The Gandhites resigned at the historic session of the Congress at Bombay on May 27, 1923. It was really a success for the Changers. The ideology of C.R. Das held the field. The Congressmen swept the polls. All the top posts in the legislatures and municipalities were snatched by the Congressmen. Vithabhai Patel, the brother of Sardar Patel, became the mayor of Ahmedabad.

The Battle of Bardoli in 1928 brought Patel a tremendous victory and got him the title of "Sardar" from Gandhiji. The Government wanted to raise the revenue by 25 percent. There was no justification for it. The Congress told people to resist the demand.

"Tell Government", said, Sardar Patel to the people, "You can do what you like, but only by force

you will get us to agree to what we do not like. Cut me to pieces but I shall not pay." Wretched agents swooped to molest men and women. 17,000 men and 40,000 buffaloes were locked up for three months. But the people would not yield. No wonder, the Governor offered terms to Sardar Patel, He refused the Governor's terms. Then Mahatma Gandhi brought about a compromise. The Lahore session demanded complete Independence in 1930 and Mahatma Gandhi marched to Delhi with Sardar Patel as his lieutenant. His arrest electrified Gujarat.

Sardar Patel became President of the Congress for the session at Karachi in 1931. "I am not interested in loves and fishes of offices or legislative honours" he said, "The peasantry do not understand them." When the Congress Assembly Party was formed in 1935, he was the strongest man in it. During the Congress Ministries, he was busy with the broom (sweeping implement). He cleaned up graft and greediness. In August, 1942 Sardar Patel was arrested in the Quit India Movement. In 1947 he became the Home Minister of India. His greatest achievement was the integration of the princely 562 states in India.

This is an elucidating article by U.N. Dhebar who knew them personally and had worked shoulder to shoulder with them. This is his impression of the Three Titans who worked for the independence of India. In the course of my 30 years of public life, it has been my good fortune and privilege intimately to serve under Bapu, the Sardar and Panditji. They were three mighty personalities. Their backgrounds

and approaches to various issues were different and yet all the three were consecrated (sanctified) to the same goal so far as the people of India were concerned. Many time during my spare moments, I have tried to assess the impact to these personalities on the country as a whole as well as on the individuals through whom they operated. Every time, I have found that the impact differed to the extent their backgrounds and approaches differed.

There was, however, something common among the three which enabled them to function together in the common cause as a team. For that reason, the impact worked to the benefit of the country greatly. One thing that was common to all the three was their indomitable will and courage to sacrifice themselves. So far Gandhiji was concerned, sacrifice was an integral part of his life's routine. It was a part of his spiritual discipline to reach the goal of self-realisation. He rarely missed an opportunity to warn those who worked for that goal that "without courage all other virtues would tend to become vices or at least would be sterile (up productive)." His dream to face death with the name of God on his lips he considered God to be indistinguishable from Truth and Love—was fulfilled in letter and spirit.

With the Sardar courage and sacrifice were part of his temperament. His life from childhood were replete (fullfilled) with incidents of courageous defiance everywhere— defiance in his house, in the classroom or in the Village. He carried courage along with his lawyer's brief to the court-room and asserted his personality to the full on all particularly on judges

of doubtful integrity. In political life, there has not been a man who was more fearless than the Sardar in calling a spade a spade. Nothing but the iron will of the indomitable Sardar could have liquidated (cleared) the princely order. Unpopularity did not at all bother him, once he was convinced that he was doing his duty.

In the case of Panditji, the source of courage was his faith in the working of the laws of social dynamics. They constituted the bedrock of his indomitable will. This was a conviction born of an objective appreciation of the forces in operation. He was also convinced that the working of the laws of social dynamics was not always according to schedule or time-table and not always even or uniform. Whenever he found that the steps he had advocated were premature and the situation unripe, he was prepared to make adjustments even at the risk of being misunderstood to be vacillating. Not he, but the situation vacillated (wavered). The Gandhian era was a daily lesson in courageous definance under the spell of a compelling duty. Who but men with such courage could have dared, for instance, to think of a many-sided struggle involving historic assaults simultaneously on political tutelage (production) of the British and th feudal Princes, social disabilities and economic underdevelopment.

Many times I have been asked about the reason for difference in the qualitative functioning of the Congress between its early days and the recent past. The difference has been that in place of three, we had

been left with one such person. The sterling patriotism of the three leaders became contagious for the simple reason that it was accompanied by an unshakable resolve to stake their whole being in the fight for liberation of the country. Bapu courted murderous assaults. Panditji long terms of imprisonment: and the Sardar, venomous attacks of the Opposition and of disgruntled Congressmen with the same indifference as once faces duststorms. their sense of purpose, however, was so keen that they realised that in the overall freedom strggle, and repture would be disastrous.

Bapu set the pace in evolving a leadership based on an all-inclusive relationship, of which political relationship was but a part. it was because of these three that the Congress became a family dedicated to a common mission. The ties they forged have loosened in the recent past and they may disintegrate in course of time. However, it is a tribute to the solidarity of those three uncommon leaders that the ties have endured the Congress Working Committee forgetting personal claims, threw its weight in favour of an uncontested election for the party leader and when on June 2, the Congress Parliamentary Party endorsed Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri's nomination unanimously. Mr. Morarji Desai standing down in a spirit of sacrifice and Mr. Nanda giving a lead in self-abnegation (renunuation).

But three were facts of the situation as I said above, when the impact differed because of the differing background. Gandhiji was a politician wending his way towards a spiritual objective. By the

tie he arrived in India, he had reached a higher stage in that process. It could be said that he was a spiritual leader leading a national movement. Panditji, too, was no politician in the sense in which the word is understood. His loyalty was mainly to the evolution of man on scientific lines.

Bapu threw himself into politics because, as he said, politics was throttling every activity intended for the uplift of mankind. With Panditji, a political struggle had become essential because imperialism, feudalism and conservatism were halting the march of the common people in the colonial countries towards a new social existence based upon science and technology. In the case of one, the urge was spiritual in the case of the other, the urge was not material, but born of an intellectual conviction that science had a role to play effectively than religion in lifting up the people.

With the Sardar, politics was a struggle, pure and simple for the liberation of the toiling masses. To him this struggle could not be fought successfully unless the masses were mobilised and thrown into the vortex of the struggle. The Bardoli 'satyagraha, which brought him the title of Sardar, was a peasant revolt against the 'zoolum of the British Raj.' the INTUC was a forum to mobilise factory labour. His was the approach of the mass political leader who represented the interests of the peasant and the worker.

The resulting impacts of the three leaders were naturally different. Bapu led us to think of spirituality

and emphasised the disciplines of spirituality i.e., truth, love, non-possession, celibacy, austerity and so on, which the normal politician considered redundant for a political organisation. Panditji's emphasis on science drew us into the vortex of a struggle for the planned development of our manpower and material re-sources. The Sardar injected into us a thirst for land reforms and development of rural resources.

His greatest achievement was perhaps the merger of Hyderabad and other about 600 princely states with the Indian Union and he will always be thankfully remembered by his countrymen for this. He is rightly known as the "Iron Man" of India. He was a great political leader, patriot and statesman who instilled confidence into others. One aspect of his personality which is often lost sight of was his great sense of humour which cheered all around him and which was even recognized by Gandhiji who himself was a great humorist.

The spiritual of Gandhiji thought in terms of trusteeship; the scientific in Panditji thought in terms of socialism; the practical in the Sardar was motivated by the approach of dealing with first tins first. There was not conflict between the three approaches. Differences in emphasis merely portrayed the differences in their background. Some people were interested in magnifying their differences. But the greatness of these leaders lay in not missing the focus. The focus was the need to mobilise all the resources—spiritual, scientific and

earthly—to secure political, social and economic freedom for the people of this ancient land. He died on 15th December 1950 in Bombay at aged 76 due to heart failure.

Sardar Patel will live in history as a great disciplinarian, the Iron Man of India, who would neither be corrupt nor let anybody be corrupt. He was well-informed about everybody who was somebody in the Congress. His power was full of holy horror. His voice shook the delinquent (defaulting). The Prime Minister of India Sh. Narendra Modi inaugurated on 31.10,2016 length of 182 meter statue of Sh. Sardar Patel known as Statue of Unity in Gujrat on the 144th birthday of him.

If ever it chanced, as sometimes chance it must.

That one, among so many, overleaps

The limits of control, his gentle eye

Grows stern, and darts a severe rebuke.



20. DR. RAJINDER PARSAD

DR. Rajinder Prasad, the first President of the Republic of India (1950-1962) was a lawyer turned journalist. He was a comrade (companion) of Mahatma Gandhi, in the non co-operation movements for independence and was also president of the Congress Party in 1934, 1939 and 1947.

It was not Babu Rajinder Parsad who tried to seek and meet Mahatma Gandhi. It was Mahatma Gandhi who tried to seek and meet Babu Rajinder Prasad. Babu Rajinder Parsad had carved (cut) a niche (cavity) for himself in the Temple of Fame long before Gandhiji came from South Africa and blazed (glowed) a new trail across the Indian horizon. Babu Rajinder Parsad was a very prominent lawyer of Bihar and a leading light in the social and political circles, of whom Gandhiji heard and went to Patna to enlist his support for the cause of freedom. Babu Rajinder Parsad was not at home and Gandhiji passed the night in his verandah, just as you and I would do if we sought an interview with a minister who is out. But Babu Rajinder Parsad was no minister. Indeed he was more than a minister. He was the man whom the whole Bihar respected because of his integrity and sympathy for the down and the downtrodden (poor).

Born at Zerradai Bihar 3rd December, 1884, Dr. Rajinder Parsad had his early education at home. He was his mother's son and like Mahatma Gandhi was deeply influenced by the piety of his mother. She

infused in him the teachings of Ramayana. He was serious and of a philosophical bent of mind even in his childhood. Instead of indulging in mischiefs, he was contented with watching the mischief of others. He has drawn a beautiful picture of a simple and simpleton Maulvi in his autobiography. The Maulvi was none other than his own tutor.

Babu Rajinder Parsad have had a brilliant academic career. He stood first in all the examinations from the matriculation to the Master of Arts. He qualified himself for law and set up a lucrative practice at Calcutta. But his heart was in the social and political work. He was burning with zest (Relish) and zeal (enthusiasm) for the independence of the country. It was only his family circumstances which kept him in bondage to that jealous mistress Law.

Babu Rajinder Parsad was practising at the Patna High Court when he met Mahatma Gandhi. Rather Mahatma Gandhi met him. In fact Gandhi went there especially and particularly to enlist his support for the cause of independence. It was the year 1917, Babu Rajinder Parsad soon fell under the charm of Mahatma and became his follower.

Rajinder Parsad championed the cause of the cultivators in Champaran and drew the attention of the country to the great cause which he had espoused (engaged). These were the indigo workers badly and brutally treated by the white planters. Babu Rajendra Parsad stood for the indigo workers and the nation stood for Dr. Rajinder Parsad. Gandhiji

was all admiration for him. It was a thumping victory for the constructive programme in the struggle for independence. The year 1920 found Babu Rajinder Parsad a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi in the First Non Co-operation Movement in the struggle for independence. He renounced everything for the nation and became a great Satyagrahi in the ranks close behind Mahatma Gandhi.

Great as was the political and social work of Babu Rajinder Parsad, he did his greatest work when he organized the relief of the suffering humanity in the Bihar Earthquake and during the floods. Despite his own ill-health, he spurred himself to superhuman activity and dragged other along close behind him. His work was a magnificent (help) success. He helped save thousands of lives. He brought succour (help) to the millions.

It was in recognition of his services to the nation in the relief work that he was elected as President of the Bombay Session of the Indian National Congress in 1934. He was re-elected as President of the Congress again in 1934. He has all along been a very prominent member of the Congress Working Committee.

When the Interim Government was formed in 1946 with Congress-Muslim League collaboration, Dr. Rajinder Parsad was in this Cabinet. he held the portfolio of Food. He was the First Minister of Food and was free from that blame which has stuck to the successive lineage of ministers in this department. Food situation in the country was very grave: but

thanks to his efficient handling, that the catastrophe (ruin) of the countrywide famine was averted.

When the constituent Assembly was formed immediately after the achievement of independence in 1947, Dr. Rajinder Parsad was elected its President. The Constitution of India was completed in 1949. When the Constitution of the Republic of India came into force on the Republic Day, January 26, 1950, Dr. Rajinder Parsad became the First President of the Republic of India, and he held this office for twelve long years till 13th May, 1962.

Superficially there prevailed warmest relations between the President Parsad and the Prime Minister Nehru; but they had serious psychological and political differences which now and then simmered (cooked gently) and rumbled (made the sound like thunder) to the surface. For one thing, Mr. Nehru was not in favour of Dr. Rajinder Parsad becoming the President of India. Left to himself, Mr. Nehru would have liked Rajagopalachari, the then Governor-General of India to continue as the First President of India. But Sardar Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister, was of different mind.

While the Prime Minister Nehru favoured Rejagopalachari for the Presidentship, Deputy Prime Minister Patel favoured Dr. Rajinder Parsad. And the Deputy Prime Minister won a victory over the Prime Minister. Dr. Rajinder Parsad became the President of India. That shows that power behind the throne of the Congress was Sardar Patel and not Prime Minister Nehru. We have already stressed this point

in the chapter on Sardar Patel. He was in fact ideally fitted to the Prime Minister of India while Mr. Nehru would have been an ideal Deputy Prime Minister. But fate willed it otherwise.

Several times during their tenure as President and Prime Minister, Parsad and Nehru were at loggerheads (fools) on the interpretation of subtle constitutional points. Rajinder Parsad believed that the subtle constitution gave the president great constitutional powers and he could act without consulting the Cabinet. Mr. Nehru, on the other hand, believed that the president was only a figurehead like the king of India and that all powers belonged to the Prime Minister. This struggle for the interpretation of the Constitution continued almost till the retirement of Dr. Rajinder Parsad.

“Rajan Babu” as he was popularly known, was the most well read man of his times. Noble character, charming manners, sincerity and truthfulness—all made him a ‘perfect gentleman’. He had remarkable organisational capacity and leadership qualities. A true follower of Gandhiji, Rajinder Prasad belonged to the Right Wing of the Congress. He was a high intellectual, a great educationist and an able lawyer. He represents the hard core, of the type of people who was the backbone to our National Movement.

Dr. Rajinder Parsad wanted to continue as President for another term. He did not want to retire into wilderness after a period of life-long national service. He was a patient of asthma and he did not hope to live long. He wanted to die as President of

India rather than as an ex-President. He pleaded with Nehru to allow him to continue for another term but Nehru put down a heavy hand.

Mr. Nehru did not agree. So Dr. Prasad left Rashtrapati Bhawan in great disappointment and retired to Sadaquat Ashram in Patna where he died within a year after his retirement on 28th Feb., 1963 at the age of 79, conscious of wrong having been done to him by Mr. Nehru. "Line For An Old Man", by T.S. Eliot would express the mind of Dr. Rajinder Prasad on the eve of his death in Sadaquat Ashram—

**The tiger in the tiger-pit
Is not more irritable than I.
The whipping tail is not more still
Than when I smell the enemy
Writing in the essential blood
Or dangling from the friendly tree.
When I lay bare the tooth of wit
The hissing over the archer's tongue
Is more affectionate than hate,
More bitter than the love of youth,
And inaccessible by the young.
Reflected from my golden eye
The dullard knows that he is mad.
Tell me if I am not glad!**



21. JAWAHAR LAL NEHRU

IN England, the real democracy started when Sir Robert Walpole became the Prime Minister. If Walpole was the first Prime Minister of a great democracy, Jawahar Lal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of one of the greatest democracies of the world. But he was different from Walpole. Whereas Walpole followed the policy: "Everyman has his price," the Indian leader had no such crafty (artful) slogans and policies. In spite of his so-called westernism, Nehru was deeply rooted in the Indian cultural heritage, philosophy and ethos (general characteristics), as is quite evident from his An Autobiography and even more explicitly (clearly) from his The Discovery of India. He was a patriot to the core and this does not need to be stressed in view of his having spent the prime of his life in the British jails for the cause of India Independence Movement. That in this, he was greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi, also need no emphasis and, as we know, even after Gandhiji's assassination, he became the chief exponent of his ideology.

He was born in a rich aristocratic family on 14th, November 1889, at Allahabad. His father Pt. Moti Lal Nehru was an affluent (wealthy) practising lawyer who also came under the sway (rule) of Gandhiji's independence struggle. Even his mother Swaroop Rani took an active part in this struggle. He had his early education at home. He went to England for

higher studies. He joined the Public School at Harrow. He became a barrister but the call for joining the Independence Movement was too strong to be resisted and he fell headlong into it.

He was a man of great personal charm and broad love for humanity, for the depressed classes in particular. His idealism was not skin-deep. He had no malice for even the cruel rulers but wanted only justice for his motherland from them. His writings in jail and speeches bear ample testimony (evidence) to his being free from rancour (high) hatred or feeling of superiority.

He was a true nation list as well as internationalist. When he became the Prime Minister of India in 2nd September, 1946, he undertook the task of building India and making her a great nation. He believed in heavy industry and dams for development of industry and agriculture respectively. He called the Bhakra Dam and th great steel plants "the new temples of India". Mr. M.C. Chagla, one of his cabinet ministers described him as a "humanist" above everything else. This is what he said—

If there is one word that describes the man's character as a whole that word would be 'Humanist'. Nehru was a humanist in the sense that he thought primarily of human beings, their difficulties, worries and anxieties, above Parliament, administration and all the trapping (ornamental harness) of civilisation, When he thought of the

masses, he was not thinking of an abstraction (absence of mind) but of the individuals that constituted the mass. He had power immense power, but that did not diminish (decrease) the interest he took in ordinary people, particularly children and in human relationships.

He was a true democrat. With the popularity he had among the Indian masses at the time of Independence, he could easily become a dictator if he so liked. But democracy being engraved in the innermost shrine of his heart, he chose to remain a genuine democrat as ever. His great democratic mode of mind is corroborated by M.C. Chagla in his book "Roses in December". The Indian people knew it then and know it now and hold him in high esteem which is not likely to recede (withdraw) at any time for generations to come. It was not for nothing that Mahatma Gandhi virtually chose him as his heir and in spite of Nehruism being at variance with Gandhism in certain ways. Gandhiji deemed him tallest among the Indian leaders who could steer the destiny of a great nation and, as we know, with utmost devotion and sincerity and most effectively, he did it.

He was a great lover of peace in the world. He is still known as the apostle of peace the world over. He formulated India's foreign policy as a nation that loved peace, social security and economic development for all. He wanted to create a world free from tension, war, social discrimination and economic exploitation.

He had a great regard for and hopes from the U.N. and under his Prime Ministership India sent her

troops to Korea to bring peace to that war-torn nation. Indian troops also worked for peace in Congo. When Pakistan attacked Kashmir in 1948 and India was approached by the Hari Singh Maharaja of Kashmir for help, India did so after the merger of Kashmir with the Indian Union. Thus attack on Kashmir was considered an attack on India and when the Indian forces were pushing away the invaders ruthlessly, Nehru suddenly ordered ceasefire and took the matter to the United Nations, hoping for justice from that August body. But, as is well-known the attitude of the world body was only disappointing. Still, in the UN and continued paying the necessary funds and fulfilling all international obligations under its leadership.

It was with the idea of permanent peace that India signed the Panchsheel with China under the dynamic leadership of Jawahar Lal Nehru. But, unfortunately India was stabbed in the back and attacked in 1962 by China, throwing all the pious slogan of "Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai" to winds. Earlier just as Pakistan had captured about one third of Kashmir and has held it in illegal occupation since then, China annexed thousands of kilometres of Indian land even if most of it is a barren region.

The attack by China was a great shock to India and to Nehru personally as it was never expected. India's debacle at the hands of China probably hastened Nehru's end. Many may find Nehru's foreign policy to be defective for producing unwittingly the thorn of Kashmir problem and the loss of national prestige because of China's mauling

proud India forces.

As a fallout of Gandhiji's stern ideology of non-violence. Nehru was perhaps taken in by the Chinese (smooth glib) talks as genuine and sincere. Now the time had come to realize that India had to be a strong country militarily to defend her freedom. In reality, Nehru himself said at the time of Chinese attack:—

Freedom is in peril (danger), defend it with your full might.

It must be noted that Gandhiji had often said that non-violence could be practised most effectively only by the strong. It was not meant for the weak. This clearly meant when applied to a country that it must be first strong and mighty to be able to follow the policy of non-violence and peace. Thus, India had of necessity and ideological consideration to be strong both militarily and economically.

Nehru, however, must not be faulted on this ground. On the one hand, he was inexperienced in the art of governing and international dealings. On the other hand, having passed through a long era of non-violent and self-sacrificial struggle which had borne fruit, he was bound not to suspect others' intentions, as he did in the case of Pakistan and China. Moreover, by laying stress on development of agriculture and industry, he probably wanted first to make India a great economic power before she could become a great military power and in this, he was probably right in his own way, though it was later realized that both aspects have to go hand in hand.

Whatever might have been the compulsion of

Jawahar Lal Nehru in seeming to be too simplistic in certain matters pertaining to foreign affairs such as taking the Kashmir problem to the U.N. or being almost unprepared on the Indo-Chinese border, India's voice was reverently heard in the international corridors during his tenure and India was a force to be reckoned with in the matter of world peace, if not in the military or economic fields.

One of the greatest achievements of Nehru was to keep India aloof from the cold war of power bloc. At that time the world was divided into the western and Russian blocs which both were hostile to each other. Nehru offered the third alternative in the shape of a non-aligned group by becoming one of the founding fathers of the Non-Aligned Movement along-with Col. Nasser of Egypt and marshal Tito of now defunct Yugoslavia. The main plank of this movement was the pursuit of peace and remaining free from any military treaties and agreements. A large number of countries joined this movement and thus there was a realization among the poor and developing countries that only a world free from war, cold or hot, could serve their purpose for economic development through mutual co-operation, faith and confidence.

Nehru was a socialist to the core and it was one of his cherished aims to make India a land free from poverty, inequality, discrimination of any kind, illiteracy and disease. He believed in socialistic pattern of society and the Five-Year Plans were started under his leadership. He had a rational mind

and he believed in the prevalence of a scientific spirit. He wanted to free the people's minds from superstitious practices and beliefs. Hence he laid stress on scientific education and in starting new universities and educational institutes to enhance the cause of knowledge.

He was a great writer of English prose apart from being a great author. His books are an epitome of knowledge conveyed in a simple, impressive non-ornate style. He wrote many books such as "Discovery of India", "Autobiography" and "Glimpses of World History" etc. He loved Nature and particularly the Himalayas. He was an agnostic but a great humanist and had love for children dear to his heart. Children still call him "Chacha Nehru" and his birthday is celebrated every year as children's day. His love for roses and animals is also proverbial. Nehru passed away on 27th May, 1964 when he was 75 years old.

Nehru was born in a confusion of political jungle and he died in a confusion of economic jungle. The following lines from Robert Frost found written in his own hand on his writing pad depict the state and sincerity of his mind—

**The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And many miles to go before I sleep,
And many miles to go before I sleep.**



22. SMT. INDIRA GANDHI

Indira is a young woman with an old head on her shoulders. She is heavy with experience, the family know how to public life. She is the great daughter of a great father Jawaharlal and the grand-daughter of a great man Motilal. Many historic events in the history of India took place in her house. Some men are born great; some achieve greatness; and some have greatness thrust on them. Jawaharlal Nehru was born great. He was born in a circle in which political power rested. He was a small star on the Solar System of Gandhiji right from his birth.

Motilal Nehru had achieved greatness as a prominent lawyer of India and he built for himself an empire in the political world of India, which ultimately rocketted Nehru into the highest heavens of statesmanship. Not that Jawaharlal Nehru was not great in his own right. Not that his father's stock of prestige alone could have made him what he did become. But his father's personal relationships and affluence was a great asset which equally intelligent men like Subhash Bose and Jaiprakesh Narain lacked. Many poor young patriots if they had the same advantages which Nehru had might well have done equally well, and not died unknown, unsung and unattended.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi, on the contrary, has greatness thrust on her ! She never desired to be the Prime Minister of India. Her father never prepared her for the onerous (burden some) duties of Prime

Minister. Not that she is not fit to be the Prime Minister by virtue of her family inheritance and world-wide experience. But it is fact that she never desired to be one. Circumstances thrust the highest office on her young shoulders. And if the stars stand by her, she will go far in life. And there is no reason why the stars should not stand by her if she can rise above the forest of corruption and clear the tangled under-wood from the feet of the poor and the downtrodden who lie wrapped like a goat in the coils (circles) of a boe-constrictor.

No doubt, she was an iron lady who not only humbled her own errant (wandering inquest of an adventure) and arrogant defiant party men at the hustings but also cut to size the conceited Pakistan rulers who had developed the habit of talking more than their worth. She was born on 19th November, 1917 at Allahabad. She was the illustrious daughter of the renowned Indian leader and freedom fighter, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru who became the first Prime Minister of India as she gained freedom on 15th August, 1947.

She was born during a period of great political upheavals and her childhood was spent in a period of turmoil (trouble). Her grandfather Pandit Moti Lal Nehru was an affluent (wealthy) lawyer. Thus, it can be said of her as it is said of Jawahar Lal Nehru that she was born with a silver spoon in her mouth. At that time, Anand Bhawan at Allahabad was the hub (central part) of all political activities in India. It was the central place to meet for great Indian National Congress leaders. Even Mahatma Gandhi often stayed here. So her life therefore was all a political

affair and nothing else. In other words, politics was there in her veins and arteries. She had to lead a childhood of great contrasts. On the one hand, she had all the luxuries and facilities a well-to-do family could enjoy and on the other hand, she had to lead almost a lonely life as her father had often to be in jail even when it was not so, he hardly had any time to spare for her. This had an adverse effect on her studies, which could not be regular and systematic. She had to content herself by studying at home. However, she was later lucky in being able to study in the calm and natural atmosphere of Shantiniketan. Still later, she also studied in Switzerland than at Oxford in England.

She visited the Sabarmati Ashram at Ahmedabad and felt greatly impressed by the simple and austere life being led thereby the inmates. Gandhiji's ample influence on her was quite perceptible (intellect) and she always remained a woman of peace except when she was compelled to retaliate as Pakistan attacked India in December, 1971. Even then, she signed the Shimla Agreement with Pakistan for the sake of peace even when all the clauses of it were not quite favourable to India.

When she was just 13 years old, she formed a "Monkey Army" of children of her age to serve guest leaders who took part in political confabulations (familiar talks) and even more importantly, to carry secret messages to different Congress leaders from one to the other.

When her mother, Kamla Nehru, fell seriously ill and had to go to Switzerland for treatment, she accompanied her. She served her like a nurse but her

life could not be saved. After her death, she went to England in pursuit of her studies at Oxford. Later, she herself was not feeling quite well and had to be sent to Switzerland where she regained her health. She was greatly devoted to her father and tried to serve him with great devotion and dedication as any loving daughter should do. Jawahar Lal was also very fond of her but could not remain with her for many days continuously because of his political commitments and more conspicuously (clearly) when he had to serve several terms of imprisonment in the British prison. He, however, wrote to her often from the jail and, later, his writing appeared in book form as "Letters from a Father to his Daughter."

When she returned from Switzerland, she expressed the desire to marry Feroze Gandhi. Since the latter was a Parsi, the conservative Hindus were much agitated against her decision. But she was a girl of a strong will, a quality which continued to be embedded (laid firmly) permanently in her mind as she grew up to be the Prime Minister of India. Whatever her will, her father himself was greatly devoted to her and would not like to displease her. He accepted her decision happily, rejecting all the protestations of the conservative people. Feroze Gandhi was at that time the Editor of the National Herald, a newspaper having a good reading public then and he rose to be a second (around of ladder) rung Congress leader later.

Indira Gandhi proved to be a good servant at various levels. At first, as a child, she served the political leaders who met at Anand Bhawan. Later she served her mother when she was ill. Still later, she

served her father when he felt lonely after Kamla Nehru's death and also when he became the Prime Minister of India and remained as such for about seventeen years. Now, she had her sphere of service to others widened, as first she became the President of the Congress, which happened during Jawahar Lal's lifetime and then the Minister for Information and Broadcasting in Lal Bahadur Shastri's cabinet after Nehru's death.

After Shastri's sudden death at Taskent, Russia in 1966, she became the Prime Minister of India. Now, she got the real chance to serve the people of India, a task she performed exquisitely (dedicately) well despite a number of blunders, which she made.

In 1969, she found the political atmosphere in the country to be volatile (Apt to change) and according to her, a cause of concern. So, she dissolved the Parliament and went for elections in which she got a thumping majority in the Lok Sabha. The Congress got split but it was Congress (I) that is (Indira) that won. Later, in 1975, she had to impose Internal Emergency which many political thinkers and especially the common people thought and still think to be a gret blunder. At first, it appeared that with the imposition of Internal Emergency, things would improve. Even some enlightened people, intellectuals and others, praised the emergency. Vinoba Bhave called it "Anushasan Parva". but, as soon there emerged the misuse and abuse of emergency by the police and bureaucrats, emergency came to be recognized as loathsome. Thousands of political leaders of opposite parties were put behind prison bars and life became hard for

the common man.

Jaya Prakesh Narayan, one of the most enlightened and revered political leaders of the period started a peaceful but forceful movement against Indira Gandhi and within a short span of time the masses got revulsion (sudden change of feeling) for her government. The result was that she lost elections in 1977 and the Janata Party government got installed at the Centre. Actually Allahabad High Court Judgement went against her in a case.

Soon, infighting started in the Janata Party and people were soon fed up with it. The result was that in the 1980 elections. Indira Gandhi was against voted to power. Several remarkable things happened or were done in India during the regime of Indira Gandhi. In 1971 Pakistan was utterly defeated in a decisive war. Actually, the war was forced on India. The cruelties inflicted by the army of Pakistan on the people in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) led to the exodus (departure) of more than 10 million people into India. It became very burdensome for the government of India to support such a huge number of refugees. Indira Gandhi raised a hue and cry against the terror let loose by Pakistani army on innocent people of East Bengal and even visited America in this connection, but the world opinion could not be aroused, as the western countries turned a deaf ear to India's pleadings.

War became inevitable and Indian forces had to join hands with the Mukti Vahini of Bangladesh, which became a reality as a result of war. It was on 3rd December 1971 that Pakistan made sudden

aerial attacks on six important Indian airports and India had to reply effectively. Pakistan was brought to its knees and more than ninety thousand of its soldiers were captured by the Indian forces. They were later released as Simla Agreement was signed in 1972. Thus she showed amazing diplomatic and military skills. Atel Bihari Vajapayee called her "Durga".

India's defence preparedness was most effectively proved in the 1971 war. But India continued augmenting its military might as the time passed. Pokharan I took place in 1974 and India clearly demonstrated its capacity of producing a nuclear bomb. India, however, chose to desist from further experiments as her nuclear policy was all along peaceful. Earlier the Aryabhata had been sent into space. This showed at that early stage India's intentions to be a space power also.

It was during her regime that fourteen important banks were nationalised and the Pay Commission was set up to determine the scales and modes of perks of Central Government employees. During her period India also developed impressively in fields such as agriculture, industry, etc.

One of the most remarkable achievements of India during the period of Indira Gandhi is the commissioning of the Indian National Satellite which was launched in space with the SLV-III vehicle. Later, INSat-1B was launched on February 1, 1984. Since then India has sent several spacecrafts in space, which have helped in matters such as weather monitoring, telecommunications, TV, Computer connectivity, land and water resources, drought

monitoring, flood mapping etc.

It was unfortunate that turmoil continued in Kashmir and even more dangerous grew the condition in Punjab because of terrorism incited and supported by masters across the border. A great Indian and world leader as Indira Gandhi was, she had to pay with, her life when she fell a victim to the bullets of an assassin on October 31, 1984.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi started as Joan of Arc, and ended as King Lear. But in those 18 years of politics and power, she not only changed India, but also changed Pakistan. In her bid to reinvent the Congress and keep the reins over a nation, she also showed how power corrupts. She adhered to the quasi-socialist economic policies begun by her father. She also established closer relations with the Soviet Union, depending on that nation for support in India's longstanding conflict with Pakistan.

Indira Gandhi is immortalized in history as a forceful and capable ruler. Under her leadership, India became a strong country, making all round progress. She was a great crusader of world peace also. She added new dynamism to international politics, by strongly advocating the cause of the poor and backward countries of the world.

She will always be remembered as one of the greatest women of the world, a woman who steered the destiny of the greatest democracy of the world for more than 15 years a period of unusual disturbance. She was a great humanist and environmentalist and her speech at Stockholm

delivered to safeguard world environment will never be forgotten by lovers of mankind.

Indira Gandhi represents the spirit of Walt Whitman Facing West From California's Shores–

**Facing West from California's shores,
Inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet
unfound,
I, Child very old, over waves, towards the
house of maternity, the land of migrations,
look after,
Look off these shores of my Western sea, the
circle almost circled;
For starting westward from Hindustan, from
the vales of Kashmere.
From Asia from the north, from the God, the
sage and the hero,
From the south, from the flowery peninsulaj
and the spice islands,
Long having wander'd snce, round the earth
havng wandered,
Now I face home again, very peased and
joyous,
(But where is what I started for so long ago?
Andy why is it yer unfound?)**



23. LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI

Many a big man has left a small impression on the mind of Mother India. Many a Small Man has left a big impression on the mind of Mother India. The impression we create on the world, the psychological dent (small hallow) we make, does not depend on the size of our body and brain. An elephant has the biggest brain in the world, but it is not anywhere near to man. Two of the same men who left behind a big impression on the slate of time and tide were Napoleon Bounaparte and Lal Bahadur Shastri. The latter might well be called the Napoleon of the First Indo-Pakistan War.

We call it "first" because there are likely to be many more wars between India and Pakistan. We cannot help agreeing with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bhutto, that the Indo-Pakistan War will last a thousand years. England and France fought a Hundred Years War before they were reconciled. So did Canada and U.S.A. So will India and Pakistan. But whatever happens, we shall never forget Mr. Shastri who steered the nation manly and manfully through most difficult times in the history of Mother India.

When Lal Bahadur Shastri died at Tashkent on January 11, 1966, his 90 year old mother refused to believe it! "it cannot be true" she kept on saying. Latter when she heard that the body was being flown to Delhi, she asked : "Who will then tell me, it is already late and I should go and rest?"

Before the last Prime Minister emplaned for Tashkent on January, 3, 1966, his mother drove to the airport tarmac in a car to bless him. Lal Bahadur Shastri was born on October 2, 1904—thirty six years after Gandhiji was born on the same day as Gandhiji was born and they shared many common qualities. Shastri was indeed a Little Gandhi.

Shastri was born in Mughal Sarai, a railway colony, seven miles from Varanasi. His father, Sri Sharda Prasad, was an indigent (poor) school teacher and later a clerk in the Revenue Office in Allahabad. Lal Bahadur was berely a year and a half old when his father died. So Shastri was entirely brought up by his mother whom he paid his last respects before emplaning for Tashkent. As a child the boy lived in the family of his grandfather Hazari Lal. After passing sixth standard, he moved to Varanasi and joined high school. There he lived with his maternal uncle Raghunath Prasad who was a clerk in he Varanasi Municipality.

Lal Bahadur first saw Gandhiji when he was eleven years old. This was in 1915 when the Mahatma came to Varanasi to lay the foundation-stone of the buildings of Banaras Hindu University. It was for the young student an unforgettable memory and experience. As a school boy Lal Bahadur also enrolled himself in the boy scout movement, but in the indigenious (native) movement known as the Bharat Seva Samiti and not in the British officially-supported Bedren Powell movement. When Gandhiji

launched his first All-India non-cooperation movement in 1921, Lal Bahadur was 16 and about to appear for his School Leaving Certificate Examination. He heard Ghandiji again at Varanasi and decided to follow the Mahatma. In January, 1921, some of the National-minded professors of Banaras Hindu University, among them Acharya Kripalani, resigned their posts.

Some of the students also decided to come out of their colleges and schools to join the national movement. Among them was Lal Bahadur who did this to his uncle's consternation (error). His first encounter with the police came shortly after when he was a member of a banned procession and meeting. He was arrested but released. Therefore Lal Bahadur joined the Kashi Vidya Peeth, a Nationalist University very much suspect in the eyes of the then British Government. Its first Principal was the celebrated philosopher, Dr. Bhagwandas, and among Lal Bahadur's contemporaries at this institution were Algurai Shastri, T.N. Singh and Balkrishna Keskar. He studied there for four years taking his degree (Shastri) in the first division.

As a student in college he was as indigent as in school. He could not afford a bicycle and on some days had to walk 16 miles when he attended morning classes. Perhaps, it was here that influenced by Dr. Bhagwandas's Samanvaya Vada approach to life which denoted a synthesis (combination) between opposing views, Lal Bahadur acquired the habit of

mind which later was innate in (natural) him, always to attempt to reconcile seemingly conflicting views. Tashkent was the last and most dramatic illustration of this approach.

In 1926, soon after leaving the Kashi Vidya Peeth, Lal Bahadur joined as a life member the Servants of the People Society whose founder was the late Lala Lajpat Rai. More than any other institution of which he was a member, it was to influence his thought and outlook deeply. From thence onward he was a national missionary though never conspicuous (visible) in the public eye until many years later. Lal Bahadur shastri said –

It was due to my life membership of the Society that I got an opportunity to serve my country the most. The Society has been instrumental inculcating in me the true meaning of the word servant of the people.

About this time, in 1927, Lal Bahadur married Lalita Devi of Mirzapur and the only dowry he received at his own request from his father-in-law, who could afford more, was a charkha and a few yards of khadi. While working as a member of the Servants of the People Society in Allahabad, Lal Bahadur for the first time met Jawaharlal Nehru, then like him vaguely disturbed and rebellious over the moderate course of Congress politics. It is curious how in some respects the careers of the two men follow similar courses. In the later years following civil disobedience, Nehru had sought an

outlet for his ebullient (agitated) energy in the Allahabad Municipal Board of which he was chairman in 1923. Five years later, in a similar mood of frustration Lal Bahadur joined the same body and plunged into civil activities.

In 1929 Lal Bahadur, then 25, was among the vast crowd gathered at the Lahore Congress who watched Jawaharlal Nehru unfurl India's flag of independence on the banks of the Ravi. A year later followed the civil disobedience movement in which Lal Bahadur was sentenced to two-and-half years' imprisonment for calling upon the peasants to refuse to pay rent. Therefore, until 1954, he was to go to jail at frequent intervals and in all spent a total of nine years behind bars. He was to recall later "My Jail life" was interesting from more than one point of view. I used to do a lot of reading every time I went to jail. During one of his prison terms he occupied his time translating the biography of Madam Curie in Hindi.

Lal Bahadur's first spell in office was 1946 when the congress assumed power in the provinces under the system of provincial autonomy. For a brief period he served as Parliamentary Secretary to the late Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, the Chief Minister. Later, when the late Rafi Ahmed Kidwadi went to New Delhi, Lal Bahadur succeeded to his portfolio as Minister of Police and Transport, a charge he held until 1951 when he became a member of the Rajya Sabha.

Thereafter, as a minister at the centre, he came prominently into the public eye serving successively

as Minister for Railways and Transport from 1952 to 1958, as Minister of Transport and Communications from 1957 to 1958, as Minister for Commerce and Industry from 1958 to 1961 until in August 1963, along with five colleagues he resigned from the Central Cabinet under the Kamaraj Plan to devote himself to party and organizational work. It is well known that Mr. Nehru was reluctant to let him go but Lal Bahadur insisted as earlier he had insisted on resigning as Transport Minister following a number of railway accidents.

He was not long out of office. Following Nehru's debilitating (weakening) stroke at the Bhubaneswar Conference in January, 1963. Lal Bahadur's appointment as Minister without portfolio was announced, and there were oblique signs that Nehru, though he always disdained (seemed) from nominating his successor and even refrained from indicating him, was attempting to mould Lal Bahadur as a possible choice for that high office. The terms of Lal Bahadur as a possible choice for that high office. The terms of Lal Bahadur's appointment as Minister Without portfolio on January 22, 1964, charging him "to carry out function entrusted to him by the Prime Minister in relation to the Ministry of External Affairs and the Departments of Cabinet Secretariat and Atomic Energy" suggested this and the responsibilities with which Lal Bahadur was later entrusted notably during the Hazratbal episode in Kashmir, reinforced the impression.

Jawahar Lal Nehru died on 27th May, 1964.

Therefore, Gulzari lal Nanda became the caretaker Prime Minister till Lal Bahadur was appointed to that August post. Certainly, the work was stupendous (wonderful) as the post was not a bed of roses. But Mr. Shastri came out on the top.

Pakistan had long been itching to cause embarrassment (difficulty) to India. It first started hostilities in the Rann of Kutch area in Gujarat in early 1965. Later, it started a full-fledged war against India in the latter half of 1965. Its aim was to snatch Kashmir from India. Moreover, as the country was reeling (revolving) under state of a severe drought, Pakistan thought it an opportune moment to pester (trouble) India.

Lal Bahadur Shastri was no novice (unexperienced) as a great political leader who was loved by the countrymen in immense measure. Shastri rose to the occasion and his latent virtues as being a leader not only in peace times but also in war times came on the surface. During this period, Shastri's speeches were an unfading monument to the people of India. He inspired the people and exhorted (advised) the Jawans using powerful words which were all the same highly civilized. For instance, when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto called the Indians "dogs" in the U.N., Shastri replied that India being a civilized country could not answer abuse with abuse but Indian bullets would give the right answer.

To overcome food shortage, Shastri encouraged people to observe fast on Mondays. He exhorted the

farmers to give more attention to agriculture. He asked the people to grow wheat and other cereals on every patch of land. He himself grew wheat plants even in flower pots in his house. He asked people to grow fruit trees such as papaya which bore fruits early. He forbade holding large functions and parties, including marriage parties where food was to be served to so many people. He is still remembered for his immortal slogan:

Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan.

It is said that a man's life is to be measured by the years he uses and not the years he lasts. Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri has died at the comparatively early age of 62 : he was Prime Minister for the comparatively short period of about 18 months. Yet it cannot be said that his life or his tenure of office as the first servant of the people was cut off with its promises unfulfilled. He threw himself into the freedom movement when he was still in his teens. The movement built him up, moulded his character and gave him the experience and insights which were to be of the highest value to him in the years when he came to play a dominant role in the life of the nation.

He never said or did any thing which suggested in the slightest degree that he was thrusting himself forward for any such role. Nature had made him small and inconspicuous (sharp sighted) and he seemed to assist nature by a manner so unobtrusive and free from any trace of flamboyance (burning) in speech or gesture that it looked as if he would

remain, because he preferred to remain, in the second and not the first row among the nation's leaders. But behind that manner and a genuine humbleness of spirit lay a small, hard scintilla (spark) of purpose, a toughness or fibre which welcomed challenge and shrank from no responsibility. His rise to the office of the Prime Minister was in that sense the last reward of his apprenticeship and the accomplishment of its promise.

When he succeeded Mr. Nehru he accepted a legacy which was burdened both by Mr. Nehru's greatness and his failures. Mr Shastri approached the new responsibilities in his own way, setting his sights lower. In international affairs he concentrated on improving relations with neighbouring countries and beyond discharging an inherited commitment to attend the Cairo conference, made no attempt to play his August predecessor's larger role on the world stage. In the domestic field, the first part of his period in office had to be devoted almost entirely to the pressing problems created by food shortages and the language controversy.

These problems demanded hard decisions and the new Prime Minister seemed more inclined to be guided by events than to guide them. Whether this was due to indecision, as his critics alleged, or because Mr. Shastri was trying to find his feet in now merely of academic interest, for when the greatest crisis after the attainment of freedom struck te

country, a few months ago, it found the Prime Minister confident of himself, sure of his ground and able to provide the country with the determined leadership it needed. Whether he had grown with his office or had only re-discovered qualities always latent in himself is again a point of no great relevance except in this sense, that it is consistent with the picture his career presents of a man who does not seek out opportunities for playing a decisive part but who can be decisive if the part is thrust on him.

Throughout the three-week was with Pakistan his voice rang strong and clear and his hand on the controls never wavered. But he also did not lose sight of the ultimate aim which was implied in the whole posture of this country in world affairs and in the image it had built up for itself of dedication to peace and good-neighbourliness among nation. The meeting in Tashkent may, therefore, be said to mark the culmination (highest point) of his effort and the agreement he reached there with President Ayub Khan as his real triumph (victory).

Death has come to him in the moment of fulfilment of the purposes for which he had worked during his life. If it has an element of tragedy, it is for his fellow-citizens and for those who have to carry on his task and who will miss the particular qualities and gifts which he had brought to it. To them and to succeeding generations, his name and memory will be guide and an inspiration.

Lal Bahadur Shastri was a servant of the people

in the truest sense of the word. It is noteworthy and characteristic of him that he used to pay Rs. 250 month from his salary to the Servant of the People Society. Unlike other Congress men he did not amass wealth and indeed died poor. He was still paying off the loan he took to buy a small car. He had no insurance, nor any property. "I was fated to see him make his last journey alone." said Ramnath, Lal Bahadur Shastri's balet, who had gone with the Prime Minister to Taskent and returned with the body. Before I entered Ramnath's room, I had been warned that he was too ill to speak. But slowly he began to talk about his 45 years of life with the master.

Ramnath was only one year old when his mother died. He and his sister were brought up by Mr. Shastri's family. He became the cook and attendant of Mr. Shastri who treated him like his own son. What was most endearing about Mr. Shastri? He thought for two minutes, then said simply: "There was nothing that I did not find endearing." "Babuji" never got angry. Ramnath recalled an incident during Mr. Shastri's recent visit to Allahabad when he forgot to take out a clean cap from the baggage sent to the airport. "He never stepped out without, his topi, I rushed back, the plane was delayed by an hour but when I returned I received no word of rebuke. "Babuji" was laughing.

"Babuji" had a great respect for his guru. He used to talk at length about him to Ramnath. A few

years ago when the guru died “Babuji” went to his village and stayed there for many days sorting out his family affairs. Mr. Shastri’s last day is best described in Ramnath’s word. “The morning dawned clear and not so cold. For the first time in his life I saw Babuji sleeping until as late as 9 a.m. After the days’ hard work he insisted on my accompanying him to a party. I came back earlier and on my return he asked me to make some allu palak. After a meagre (small) dinner he said, “It is nearly 12. Switch off the light—do not you start packing now and remember to keep out my woollen blanket for the plane journey tomorrow. After an hour, Ramnath was woken up. “I rushed out of the room and saw Babuji with his head lying on the lap of Sharmaji. I do not know what happened after that, “said Ramnath, exhausted by the effort of speaking.

The glory that was Hind, that was Shastri, when President Ayub set out in a Patton tank for a cup of tea in New Delhi, can never be dimmed. he typified the Nation and the God in those Great Days. Julia Ward Howe’s Battle Hymn of the Republic applies to the Republic of India under Lal Bahadur Shastri in those dark days when the Indian army and patriots faced American sophisticated (adulterated) weapons with antique (Ancient) battle-dore equipment.

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:

He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored ;

**He hath loosed the faithful lightning of His
terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on,
I have seen Him in the watch-fires of
hundred circling camps;
“They have builded Him an altar in the
evening dews and damp;
I can read His righteous sentence by the
dim and flaring lamps;
His day is marching on.
I have read a fiery gospel, write in
burnished rows of steel;
“As ye deal with my contemners, so with
you my grace shall deal :
Let the Hero; born of woman, crush the
serpent with his heel,
Since God is marching on.”**



24. VEER SAVARKAR

Savarkar, was the King of the Indian Revolutionaries. He made an attempt to overthrow the British Indian Empire with bullets and bombs, and very nearly succeeded but because of the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi on the scene whose methods weakened the hands and hold of Savarkar on the mass mind.

Poet, scholar, social worker, historian and one of the earliest revolutionaries, Veer Savarkar, as he came to be known, was born in a Chitpavan Brahmin family, in Maharashtra, in 1883. In 1899 he was already imbued with the spirit of freedom, if necessary, by armed rebellion. He passed Bar-at-Law from London, but the British authorities did not allow him to be called to the Bar. In 1900, he joined the Fergusson College, Poona and impressed upon his fellow students the value of armed struggle. He also insisted upon them taking a solemn oath that they would sacrifice everything for the sake of the motherland. Although he passed his examination creditably, he was not awarded the degree because of his revolutionary activities. He founded the Abhinava Bharat, before he proceeded to London.

In London, he started the Free Indian Society which became the chief organisation of terrorist activities. "Individuals, or kings may live or die but the nation should not die," he told a gathering of

revolutionaries in London. Consumed with the passion to lay down his life for the sake of his motherland he survived every crisis, suffered the worst kind of British brutality. He unfurled the Indian national flag at a conference in the presence of many Britishers, to celebrate the Indian Armed Revolution (Sepoy Mutiny) of 1857. Soon after he was arrested, a deportation (remarks) order was issued and he was put on a ship to sail to India in 1910.

During his voyage in captivity, he made a bold attempt to escape when his ship touched Marseillers (France). When the ship was crossing the French coast in the night, he went flying in the air from the bottom deck to dive into the sea. The guards on the upper dock opened fire. But he swam like a fish under water, and popped clean out of the guard's sight and finally landed on the French coast. But the British police caught him on the shore. Savarkar protested and said, "you are the British police. You cannot arrest me on French soil", but the French authorities permitted the arrest. Thus, he was illegally re-arrested by the British police on the French soil and brought back to India. He was sentenced to transportation for life to the Andamans.

On release in 1924, he was interned (obliged) in Ratnagiri district, where he engaged himself in social work. Freed from internment in 1937, he joined the Hindu Mahasabha. He served for seven consecutive terms as its president and devoted the rest of his life, organising the Hindu community. After

Gandhiji's death, he was arrested and charged as a suspect in Mahatma Gandhi's murder case, but was acquitted. He died in 1966.

Savarkar was a nationalist in the western mould. He was also a visionary who sought to transform Hindus into mirror images of those who controlled the levers of global power. He wrote a book, to commemorate the occasion of the golden jubilee celebrations of the 'Great Revolt of 1857'. It was titled "The Indian War of Independence", and was published London in 1909. In his book, Savarkar described the uprising of 1857 as 'a planned war of national independence' and tried to prove that the risings of 1826-27, 1831-32, 1848 and 1854 were rehearsals of the great drama played in 1857. He also wrote a pamphlet entitled "Grave Warning" which was widely distributed in London and copies of it were sent to India. He translated the life of Mazzini into Marathi of which thousands of copies were sold. He also wrote freedom songs and used to address the waves of the sea to take him to India whenever he felt sad. Savarkar was a militant nationalist who wanted to use violence to resist the British rule.



25. ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE

Vinoba Bhave, a widely venerated (respected) disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, is one of India's best known social reformers. He started the movement that was named Bhoodan—gift of land. he collected land from landlords and gave it to landless farmers. He was given the honorific title acharya.

By that time Mahatma Gandhi had lost faith in Nehru, Patel and others as the correct spokesmen of Gandhian philosophy, and the master did not regard these politically-minded disciples as fit for his Individual Satyagraha. In fact, few were the followers for this highly spiritualized political satyagraha that it had two inevitable effects. The few followers who participated in the Individual Satyagraha Movement were quickly clapped in prison by the British and the movement came to end, as Mahatma Gandhi was unwilling to pursue it with half-hearted disciples.

Secondly, the next Satyagraha Movement was not non-violent at all, because Mahatma Gandhi knew that the rank and file of the Congress were not non-violent in spirit. So he launched Quit-India Movement which was leaderless and masses were allowed to give free play to violence for the achievement of independence. Miraculously enough, the British did quit!

Vinoba Bhave was born in September 11, 1895

at Gagode in Gujrat. He was a villager of Colaba district. He got his early education in Kala Mandir, Baroda. The Swadeshi Movement left a deep imprint on his mind. He made up his mind never to marry but to devote his energies to the service of the country. Besides an abiding love for religious study and contemplation, Vinoba became a linguist. Besides Marathi, he studied French and English. Also he acquired an intimate knowledge and understanding of Sanskrit.

Like Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave studied Gita profoundly and adopted the principles of Gita for this practical life. En route to Bombay from his Intermediate Examination, Vinoba had a spiritual urge to go to Banaras for learning Sanskrit and thither he went without waiting to take the puerile (childish) examination. When he heard that Mahatma Gandhi had put up an Ashram at Sabarmati, he communicated with him and joined the Ashram. Gandhi was soon impressed by his devotion and spiritual powers. Vinoba devoted himself to the constructive programme of Gandhiji instead of participating in political activities.

After Independence, Vinoba Bhave launched what is known as Bhoodan Movement : begging land from the landlords and giving it to the landless labourers. "Lend a helping hand to the leandless" has been the slogan of agrarian reformers all over the world. Vinoba Bhave gave a practical shape to this slogan. Bhoodan is a comprehensive word for all

sorts of gifts for the uplift of the poor. It comprises the gift of the means of cultivation, the gift of a share in a person's wealth and the gift of the individual labour. These are all logical development of the movement for equitable distribution of land.

There is a general belief among the people of India that on certain days a dip in the waters of the holy river Ganges will wipe away sin. Vinoba Bhave said—

This Ganga flows hidden in every human heart. I want to let it out and set it flowing in and through the whole of society. Just as King Bhagirath brought down the Ganga from the celestial (heavenly) region to the earth, so do we want with name of the Lord on our lips to bring the Ganga hidden in the human heart out into the life individuals and society.

Vinoba Bhave has pilgrimaged the whole of India on foot. The daily routine is a journey of twelve miles beginning at three in the morning. He walks briskly, averaging about four miles an hour. A cupful of curd is his breakfast. About 9, A.M. he halts for the day. At 5 P.M. there are evening prayers. After prayers Vinoba stresses on the villagers the gospel or self-help.

Vinoba Bhave says to the villagers ; "When you, men and women of the village, learn to work together to produce your daily needs, you will be able to create your own rule known as gram raj. Your rule

will be self-government when your village is self-reliant and stands on its own feet..... "The fight for independence is over. But an ever tougher fight, that for village self-government and self sufficiency, is the call for the morrow. The fight we offer is non-violent; it is a fight that cannot be postponed. All of you, brothers and sisters, will be soldiers in it. Our weapons will be the spinning wheel and the ploughshare. For our battle we need neither guns nor bombs, only tools that are fit for work."

"The rich have fathered the communists", is Vinoba Bhave's opinion. No police can cure the sickness. The only way to root out communist menace (danger) is "to resolve the dreadful disparity in the distribution of property in a peaceful way." Vinoba said to the agriculturists : "If you have five sons among whom you are dividing your property, treat me as a sixth, and give me a sixth share."

Vinoba Bhave is not fascinated by machines and mechanical gadgets. He dreams of India as a country of simple living and high thinking, where rivers flow with mild and honey. Of Vinoba Bhave, Gandhiji once said. He is one of the Ashram's rare pearls—one of those who have come not to be blessed but to bless, not to receive but to give.

Vinoba's aim was to make universal brotherhood a living reality for the rich and the poor alike. Bhave's original project and his philosophy of life are explained in a series of articles collected and published

as Bhoodan Yojana. In 1983, he was awarded the Bharat and published as Bhoodon Yojna. In 1983, he was awarded the at Ratna posthumously.

He died in 1982 at the aged 1987. John Keats, Ode to Autumn typifies dreams of land producing plenty and to spare for our hungry teeming millions.

Season of mist and mellow fruitfulness!

Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;

Conspiring with him how to load and bless

With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run:

To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees

And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core:

To swell the gourd, and plumd, the hazel shelle

With a sweet kernel; to set budding more

And still more, later flowers for the bees.

Until they think warm days will never cease,

For summer has overbrimm'd their clammy cells.



लेखक द्वारा प्रकाशित एवं निःशुल्क वितरित पुस्तकों की सूची :-

1. रामचरितमानससार
2. गीतासार
3. उपनिषद्सार
4. सत्यार्थप्रकाशसार
5. भक्ति
6. सुखीजीवन
7. आत्मबोध
8. वेदवाणी
9. वैदिकसाहित्य
10. अमृतवाणी
11. महर्षि दयानंद
12. स्वामी विवेकानंद
13. शरणागति
14. वैदिक रामायण
15. क्या आप जानते हैं ?
16. शेर-ओ-शायरी
17. ओ३म्
18. गायत्री रहस्य

लेखक द्वारा अप्रकाशित पुस्तकों की सूची :-

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|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. वैदिक मनुस्मृति | 23. यज्ञ |
| 2. वैदिक उपनिषद्वाणी | 24. संत |
| 3. वैदिक दर्शनवाणी | 25. संतवाणी |
| 4. वैदिक महाभारत | 26. आत्मकथा |
| 5. वैदिक गीता | 27. भृतृहरिशतक |
| 6. अमर धर्मग्रंथ | 28. ब्रह्मचर्य |
| 7. अमर नीतिग्रंथ | 29. गृहस्थ |
| 8. पुराणपरिचय | 30. सामान्य हिन्दी (भाग I-II)
(सब कक्षाओं के लिये) |
| 9. ईश्वरसिद्धि | 31. धर्म |
| 10. राष्ट्रभाषा हिन्दी | 32. कर्म |
| 11. मर्यादा पुरुषोत्तम श्रीराम | 33. मन |
| 12. महावीर हनुमान | 34. सुखी कौन ? |
| 13. योगिराज श्रीकृष्ण | 35. भारत के क्रांतिकारी |
| 14. आदिशंकराचार्य | 36. भारत के भक्त |
| 15. आचार्य चाणक्य | 37. Great Thoughts |
| 16. दस गुरु | 38. Great Indians |
| 17. आर्यसमाज के महामानव | 39. Great Thinkers |
| 18. स्वामी रामतीर्थ | 40. Great Scientists |
| 19. संस्कार | 41. General English
(Part I to V)
(For All Classes) |
| 20. गीतांजलि | |
| 21. आर्यसमाज | |
| 22. ज्ञानामृत | |

कृपया पाठकगण इस ओर भी ध्यान दें कि इनकी निम्नलिखित पुस्तकों को इनकी वैब साईट www.dpkapoorbooks.co.in पर भी देखा जा सकता है ।

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|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. अमृतवाणी | 27. सामान्य हिन्दी (भाग I-II) |
| 2. आर्यसमाज | (सब कक्षाओं के लिये) |
| 3. आर्यसमाज के महामानव | 28. वैदिकसाहित्य |
| 4. आदिशंकराचार्य | 29. वैदिक उपनिषद्वाणी |
| 5. आचार्य चाणक्य | 30. वैदिक दर्शनवाणी |
| 6. अमर नीतिग्रंथ | 31. वैदिक रामायण |
| 7. अमर धर्मग्रंथ | 32. वैदिक महाभारत |
| 8. दस गुरु | 33. वैदिक गीता |
| 9. ईश्वरसिद्धि | 34. योगिराज श्रीकृष्ण |
| 10. गायत्रीरहस्य | 35. यज्ञ |
| 11. ज्ञानामृत | 36. आत्मकथा |
| 12. गीतांजलि | 37. भर्तृहरिशतक |
| 13. क्या आप जानते हैं ? | 38. ब्रह्मचर्य |
| 14. मर्यादा पुरुषोत्तम श्रीराम | 39. गृहस्थ |
| 15. महावीर हनुमान | 40. वैदिक मनुस्मृति |
| 16. महर्षि दयानंद | 41. धर्म |
| 17. ओ३म् | 42. कर्म |
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| 19. राष्ट्रभाषा हिन्दी | 44. सुखी कौन ? |
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