

X



**MAHATMA GANDHI**  
**Man of the Millennium**

**MAN'S SPAN OF LIFE**

**M**an's span of life may be a hundred and even more. But no matter how long he lives, his life is hardly one millionth part of a drop in the ocean that is eternity. All attachment for it and all calculations about it hardly make sense. Our calculations are bound to be uncertain. We can only make a guess at the maximum years a man may live. For the rest, we see even healthy children succumb to death. And we cannot assert that a man given to the pleasures of life will not live long. All we can say is that a man who lives a life of simplicity and chastity will probably live long.

But to exercise self-control in order to live long is life a mountain in labour bringing forth a mouse. The passions must be subdued in order that we may attain self-realization. If, in the course of that

discipline, we find that life is being shortened instead of being lengthened, we need not bother about it. Health and longevity are a very insignificant fruit of self-control.

I believe in the feasibility of living the full span of life. .... For years I have believed that if a person is filled with the presence of God and has thus attained the state of dispassion, he can surmount handicaps against long life.. I have come to the conclusion, based on observation and scriptural reading, that when a man comes to that complete living faith in the Unseen Power and has become free from passion, the body undergoes internal transformation. This does not come about by mere wish. It needs constant vigilance and practice. In spite of both, unless God's grace descends upon one, human effort comes to naught.

*M.K. Gandhi*

[Sponsored by Bhavan's Gandhi Institute of Computer Education and Information Technology]

**A Letter from the President**



**SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE-2**

□ R. VENKATARAMAN

Despite being an ardent believer in private sector, he established the outstanding public sector undertakings like the Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd., and the Sindri Fertilizers.



**D**r. Syamaprasad joined the Union Cabinet in 1947 in his personal capacity along with other distinguished non-Congressmen like John Mathai, Shanmugan Chetty and Ambedkar and the great Congress leaders, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel. Though an educationist by specialization, he handled the portfolio of Industries with a rare felicity and laid the foundation for what was later called the 'mixed economy'. Despite being an ardent believer in private sector, he established the outstanding public sector undertakings like the Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd., and the Sindri Fertilizers. Pragmatism and not dogmatism informed his industrial policy. His approach to industrialization was based on the needs and circumstances prevailing in the country and not on any ideological approach to the issue. He, thus, encouraged every sector, the public, private, cooperative, individual, and the small and rural industries. I should like to cite one example: Around 1948, the workers of salt Pans in the district of Tirunelveli in South India had formed a co-operative for the manufacture of salt and applied to the Central Government for assignment of land. The idea was novel and

was resisted by the bureaucracy from the lowest level to the highest in the government of India. I was then in charge of the labour wing of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee and I represented to Dr. Syamaprasad the cause of the salt workers. I explained to him that the salt workers had experience in salt manufacture and that the experiment was worth a trial. Overruling all objections, from the officialdom, Syamaprasadji allowed the co-operative to be formed and assigned the land. It is today one of the outstanding examples of co-operative salt manufacture by the workers themselves.

As Industries Minister, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee had a practical and sympathetic approach to labour problems. He had no faith in the Marxist doctrine of class struggle. He believed in co-operation between labour and employer for the benefit of increased production and productivity. He had a great solicitude for the welfare of labour for which I can also bear personal testimony. It was around 1948 that there was a complete strike in textile mills in Coimbatore. Sri R. K. Shanmugam Chetty (then Finance Minister) and Syamaprasadji visited Coimbatore to discuss the matters with mill-owners as well as the workers. At the meeting, I opened the case for the labour and said that the



**He believed in co-operation between labour and employer for the benefit of increased production and productivity. He had a great solicitude for the welfare of labour for which I can also bear personal testimony.**



Sri R. K. Shanmugam Chetty



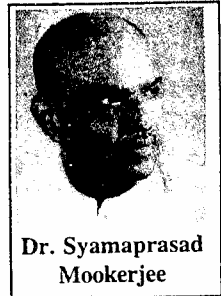
**As a Parliamentarian, Syamaprasadji was an orator, a skilled debater and master of witty sallies and repartees. During my days in provisional parliament and the first Parliament, I had the benefit of watching his composure during criticism and his devastating reply.**

employers were paying prewar wages in the days of post-war inflation. I was followed by other trade union leaders. The mill-owners presented their case. Apparently, Syamaprasadji had come with a prejudiced brief against workers but such was his broad mind and open sympathy for the labour that he totally changed his approach and gave directions for resolving the problem.

Syamaprasadji's solicitude for labour was so well known that the workers of the Hindustan Ship Building Yard, Vizagapatnam offered to abide any decision that Syamaprasadji may give in their dispute with the management.

As a Parliamentarian, Syamaprasadji was an orator, a skilled debater and master of witty sallies and repartees. During my days in provisional parliament and the first Parliament, I had the benefit of watching his composure during criticism and his devastating reply.

As Minister for Industry and Supply, he was once criticized in Parliament for having disposed of the surplus stores at a very low price. I remember one member, who made these allegations, brought a few specimens of good brushes and showed them as having been disposed of at a very low price. Syamaprasadji, while replying to the debate, answered the criticism saying that the surplus stores consisted of both good and bad materials that had to be disposed of at the



Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee

best available price. He then produced a few brushes before the House which had no bristles at all as samples disposed of and thus completely silenced the House!.

Above all Syamaprasadji was front rank patriot and an ardent nationalist. He did not accept anything less than complete independence to the country unlike the moderates of those days who were content with Domination Status. He was against the partition of India and resisted it with all his might. After independence Syamaprasadji wanted total integration of Kashmir with India and opposed the special status under Art 370 of the Constitution. His speech in Parliament opposing a separate flag for Kashmir State which was put forward by the influential leaders of the National Conference before the Kashmir Constituent Assembly, rings in our ears as one of the finest pieces of parliamentary eloquence. He told the people of Jammu at a mammoth public meeting "I shall get you the Indian Constitution or give up my life for it".

In May 1953 the Jammu and Kashmir State was in ferment. The Praja Parishad had mounted an massive agitation for keeping Jammu and Kashmir as one of the other states within the Indian Union and the local government had let loose leonine violence and suppression. Despite indifferent health, the lion hearted leader Syamaprasadji rushed to Kashmir. He was arrested and he died while in prison custody. He died a martyr to the cause of Indian Unity. The nation was plunged in sorrow.

Syamaprasadji was universally admired



**His speech in Parliament opposing a separate flag for Kashmir State which was put forward by the influential leaders of the National Conference before the Kashmir Constituent Assembly, rings in our ears as one of the finest pieces of parliamentary eloquence. He told the people of Jammu at a mammoth public meeting "I shall get you the Indian Constitution or give up my life for it".**



**Prime Minister Nehru as the leader of the House made a memorable obituary reference in which he said that "we are deprived of the personality who had played a notable and great part in the country... A large and good stretch of years was before him. But that was not to be".**

and respected. In Parliament the treasury benches, the opposition and all other sections were deferential towards him. In fact Shri Mavlankar, the then Speaker of the Lok Sabha echoed the feelings of all sections of the House when he said:



Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru

"His ability, sincerity, the masterly manner of his handling his subject, his eloquence and above all his patriotism and love of his country-men entitled him to our respect".

Prime Minister Nehru as the leader of the House made a memorable obituary reference in which he said that "we are deprived of the personality who had played a notable and great part in the country... A large and good stretch of years was before him. But that was not to be".

I should like to add one more admirable quality of his, namely his adherence to the highest democratic tradition during debates in the House. Speaking as the Leader of Opposition in the debate on Planning, Syamaprasadji said, "we are anxious to give you cooperation. We are not enemies sitting face to face before each other. You feel for the Country, we feel the Country should develop. We know that political freedom will be meaningless and fruitless if it is not followed by economic freedom and social equality. But let us proceed not on party lines. Let there be more tolerance, let there be more appreciation of each other point of

view. If some of us do not agree with you, do not see eye to eye with you, do not immediately think we are traitors or enemies of the Country. We are here to serve the Country and that is the spirit in which I have spoken”.

Syamaprasadji was a Karma yogi. He performed his duties without fear or favour, affection or ill will. Bhagavan said in *Bhagavat Gita*—

(Ch III V 19).

*Thasmat asaktah satatam Karyam Karma Samachara  
Asaktohi acharan Karma param aproti Purushah*

Therefore, constantly perform your obligatory duties without attachment. By doing duty without attachment man verily obtains the Supreme. By his martyrdom, Syamaprasadji has attained the Supreme.

I congratulate Asutosh Mookerjee Memorial Institute on their decision to install the bust of Syamaprasadji so that the illustrious son may keep company with the illustrious father.

*Lives of great men remind us  
That we make our life sublime*

I am sure that this image of Syamaprasadji will instill in the succeeding generations qualities that make a nation great.

*R. Venkataraman*  
(R. Venkataraman)

March 31, 2001  
New Delhi



**Syamaprasadji  
was a Karma  
yogi. He  
performed  
his duties  
without fear  
or favour,  
affection  
or ill will.**



## Dear Readers,

The **Bhavan's Journal** April 1-15 issue (Sri Ramanavami Number) will come with special features and articles on Sri Rama and Ramayana. Our Shri K. Subbarayan, Associate Editor of **Bhavan's Journal** for the past three decades has due to health reasons taken retirement. He is now undergoing treatment in Arya Vaidya Pharmacy, Coimbatore under the supervision of the Vaidyaraj Chandrasekhara Warriar.

Misfortunes come never singly. Smt. Ratnam Sivaramakrishnan, *Sahadharmacharini* of our other Associate Editor Shri V. Sivaramakrishnan passed away recently. He was staying in Bhavan's complex at Andheri. At the instance of his son Shri S. Venkat, Shri Sivaramakrishnan has shifted to Delhi. Besides being Associate Editor of **Bhavan's Journal**, Shri V. Sivaramakrishnan was also giving regular lectures at Bhavan's Rajendra Prasad Institute of Communication & Management, Mumbai. Kulapati Munshiji's dictum is "Once a Bhavan's man, always a Bhavan's man". In that spirit Shri Sivaramakrishnan has agreed to give lectures in the Bhavan's Delhi Kendra.

Shri V. N. Narayanan till recently Editor of *Hindustan Times* is working as Principal of the Bangalore Unit of Bhavan's Rajendra Prasad Institute of Communication & Management. He has been appointed as the Associate Editor of the **Bhavan's Journal** with immediate effect in addition to his present duties and responsibilities as Principal of Bangalore Unit of Bhavan's Rajendra Prasad Institute of Communication & Management.

Further, from 15<sup>th</sup> April 2001 onwards the **Bhavan's Journal** will be printed and posted from Chennai. Hence all are requested to conduct communications pertaining to : change of address, non-receipt of issues, advertisements etc. with our Chennai Kendra at the following address:-

### The Circulation Manager

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan  
Post Box. No. 2946  
New No.18, 20, 22

(Old No.37/39) East Mada Street,  
Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004.

Tel: 4940811/ 4943450/ 4943420/ 4940674

Fax: 4941045.

*S. Ramakrishnan*  
(S. Ramakrishnan)  
Editor