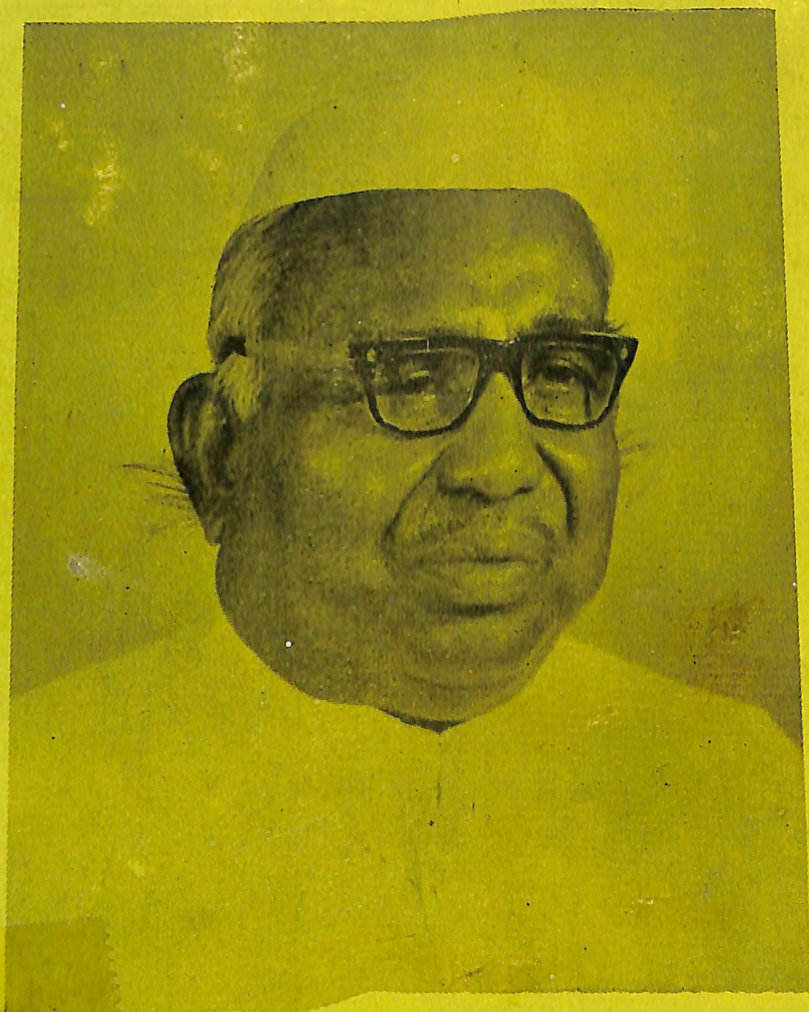


JAGJIVAN RAM



**VITAL ROLE PLAYED
IN
RESTORING DEMOCRACY**

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JAGJIVAN RAM .

VITAL ROLE

IN

RESTORING DEMOCRACY

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मुझे यह जानकर प्रसन्नता हुई कि जगजीवन बाबू के संसदीय जीवन के चार दशक पूरे होने के उपलक्ष्य में उन्हें एक अभिनन्दन ग्रन्थ समर्पित करने का आयोजन हुआ है। मैं इस आयोजन का हृदय से स्वागत करता हूँ।

जगजीवन बाबू संस्कृत कवियों की उस कल्पना को अपने जीवन में चरितार्थ करते हैं जिसमें उन्होंने पंक से उत्पन्न कमल पुष्प का गीत गाया है। तीस वर्षों के स्वराज्य के बाद भी आज हरिजन जातियों की जो दशा है, उस पर सभी भारतीयों को लज्जा से अपना सिर झुका लेना पड़ता है। जगजीवन बाबू ने उनके तथा अन्य दलित-पीड़ित लोगों के उत्थान के लिए अथक परिश्रम किया है जिसकी जितनी भी प्रशंसा की जाये, थोड़ी है। अगर उन्होंने इस कार्य के सिवा और कुछ नहीं किया होता तो भी उनका नाम भारत के आधुनिक इतिहास में अमर रहता। इस महान् कार्य के अतिरिक्त जगजीवन बाबू ने देश की सेवा, पहले स्वतन्त्रता-सेनानी के रूप में, और स्वतन्त्रता-प्राप्ति के बाद, अत्यन्त कुशल प्रशासक के रूप में की है। उनकी प्रशासनिक क्षमता सर्वविदित है।

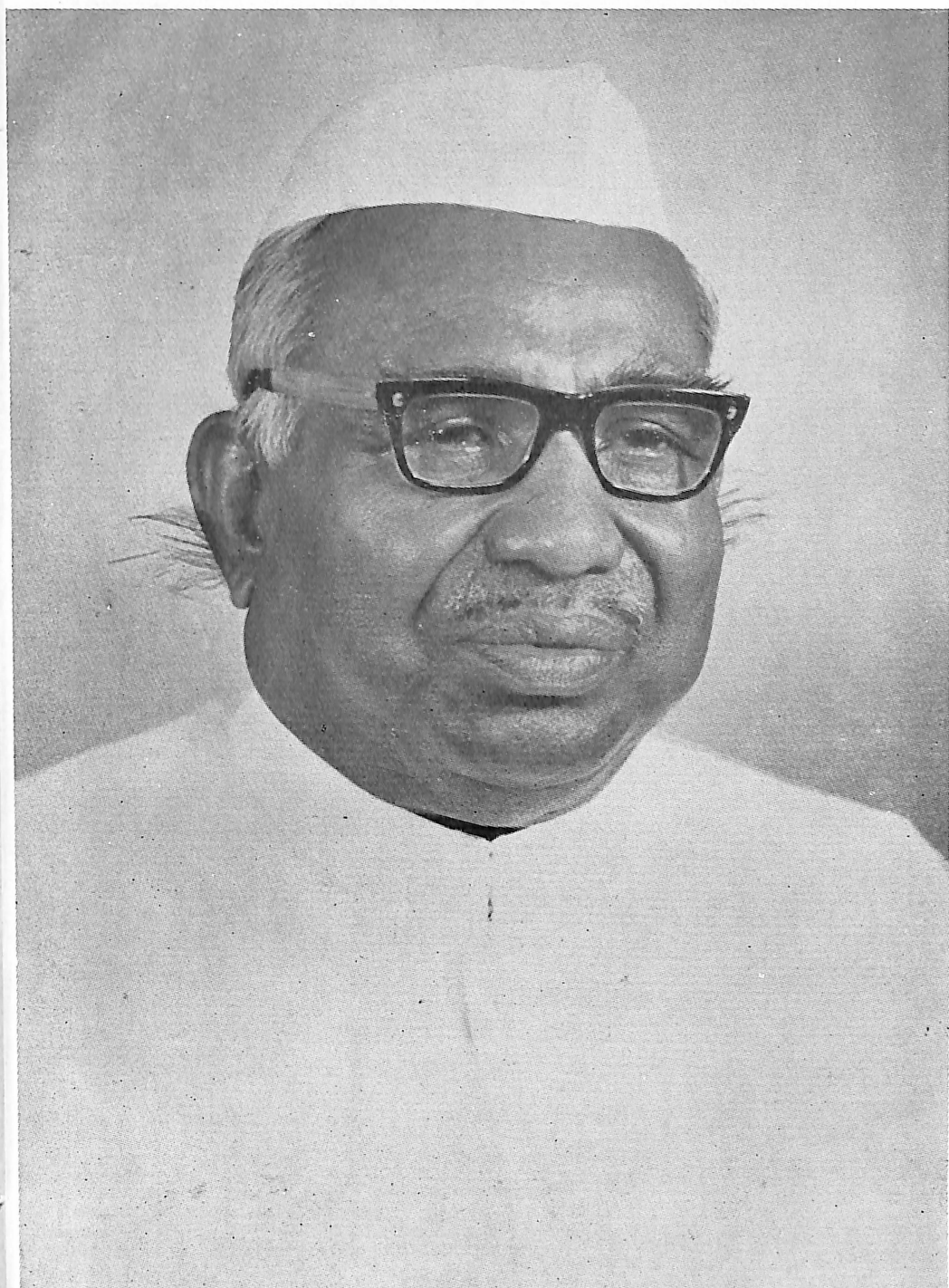
मैं इस अवसर पर उनको हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं भेंट करता हूँ। ईश्वर उन्हें शतायु करे जिससे कि देश और समाज की सेवा वे और भी अनेक वर्षों तक कर सकें।

जयप्रकाश नारायण

पटना,

(जयप्रकाश नारायण)

७ सितम्बर, १९७७



THIS "ABHINANDAN GRANTH"

And the one Relating to Four Decades
of His Parliamentary Career was Presented to

SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM

on September, 1977

by

SHRI JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

on the occasion

of

THE CELEBRATION OF FOUR DECADES
OF BABUJI'S PARLIAMENTARY CAREER

Contents and Contributors

1.	Message from Shri Jayaprakash Narayan	3
2.	Reasons for New Abhinandan Granth ...	9
	By—Shri D.N. Tiwary Chairman Celebration Committee	
3.	Man of Dedicated Service ...	17
	By—Dr. N. Sanjiva Reddy President of India	
4.	A Unique Political Personality ...	21
	By—Shri K.S. Hegde Speaker, Lok Sabha	
5.	A Nation Builder ...	25
	By—Shri D.K. Borooah, M.P. Former President Indian National Congress	
6.	Service To Hinduism	30
	By—Dr. P.C. Chunder Minister for Education	
7.	Torchbearer of Democracy ...	35
	By—Shri Shanti Bhushan Minister for Law	
8.	Blend of Qualities ...	38
	By—Shri Gulzarilal Nanda Former Home Minister	
9.	An Outstanding Political Figure ...	42
	By—Shri Bhupesh Gupta Member of Rajya Sabha	

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|----|
| 10. | Valiant Fighter | ... | 48 |
| | By.—Shri Madhu Dandavate
Minister for Railways | | |
| 11. | Nation's Concern Uppermost | | 49 |
| | By—Hitendra Desai
Former Chief Minister of Gujarat | | |
| 12. | Great Administrator | ... | 50 |
| | By—T.A. Pai
Former Industry Minister | | |
| 13. | Vital Role in Restoring Democracy | | 52 |
| | By—A Special Correspondent | | |
| 14. | शोषित और अपेक्षित वर्ग की अभिलाषाओं के प्रतीक | | 63 |
| | लेखक—श्री चन्द्रशेखर
अध्यक्ष
जनता पार्टी | | |
| 15. | जगजीवनराम और भारत की राजनीति | | 67 |
| | लेखक—श्री मधु लिमये
मुख्य सचिव
जनता पार्टी | | |
| 16. | हमारे बाबूजी | | 75 |
| | लेखक—श्री नानाजी देशमुख
मुख्य सचिव
जनता पार्टी | | |

Reason for New Abhinandan Granth

An Abhinandan Granth to Shri Jagjivan Ram was to be presented by the President of India, late Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed on January 20, 1977 at a function in Patna to mark the completion of Four Decades of his Parliamentary career. On January 12, 1977, Private Secretary to the President informed me that due to Shri Ahmed's indisposition, he would not be able to undertake the journey. He also suggested postponement of the function. Subsequently, I met the President on January 14. He informed me that the doctor had advised him not to go out of Delhi for a fortnight or so. The President also disagreed with my suggestion to hold the function on January 31. He wanted the function to be held sometime in the first week of March and promised to preside over the presentation ceremony at Patna, even if it coincided with the elections.

On the night of January 17, 1977, the Prime Minister dissolved the Lok Sabha and declared elections sometime in March. Once again, I met the President on January 21 and suggested to him to fix the date in the first week of March, 1977. He took the plea that it would not be advisable to hold any function in the midst of the election campaign. This gave me a hunch that postponement by the President might be on account of some political reasons and external pressure. Thereafter, the political situation began to change with lightening speed.

Lift Emergency Demand :

It would be pertinent to give a short description of the happenings after January 25. It is also necessary to give some background of what happened on February 2. After the promulgation of Emergency on June 26, 1975, some of us—Congress M. Ps—and other senior Congressmen were feeling suffocated. Prime Minister's style of functioning became dictatorial. She used to decide all important matters by herself without even consulting her cabinet colleagues. She would only inform them about the decisions taken. Meetings of the Parliamentary Party were insipid and meaningless where the Party was asked to affix its rubber stamp on the decisions communicated to it. Mostly, the decisions were taken on ad hoc basis by the Prime Minister herself and her coterie. We, Congressmen, who had been nurtured in Gandhian tradition, felt deeply disturbed. Dissenting voice apart, Members were not even expected to express their opinion at Congress sessions or Congress MPs meetings. My resolution at the Chandigarh Congress Session in January 1977 for lifting Emergency and holding early elections was disallowed and I was not even permitted to speak on the subject. On several occasions, I talked about these matters with Shri Jagjivan Ram, who himself expressed his unhappiness over the trend of events. He always advised patience and restraint and suggested to wait for a proper opportunity to take any suitable action in the matter.

After the dissolution of Parliament, the Emergency was relaxed and consequently press censorship was partially lifted. From January 25, myself, Shri H. N. Bahuguna and Smt. Nandini Satpathy had discussions with Shri Jagjivan Ram about the steps to be taken to restore normalcy in the political life so that there could be free and fair elections. We all agreed that in the interest of free and fair elections it is necessary to completely withdraw emergency, suspend DIR Acts and Rules, restore press freedom and release all political prisoners. This thinking of ours was to be placed before the Prime Minister. Shri Jagjivan Ram asked the Prime Minister's Secretariat for fixing an interview with her. He was told that she was indisposed and would send for him as soon as she recovered.

Suggestion Rejected :

On February 1, an emissary of the Prime Minister came to Shri Jagjivan Ram asking him for launching the election campaign. Shri Jagjivan Ram told the emissary that he wanted to have a talk with the Prime Minister before launching any election campaign. On that very day, time for interview with the Prime Minister was fixed for 1645 hrs. Shri Jagjivan Ram went to the Prime Minister at the appointed time. In this meeting, he pressed the above points, namely : complete withdrawal of Emergency, suspension of DIR Acts and Rules, total removal of curbs on press and release of all political prisoners. Her reply was that sufficient concessions had already been given and it would not be in the interest of the country to further relax emergency and freedom of press. Despite pleading by Shri Jagjivan Ram, the Prime Minister could not agree to his proposals. About the political prisoners she told him that orders had already been issued to the State Governments. She would remind the State Governments to take immediate steps in the matter. Shri Jagjivan Ram told her that nobody would believe that Prime Minister's orders about the release of political prisoners could not be carried out. He frankly told her that if she could not agree to his request ; the Opposition parties would feel that elections were not free and fair and that they had to fight with this handicap. This would give a bad name to the Government and the Party.

Painful Decision :

Shri Jagjivan Ram returned to his residence just after seven to ten minutes. He had to take the most momentous decision of his life whether to remain in the Congress or come out. It was 5 P.M. I was sitting by his side. Tears began to roll from his eyes when he mentioned his 46 years of association with the Congress and the idea of dissociation touched his heart. I told him that my association with the Congress was also of more than 56 years but in the interest of the country one has to take even a painful decision ; just as a diseased and infection-ridden incurable limb had to be amputated to save life. Similarly, we have to take the decision.

in the interest of democracy and the country. Other friends were called and the decision was made final. It was decided to resign from the Congress. Since Shri Jagjivan Ram was a Member of the Cabinet, he had to resign from the Government too. After the final decision was taken, letters of resignations and a press statement were drafted, got typed and cyclostyled late in the night of February 1, 1977. On February 2, 1977 at 10.30 AM the letter of resignation was sent to the Prime Minister and Congress President, both of whom were in the meeting of the Central Election Committee called for finalising the list of Congress candidates for the Lok Sabha elections. On receipt of the letter of Shri Jagjivan Ram, I was told that a sense of numbness and shock prevailed at the meeting. Meanwhile, Shri Jagjivan Ram went to the President of India and handed over to him a copy of his resignation letter with the explanatory note about the reason of his resignation. At 11.30 hrs. he made a statement to the press giving the reasons of his resignation and asking the people to support the new organization formed by him called the Congress for Democracy. People were surprised how the entire plan was kept secret and even the special Branch officials of CID could not have an inkling of such a vital development.

Welcome by Admirers :

Shortly after the announcement by Shri Jagjivan Ram, stream of his supporters and admirers began to flood his residence. The rush in the compound of his residence during the day and till late in the night was tremendous. He had to come out of his house several times at short intervals to thank the people and address them. He exhorted them to work for the defeat of the Congress and success of the new party called the C.F.D. The news spread like lightening in every nook and corner of the country. In the press conference the following persons were present who had taken the lead in resigning from the Congress and forming the new Party :

1. Shri Jagjivan Ram.
2. Shri H.N. Bahuguna.
3. Shri D.N. Tiwary.

4. Smt. Nandini Satpathy.
5. Shri K. R. Ganesh.
6. Shri Raj Mangal Pandey.

The election campaign of the Congress was to be inaugurated by Shri Sanjay Gandhi on February 5 at the Ramlila Grounds, New Delhi. But after the resignation of Shri Jagjivan Ram and his friends and the formation of the new Party, there was a wave of resentment and anger against Sanjay Gandhi and his name was replaced by that of Smt. Indira Gandhi for the inauguration of the election campaign. At the meeting a crowd of about two lakhs had been collected. Trucks and buses were requisitioned to bring people at the Ramlila Grounds. But the crowd was disorderly and impatient to go back and the meeting ended in half an hour. Smt. Gandhi became very much non-plussed.

On the following day, Ramlila Ground was again the venue of another meeting addressed by Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and Shri Jagjivan Ram. More than a million people, orderly and peaceful, listened to the leaders with rapt attention. The enthusiasm of the audience could be gauged from the repeated applause. This was unprecedented attendance, despite the fact that the bus services were discontinued to discourage people from attending. But they came by foot and any other mode of conveyance including bicycles. A foreigner remarked that he had not seen elsewhere in the world such a large and orderly audience. This had a great impact on the electorate of the country particularly that of Delhi.

From Pessimism to Optimism :

It would not be out of place to mention that before Shri Jagjivan Ram and his colleagues had quit the Congress, the newly formed Janata Party Leaders were apprehensive of their success in the elections. Some thought of even boycotting the elections, if restrictions were not fully withdrawn. Their workers were not touring the countryside for fear of arrest. Shri Jagjivan Ram's resignation boosted the morale of the people and the Janata leaders felt relieved. While Janata leaders were apprehensive that they would be able to win only few seats, Shri Jagjivan Ram was fully

confident of getting a majority. I have reasons to believe that even Morarjibhai was not sure of getting a majority. Although the new Party, C.F.D., was not given its due in selection of candidates ; Jagjivan Babu gave full support to the Janata Party candidates without making distinction between C.F.D. candidates and candidates of other constituents of the Janata Party. He undertook extensive election campaign tours of the entire country, mostly by train and car, as planes were not available. All the C.F.D. candidates, except one, were elected.

It is a fact that Janata Party leaders hardly visited any constituency where C.F.D. members were contesting, while Jagjivan Babu, without any reservation and distinction, went to constituencies of candidates belonging to other units of the Janata Party. Wherever he went, he drew enormous admirers surpassing the crowds for any other leader including the then Prime Minister.

Election of Leader :

After the elections, it was decided that the leader of the Janata Party would be elected by consensus to be taken by Shri Jayaprakash Narayan in Delhi. But this procedure was not followed on account of certain unfair manoeuvrings and manipulations which by now are so well known. I, therefore, need not dilate on them. It was obvious that an overwhelming majority of Janata Members were in favour of electing Shri Jagjivan Ram as their leader. Once the consensus procedure was given a good-bye, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and Shri J.B. Kripalani announced that Morarji bhai would be the leader of the Janata Parliamentary Party and the Prime Minister of India. Deviation from agreed decisions taken after consulting leaders of Janata Party, including that of C.F.D., regarding representation in the Ministries left a bad taste. C.F.D. Group was not treated at par with others.

The question of merger of C.F.D. with the Janata Party was engaging the attention of both the Janata and the CFD Members. All the units except the C.F.D. had agreed to merge on May 1, 1977. When the meeting of CFD

members was held, the majority opinion was against merging into Janata. However, the final decision was left to the leader, Shri Jagjivan Ram, who was to take into account exigencies of the situation and decide accordingly. Finally, Jagjivan Babu declared on May 1, 1977 in the Convention of the Janata Party that C.F.D. will completely merge with the Janata Party and a formal decision of the C.F.D. will be taken in the Convention to be held on May 5, 1977. On May 5, 1977, the C.F.D. resolved to merge with the Janata Party, with one or two dissenting voices. The President of the Janata Party Shri Chandra Shekhar gave solemn assurance to the delegates of C.F.D. assembled in Delhi, that equal treatment would be meted out to the erstwhile C.F.D. members. But the later happenings belied that assurance. It is not a good foreboding for the future.

The part played by Shri Jagjivan Ram in defeating the Congress and the removal of Smt. Indira Gandhi from the political scene, is unique in the annals of history. Perhaps, his was the greatest contribution in this cause. It is a recent happening, the historians will judge and weigh the vital role played by Shri Jagjivan Ram in the removal of Congress rule and setting up of Janata Government at the Centre.

It is high time now that the Abhinandan Granth on Shri Jagjivan Ram be presented at an early date, possibly in the second week of september. Members of the Four Decades of Jagjivan Ram's Parliamentary Career Celebration Committee desire that this may be presented by Shri Jayaprakash Narayan or the President of India.

D. N. Tiwary
Chairman
Celebration Committee

Man of Dedicated Service

Dr. N. Sanjiva Reddy

In the rough and tumble of India's politics to-day, it is only rarely that we can come across a person who has held high ministerial positions in the Government almost continuously for a period of over three decades and yet enjoys wide popular esteem, affection and admiration amounting almost to adoration. In Babu Jagjivan Ram we find such a rare and, if I may say so, unique person. It is only the other day that we had the opportunity to celebrate his seventieth birthday and if the mammoth gathering and public rally witnessed on that occasion is any indication, it is a measure of the widespread popularity that he enjoys among the different sections of our people.

Babuji, as he is affectionately called, like another great leader Rajendra Prasad, who also hailed from Bihar, the home State of Shri Jagjivan Ram, has not attained this eminence and esteem by any freak of fortune. It is by sheer hard work and dedicated service to the people, particularly the poor and the down-trodden, for over forty long years that he has come to enjoy this unique position in the country.

Born in a lower middle class Harijan family with no affluence to support but undergoing all the indignities suffered at the time by his community at the hands of the caste-Hindus, Shri Jagjivan Ram had to wage a relentless struggle against oppression and injustice, and as our Acting President said the other day, his childhood and youth lay

not on a bed of roses but among thorns. It must be said to his credit and indeed it speaks volumes about his rare and good quality that all these had not left any bitterness in his mind but had only steeled him to greater devotion to the causes which he has chosen to uphold from the beginning.

“Priceless Jewel”

It is needless for me to narrate here the several significant events of his life, which are more or less known to everybody in this country. I would, however, like to mention one particular event which happened at an early stage in his career, almost at its very start and perhaps little known to his countrymen. In 1936, when he was hardly twenty-eight, Shri Jagjivan Ram began his parliamentary career as a nominated Harijan member of the Bihar Legislative Council. On the opening day of the Council session attended by him, there was a tussle between the non-official member and the Treasury benches over the reduction of canal rates in Bihar. As a nominated member, Shri Jagjivan Ram was supposed to vote with the Treasury benches. The demand for the reduction of rates was justified and the Government attitude appeared to him to be entirely unimaginative, bureaucratic and against the interest of the people. He decided to vote with the opposition and expressly said so to some members who belonged to the Government side. They tried to argue and persuade him, but he was adamant. It must be remembered here that he was on the threshold of his whole career and it might have proved quite damaging if he entered into open conflict with the Government on the very first day of his Council membership. But young Jagjivan Ram was not to be deterred by these considerations and he voted with the opposition.

I have mentioned this incident to show what mettle Shri Jagjivan Ram was made of even at this early age, which proved a pointer to all his subsequent decisions and actions in his long career of service to the people. In 1937, the Congress decided to contest the elections to the Provincial Legislatures and it was a feat on the part of Shri Jagjivan Ram not only to have been elected unopposed to the Bihar Legislative Assembly but to have secured for the Congress

14 out of the 15 Harijan seats in the Assembly without a contest. When many temptations and allurements were then offered to him by the non-Congress Premier of Bihar with a view to winning over the Harijans to his side, it was again to his credit that he not only turned his eye away from the offer but even kept the Premier on tenterhooks, which won for him from Mahatma Gandhi the appellation of a "priceless jewel".

Secret of Success :

Since then, Shri Jagjivan Ram has adorned many high positions in the Party and the Government, and no charge that he has been entrusted with has he left unembellished. He has been President of the Indian National Congress from 1969 to 1971. He has been a Cabinet Minister in the Union Government since September 1946 and has held almost all the important portfolios during this long period of over three decades—broken only for two brief periods *Viz.* one of two and a half years from August, 1963 to January, 1966, when he was voluntarily out of office under the Kamaraj Plan and the second of some two months early this year when he resigned from Smt. Gandhi's cabinet and the Congress.

It is sometimes said that a bit of luck always attends on him and that is the secret of his success with any portfolio, including the most crucial ones like Defence and the difficult charge of Food and Agriculture. It is common knowledge that he was the Minister of Defence during the dark days of the 1971 Indo-Pak conflict and the Bangla Desh liberation operations and it is also well-known how creditably our country came out of those crises. Again, it is a matter of recent occurrence that when he took up the portfolio of Food and Agriculture the country was in a tight corner so far as its food supplies were concerned and within a short time he was able not only to turn the corner but to build up a surplus stock by successfully working out the Green Revolution. It is easy to say that fortune favoured him in these achievements, but the wealth of administrative experience that he has brought to bear in tackling these problems and the amount of hard, patient and silent work that has

gone to accomplish these difficult tasks are not fully appreciated, as they are not so obvious to an outsider.

As regards his other qualities and achievements as a parliamentarian, political leader and champion of the poor and the distressed, I need not dwell any further. Suffice it to say that he has all along shown himself an excellent organiser, a fine debater and a man possessed of tact, prudence, wisdom and courage of conviction. Quiet by nature and unostentatious by temperament, Shri Jagjivan Ram is a shining example of a life dedicated to the country and the cause of social and economic justice.

I have known him closely for these several long years and my association with him has always been cordial as of friends brought together by a community of ideals and urges for action in the common cause of our people and their progress. I cherish this association and I wish Babuji many more years of fruitful service to our country and the causes for which he has dedicated his life all along.

A Unique Political Personality

K.S. Hegde

Shri Jagjivan Ram, affectionately called “Babuji” is a unique figure on the Indian political scene. He has been in the public life of this country for nearly five decades now, in the course of which he has served his country in varied positions with rare dedication and success. In point of his tenure of ministerial Office, he perhaps stands alone. Shri Jagjivan Ram represents in himself a none-too-common combination of a loved leader, astute statesman, skilled parliamentarian and sound administrator.

Gandhiji's Affection :

Babuji is one of the few lieutenants of Gandhiji of the freedom days left in our midst today. As is wellknown, Jagjivan Ramji was one of those young men who responded readily and unreservedly to Mahatmaji's call and ploughed themselves in the national struggle. And, it is a measure of his sincerity, deep devotion, and his other sterling qualities as a disciplined soldier in the country's cause that he not only very soon attracted Gandhiji's attention but also won his affection. As a true Gandhian he has imbibed all the great qualities of his Master; courage, kindliness, self-effacing simplicity and a moral concern for, and total identification with, the poorest and the lowliest among his countrymen. Being brought up among them Jagjivan Babu had personal experience in his early days of the privations and

indignities suffered by his depressed and downtrodden brethren which has brought him emotionally closer to them and made him their natural leader and crusader in their cause, who could authentically voice their unarticulated miseries, and their hopes and aspirations for a better morrow. And what has distinguished his leadership is his silent, solid striving for the cause, without any bitterness whatsoever towards anyone, which has only enhanced his stature as a leader and won for him the respect and regard of all sections of the people.

Courage of Conviction :

The first thought that comes to mind at the mention of Babuji's name is of an individual who, for all his suaveness, cannot be easily pushed around—a person who has his own sense of direction and a courage of conviction to follow it. This trait in Babuji's character has been there from the very beginning of his political career. Who could ever forget the incident on the very first day of his legislative career in the Bihar Legislative Council, when he voted with the opposition on the issue of reduction in Canal rates in Bihar, which he was convinced to be in the public interest, while as a nominated member it was expected that he would vote with the Government? This fearlessness and dedicated championship of the people's causes have been a common feature throughout his distinguished career.

In his long, almost unbroken ministerial career for over three decades, Shri Jagjivan Ram has held a succession of major portfolios—Labour, Communications, Railways, Food and Agriculture and Defence—and has been a resounding success at each one of them, a fact which speaks for his great qualities as an administrator. Officials who have been with him at one time or the other all talk of his ability to command the loyalty of the team around him by his sincerity of purpose, fairmindedness, civility of manners, openness to candid advice, and seriousness in implementation of decisions when once taken after the most careful and anxious consideration—qualities which inspire credibility in a leadership and call forth the best in men. Major breakthroughs and memorable happenings are associated with

his ministerial tenures-like bumper crops and the Green Revolution, the nationalisation of air transport and the Bangla Desh victory, not to speak of the several measures in labour and other fields, which may be regarded as long strides in our march towards a better social order.

Administrator and Parliamentarian :

An able administrator may not necessarily mean a skilled parliamentarian and **vice versa**, but a successful Minister, which Shri Jagjivan Ram is, is both. His greatest asset here has been his capacity to carry the House with him, which indeed is saying a great deal about his personal qualities, his attitude towards the House and his equipment and standing as a parliamentarian. Unoffending by nature, soft-spoken, and ever urbane and courteous in his dealings with others, his is a genial personality much-loved in the House. Those who have sat for long years in Parliament are able to tell us how in his conduct in the House he has always given the impression of one who has a genuine reverence for the parliamentary institution and is ever conscious of his obligations towards it. Like any good parliamentarian, he knows the value of listening carefully and getting to know the other man's point of view. He is unruffled in the midst of all the swirling passions in the House and with his abundant self-assurance is able to take any criticisms calmly. And when his turn comes for reply, he is ready to meet them all with reasoned, telling arguments interleaved with his native wit and humour. A seasoned debator confident of his own powers, he has no need to bend low to score victories over his adversaries on the legislative floor. Himself sure of his ground, with his enviable grasp over facts, he is also never known to unduly lean on departmental briefs, or allow himself to be cramped by it in his performance in the House. His interventions are cogent, to the point and full of facts, contributing to constructive debates in the House.

Cordial & Sincere :

Ultimately, behind everything is the man. Deeply religious, a devout Gandhian with self-effacing humility and

genuine love of humanity, Babuji in his relations with others has always been cordial and sincere. Those who have been close to him have said that he never allowed his personal friendship with anyone to be lost in the dust and din of every day politics. One has only to mention Babuji's name to some of his friends and close associates, to know what a devoted following he has in the country and in what genuine regard he is held by his countrymen.

There are some in this world-God's humble men-who like the life-sustaining red corpuscles in the blood are content to unobtrusively do their part and never look beyond. They are happy doing their duty and find fulfilment in it. To this happy minority of men, Shri Jagjivan Ram belongs.

In short he is a perfect gentleman, a great champion of downtrodden, a superb Parliamentarian and an excellent administrator.

A Nation Builder

D.K. Borooah, M.P.

The year 1936 is a landmark in the history of India's freedom struggle. In Lucknow that year were heard two great voices. One was that of Jawaharlal Nehru proclaiming socialism as the only way to end poverty, misery and unemployment in the country. The other was that of young Jagjivan Ram focussing the attention of the nation to the plight of untouchables and calling upon them to rise as a united force. Both the voices exhorted the people to look upon national independence as the precondition for realising the higher goal of a classless and casteless society. While the former had the ring of authentic human sympathy, the latter had a feel of articulated personal experience. Jawahar Lai Nehru had presided over the 49th session of the Indian National Congress held from April 12 to 14 and Jagjivan Ram was the President of the All India Depressed Classes League Conference held on April 14 to 15.

Remarkably Deep Understanding :

While Panditji had already arrived on the national political scene and was the acknowledged leader of the younger, forward-looking generation of Indians, Jagjivan Ram was a new star just making his debut on the national scene. And yet, I must say, the younger man displayed a remarkably deep understanding of the Indian reality, the

reality consisting of inequity and injustice against which we were waging the struggle for freedom. His insistence on combining social and economic revolution gave a new depth and meaning to the concept of socialism.

The more I contemplate the two speeches the more I get convinced of the complementarity of the thoughts of Panditji and Babuji. On the crucial problem of untouchability Jawaharlal was of the opinion that it would vanish under socialism. He looked upon the Harijans as 'the landless proletariat' and believed that "an economic solution removes the social barriers that custom and tradition have raised". Jagjivan Ram thought that the invidious caste divisions themselves would come in the way of achieving socialism; and there is a hard grain of truth in that.

Social Reformer :

Indian society has been a divided society for centuries and social stratification has taken a settled form the worst aspect of which is the practice of untouchability. Only a persons who has suffered the humiliation and indignity that it brings upon its victims can realise the importance of breaking it. Jagjivan Ram, in his inimitable style, set out the integral relationship between social, political and economic revolutions when he said, "We want democracy and socialism. We dream of establishing a socialist society in the country but we forget that caste and democracy cannot exist together : either caste will exist or democracy will exist, both cannot exist together. So long as caste continues, any talk of socialism is empty talk. Caste and socialism are incompatible and so long as socialism and democracy are not established it is very difficult to establish human values in society".

Very few people today know that Babu Jagjivan Ram entered public life not as a politician but as a social reformer, a fighter for the cause of restoring human dignity to that part of Indian humanity which has been for centuries condemned as untouchable. From study and experience he had come to the conclusion that the heinous system was not ordained by any moral or natural law. And that made him

impatient with such patronising steps as throwing open the temples to Harijans or the caste Hindus condescending to have food with Harijans. He insists on, and has been fighting for, unreserved and unqualified equality. On account of this attitude he has been on many occasions misunderstood which, in my view, is an unfortunate expression of the conscious or unconscious sense of caste superiority of his detractors.

Crusade Against Injustice :

Undaunted by all such obstacles—and they have not been few—Babu Jagjivan Ram has continued his crusade. And thereby he has made a peerless contribution not only to the freedom movement but also to the consolidation of freedom. But for him, it would have been difficult to break the barriers of caste (even to the extent that they have been) and build national unity. Even Gandhiji's efforts might well have come to naught if Jagjivan Ram had not opposed the separatist doctrine of conversion being propagated by powerful forces at that time. It is he who convinced the Harijans that seeking social status through adopting another religious denomination would not end the injustice they suffered. He exhorted them to raise themselves with their own effort, join the mainstream of the nation and work for its advancement. "In the progress of the country lies our progress; in its salvation, our salvation; and in its emancipation, our emancipation." He declared in unmistakable terms in his Presidential address to the Lucknow Conference of the All India Depressed Classes League as far back as 1936. The nation would be doing itself a grave injustice if it fails to recognise this revolutionary contribution of Babuji. He was no angry protestor; in fighting for the cause of Harijans he was fighting for the unity of the country, for the establishment of democracy and socialism in India.

Babu Jagjivan Ram is a man of no mean erudition. He is one of those few politicians who keeps himself abreast of the latest in the field of human knowledge. The province of his knowledge extends from the ancient Vedas to modern Marxist and post-Marxist thought. But he has never allowed learning to overwhelm his wisdom which springs

from his living touch with mother earth. Even as a young man he had developed the habit of testing all theory on the touchstone of living experience. A statesman has been described as a person who has the capacity to think like an intellectual and feel like a common man. And Babuji has displayed that capacity in ample measure. Talking of caste and class he said, "Class is interchangeable but caste is not". Only he could have said it in that way. He is one of the finest orators we have around ; the quality of his oratory lies not in display of learning or torrential flow of language but in communicating to the common man the highest thought in simplest words.

Friend, Philosopher & Guide :

The contribution of Babuji in setting in motion the process of national integration by asserting the value of human dignity is of a fundamental nature. It puts him in the category of front rank nation builders. He has combined in himself the qualities of idealism, integrated and comprehensive thinking and practical wisdom. Whichever sphere of national life he has touched bears the imprint of his personality. The framework of industrial relations and labour welfare which he prepared as free India's first Labour Minister would remain valid and unsurpassed for decades to come. Maximum welfare through minimum friction and settlement of conflicts through across-the-table negotiations is as novel a feature of post-World War II industrial life as Non-alignment is of international relations.

Babu Jagjivan Ram has had the longest innings in the Central Cabinet being there ever since 1946 with a brief interruption after the Kamaraj Plan and he has the distinction of making an eminent success of every portfolio that he handled. As Minister of Food and Agriculture he not only imparted a new dynamism to both production and distribution of food but also initiated the implementation of the long-awaited policy of distributing land to the tiller. India's armed forces saw their finest hour in the Bangla Desh victory during his tenure as Defence Minister. In that capacity he took the bold step of demolishing caste distin-

ctions that prevailed in the form of combatant and non-combatant troops. He owes his success to his quick grasp of problems and the habit of going into details. If the superiority of the statesman over the bureaucrat is ever truly established it is in his ministry.

A man, who had to struggle and fight the way Babu Jagjivan Ram has, could become bitter and cantankerous. But no. Babuji is free from all kinds of complex and therefore free from malice. Where national interest and principles are however involved he is non-compromising fighter. Of course, he chooses his own time and his own methods which are never less than fair and democratic. The people of India have learnt to look upon him as a dependable guide, friend and philosopher. He has weathered many a storm in the past and none will overwhelm him in future.

Service to Hinduism

Dr. P. C. Chunder

Modern Hinduism owes a debt of gratitude to Babu Jagjivan Ram. During the trouble some thirties of this century communal conspiracies tarnished the Indian political scene. The British imperialists were bent upon dividing the Indian people on the lines of caste and creed. Mahatma Gandhi cried hoarse to stop the rot. The Muslim League largely swayed the Muslim masses. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was determined to take the depressed classes away from Hinduism and induce them to adopt some other religion. At this crucial stage, Babu Jagjivan Ram's foresight, sagacity and stratagem were mainly responsible for saving Hinduism from the harmful effects of Dr. Ambedkar's divisive move. The account of Babuji's services to Hinduism in those crucial days deserves reiteration.

Devotion to Religion & Down Trodden :

Born in a backward Hindu community, Jagjivan Ram's early spiritual mentor was his father, Sant Sobhi Ram. While working with the British army at Multan, Sobhi Ram came in touch with the adherents of 'Shiva Narayani Sant' sect and adopted the 'Sant'-hood. Back home in Bihar, he became the Guru or spiritual preceptor of hundreds of disciples. As a fine calligraphist, he copied by hand

the 'Granth' of the sect to supplement his income. Jagjivanji inherited a moral stamina from his saintly father.

Babuji's teacher at the primary school was Kapil Muni Tiwari. This Brahmin did not observe untouchability. He too impressed his young pupil immensely.

When Jagjivanji joined the school at Arrah he expressed his early protest against untouchability, when he broke the pots reserved for the untouchable. His mute but active protest led the Head Master to cancel the order for the reserved pot for the backward Hirdus.

Through nature and nurture, Jagjivanji acquired deep attachment for his ancestral religion, but nevertheless rejected its prejudices. His combative spirit manifested itself during his student days at Varanasi. When his landlord would not allow this Harijan student to live with his mother in the rented house, Jagjivanji prevailed upon the landlord's priest to change the disciple's mind. Again, a barber refused to entertain Jagjivanji as a customer. In protest he organised the local Harijans for the boycott of the barbers. They soon came to terms with the Harijans.

At Varanasi, Jagjivanji studied the Hindu shastras to get an insight into the Indian traditions. He frequented the Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society. Later he shifted himself to Calcutta and joined the Vidyasagar College, founded by the great social reformer, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. He came in contact with the national leaders like Subhas Chandra Bose, J.M. Sen Gupta, B.C. Roy and others. At the Calcutta Congress in 1928, he met Mahatma Gandhi from a distance, but was attracted to him ideologically. Jagjivanji on the one hand, organised Ravidas Sabhas to ameliorate the conditions of the Harijans and on the other hand exposed the communal character of the Muslim League in many meetings in Calcutta. Jagjivanji started writing to Mahatmaji. Yet he did not hesitate to help the terrorists.

When the Civil Disobedience movement was launched, Jagjivanji organised meetings and processions in Bihar. While

in the midst of national struggle he passed the B.Sc. examination with credit.

Opposition to Harijans Conversion :

At this stage, the demand for the separate electorates was in the air. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar claimed that the untouchables should only vote for the untouchables. Mahatmaji opposed the demand, but later agreed that the Harijans could have reserved seats in a joint electorate. Mahatmaji's fast ultimately led to the Poona Pact, which scotched the danger of separate electorates. A new organization was formed to promote the welfare of the Harijans. This was later called the Harijan Sevak Sangh. The name of Mahatmaji's weekly was changed from Navajivan to Harijan. Jagjivanji followed his lead in the work for uplift of the Harijans. Correspondence between the two multiplied. Jagjivanji became the secretary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh and rose to be a prominent provincial leader of the Harijans.

But the Poona Pact failed to pacify the leading figures among the Harijans. In October 1935, Ambedkar declared at the Bombay Presidency Depressed Classes Conference that the Harijans should leave the Hindu fold altogether. While Mahatmaji argued against the divisive step, Ambedkar asserted that inequality was the very basis and ethics of Hindu religion and so there was no use deluding one with the belief that the depressed classes would ever acquire their full manhood while remaining in the Hindu fold. Jagjivan Ram publicly condemned this disintegrating efforts of Ambedkar.

Nevertheless, Ambedkar was in full glare of publicity. Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs, Arya Samajists, Sanatanists and others wooed him persistently. Hindu Dharma Tyag Committees were organised in Bombay. Yet only a section of the Harijan, especially the Mahars, was prepared to respond to Dr. Ambedkar's call. Many Harijan leader indeed did protest vigorously. But backed by the foreign imperialists, the potential danger posed by Dr. Ambedkar's move away from Hinduism threatened to disrupt the oldest community. In many parts of India

many Harijans were converted to Christianity. Others considered conversion to the Sikh religion.

The Hindu Mahasabha promptly reacted and under the presidentship of Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya offered a fair deal to the Harijans. Jagjivanji attended its session at Poona and successfully resisted the Sankaracharyya's move to ban admission of the Harijans into the 'garbha' or innermost chamber of the Hindu temples.

Jagjivanji for the first time met Dr. Ambedkar, who then criticized the other's attitude towards the down-trodden Harijans. Jagjivanji sent a secret letter to the leaders of the Hindu community to consider Dr. Ambedkar's viewpoint. The nationalist Harijans formed the All India Depressed Classes League.

At the inspiration of Dr. Ambedkar, an All Religions Conference was held at Lucknow in May 1936 where Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains and Arya Samajists vied with one another in wooing the Harijans. Though uninvited, Jagjivanji with a number of his friends attended the conference. After a great deal of lobbying at his instance, the issue of conversion was decided to be deferred and the leader of the nationalist Harijans, Shri Rasik Lal Biswas, was elected as the President of the All India Depressed Classes Conference.

Foresight & Sagacity :

While Jagjivanji felt that it was difficult to confront Dr. Ambedkar straightaway, he took recourse to a stratagem. As has been pointed out, many of the nationalist Harijans had decided under Jagjivan Ram's guidance that it was better strategy to declare themselves 'pro-conversionists' if they had to carry the Ambedkarites with them. Their tactics succeeded. The nineteen-men committee, with powers to co-opt others elected by the conference to examine the different aspect of all the religions and after considering the whole matter in the interest of the depressed classes, to submit a report to the next all India Depressed Classes Conference, had a majority of nationalist Harijans. They

had posed at the conference as 'pro-conversionists' and had assented to a resolution expressing full confidence in Ambedkar. Jagjivan Ram was the moving spirit behind this strategy. He kept himself sedulously in the background. While the press blazoned Ambedkar's success, Jagjivan Ram knew that the Doctor's fall had begun.

And in this he was correct. The mass conversion of the Harijans to some other religion was thus averted. The All Religious Committee had a majority of men, as already stated, of Jagjivan Ram's view-point. The resolution which sought the constitution of the Committee was his draft. He was the unseen spirit moulding opinions and directing the Conference into what he and his colleagues conceived to be proper channels.

He had thus successfully piloted a subtle scheme calculated to strike a new path as an alternative to Dr. Ambedkar's negative tactics which led to a blind alley.

After India attained her independence, Dr. Ambedkar led his followers to be converted to Buddhism *en masse*. But then the foreign imperialists were no more. This step had little impact on Hinduism as a whole. The neo-Budhists feel themselves somewhat isolated, whereas Jagjivan Ram has been elevated to the status of a national leader. His leadership has since been sought after not only by the scheduled castes, but also by every other section of the Hindu community, nay, the Indian people. Here lies the worth of the foresight and sagacity of Babu Jagjivan Ram. Modern Hinduism can repay its debt to him by implementing in letter and spirit the provisions enshrined in Article 17 of the Constitution of India, "Untouchability" is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden."

Torchbearer of Democracy

Shanti Bhushan

Babu Jagjivan Ram is a great believer in democracy. He has always fought for it. He has kept the flame of democracy burning in this country. Once again he has stood firm for democracy and the democratic values cherished by him all his life. In his statement issued to the press on February 2, 1977 at the time of his resignation from Mrs. Gandhi's Cabinet and from the Congress Party, he said, that "the Motherland calls once again to guard and preserve democracy, to protect human values so that India and India alone becomes strong and prosperous". Indian democracy owes a debt to Babu Jagjivan Ram.

Contribution to Democracy :

During the nineteen months of Emergency the people of this country had to undergo untold sufferings under an authoritarian rule. After the declaration of emergency on June 25, 1975, endless number of innocent persons were put behind the bars. The Constitution was mutilated to meet certain personal objectives. The judiciary was mauled. A reign of terror was unleashed. Common man was breathing under suffocating condition of emergency. The basic tenets of democracy and socialism had disappeared. At such a critical juncture Babu Jagjivan Ram came forward to make an effective contribution to the cause of liberation and emancipation. His dissociation from the unholy authori-

tarian forces of the day, and a direct and challenging confrontation with them came as a big morale booster to the millions whose voice had been gagged. It was welcomed by all those in India and abroad who had dedicated themselves to a democratic way of life. Babuji's decision was hailed by world press. In the political circles it was considered as, "yet another expression of the strength of democratic sentiments in the country".

A true Gandhian, Babu Jagjivan Ram believes in simplicity and leads a simple life. His doors are always open to all. Throughout his life, he has devoted himself to the cause of millions of downtrodden—whether they be harijans, labourers, or those belonging to the backward classes or to any other neglected sections of society. Their interest is always uppermost in his mind. He has done and is constantly doing whatever he can for their social uplift, betterment and prosperity.

Astute Statesman :

Babu Jagjivan Ram has also made a mark abroad. In 1947 and 1950 he led Indian delegation to the conferences of International Labour Organisation. Recently, he represented India at Farakka talks with Bangladesh. He has succeeded in hammering out a solution to the problem which was hanging for over thirty years. This speaks of his high calibre as a diplomat in addition to his being an astute statesman with a keen understanding of the needs and aspirations of the people.

Babu Jagjivan Ram, apart from being a valiant fighter in the battle of freedom, is an excellent organiser, capable administrator and a fine statesman. He is possessed of tact, prudence and courage of conviction and endowed with a keen intellect and a sensitive understanding of popular sentiments.

Since the pre-dawn era of Indian independence Babuji has been entrusted with the responsibility of handling the affairs of the Government. He has almost without interruption, held a number of important portfolios with great

success as a Cabinet Minister of the Indian Government. With a vast fund of commonsense, deep insight and a burning desire to serve the people, Babuji has always found it easy to deal with any matter—be it relating to agriculture, labour, communication or defence. Babuji's wit and humour is matchless. He can have a dig at his adversaries without being unpleasant. He is tenacious yet flexible. Babuji can be ferociously challenging yet he is sporting.

It is really a great fortune of the Indian people to have Babuji to serve them and thus gain for themselves the finest blend of wisdom and experience.

Blend of Qualities

Gulzarilal Nanda

My association with Jagjivan Ramji extends over a period of 30 years. It commenced in the year 1947, when he was Minister of labour in the Central Government and I occupied a similar position in the then Government of Bombay. Prior to this I had devoted 25 years to the service of the working class in Gujarat under Gandhiji's guidance, in the the field of organisation and welfare. The bulk of the workers belonged to the Scheduled Caste and other backward sections of the community. These were therefore the basic interests that we shared in common through all these years. I have been watching with keen appreciation the effort and achievements of Jagjivan Ramji in the cause of labour and Harijans, in and outside Government. We were together in Parliament for many Years. We were colleagues in the Central Cabinet for a good length of time. When he vacated his place in the Government as a consequence of the Kamaraj Plan we used to meet often and the bond which was built up then has become strengthened with the passing of time.

Remarkable Administrator :

Having a look at the career of Babu Jagjivan Ramji, one cannot help feeling that destiny has marked him out, from the outset, as an important instrument in shaping the

future of India, after the achievement of freedom. In political life as well as in the administration of the affairs of the country he was assigned key roles, one after another, which he carried out with remarkable success, and great distinction. In fact his name has become associated with success, in a manner and to an extent that it can be described as an unvarying concomitant of his activities. He has held many portfolios in the Government of India as a Cabinet Minister, so that his talents and capacities have been tested in many fields of administration. Every task that he undertook was accomplished so well that in the minds of the people, high and low, a degree of confidence had been created that anything which Jagjivan Babu touches will prosper and he will find solutions for the most intractable problems. The faith of the people in his capacity to ride storms and overcome crisis has been fully justified.

At one stage, the food situation was causing deep concern and creating serious hardships for the people. It was felt that Shri Jagjivan Ram was the only person who could tackle this problem effectively. In his hands, things began to improve. Nature too helped. The halo of successful performance has persisted around him in the whole series of tasks which he was called upon to handle, including labour and defence.

An outstanding feature of Babuji's political life also is the prominent role he has played in every crucial period, during the last three decades. Every time, he has made a decisive contribution in guiding the course of events at critical junctures. On all such occasions he brought to bear on the solution of the problems he faced, a cool judgement, quiet efficiency and reassuring confidence. He was the man of the hour at several turning points in the political history of our country.

Jagjivan Ramji owes his achievements, on such a high scale to his inborn qualities but he has also equipped himself for the positions he occupied by steady application and hardwork. He has three obvious advantages—a complete mastery of detail in dealing with the routine of administration as well as in his performance in Parliament. He is

also able to see and face every situation in the light of a wide perspective. He has displayed an enormous capacity for initiative and innovation in every field in which he has functioned. It was inevitable that he should leave the imprint of his personality in every sphere of activity in which he was placed.

He has a temperament which makes for smooth relations with those who work with him and for him. He is accessible to people at all levels who feel the need to approach him. When necessity arises he is prepared to lend a helping hand.

Jagjivan Ramji's entire career bears evidence of realism and a balanced approach, both in the realm of ideas and in the field of action. He is conversant with various ideologies in vogue but he has never lost sight of the truth that they have to serve certain ideals and ends, and helps us to attain defined goals. He has never taken an extreme position on any issue. He has always favoured a positive and constructive line, and a course of action which should yield the best results.

Man of Masses :

Jagjivan Ramji is a man of the masses. To give succour to and uplift the down-trodden and the under-privileged is the main interest of his life. He thinks for them and lives for them. In his speeches and all other pursuits, he reflects their urges and aspirations.

His great passion in life is to efface tyranny and exploitation from the surface as well as the depth of Indian society. His effort has always been to reconcile various interests, in order to speed up progress in the realization of his aims. If, however, an obstacle in the way cannot be removed otherwise, he steels himself to use all his strength to deal with it effectively.

It is the rural poor, the workers and the depressed sections of the community with whose plight and welfare he is emotionally involved. I am familiar with his work as the

Minister of Labour in the Central Government. His stewardship of the labour Ministry carries an indelible stamp of both his concern for the workers and his capacity to adopt concrete measures for their betterment in consonance with the national good. In that period he took action in respect of most of the needs and problems of the working class and broke new ground in various directions.

Jagjivan Ramji's range of interests is not confined to politics and administration. Cultural pursuits are also an important facet of his life. He has delved into the cultural traditions of India and is familiar with a wide expanse of its cultural heritage-religion, philosophy and literary works of the past.

I conclude with the tribute to Babuji that he has the traits and the blend of qualities which go into the making of a great life.

An Outstanding Political Figure

Bhupesh Gupta

To survive as a legislator for forty years the electoral casualties as Jagjivan Ram, endearingly nicknamed Bapuji, has done would in itself seem a noteworthy feat. Whatever may be one's views on Darwin's well-known doctrine the survival in this case at least has not disproved it. Within the limitations of the ideologies and politics to which Jagjivan Babu belongs he is certainly one of the fittest. For the legislative front he was, while in the Congress, found indispensable and now the ruling Janata Party, too, would not like to do without this veteran, though he may seem a thorn in the flesh of some in the new ruling set up.

Ever since he appeared on the political scene almost half a century ago Jagjivan Babu has been taken by the millions of Harijans as their champion. Whether he has succeeded in fulfilling even their minimum expectations may be debatable but no one will deny that he in his own way and in the light of his political beliefs and loyalties has striven to serve the cause of the Harijans. And what is to be particularly noted is that he has done so not in any sectarian isolation but by linking the future of the Harijans with India's freedom struggle and, after independence,

with the struggle to rebuild this great nation on a secular and democratic foundation.

Indeed, Babuji is a personality born of our glorious freedom fight, one who rose in stature as that fight gathered momentum and sweep. Like many other Congress leaders Jagjivan Babu not only came under Gandhiji's profound influence but won his affection, personifying the national movement's growing links with the downtrodden and oppressed masses. But unlike many others Jagjivan Babu came from the ranks of the Harijans without having any of the advantages of birth, wealth or privilege that often in those days of upper class politics not only received undue attention, but even facilitated, in one measure or another, one's elevation to the top rungs of the leadership. Yet Jagjivan Babu's rise in the political life of the day was a remarkable one; it was no endowment or award of patronage but a natural evolution of the man that Babuji is today.

Babuji's eventful political career, by no means without its quota of controversies, has signified a challenge to casteism from the ranks of our freedom movement and, later, of the builders of a new India. This has brought him sympathy, solidarity, understanding and respect even from those who have been somewhat critical of his ideas from the point of view of a revolutionary change—social, economic and political—without which the real emancipation of the exploited and the oppressed is inconceivable. It is perhaps one of the endless paradoxes of history that this fighting son the Harijans remained basically wedded to the politics of the 'haves'—the dominant class politics of the Congress regime. Even when a break came last February as a result of his resignation from the Indira Gandhi's Government and from the Congress literally electrifying the country's political scene that basic bond was not to go. So we have the ex-Congress stalwart now as one of the seniormost members of the Janata Party and its government though somewhat uncharitably given the Number Three place in the Cabinet. Whatever the numbering in the top echelons of the ruling party which is having its "teething trouble" for too long the redoubtable surviving member of

the Congress High Command of the old days remains, in many ways, the No. One if the mass appeal is to be taken as a yardstick. He is still regarded by the Harijans as their leader and by many others as an upholder of some of the solemn commitments of our freedom movement and of our Republic such as secularism and democracy. Who can dispute that by his resignation from the Congress and its government which was instantly followed by his searing campaign against the rule of the "one and a half" Babuji rendered signal service to the nation which will no doubt be recorded in the letters of gold in history. Small wonder that there was an attempt to "immobilise" him during the election campaign on the basis of a fabricated E.C.G. report. The foul plot would have perhaps succeeded but for the honesty of the President's physician Dr. Caroli, who refused to oblige the Establishment. Is Babuji going to be now immobilised by the new Establishment, having been put not in a nursing home but in the Janata Cabinet? This is a question which appears to be in the minds of many today-yet another index of the popular expectation from Babuji in a critical situation.

It is but natural that with the Harijans under an intensified offensive, inhuman and savage people should be looking forward to Jagjivan Babu for his most effective intervention to put an end to this national disgrace. Not that Babuji alone can accomplish this task but, then, his being in the forefront of the active defence of the Harijans and thus of the honour of the nation itself would make all the difference. This shared feeling of the people is another tribute to Babuji. After all, who in the government could be more relied upon than this leader, who has sprung from the Harijans, in defending them against the war that has been unleashed against them by landlords and other harijan-baiters. Babuji's own tradition as that of our freedom movement is challenged.

Babuji's identification with the cause of the uplift of the Harijans has added special significance to his political career and no less to his aggregate of forty years in the Bihar state assembly, in the Constituent Assembly and in Parliament. Perhaps it will be rated as his unique good

fortune that he has always been in the government benches, never in the opposition. However, to some at least this may not seem all that inviting; after all, in moulding the parliamentary characters or, if you like, parliamentarians, the opposition benches have often an important role to play. Though denied that opportunity Jagjivan Babu is nonetheless a very able parliamentarian, easily one of the best India's parliament has known. A skilful debater with a splendid command over language—both Hindi and English—Babuji is perhaps at his best when attacked. One wishes such a debater was in the opposition benches fighting for better causes. But it seems fortune has preserved him only for the treasury benches and that, too, not unoften to defend the lost causes in a capitalist rule under which the Harijans and other oppressed and exploited masses can never hope to get what is their due.

Jagjivan Babu is reputed to be a great administrator, who cannot be, it is said, played about by the top bureaucrats. He has been one of the few ministers to hold the portfolio instead of the portfolio holding them—certainly a very creditable point in a set-up where the bureaucracy and the red tape rule the roost. Of course, he has not been entirely spared the fetters as well as the evil influence of the system which the Congress has served and the Janata Party is now serving. But his personality could not be extinguished even though it occasionally became somewhat dim as during the months of the internal emergency. That was perhaps the most unhappy period of Babuji's career as a leading member of the Central Government.

Many have asked, why Babuji of all Congress leaders remained silent during the crucial months of the emergency when Indira Gandhi was plumping for the establishment of a personal, authoritarian rule and the notorious caucus, led by her younger son, was usurping the authority and power of the government, riding rough-shod over the established democratic norms and values in flagrant violation of the laws of the land including the Constitution. The ugly development called for a revolt in the cabinet and Jagjivan Babu's lead in it.

In this connection the writer of this article recalls his talk with Babuji about the disturbing and shameful state of affairs in and around seat of power with a view to seeking his intervention to stop the rot. That was in the later half of 1976. After listening with utmost attention Jagjivan Babu gave his reaction in a few rather significant words, saying that "I agree with you one hundred percent". One could hardly miss the note of deep anguish and concern in what he said. Of course, he gave no indication of action he had in mind, certainly not, what he has to do on February 2, this year. He dropped, as it were, a megaton political bomb on the scandalous, corrupt emergency raj tottering to its ignominious doom. Babuji will be remembered as the most effective election campaigner of the traumatic Lok Sabha poll. In retrospect, it may well be said that Indira Gandhi's waterloo was settled not when the votes were cast but when Jagjivan Ram had struck his knockout blow by his resignation on that fateful February day.

Babuji later did make some initial amends for his failure to pull up Indira Gandhi together with the caucus but he has not yet given a convincing answer why he had not revolted earlier. If any one man could have then restrained Indira Gandhi, it was Jagjivan Ram.

It must, however, be said in fairness to Babuji that he disliked what was going on in the then Prime Minister's house and he was sincere and honest in disapproval, albeit passive.

Many instances of Jagjivan Ram's fine performance as a parliamentarian can be recalled but perhaps the greatest contribution to the cause of parliamentary democracy he has made in the recent period was when he resigned from the Indira Gandhi's government and also from the party he had served for several decades in order to take the fight against the rule of the "one and a half" to the people. This one single action but not one on the floor of the House, would in the historical perspective, outshine all his best performances within the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha put together. Jagjivan Babu's formation of a new party 'the Congress for Democracy' was another significant step which

brought a bright promise for the struggle for democracy in the new situation. Many Congressmen instantly rallied behind him and still many others were in line to do so. But then Babuji, in his wisdom, preferred to call off that move and merge the new-born CFD in the Janata Party. The Janata Party has no doubt been strengthened by the infant CFD's self-immolation. But Jagjivan Babu has yet to prove how this is going to help the secular and democratic tradition of which he has been a part and, in particular, the cause of the Harijans so dear to his heart!

However, Babuji is very rightly looked upon as a powerful force, one not flourishing on some father figure's blessings but deriving his strength from the tradition he has upheld and from the Harijans and other sections of the the people, to carry forward his fight in the new complicated circumstances in which he is placed today. Wherever Babuji happens to be, he is there in his own right as an outstanding national leader.

Since the young Jagjivan Ram entered public life much has changed in the life of the nation and the world around. The Harijans for instance, can no longer be satisfied with the small mercies from the exploiting classes or from the power that be. Along with other vast sections of the oppressed and exploited masses they want to be the masters of their future. Hence they are realising more and more that the strivings for their elementary rights, for their human dignity, and for justice are today merging with the profound, far-going struggle for revolutionary social change and that only under socialism can they truly accomplish their emancipation and assume in full measure the role history has earmarked for them. To the extent Babuji responds to such promptings of social change, he will have added new lustre to his colourful career that, in the parliamentary arena today, enters its fifth decade. All his friends will wish him well with the fervent hope that this distinguished veteran of India's freedom battle will not permit himself to be "immobilised" in his new situation.

Valiant Fighter

Madhu Dandavate

A valiant fighter during the country's struggle for independence, a gifted parliamentarian, an able administrator and a champion for the cause of the weaker sections of the society, Babu Jagjivan Ram has an illustrious record of service to the people. It was, therefore, natural and in keeping with his image that while democracy in India was passing through the severest strain, he should have opted for freedom and given a new direction to people's struggle for their democratic rights.

Against this background, it is appropriate that the people of Bihar should have decided to present a commemoration volume to Babuji on the occasion of completion of four decades of his parliamentary career.

I convey my best wishes for the success of the function.

Nation's Concern Uppermost

Hitendra Desai

I am glad that a commemoration volume is being published on the occasion of the celebration of the completion of four decades of Parliamentary career of Shri Jagjivan Babu. It is a matter of pride that Shri Jagjivan Ram has an unbroken record of four decades of Parliamentary career. That shows that he has been quite popular with the people.

Shri Jagjivan Babu during his Parliamentary career has handled number of Departments in several capacities. In all this work he has been the champion for the cause of the weaker and downtrodden sections of the society. His main concern has been the concern of the nation as a whole and his faith in secularism, democracy and socialism is clearly marked in whatever field he functions.

I wish him long life and useful years of service to the nation.

Great Administrator

T. A. Pai

The first contact that I had with Babuji was when he was the Minister of food and Agriculture in 1967. Then I was a Banker. Syndicate Bank was the first commercial bank in the country to go into agricultural finance as it considered agriculture as the basic industry of the country and deserved as much support as any other governed bank financing of any enterprise were the same for agriculture as for industry. But the problem here was to deal with a much larger number of people, understanding them and their occupation much more intimately than the normal banker would care to do. It had been a traditional belief that only co-operatives could do it and commercial banks need not have anything to do with this. I required, therefore, official support against this approach and I must say that I got it in plenty from Babuji.

Symbol of hope :

I have very high regard for Babuji's commonsense approach to the problems of the Country. He has been down to earth because he has known what life is for millions of people in this country. He has been a symbol of hope for the down-trodden in this country who have suffered for centuries and he was the one to prove to the world, given opportunities for development.—though his might have been

one of the very few instances where people had to accept the tyranny of the caste system and the under-privileges that go with the birth, to escape these that a man could have considerable abilities, sagacity as well as anybody else born with a silver spoon. Today country's wealth in human resources on account of feudalistic attitudes had been languishing. As we have so much of it is the poverty of mind that refuses either to acknowledge it or seriously apply ourselves to make the most effective use of it for the development of the country.

As a Cabinet colleague, I have been lucky enough to get every courtesy at his hands, understanding and it was a privilege to have known him so well and to have worked with him.

Great Administrator :

As an administrator he proved himself to be a great administrator as he inspired confidence in all those who worked with him as a leader of a team should and never let them down. The crucial test for any administrator is to share success or failure with his colleagues and Babuji could be relied upon to do this.

I do hope that his valuable services would be available to the country for a long time to come. While youth has his own qualifications, old age is heritage of wealth, experience and maturity. It is the combination of both that is required for the renewal of life in this country.

Vital Role In Restoring Democracy

By A Special Correspondent

Extending “cordial welcome” to Shri Jagjivan Ram to the Janta Party when he had resigned from the Cabinet and the Congress, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan had expressed the hope that “the forthcoming elections would (now) change the direction of history and democracy as well as our democratic institutions would get a fresh lease of life and strengthen the power of the people.”

Innumerable prominent political leaders and the general public who had personally undergone the sufferings of Emergency or seen the reign of terror let loose heaved a sigh of relief with the thought that the chances of Congress defeat and restoration of democracy had brightened considerably. Majority of leaders then in jail were wary about the opposition's chances at the polls since the atmosphere was charged with awe and the feeling that voters might not be able to exercise their franchise freely.

Resignation Boosted Morale

The mood of these leaders and the people was, however, entirely different when they heard the news of Babuji's resig-

nation and the firm declaration that his objective would be to arrest the "authoritarian and totalitarian trends."

Shri Madhu Limaye, a prominent political leader then in jail and worried about the chances of Mrs. Gandhi holding free and fair elections has aptly described his own mood and indeed reflected the feelings of the people : In jail the announcement of holding elections to the Lok Sabha was received with a feeling that Mr. Indira Gandhi will not let the elections be fair. The voters will naturally be intimidated as the internal emergency is not going to be withdrawn. But on February 2 when they heard over the A.I.R. the news of Babuji's resignation there was a wave of hope and jubilation. "Democracy will now be vindicated", they felt.

Shri Sanjiva Reddy, now the President of India, said "Gandhiji used to create great men out of dust but Mr. Jagjivan Ram stepped in to save great men when they were all being turned to dust by his bold step before the recent Lok Sabha elections. He hoped that Shri Jagjivan Ram would visit South also to create the same climate he had created in the North."

Shri Nanaji Deshmukh said "when we were suffering under authoritarianism, he kicked away the chair of office and created an atmosphere in which the people demonstrated their faith in democracy and freedom to the entire world."

Shri Ibrahim Suleman Sait said "Shri Jagjivan Ram who had made the greatest sacrifices, ruled the hearts of 600 million people of the country. Only a leader like him could unite all sections."

Shri U. S. Patil said "all causes and sections with whom Shri Jagjivan Ram sided were crowned with success."

These and numerous other leaders belonging to various parties including Shri Jayaprakash Narayan found in Shri Jagjivan Ram the saviour of democracy. These richly deserved tributes have been rightly showered on him not only before or during the last elections to the Lok Sabha but even after the elections and the formation of the Janata

Government. Law Minister Shanti Bhushan recently said "Shri Jagjivan Ram has kept the flame of democracy burning. Once again he has stood firm for democracy and the democratic values cherished by him all his life. Indian democracy owes a debt to Babu Jagjivan Ram."

It is said that newspapers reflect the opinion and wishes of the people. They are choosy in eulogising a politician and do so only when people all around express themselves strongly. Prominent newspaper columnist S. Nihal Singh of the Statesman wrote "Mr. Jagjivan Ram has emerged in a pivotal position because he has opened up a viable alternative for a lot of Congressmen, now and in the post-election phase. Even more significant than the number of Congressmen who have joined the Congress for Democracy is the appeal Mr. Jagjivan Ram has for the bulk of those remaining in the party, for one thing, they know that most of them have been renominated party candidates by virtue of Mr. Jagjivan Ram's dramatic decision. Secondly, they now know where to turn to for help in a future crises... Many of the Congressmen remaining in the organisation feel closer to Mr. Jagjivan Ram than to the prevailing party power structure."

Free Press Journal of Bombay wrote "it is becoming increasingly evident that the fast changing twists and turns in the nation's political landscape, spurred by Mr. Jagjivan Ram's totally unexpected and sudden exit from the Congress, have put out of gear the ruling party's election strategy in many states".

Everyone—politicians, newspapermen and the masses—acknowledged that Babuji's resignation from the Congress worked as a decisive blow to the forces that had unleashed Emergency and had created vicious atmosphere full of fear and intimidation. His exit, therefore, not only strengthened the then opposition forces but injected an element of panic within the Congress as well.

Certain opportunists who had benefitted during the dark days of Emergency however indulged in mud slinging and spread the canard that Babuji did not revolt and resign all

the 19 months of emergency. It suited these professional maligners and paid propagandists to ignore cogent reasons given by Babuji in several statements made after his resignation outlining the reasons for his waiting for a proper time to show his resentment against the forces of oppression. Ruthlessly wielding power, Mrs. Gandhi would not have spared Babuji if he had resigned anywhere during the days of Emergency when press was gagged and the arrest of Jayaprakash Narayan and other prominent leaders was not allowed to be reported.

Babuji's statement at the first public meeting at Ramlila Ground provides the most appropriate answer. He said: Today it is being asked why I resigned after so many months. Do I have to resign on a day suitable to Mrs. Indira Gandhi. If I had resigned earlier, people would not have known about it. I wanted the entire people to know so that I could tell them the reason.

He made similar statements in several other meetings. In Chandigarh he said when he was in the Central Cabinet he was feeling as suffocated as the 600 million people of the country. "I was in fact waiting for a chance to loosen the stranglehold, and be a free man...If she had got the scent of my plan to resign, she would have moved some other card—and his urge for his own freedom and the freedom of the people would have been trumped."

In fact Shri Jagjivan Ram had found the dictatorial traits in Mrs. Indira Gandhi when she refused to quit after the Allahabad High Court judgement went against her. Only he could assess how much vindictive she could be. Newspaper columnists have mentioned on several occasions that among the then Cabinet Ministers, only Shri Jagjivan Ram had the courage to suggest Mrs. Gandhi to resign after the Allahabad verdict. Instead of setting healthy traditions, Mrs. Gandhi not only clung to power but started organising "rallies" through her paid agents.

It is now a well-known fact that Mrs. Gandhi never took her cabinet colleagues into confidence while imposing emergency or dissolving Lok Sabha to hold elections.

Babuji had also acknowledged it and said that over the years many Pradesh Congress and district Committees had been superseded and *ad hoc* committees appointed in their place. These matters were never brought before the Congress Working Committee. "The tendencies towards despotic rule in the Congress organisation as also in the administration of the country are increasing alarmingly." Emergency was imposed without the knowledge of Babuji. Once imposed, Babuji never wanted it to continue after a certain period. At a press conference in Bombay on February 27, Babuji said "I expected that the emergency was for a short period. I did not expect Mrs. Gandhi would misuse the emergency". Again in Chandigarh, he said Mrs. Gandhi had "crushed democracy. She had made the people poorer—they had neither rights nor liberties."

Mrs. Gandhi had the habit of using leaders to prop up her image and discard them at her convenience. She would get all the credit for good things done by the Government and pass on discredit and blame for failures on others. Babuji aptly described it in his press conference in New Delhi when he was asked to comment on the Prime Minister's off repeated complaint that she had been stabbed in the back by her colleagues. Babuji asked if there was any person worth the name in the country whom she has tried not to humiliate? Has she not betrayed the country on many occasions in regard to various economic programmes that she announced? Does she expect that in such a situation honourable persons will stick to her at all times? And if any person finds her company inconvenient and not to the benefit of the country, why should she feel that she has been stabbed in the back? Has she cared to count how many persons she has completely annihilated, of course, politically.

Babuji obviously realised that the blows being given to democracy by Mrs. Gandhi will completely annihilate this system for ever. In Bhiwani, he said "when he found that she had renounced the democratic principles and was establishing one-party rule in the country, he had no alter-

native but to leave the party and fight for restoration of democracy in the country.”

The Congress Party has all along been adorned by the people because it spearheaded the freedom movement and followed the best democratic traditions during the Prime Ministership of Jawaharlal Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri. Babuji who had been the backbone of the Congress for several years never wanted to leave it, much less revolt against it. He would not have thought of resigning from the Party even when he went to meet Mrs. Gandhi on that fateful day of February 1, 1977 to put her wise by telling her to withdraw emergency and restore press freedom. In his letter to Mrs. Gandhi on February 2, Babuji wrote: “When I called on you last evening at 4.45 P.M., I pleaded with you for lifting ‘the Emergency’ as the prevailing condition in the country do not justify its continuance any longer. I further explained that any situation arising after the lifting of the emergency can be dealt with by normal laws of the land and no extraordinary measures were necessary.

“You expressed your reluctance to end the Emergency as the Home Ministry has already examined it and did not find it possible to lift the emergency. After this it was unnecessary to further pursue the matter and I left.

“The country today is under double Emergency. Besides there are some extraordinary laws in operation. Citizens of the country have been deprived of all their freedoms—freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of movement etc. etc. Life and liberties of the citizens are not safe. Any citizen can be deprived of his life, his liberty and his property by the Government without any remedy—legal or administrative—being available to him. Executive today is vested with extraordinary powers with no check on their action. There are instances where innocent citizens have been detained only because some politician in power or his henchman or an executive was displeased with them. Houses of many citizens in many parts of the country have been demolished. A fear psychosis has overtaken the whole nation. People are living in a state of

constant fear and are silently suffering. This is bad for any country, more so for a democracy. Therefore, it is necessary that the Emergencies are ended, all extraordinary laws are made inoperative and freedom of the people are restored so that the entire nation can be rescued from the state of impotence to which it has been reduced at present.

“It is, however, obvious that you are not prepared to do this. Therefore, one will be justified in drawing the conclusion that the government wants to sustain itself—perpetuate itself—by measures like the Emergencies and the extraordinary laws. It is difficult for me to associate myself with such a dispensation any longer. I am therefore, sending my resignation herewith from your cabinet and request you for its immediate acceptance.”

That Babuji and his associates had resigned from the Congress to save democracy is evident from the statement issued by them. It said :

We have supported Mrs. Indira Gandhi so far since 1969 because she had proclaimed a policy which promised to be the continuation of the best traditions of the Indian National Congress as adumbrated by Gandhiji. We extended to her our unstinted loyalty and support so far because she had promised to eliminate narrow personal loyalties and bossism from the Congress organisation, had announced various progressive measures and had given an assurance of ending social disparities and uplifting the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and the weaker section by ending poverty as conveyed by her slogan of “Garibi Hatao”.

However, developments since the declaration of Emergency in June, 1975 have generated most ominous trends in our country, which seem to be reversing not merely the promises and professions of the Indian National Congress since 1969, but decency and integrity in public life and also the rudimentary norms of democracy. The internal democracy of the Congress organisation at all levels has been not only abridged but has almost been abolished. Indiscipline within the Congress both in organisational and parliamentary

(legislative) wings has not only been tolerated but instigated and encouraged from above. Most dangerous procedures have been adopted to topple those chief ministers who do not submit to the dictates of some individuals though they enjoy comfortable majorities in their respective legislature parties. Such ousters are achieved through intrigue, threat and allurement unknown in the history of the Congress.

In this way, a system of concentrating power in a coterie or even an individual has been ruthlessly taken recourse to. Tendencies towards despotic rule in the Congress organisation as also in the administration of the country are increasing alarmingly. The basic tenets of democracy and socialism to which the Congress has been committed since the thirties are being violated with impunity. The device of authorisation has been invented to complete the process of authoritarianism.

Congressmen at all levels do not like these trends but have been overawed to silence and are living in a suffocating condition. The silent majority in the Congress is restive and impatiently waiting for a lead to resurrect democracy in the organisation and in the country. Millions of Congressmen, students, youth, peasants and workers, intellectuals and masses gladly underwent untold suffering and sacrifice at the call of the motherland to free her from foreign subjugation. The motherland calls once again to guard and preserve democracy to protect human values so that INDIA and INDIA alone becomes strong and prosperous.

It is in this context that we have taken the fateful decision to appeal directly to Congressmen, to the youth, to intelligentsia and to the people in general to come forward and prevent the impending reversal of the basic direction of Indian political life set out before us by the founding fathers of the republic.

We are convinced that we would be open to the charge of gross dereliction of our duty and obligation to the people of our country if we did not take them into confidence at

this decisive hour. Any suffering for the sake of the cause will not be shirked. We have faith in the people.

We have chosen this moment to appeal to them in view of the fact that the coming general election to the Lok Sabha provides, perhaps the last opportunity for preventing the total reversal of the nation's cherished policies, And for correcting the illegitimacy that predominates in several aspect of our national life.

We are, however, convinced that conditions are yet to be created for a free expression of the popular will and as such we demand in unequivocal terms:

- the immediate withdrawal of the Emergency;
- the repeal of MISA;
- the release of all political prisoners held under arbitrary laws;
- the repeal of the Prevention of Publication of Objectionable Matters Act;
- the restoration of the Feroze Gandhi Act ensuring immunity for the publication of parliamentary proceedings;
- the declaration by the Government that the police and para-military force shall not be used in the election in any manner that may intimidate the voters;
- the Government machinery shall not be used in any manner for the purpose of promoting the interest and image of any person in political life; and
- the Government's mass media, particularly the radio and the television shall observe the norms that prevailed before Emergency.

Any party believing in parliamentary system of government cannot possibly consider going to the electorate to seek legitimacy for itself without fulfilling these minimum conditions for a free expression of popular verdict.

We appeal to all right-thinking Congressmen, who cherish democratic traditions of the Congress organisation,

to seriously consider the grave impairment of democratic norms and procedures which has recently afflicted the Congress organisation.

Many duly elected Congress committees at pradesh and district levels have been arbitrarily replaced by *ad hoc* committees. The AICC, which has always been a predominantly elected body having only ten percent nominated members with no voting rights, has of late been reduced to a submissive ratifying committee with nearly half of its members selected by nomination. Political and organisational decisions of grave consequences have been announced at random by persons having no *locus standi* in the Congress organisation and such decisions have often been taken behind the back of even the Congress Working Committee.

Therefore, now is the time for all Congressmen to assert themselves openly, and with the aid of the people, who hold the Indian National Congress as the repository of their emergence to nationhood, to reverse the current drift to disaster.

We appeal to all right-thinking Congressmen, who have the interests of India's toiling millions in their heart, to realise that the 20 point programme has virtually been pushed to the back-ground, thanks to the emphasis on certain new programmatic points, and through a whole series of major concessions granted to vested interests, while denying the working class their rightful claims.

In this connection, it is necessary to visualise the grave consequences of the manner in which land reforms have been relegated to a secondary position and the way the rule of law for all practical purposes has yielded place to rule of men. This has seriously eroded the credibility of the highest authorities of the land on the one hand, and has created grave feelings of insecurity in the minds of the poor masses as well as the minority communities on the other.

The very purpose of all our social and economic programmes is being defeated and the common people are being alienated from the Congress and the government.

We are convinced that a leadership which alienates the minorities and the havenots from the Congress organisation is throwing to the winds the most important planks of the Indian National Congress and the Indian political system.

We have chosen to come out openly at this hour also because we feel that such grave impairment of the confidence of the minorities may ultimately disrupt the integrity of the nation itself. We shall do all in our power to restore the confidence of the minorities and the weaker sections of the people.

We would like to reiterate that our objective is the defence of the best traditions of the Indian National Congress. The restoration of decency and integrity in public life, the prevention of the current drift of our democratic system in the direction of a regime of authoritarian and self-centered establishment. We have decided to stand by the long suffering people of this country, the poor and the deprived, no matter what price we have to pay.

In this solemn endeavour we seek active cooperation of all forward looking forces of our country and we appeal to all right-thinking Congressmen to respond to the call of their conscience. This is a crucial moment when the defence of democracy is the supreme task facing our nation.

We go into this crusade with unflinching faith in our people and in the triumph of our cause,

शोषित और अपेक्षित वर्ग की अभिलाषाओं के प्रतीक

चन्द्र शेखर

दासता से मुक्त होने की उत्कट अभिलाषा, मानवीय स्वभाव है। शोषण, उत्पीड़न और दमन के विरुद्ध संघर्ष की प्रवृत्ति उसमें सन्निहित है, किन्तु अपनी परिस्थितियों से आबद्ध मनुष्य निर्णय नहीं ले पाता। उसकी इच्छा-शक्ति सामाजिक अवरोधों से कुंठित हो जाती है, किन्तु असन्तोष तो अंकुरित होता ही रहता है और फिर एक दिन उसकी अभिव्यक्ति भी होती है। जो इस सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व का निर्वाह करने के लिये अपने को परिस्थितियों से ऊपर उठाकर स्वयं को समाज के सम्मुख प्रस्तुत कर पाता है, वह अगुआ बन जाता है, एक नई दिशा देता है और अनजाने अनेक बेबस दिलों की धड़कन उसकी वाणी में मुखरित होने लगती है। जिसके मन में यह विद्रोह की भावना स्वानुभूति से प्रेरित होती है उसमें दृढ़ संकल्प, अडिग निश्चय और कठिन परिस्थितियों में निर्णय लेने की अनोखी शक्ति होती है। किन्तु कभी-कभी ऐसे लोगों में भावातिरेक के कारण संयम का अभाव होता है, जो इन सारी सीमाओं से परे अपना सन्तुलन बनाए रखे, ऐसे लोग विरले ही होते हैं। ऐसे इने-गिने लोगों में ही हैं जगजीवन बाबू जिन्होंने भारतीय जनजीवन में अपना एक विशिष्ट स्थान बना लिया है।

अन्तर्चेतना की प्रखरता के प्रतीक :

समाज में जहां अँधेरा छाया हुआ है, अज्ञान का अँधेरा, निर्धनता और बेबसी का अँधेरा, जहां शोषण और दमन से सदियों जूझते रहने के कारण

संघर्षीय संस्थाओं संघर्ष का संशय रहित था और वन सक्ती है और रचना का काम जगज्जीवन बाबू ने किया ।

काय-क्षेत्र, हर स्थिति में करोड़ों में करोड़ों की भावना को बाणी देने का काम रचनात्मक कर्मा का सिद्धिदाता अथवा संघर्षीय संस्थाओं की संस्था के निर्माण के लिए, सतत संघर्षीय रहने के लिए । बाहे संस्थाओं की अंग की पीड़ा को आत्मसात किया और उसी से प्रेरणा प्राप्त की एक नये संघर्ष में जीवन की वास्तविकताओं की निकट से प्रस्ता । संस्था के उपस्थित लालसा, संघर्ष कठिनाइयों को अंग जाने की शक्ति देने की रही, साथ ही इस विना, देश की आजादी की विल-वेदी पर अपने को स्वीकार कर देने की असमर्थ होते हुए भी, जीवन-निर्वाह के लिए साधन जुटाने की प्रवृत्ति के लिए और संघर्षीय जीवन, प्रारम्भिक आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति में परिणत होती ।

और न कोई धवड़ाहट । सब कुछ खेल लेने की मन की बेगारी, सदैव नही; उदात्तता का भी नही किन्तु जब निर्णय लेना पड़ा तो फिर न कोई हिचक में जगज्जीवन बाबू की यह शक्ति लोगों के सामने उभार कर आई, उत्तेजना निर्वाही में कितने उत्तर-वर्द्धन आये पर हर मोड़ पर निर्णायक घड़ी प्रखरता का प्रतीक है ।

के लिए अपने को स्वीकार कर दे, यह उस व्यक्ति विशेष की अन्तर्भावना की बाद निजी समस्याओं को भूलकर देश को परीक्षण के वन्दन से मुक्त करने के प्यास की समस्या सबसे प्रबल हो, उस परिवार का युवक शिक्षा प्राप्त करने के जगज्जीवन बाबू के इन गुणों को उजागर करती है । जिस परिवार के सामने अख-और आत्मोत्थान की असीम क्षमता के । दासता के युग के संघर्ष की कहानी है, उसके पास भला और क्या सम्पन्न हो सकता है सिवाय आत्म-विश्वास के, ऐसे वर्ग से निकलकर आशा का नया दीप जलने का जिसमें अदम्य उत्साह बूझे हुए अरमान और धन विश्वास के अतिरिक्त कुछ और दिखाई नहीं देता,

संयम से स्थिति को समझाला। सरकारों पक्ष की सहायता करते हुए भी विदेशी पक्ष को समर्थ कर पाते की उनकी अनर्पम शक्ति को नकारना वास्तविकता से मेलेंगे माना है।

जगजीवनराम

और भारत की राजनीति

मधु लिमये

२ फरवरी, १९७७, भोपाल केन्द्रीय कारागार । श्रीमती इन्दिरा गांधी द्वारा चुनाव की घोषणा किये जाने के बाद, एक पखवाड़ा बीत चुका है, उनके इस वायदे के बाद भी कि, चुनाव निष्पक्ष होंगे और राजबंदियों को छोड़ा जायगा, कम से कम मध्य प्रदेश में तो, राजबंदियों की रिहाई की रफ्तार काफी धीमी है । भोपाल जेल से दो चार राजबंदी हर दिन जरूर छूट रहे हैं, लेकिन इसे सामूहिक रिहाई कहना कठिन है। मेरे यार्ड में, दूसरे बंदियों के आने जाने पर, दिसम्बर के अंत से जो रोक लगी थी उसमें, वातावरण बदल जाने से, थोड़ी ढील जरूर आई है । जो लोग मिलने आ रहे हैं वे इसी की चर्चा कर रहे हैं कि उन्हें कब छोड़ा जायगा ? लगता है कि मध्यप्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री विरोध पक्ष के रास्ते में तरह-तरह की रुकावटें डालना चाहते हैं, वे भय का वातावरण बनाये रखना चाहते हैं, फिर भी, जेल में बैठे-बैठे ही यह साफ दिखाई दे रहा है कि जनता पार्टी के बन जाने से जनता और कार्यकर्ताओं में, आशा और उत्साह की एक लहर दौड़ गयी है । दिसम्बर के अंत में तो ऐसा लग रहा था कि जैसे विरोधी पक्ष के एकीकरण की वार्ता असफल रही है और शायद, एका नहीं हो पायेगा । मैंने दिसंबर के अंत में, मेरे मित्र श्री पीलू मोदी को एक पत्र लिखा था । उन्हें नये साल की मुबारकबाद देने के बाद मैंने लिखा था कि मुझे अफसोस है कि आप लोग नूतन वर्ष की भेंट के रूप में, भारत की जनता को कोई विकल्प नहीं दे पा रहे हैं ।

जनवरी के आखिरी हफ्ते में, समाजवादी दल की राष्ट्रीय समिति की बैठक, चूनाव के मामले को लेकर होने वाली थी। चूनाव के बारे में मेरी राय जानने के लिये, मेरी परनी मुझसे मिलने आयी थी। तबतक जनता पार्टी के गठन की घोषणा हो चुकी थी। एक सप्ताह अगले, नई पार्टी की और जनता की प्राप्ति हुआ था। चूनाव अभियान अपने आप में एक गतिशील कार्य होता है। अभियान के दौरान जनता खूबकर सामने आ सकती थी, उसे सामने लाया जा सकता था। इसलिये नई परिस्थिति में, मेरी यह स्पष्ट राय थी कि हमारे जैसे लोगों को सरकार अगर न भी छोड़े, तो भी चूनाव का बहिष्कार नहीं करना चाहिए। जैसे-जैसे चूनाव अभियान जोर पकड़ता

18 जनवरी के बाद, लोकतांत्रिक स्वतंत्रताओं की वापस लौटाने के बारे में, प्रेम मुखर्जी उठाने के बारे में, और राजवर्धियों की रिहाई के बारे में सरकार का रुख देखकर तो मेरे मन में भी यह शंका थी कि शायद जनता का भय, विशेष कर ग्रामीण इलाकों में, खत्म नहीं हो पायेगा। और जनता जब बोट देने के लिये निश्चय होकर हो नहीं आयेगी, तो फिर निष्पक्ष चूनाव कैसे होगा? इन कार्यों के चलते जनवरी के महीने में, चूनावी नवीजों के बारे में यह विश्वास रहती थी कि कहीं कांग्रेस को माजिनल बहुमत तो नहीं मिल जायेगा?

निराशा :

18 जनवरी को लोकसभा चूनाव की घोषणा करते समय श्रीमती इंदिरा गांधी ने जो कुछ भी सोचा बिचारों में बाँटा हुआ था, उसमें एक अनुमान यह जरूर रही होगा कि बिरोधी पक्ष बिखरा हुआ हो रहेगा; एक नहीं हो पायेगा; बिरोधी पक्ष के कई उम्मीदवार एक सीट पर खड़े होंगे; और कांग्रेस भारी बहुमत से जीत जायेगी। तानाशाही में बाँटकारों का बाजार हमेशा गरम रहता है। इन लोगों ने श्रीमती गांधी को यही भारीसा बिजया था कि वे और उनके पुत्र संजय गांधी अत्यधिक लोकप्रिय बन गये हैं; बिरोध पक्ष का मनाबल टूटा हुआ है, और ऐसी हालत में कांग्रेस की शानदार जीत सुनिश्चित है, मैंने तो यहाँ तक सुना है कि मध्य प्रदेश के कुछ विधायिकाधियों ने सरकार के पास ऐसी रणनीति पेश की कि कई इलाकों में कांग्रेस के खिलाफ चूनाव लड़ने के लिये कोई उम्मीदवार हो सामने नहीं आयेगा; और निष्पक्ष तथा लोकतांत्रिक चूनाव का नाटक निगाने के लिये, ऐसा देकर, कांग्रेस पार्टी को ही कुछ बिरोधी उम्मीदवार खड़े करने पड़ेंगे।

जायेगा, वैसे-वैसे सरकार पर दवाव बढ़ता जायेगा और जन लज्जा के चलते सरकार को, कम से कम शहरी आजादियों के क्षेत्र को विस्तृत करना ही पड़ेगा, ऐसा मुझे लगता था, फिर भी, बाहर के नेता जैसा उचित समझे वैसे करें, यह संदेश मैंने भेजा था। दिल्ली से लौटते समय मेरी पत्नी मुझसे भोपाल में फिर मिली थी। बाहर की बदलती जा रही परिस्थितियों की विस्तृत जानकारी, उन्होंने मुझे दी और बताया कि सरकार चार-पांच लोगों को शायद नहीं छोड़ेगी, इनमें मेरे अलावा, मेरी पत्नी ने श्री राज-नारायण, श्री ज्योतिर्मय वसु और श्री नानाजी देशमुख के नाम भी गिनाये थे। वे श्री मोरारजी भाई और जयप्रकाश जी से भी मिली थीं। चौधरी चरण सिंह से उनकी टेलीफोन पर बातचीत हुई थी। उन्होंने कहा कि तीनों नेताओं की आपके लिये यही सलाह है कि रिहा न होने पर भी मुझे चुनाव लड़ना है।

आशा :

दो फरवरी को दोपहर के खाने के बाद मैं कुछ पढ़ रहा था। आकाश-वाणी का दो बजे का हिन्दी या अंग्रेजी बुलेटिन मैं रोज और जरूर सुना करता था। जेल के मेरे अन्य साथी आकाशवाणी सुनना पसंद नहीं करते थे, ये सब, रात के आठ बजे बी०बी०सी० सुनना चाहते थे। लेकिन दोपहर का और रात का आकाशवाणी का बुलेटिन मैं अवश्य सुनता था। दोपहर के समय, अक्सर सन-सनी खेज खबरें आती थीं; मुझे याद है कि जब मैं नरसिंहगढ़ जेल में था तब माओत्से-तुंग के निधन की खबर, मैंने दोपहर के बुलेटिन में ही सुनी थी। मेरी इस आदत के मुताबिक, उस दिन भी मैंने दोपहर में रेडियो लगाया। खबर देने वाले ने जो खबर दी उससे मैं हैरत में तो पड़ा ही, साथ ही बहुत खुश भी हुआ। बुलेटिन में कहा गया था कि कांग्रेस के वरिष्ठ नेता श्री जगजीवनराम ने मंत्रिमंडल से भी त्याग पत्र दे दिया है और कांग्रेस पार्टी की सदस्यता से भी। दोपहर में, राजवंदियों के यार्ड में कोई सभा होने वाली थी। मुझे भी उसमें बुलाया गया था, मैंने सभा में लोगों को यह खुशखबरी सुनाई। वस उसके बाद तो जेल का वातावरण ही बदल गया !

ग्रामीण इलाकों में भय का वातावरण बना रहेगा, यह जो आशंका मुझे दो फरवरी के पहले सताती थी, वह समाप्त हो गयी। मुझे लगा कि जब कांग्रेस के इतने बड़े नेता आपात काल की घोषणा के खिलाफ और

शहरी आजादियों तथा निष्पक्ष व लोकतांत्रिक चुनाव के समर्थन में, खुलकर इतना बड़ा कदम उठा रहे हैं तो फिर भय का वातावरण टिक नहीं सकता। और उस दिन से जनता पार्टी की जीत के बारे में मैं निश्चिंत हो गया।

मंत्रिमंडल और कांग्रेस से इस्तीफा देने का बाबूजी का फैसला हिम्मत भरा तो था ही, साथ ही वह अत्यंत सामयिक भी था। चुनाव कराने के लिये, अब अंतर्राष्ट्रीय लोकमत के सामने श्रीमती गांधी प्रतिवद्ध हो चुकी थीं। पीछे हटना, अब उनके लिये मुमकिन नहीं था, अगर 18 जनवरी के तुरन्त बाद बाबूजी यह फैसला करते, तो कुछ बहाना निकाल कर प्रधानमंत्री चुनाव कराने से, मुकर भी जातीं। जनता पार्टी के बन जाने के बाद, लोकमत के रुख का अंदाज भी, बाबूजी को लग गया। उनके इस्तीफे और जनता पार्टी के साथ पूरी तरह से सहयोग करने के उनके आश्वासन से राजनैतिक शक्तियों के संतुलन में एक निर्णायक परिवर्तन आया। साधारण मतदाताओं पर यह असर हुआ कि अगर बाबूजी जैसा वरिष्ठ नेता विद्रोह करता है और इंदिरा गांधी उनका कुछ भी नहीं बिगाड़ पा रही हैं तो फिर हम लोगों को भी सरकारी दमन की चिंता नहीं करनी चाहिये; अब हम खुलकर जनता पार्टी को वोट भी दे सकते हैं और उसका प्रचार भी कर सकते हैं।

शांतिपूर्ण जन-क्रांति :

दो फरवरी के बाद, चुनाव के दिन तक, बाबूजी ने चुनाव अभियान में बड़ा महत्वपूर्ण रोल अदा किया। दिल्ली में रोजाना होने वाले पत्रकार सम्मेलनों में वे जो टिप्पणियाँ किया करते थे वे बड़ी सटीक और प्रभावशाली हुआ करती थीं। श्रीमती गांधी के लिये, इन टिप्पणियों का जवाब देना, बड़ा कठिन हो गया था। अपना हमेशा का आक्रामक रवैया छोड़कर, दो फरवरी के बाद, उन्हें वचाव के रास्ते पर आ जाना पड़ा। वे चिड़चिड़ी हो गयीं और अपना संतुलन खो बैठीं। २२ जनवरी के बाद जनता पार्टी की सभाओं में भीड़ बढ़ती ही चली गयी। दो फरवरी के बाद तो अभियान में विशेष तेजी आ गई। इस अभियान की कई सबसे बड़ी सभाओं को बाबूजी ने संबोधित किया। अब वह केवल चुनाव अभियान ही नहीं रहा। दुनिया ने इस अभियान को शांतिपूर्ण जनक्रांति का रूप धारण करते हुए देखा। चुनाव के नतीजे निकले और जनता पार्टी केन्द्र में सत्तारूढ़ हो गई। जिन इलाकों में जनता पार्टी की भारी जीत हुई, उनका गहराई में जाकर यदि हम विश्लेषण करेंगे तो मालूम होगा कि व्यापक एकता और सामाजिक शक्तियों की एक जुटता ही, इन इलाकों में जनता पार्टी की जीत का सबसे बड़ा कारण रहा है। युवा वर्ग,

औद्योगिक मजदूर, छोटे व्यापारी और कर्मचारी, किसान तथा खेतिहर मजदूर, सिक्ख, मुसलमान और हरिजन आदि के व्यापक समर्थन से ही जनता पार्टी जीती है। जगजीवन बाबू के सामयिक विद्रोह से इन सामयिक शक्तियों के मेल-जोल में बड़ी गति आई। मुसलमान भारी संख्या में जनता पार्टी के साथ आए। राष्ट्रीय स्वयं सेवक संघ और जनसंघ के, जनता पार्टी पर वर्चस्व का, कांग्रेस द्वारा जो हौवा खड़ा किया था, उसका मतदाताओं पर कोई असर नहीं हुआ। अधिकांश हरिजन शुरू से ही कांग्रेस को वोट देते आये हैं। श्रीमती इन्दिरा गांधी ने 1971-72 के चुनावों में हरिजनों के समर्थन को और भी दृढ़ बना दिया था। हरिजनों के कांग्रेस समर्थन का यह सिलसिला, 1977 के लोकसभा चुनाव में खंडित हुआ, इसका बहुत बड़ा श्रेय श्री जगजीवन बाबू को है।

जनता पार्टी के कुछ लोग अपनी शक्ति का गलत अनुमान लोकसभा चुनाव के समय भी लगा रहे थे और अभी भी लगाते हैं। हिन्दुस्तान के दक्षिणी और पूर्वोत्तर इलाकों में लोकसभा चुनाव के जो नतीजे निकले उनसे साफ मालूम पड़ता है कि जनता पार्टी के पक्ष में, देश के हर कोने में जबर्दस्त हवा थी, ऐसी बात नहीं थी। गुजरात में और दक्षिण के राज्यों में हरिजन और अल्पसंख्यक कांग्रेस के साथ ही रहे, और इसीलिये गुजरात में जनता पार्टी की सफलता में कुछ न्यूनता रह गई और दक्षिण में तो जनता पार्टी बुरी तरह से हार गई। इधर पश्चिम बंगाल, कश्मीर और तमिलनाडु में विधान सभा चुनाव के जो परिणाम सामने आये हैं उनसे फिर एक दफा यह स्पष्ट हुआ है कि जनता पार्टी का समर्थन देश के सभी इलाकों में समान नहीं है।

जनता के प्रमुख नेता :

जगजीवन बाबू के लम्बे राजनैतिक जीवन में उन्होंने जिन गुणों का परिचय दिया है, उनमें, वक्त पर सही निर्णय लेने की उनकी क्षमता, एक महत्वपूर्ण गुण है। इस व्यवहार कुशलता के चलते ही, प्रतिकूल परिस्थितियों में भी ऊपर उठकर उन्होंने देशवासियों का नेतृत्व किया। वे केवल हरिजनों के ही नेता नहीं हैं सभी श्रमिकों और दलितों के मन में उनके लिये आदर है, वे उन्हें, आर्थिक और सामाजिक परिवर्तन के लिये हिन्दुस्तान में चल रही क्रांति का एक प्रमुख नेता मानते हैं। डॉक्टर भीम राव अम्बेडकर के बाद दलितों और श्रमिकों में इतना बड़ा नेता

अभी तक पैदा नहीं हुआ है। डॉक्टर अम्बेडकर की विद्वत्ता और संघर्षशीलता सर्वमान्य है। लेकिन व्यवहार कुशलता, सामयिकता, प्रशासकीय कौशल्य और संसदीय सफलता—ये जगजीवन बाबू के राजनैतिक जीवन के खास पहलू रहे हैं।

1937 में प्रांतीय स्वायत्तता के आधार पर जो चुनाव कराये गये उनमें जगजीवन बाबू ने कांग्रेसी उम्मीदवार के रूप में चुनाव लड़कर सफलता पाई। राष्ट्रीय कांग्रेस ने जब सरकार बनाने का निर्णय किया तो जगजीवन बाबू पर भी प्रशासकीय जिम्मेदारी डाली गयी। उन्होंने उस जिम्मेदारी को अच्छी तरह से निभाया। उसके बाद, वे निरन्तर आगे बढ़ते गये, 1945-46 में अंतरिम सरकार की चर्चा जिस समय चल रही थी उस समय वाइसराय की कार्य-समिति में जिन सदस्यों को शुमार करने की बात चल रही थी, उसमें जगजीवन बाबू का भी नाम आता है। मैंने उनका नाम, पहली बार, उसी समय सुना था, 1946 में जब अंतरिम सरकार बन गई तो उनमें बाबू जगजीवनराम भी थे। और उसके बाद, 1963 तक केन्द्रीय सरकार के वे लगातार मंत्री रहे। बीच में कथित कामराज योजना के अंतर्गत उन्हें सरकार से अलग कर दिया गया था, लेकिन श्रीमती इन्दिरा गांधी के प्रधानमंत्री बनने के बाद वे फिर मंत्रिमंडल में आए, दो फरवरी, 1977 को स्वेच्छा से त्यागपत्र देने तक वे इंदिरा गांधी मंत्रिमंडल के वरिष्ठतम सदस्य रहे, रेल विभाग, कृषि विभाग, सुरक्षा विभाग आदि कई विभाग उन्होंने सफलतापूर्वक सम्हाले। प्रशासन का उन्हें गहरा अनुभव है। किसी भी नये विभाग के तहत आने वाले विषयों को वे तेजी से ग्रहण कर लेते हैं और नौकरशाही के अधीन होने की वजाय, उसपर अपना प्रभाव जमाते हैं। तफसील में और फाइलों के अंवार में वे फँसे नहीं रहते। अपने विभागों के अफसरों का वे मार्गदर्शन करते हैं, उन्हें प्रेरणा देते हैं और उनसे काम करवाते हैं।

प्रतिभा और कुशलता :

लोकसभा में जगजीवन बाबू को मैं अर्से से देख रहा हूँ। अपने विभागों की मांगों पर होने वाली हर साल की चर्चाओं, प्रश्नोत्तर काल आदि में अपनी वाद-विवाद पटुता वे कई बार सावित कर चुके हैं। अपने विरोधियों और आलोचकों के मन को न दुखाते हुए वे जवाब देते हैं। इससे कटुता टलती है और आलोचक तथा प्रश्नकर्त्ता संतुष्ट भी हो जाते हैं। इतने सालों से लोकसभा में उनका कार्य देखने के बाद मैं यह कह सकता हूँ कि विरोधियों

के जाल में बड़े-बड़े मंत्री उलझ जाते हैं लेकिन बाबूजी की पकड़ना बड़ा मुश्किल है। कांग्रेस पार्टी में उनके इन गुणों और बाक्पटुता का बहुत कम इस्तेमाल किया गया है लेकिन जब-जब भी उन्हें मौका मिला है, हमेशा अपनी कुशलता का उन्होंने परिचय दिया है। पांचवी लोकसभा में, एकदका मंत्रि-मंडल के विचलन अभिव्यक्त का प्रस्ताव आया था। उस प्रस्ताव पर उन्हें बर्षों के दौरान बाबूजी की भाषण करने का मौका दिया था। बाबूजी का बड़े भाषण, सत्ताधारी दल की ओर से दिये गये भाषणों में सबसे अच्छा था। श्रीमती गांधी इनकी इस प्रतिभा और कुशलता से शायद भय खाती थीं इसीलिए उन्हें अपमानित करने का, उन्हें दबाने का एक भी मौका वे दाय से नहीं जाने देती थीं। यहाँ तक कि, एक बार उन्हें बिहार से प्रतिनिधि तक नहीं बनने दिया गया था। लेकिन 1969 में हरिजनो का समर्थन होसिल करने के लिये उन्होंने बाबूजी का इस्तेमाल जल्द किया। बांगोर में, कांग्रेस संसदीय दल की बैठक में उन्होंने श्री संजीव रेड्डी की जगह बाबूजी का नाम, राष्ट्रपति पद के लिये जल्द पेश किया, 1974 में जब राष्ट्रपति का पद रिक्त हुआ तो श्रीमती गांधी ने उन्हें राष्ट्रपति नहीं बनाने के बरतव वाली कांग्रेस—इस तरह का प्रकार रेड्डी और अखबारों में करवा कर हरिजनो के बाट तो बटोरे गये, लेकिन बाबूजी के साथ सम्मानजनक व्यवहार नहीं किया गया।

1977 के लोकसभा चुनावों के बाद, जनता की और जयप्रकाशजी की इच्छा का आदर करते हुए बाबूजी ने कांग्रेस फॉर डेमोक्रेसी की जनता पार्टी में विभाजन कर दिया। जनता पार्टी कई गुटों और पार्टियों के विभाजनों की इच्छा से बनी हुई है। इस पार्टी में शामिल गुटों और पार्टियों के पुराने रिश्ते तथा पुरानी निष्ठाएं एक छोट से अर्थ में तो खलम नहीं होतीं। इसमें बल्क जल्द लगया, लेकिन इसमें कोई शक नहीं कि जब तक भावनात्मक एकता, पूरी तरह से नहीं हो जाती तब तक जनता पार्टी देश की आशा आकांक्षाओं की पूरा करने में समर्थ नहीं हो पायेगी।

जनता पार्टी ने अपने चुनाव घोषणा-पत्र में बहुत सारे वायदे किये हैं। लोकतांत्रिक स्वतंत्रताओं की लड़ाई का वायदा उसने पूरा भी कर दिया है। लेकिन बहुत सारे आर्थिक और सामाजिक सुवाल अभी न केवल बाकी हैं, बल्कि उन्हें सुलझाने का कोई ठोस प्रयास अभी शुरू नहीं हुआ है। ग्रामीण इलाकों में एक ओर बेविह्वर मजदूर तथा भूमिहीन, तथा दूसरी

और छोटे तथा मध्यम किसान—इनके बीच कटुता और संघर्ष बढ़ता जा रहा है। शहरों में असंगठित मजदूरों और दलितों की स्थिति दयनीय है। बेकारी की समस्या उलझती जा रही है। अर्थव्यवस्था कुंठित है। जीवनावश्यक चीजों के दाम बढ़ते जा रहे हैं।

छोटे व्यवसायों की जरूरत :

जरूरत इस बात की है कि दलितों और भूमिहीनों को छोटे और कुटीर उद्योगों में शामिल किया जाय। छोटे व्यवसाय शुरू करने के लिये उन्हें प्रोत्साहन दिया जाय। विभिन्न सेवाओं में हरिजन-आदिवासियों के लिये आरक्षित पूरे स्थान भरे जायें। दलितों में से जो बौद्ध बन गये हैं, उन्हें भी हरिजनों की तरह सारी सुविधाएं उपलब्ध कराई जाएं। अस्पृश्यता को समाप्त करने की घोषणा करने के बावजूद, अभी भी दलितों की स्थिति अच्छी नहीं है। सार्वजनिक तालावों और कुओं का अभी भी वे इस्तेमाल नहीं कर सकते। क्या गांवों में और क्या शहरों में, गंदगी और कीचड़ भरे स्थानों पर ही उन्हें रहना पड़ता है। आर्थिक उन्नति के अभाव और दाम वृद्धि के कारण उनके जीवनस्तर में, निरंतर गिरावट आती जा रही है। किसानों की स्थिति भी बड़ी दयनीय है। जब तक कृषि उत्पादन और कृषि की उत्पादन क्षमता तेजी से नहीं बढ़ेगी तब तक किसानों की स्थिति नहीं सुधरेगी और न ही खेतिहर मजदूर को अच्छा वेतन दे पाएंगे। केवल न्यूनतम वेतन निर्धारित करने भर से ही वे काम नहीं हो पायगा। कृषि की उत्पादन क्षमता और सिंचित भूमि का क्षेत्रफल बढ़ाने के लिये तथा दलितों की शक्ति बढ़ाने के लिये रोजगार गारंटी योजना को जल्दी ही चालू करना पड़ेगा।

जनता पार्टी में भावनात्मक एकता लाने और इस आर्थिक सामाजिक समस्याओं का समाधान करने में, तथा प्रगतिशील कार्यक्रमों को क्रियान्वित करने में, बाबूजी बहुत बड़ा रोल अदा कर सकते हैं। उनके अनुभवों और कार्य कुशलता का इस्तेमाल जनता पार्टी को करना चाहिये।

हिन्दुस्तान में बुनियादी परिवर्तन लाने के लिये महात्मा फुले, महात्मा गांधी, पेरियार, राम स्वामी नायकर, डॉक्टर अम्बेडकर, डॉक्टर राम मनोहर लोहिया आदि महानुभावों ने अथक प्रयास किया, और अपने पूरे जीवन को इसी काम में खपा दिया। इस परिवर्तन के पूरे होने से न केवल इन महान व्यक्तियों के स्वप्न साकार होंगे बल्कि बाबूजी और जनता पार्टी को भी जीवन साफल्य प्राप्त होगा।

हमारे बाबूजी

नानाजी देशमुख

बाबूजी का नाम स्वयं ही अनेक प्रेरक अनुभूतियों का आगार है। वे बहुमुखी प्रतिभा के धनी हैं। बाबूजी तथा सफलता मानों समानार्थी शब्द हैं। उनका हाथ में लिया हर काम सफलता की सीमाएँ लांघ चुका है। उनका जीवन दृढ़ता एवं सहृदयता का अनोखा संगम है। दूरदर्शिता एवम् समय की अचूक पकड़ उनकी विशेषता है। उदारता तथा व्यापकता उनका स्वभाव है। सहिष्णुता उनसे अभिन्न है।

सैद्धान्तिक जीवन :

उनका संसदीय जीवन वर्तमान नेताओं में ज्येष्ठतम है। 1936 जुलाई में बिहार विधान परिषद् के सदस्य के नाते वे प्रादेशिक क्षितिज पर उदयमान हुए। साधारण निर्वाचन क्षेत्र से कांग्रेस की ओर से वे 1937 में बिहार विधान सभा के सदस्य निर्वाचित हुए। कांग्रेस को बहुमत प्राप्त हुआ था। किन्तु गवर्नर से सैद्धान्तिक मतभेद होने के कारण कांग्रेस ने सरकार बनाना स्वीकार नहीं किया। अतः दूसरे बड़े दल अर्थात् “मुस्लिम इन्डिपेन्डेंट दल” के नेता श्री मुहम्मद यूनस को मंत्रिमंडल बनाने का अवसर मिला। यह अल्पमत सरकार बनी थी। श्री यूनस तथा अंग्रेज-भक्त विधायकों ने बाबूजी को मंत्री पद का लालच देकर तोड़नेका जी-तोड़ प्रयास किया। किन्तु बाबूजी की प्रखर ध्येयनिष्ठा टस से मस नहीं हुई। इस प्रकार प्रलोभन के प्रभाव से मुक्त आधारशिला की मजबूत नींव पर ही उनका संसदीय जीवन खड़ा हुआ है।

राष्ट्रीय दृष्टि :

हमारा सामाजिक जीवन अस्पृश्यता के अभिशाप से पीड़ित रहा है। हरिजनों के पीड़ित एवं प्रताड़ित जीवन से बाबूजी का हृदय असह्य वेदनाओं से भरा रहा करता था। उन्हें उन्नत करने के लिए वे दिन रात प्रयत्नशील रहते। किन्तु उन्होंने शेष जातियों के दीन-हीनों को भी उतनी ही आत्मीयता से एवं सम्मान दृष्टि से प्रश्रय दिया। उन्होंने हरिजनों को कभी भी शेष समाज से अलग होने की संकुचित एवं वर्गवादी प्रवृत्ति को सहन नहीं किया। वे इस दिशा में बढ़ते तो सम्भवतः इस नाते से उस समाज के सर्वश्रेष्ठ नेता बनते। अंग्रेजों की नजर में ऊँचे उठते तथा अपार सम्पत्ति के धनी बनते। किन्तु उनकी राष्ट्रीय वृत्ति की प्रखरता में यह मोह भस्मीभूत हो गया। वे राष्ट्र नायक के नाते राष्ट्रीय क्षितिज पर उभरे और प्रखर रूप से एक अद्वितीय नक्षत्र के रूप में जगमगा रहे हैं।

उनका गरिमामय व्यक्तित्व प्रादेशिक राजनीति तक सीमित न रह सका। २ सितम्बर १९४६ को उन्हें केन्द्रीय सरकार के मन्त्रिमंडल में श्रममन्त्री के नाते सम्मिलित किया गया।

जो काम मिला उनकी गहराई में पैठना तथा उसे योग्यता के साथ पूर्ण करना उनकी जन्मजात वृत्ति है। उन्होंने श्रमिकों के जीवन तथा उनकी समस्याओं का गहन चिंतन किया। उसके उपाय खोजे। तदनुसार कानून बनाये। 1948 का एम्प्लाइज इस्टेट इन्स्योरेन्स ऐक्ट, कोल माइन्स प्राविडेंट फंड एन्ड वोनस स्कीम ऐक्ट तथा 1948 का एम्प्लाइज प्राविडेंट फंड तथा ऐसे ही अनेक कानून बाबूजी की ही देन हैं।

जिस क्षेत्र में काम करने का बाबूजी ने अवसर पाया उसी में सबको आश्चर्यचकित करने वाली उन्होंने सफलताएं पायीं।

महात्मा गांधी की छत्रछाया में अहिंसा के वातावरण में पला यह व्यक्तित्व सुरक्षा-मन्त्री के रूप में प्रकट हुआ। पूर्वी पाकिस्तान की गतिविधियों ने भारत को चिंतित कर दिया था। वहाँ से लाखों लोग भारत में शरण लेने के लिए विवश हो रहे थे। युद्ध की आशंका से वातावरण भर गया था। उस समय इस गांधीवादी सुरक्षा-मन्त्री ने घोषणा की कि "यदि पाकिस्तान से युद्ध होता है तो वह पाकिस्तान की ही भूमि पर होगा।" सिद्धान्त की भाषा

बोलने वाले तो अनेक मिलते हैं । किन्तु सिद्धान्त को व्यवहार में परिणित कर दिखाना असामान्य काम है । बाबूजी ने जो कहा वह कर दिखाया ।

युद्ध में शत्रु का संहार कर विजयश्री प्राप्त करने वाले अनेक शूर-वीर पराक्रमी सेनापति इतिहास में पाये जाते हैं । किन्तु 1971 के पाकिस्तान के साथ हुए युद्ध में बाबूजी एक भूतपूर्व सेनापति सिद्ध हुए हैं । इस युद्ध का लक्ष्य था बंगला देश की स्वतन्त्रता । बाबूजी अपनी सेना के साथ युद्ध में उतरे, किन्तु एक संहारक के रूप में नहीं । युद्ध सामग्री से सज्जित किन्तु कत्ले-आम करने के लिए नहीं । उन्होंने ऐसी रणनीति रचाई कि लेफ्टीनेन्ट जनरल नियाजी को अपनी तिरान्वें हजार सेना के साथ चुपचाप हथियार डालकर शरण आना पड़ा । बाबूजी ने लड़ाई लड़ी किन्तु खून खराबी के बिना विजयश्री प्राप्त की । संभवतः मानव इतिहास में यह अद्भुत उपलब्धि है । गांधीजी के भारत का गौरव बढ़ाने वाली यह अद्भुत घटना है कि इतिहास में चिरस्मरणीय रहेगी । इस महान विजय का सार्वजनिक रूप से श्रेय लेने का प्रयास किसी ने भी किया हो, किन्तु इतिहास इस श्रेय के धनी के रूप में बाबूजी को ही मान्यता देगा ।

प्रत्यक्ष युद्ध के पूर्व या युद्ध काल में एक करोड़ से अधिक शरणार्थी बंगला देश से भारत में आये थे । सम्पूर्ण देश इससे चिंतित था, आर्थिक व्यवस्था चरमरा उठी थी । किन्तु बाबूजी ने कहा था “यह समस्या स्थायी नहीं है । आए हुए सब शरणार्थी अपने-अपने घर (बंगला देश) लौट जाएंगे ।” और बाबूजी ने वह कर दिखाया । ऐसी है बाबूजी की कथनी और करनी, ऐसे हैं अपने शब्द के धनी अपने बाबूजी ।

बाबूजी की गुणगाथा इतिहास तक ही सीमित नहीं है । 70 वर्ष की अवस्था में पहुँचते हुए भी वे सक्रिय कर्मयोगी हैं । देश में लोकतन्त्र को लगे ग्रहण से वे प्रारम्भ से ही चिन्तित रहे । किन्तु तानाशाही वृत्ति को परास्त करने का अवसर देखकर ही कदम उठाना श्रेयकर होगा, यह उनकी परिपक्व बुद्धि उन्हें घोरोदात्त बनाए हुए थी । अवसर पाते ही उन्होंने असामान्य और अनपेक्षित कदम उठाया । विश्व आनन्दाश्चर्य से स्तंभित हो उठा । लोकतांत्रिक निष्ठा की बाढ़ को बाबूजी के निर्णय ने तूफानी गति प्रदान की । जन-मानस में एक विश्वास जाग उठा, तानाशाही पराभूत हो गयी और लोकतंत्र को फिर से प्रतिष्ठा मिली । इस प्रकार इसके श्रेय के अधिकारी बाबूजी भी हैं ।

तानाशाही को परास्त करना एक बहुत बड़ा एवं ऐतिहासिक कार्य हो गया है, किन्तु वह स्वयं में पूर्ण नहीं है ।

लोकतंत्र की जड़ें गहरी और मजबूत करने का गुरुत्व कार्य अभी शेष है । अवसर-वाद और सत्ता-लालसा की हवा कायम है । नवशासनारूढ़ दल में भावात्मक एकता की चेतना को स्थायी और सशक्त बनाना शेष है । इस कार्य का भार वयोवृद्ध, तपोनिष्ठ, अनुभव सिद्ध व्यक्तियों पर सर्वाधिक निर्भर होना स्वाभाविक है । इसमें भी सफलता के धनी बाबूजी अग्रसर रहेंगे । आवश्यक क्षमाशीलता, असीम उदारता, ध्येय की प्रखरता तथा व्यावहारिक कुशलता में उनकी वरिष्ठता जन-अपेक्षाओं को साकार करने में अवश्य सफल सिद्ध होगी ।

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“(Shri Jagjivan Ram’s resignation from the Cabinet and the Congress) is a historic moment and I think that the forthcoming elections would change the direction of history and democracy as well as our democratic institutions would get a fresh lease of life and strengthen the power of the people.....”

—*Shri Jayaprakash Narayan*

“Gandhiji used to create great men out of dust but Shri Jagjivan Ram stepped in to save great men when they were all being turned to dust by his bold step before the recent Lok Sabha elections.....”

—*President of India*

