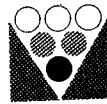


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Oct 31.01

From the Bhavan's President

## My Tribute to Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan

R. Venkataraman

After organising the Socialist Party, if Jayaprakashji and his colleagues in the Socialist Party who were all stalwarts had come into Parliament and functioned as a responsible opposition the course of our parliamentary history might have been different.

It gives me immense pleasure to be in your midst in the historic city of Patna to pay my tribute to Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan, one of India's noblest sons. He belongs to the galaxy of stalwarts who valiantly fought for India's freedom and dreamed of ushering a new society and a new world order.

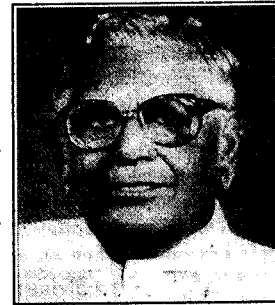
This ancient city of Pataliputra has a history dating back to 2500 years and this luminous state of Bihar has been the home of several religious cultures. It was here that the great Buddha received enlightenment and Mahavira made his last adobe. The famous Magadha empire was the centre of religion and culture. Jayaprakashji inherited all the ancient wisdom of India and strove to adapt them to the modern conditions of the 20th Century. Today on the occasion of the 100th Birthday of Jayaprakashji, we commence the year-long centenary celebrations of the illustrious visionary under excellent auspices.

I am happy that my esteemed friend Shri Mohan Dharía is with us today to deliver the commemorative address. Shri Dharía is one of the close associates of Jayaprakashji and a true

interpreter of the complex nature of the principles, policies and programmes of Jayaprakashji.

At all times Shri Dharía was a constant follower of Jayaprakashji. In 1975 when Shri Mohan Dharía was Minister in the Cabinet of Smt. Indira Gandhi, expressed his view openly that the government should have dialogue with Jayaprakashji. This was at the time when confrontation between Jayaprakashji and Indira Gandhi was at its zenith.

Indira Gandhi without following the practice of asking for resignation from Shri Mohan Dharía sent a letter to the President recommending the dropping of Shri Mohan Dharía from the Cabinet. She sent a letter to Shri Dharía also stating that she had recommended to the President to drop Shri Mohan Dharía from the Cabinet. On receipt of the letter, Shri Dharía sent his letter of resignation to the President which the President accepted. Thus Shri Dharía was one of the rare politicians who was ready to



sacrifice the office for the sake of his conviction. He is now devoting himself to ecological issues where he finds fulfilment in life.

In the 20th Century, India threw up a large number of patriots who led an exemplary life of service and sacrifice. Leaders of eminence blossomed over all parts from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Maharashtra to Assam. They were giants intellectually, morally and spiritually. They broke away from archaic and obscurantist traditions and set the nation on the path of progress consistent with the rich cultural heritage of India.

If Gandhiji was the world's greatest humanist, Nehru was one of the world's great statesmen. Social reformers like Narayana Guru and Ambedkar helped the Gandhian programme of eradication of untouchability and other social evils. Jayaprakash Narayan dreamt of creating a new order in the nation. He was one of the gems of purest ray that adorned the illustrious necklace of Mother India. His life was one quest for a perfect society without poverty and hunger, malice or illwill and authoritarianism and antagonism. He sought to establish an idyllic society and life.

He started his life as a marxist and found in Nehru a kindred spirit. He thought Gandhiji was a reformist and not a revolutionary. However, Jayaprakashji got disillusioned with the policy of the Communist Party of India and the commintern. To him individual freedom of thought and action was sacrosanct. The regimentation that Stalinist Communism imposed went against his grain. The leftists in the Congress, Acharya Narendra Dev, Achyut Patwardan, Ashok Mehta, Ram Manohar Lohia and others formed the Congress Socialist Party. Nehru welcomed it. He thought it was better

to have a progressive opposition in Parliament than a conservative one. And Jayaprakashji was convinced that it was possible to bring about socialism through democracy and not necessarily by violent revolution. In 1953, a communist, was elected to the Lok Sabha from Bengal. At that time, Shri V. K. Krishna Menon, Chairman of the Indian Delegation to UN General Assembly, hosted a dinner for the Soviet Delegation in New York. The Soviet Delegate there said that India is the only country where even communism can come to power by the ballot box.

The attitude of Marxist in India during the World War II disillusioned Jayaprakashji. Jayaprakashji was convinced that the World War II was an imperialist war for domination and exploitation while the Marxist reversed the gear and called it the People's war. He threw himself heart and soul into the movement and literally accepted the call "DO or DIE".

Superficial critics had often charged Jayaprakashji with inconsistency. They did not realise that Jayaprakashji was a soul in search in quest of ideal solutions for human misery, a Marxist turned into a Democrat.

Jayaprakashji's quest for ideal conditions for masses continued. Though he withdrew from active politics, he devoted himself to the Bhoodhan movement, started by Vinobhaji. He thought that the movement would bring about in more equitable ownership of land. He also realised the need for rural employment, the place of small and cottage industries in Indian conditions. He spelt out his economic objectives clearly and unequivocally.

It was a Gandhian frame laying emphasis on agricultural development, equitable land ownership, development of domestic and rural industries with the widest possible spread of small industries. He did not equate socialism with nationalisation of the means of production and confiscation of property. He called his scheme, "Socialism with an Indian Face". The great critic of Mahatma Gandhi in his earlier years accepted later that "Socialism in this country would neglect Gandhism at its peril".

Jayaprakashji was disillusioned by the way the Congress governments functioned. He thought that they carried on the same routine administration that their predecessor British governments were doing. He was disappointed that no radical programmes changing the age old structure of society and poverty had been seriously attempted. Overwhelmed by corruption, nepotism, authoritarianism and callous indifference to the suffering masses. Jayaprakashji initiated the "Total Revolution" against the government. India went through a dark period of emergency and suppression of fundamental rights. In the general elections that followed in 1977, Jayaprakashji, fashioned the unity of opposition forces and brought about a non - Congress Government at the Centre for the first time. To the utter sadness of Jayaprakashji, the Janata Government did no better than its predecessors. The constituents of the Janata Party were far removed from the ideology of Jayaprakashji and accepted his writ only to the extent that it suited them. Jayaprakashji's heart was broken.

Jayaprakashji's never sought office or power. In fact, when Nehru

asked him to join his cabinet, Jayaprakashji declined. His mass appeal was next only to that of Gandhiji. He could move the masses as only Gandhiji could. When the American writer Mr. John Gunther came to India in early fifties of the last century, he asked Nehru after interviewing him who else in India he (Gunther) should meet. Gunther reports that Nehru told him to meet Jayaprakash Narayan adding the he was the future Prime Minister of India. After organising the Socialist Party if Jayaprakashji and his colleagues in the socialist party who were all stalwarts had come into Parliament and functioned as a responsible opposition the course of our parliamentary history might have been different. Alternatiely, if Jayaprakashji had accepted a place in Nehru's cabinet and made his contributions, he could have been the nation's choice after Nehru for the Prime Ministership of India.

But Jayaprakashji was a visionary who gazed into the distant future of the Indian society and envisioned a state of supreme joy and happiness for the masses. He lost faith in electoral politics and party system. He thought that electoral politics excited sectarian passions, speaking half truths, giving impossible promises and indulging in extravagant expenditure. He talked of a partyless democracy. His ideas were totally at variance with the currently accepted electoral practices. Even today commissions are trying to grapple with the course of electoral malpractices, money power, criminalisation and corruption in politics. Laws cannot prevent these abuses; they can only punish the wrong doer. Democracy can succeed

only when the electorate becomes aware of its responsibility to elect men of ability, integrity and selflessness, as their representatives. If the people elect the corrupt, the criminal, the selfish and the immoral representatives, they will get only a government of their choice. Thus like Gandhiji, Jayaprakashji laid great emphasis on the moral and spiritual base of democracy. If Nehru was the political heir to Gandhiji, Jayaprakashji was Gandhiji's spiritual heir.

It is not human nature to own one's mistakes. Gandhiji accepted one mistake of his as "Himalayan Blunder". Jayaprakashji was another such species of humanity. Once in a congress session, Dr. Rajendra Prasad severely criticised Nehru's speech extolling socialism. Naturally the socialists in the Congress were upset. Jayaprakashji lost his temper and used abusive language against Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Soon he was overtaken by remorse and the discourtesy he had shown to Dr. Rajendra Prasad oppressed him. The gentleman that Jayaprakashji was, went and apologised to Dr. Rajendra Prasad for the language he had used.

Earlier Jayaprakashji as a Marxist had viewed Sardar Patel as a reactionary and criticised him as a stooge of the capitalists. Later, in an article Jayaprakashji wrote in 1977, he

acknowledged the immense service that Sardar had made in integrating the princely states and stated that, "No leader but Sardar could have pulled off the feat". He further complemented Sardar for the same advice he gave to Nehru on Tibet. Superficial observers may regard the instance as a sample of Jayaprakashji's proverbial inconsistency. But it requires courage of a high order to recant one's wrong notions.

To sum up, Jayaprakashji's entire life was devoted to the search for creating a just and egalitarian ideal society where there could be peace and prosperity. His mind worked on a higher plane for other mortals to comprehend. He experimented with the Marxist ideology, democratic, socialism, Sarvodaya, reformation of dreaded decoits and also with a formal government, namely the Janata. He could not find an answer. People called him inconsistent, enigmatic, visionary etc. But in reality they did not understand him. He was a noble soul beyond the depth of ordinary mortals.

Address by Shri R. Venkataraman, Former President of India on the occasion of 100th Birth Anniversary celebration of Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan at Mahila Charkha Samiti, Patna on 11-10-2001.

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- Proverb

Kulapati Vani

## Supreme Sacrifice

Dr. K. M. Munshi

It was time for the evening worship. Thousands of little lights gleamed in the central courtyard in front of the inner temple of Somanath and their light was reflected brightly from hundreds of gem-studded pillars.

The sanctum was more beautiful and larger than the old one and this made it easier to see the image of Lord Shankar from the courtyard itself. It was anointed with sandalwood paste, covered with *billi* leaves; it was beautiful and impressive. Water fell drop by drop upon the image from a golden pot suspended from the ceiling. From every corner, lanterns of gold shed their light into the sanctum.

In the assembly hall, seats were reserved for ruling princes. On the right hand side of the door

leading to the sanctum was seated Bheemdev Maharaj. By his side was seated Wakpatiraj of Jhallor, twirling his white moustaches with the air of a young man. Next to him sat Baldev Chauhan of Sapaldaksha, a hero of a hundred battles, Dhundhiraj of Abu and Mukunddev of Sthanak. Beside them sat the rulers of Kutch and Sorath, and a number of other high-ranking officers.

The sacrifices made by so many rulers in driving out Hammir were being rewarded today. At last, Lord Shambhu, eternal and omnipotent, had been re-established in His home, wiping off the suffering and distress of the past, converting them into happy memories.

As soon as the conch was blown,

