

Life In Outline



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WHAT MAKES patriots have such deep love for their country and abiding affection for their countrymen? It is not known what alchemy moulds their noble mind. But in the case of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya there might be a significant explanation. Deendayal Upadhyaya was born in the sacred region of Brij. Was it because of this association with the holiest spot in holy Bharat that his mind was filled with pristine patriotism? Whatever the truth, his life was one magnificent tribute to the motherland, which he served with the completest dedication for fifty short years.

Deendayal was born in the family of Pt. Hariram Upadhyaya, a well-known astrologer of village Nagla Chandrabhan in Mathura district. The astrologer's grandson Bhagwati Prasad was employed in the railways and his job kept him out most of the time. His wife Rampyari was a religious soul.

On Monday September 25, 1916, in the light of the rising sun, she gave birth to a son. The child was named Deendayal and fondly called 'Deena'. An astrologer who studied his horoscope predicted great things-that the boy would become a great scholar and thinker, a selfless worker, and a leading politician-but that he would not marry. There was joy in the family for the great qualities that were predicted for the child. But also some sadness that he would not continue the family tree.

A little while later came another son, Shivdayal ('Shibu'). Shibu was hardly six months old when Bhagwati Prasad sent his wife and children to her father's place. Grandfather Shri Chunilal Shukla and uncle Radha Raman were both in the railways. The family was big and Deena had cousins for playmates.

Suddenly one day a piece of sad news came. Bhagwati Prasad was no more. Deena was then three years old and Shibu one year. Her husband's death struck Rampyari with such grief that her health deteriorated and she contracted T.B.

Days passed. Deena was now seven and Shibu five, but because of the worries of the elders at home no regular arrangements could be made for their education. And then came a cruel day when Rampyari too died, leaving two orphans behind. The father's death had not made much impact on the two children, as they had been too young then, but the mother's passing away affected them deeply.

Forced by circumstances, Chunilal gave up his job, and returned to his village with the children. Here the love and affection of their grandmother and aunt began to bring about a welcome change in the children's sad disposition.

During this period a strange incident occurred. One night about 11 o'clock little Deena was sitting in his aunt's lap while other women of the house sat nearby and discussed household affairs. Suddenly a gang of about a dozen robbers raided the house. One of them snatched Deendayal from his aunt, threw him on the ground, put a foot on his chest and threatened to kill him if all the valuables in the house were not surrendered. At this Deendayal said : "We had heard that robbers looted the rich and protected the poor, but you are killing me, a poor boy". The leader of the bandits was touched by these words of the boy and left the place with his gang.

In July 1926 Chunilal sent both the children to their uncle Radha Raman in Gangapur for education. Here Deendayal was admitted to the primary class and regular schooling began.

In September 1925, Chunilal passed away. Now a number of problems confronted Radha Raman. When Deendayal's education started in 1925, Radha Raman had no children. His first son, Prabhu Dayal, was born in 1926. Later more sons followed. In spite of his growing family, however, Radha Raman took all care to ensure that his wards did not suffer from want in any respect.

In February 1927, Radha Raman also fell seriously ill. Doctors diagnosed TB and said it was unlikely that he would live. Doctors from Gangapur, Bharatpur and Agra refused to treat him and said he should be taken somewhere else. Fortunately Radha Raman had a nephew who was then Health Officer in Lucknow. He called his uncle to Lucknow for treatment.

Now the problem was, who would take him there? No relation was prepared to come near him for fear of contracting the dread disease. Deendayal was just a boy of 11, but he said to his uncle, "Don't worry. I shall take you to Lucknow". Radha Raman realized there was no alternative.

Deendayal's examination was near, but he was busy nursing his uncle. Gradually Radha Raman's health improved and in March 1927 Deendayal returned to Gangapur and sat for his examination. To the astonishment and joy of everybody, he secured the first rank.

In those days there were only primary schools in Gangapur. So Radha Raman sent his nephew to Kota for secondary education, where, in August 1929, Deendayal was admitted to the fifth standard. Three years later in 1932, he went to Rajgarh, where he passed the 8th and 9th standards. One of his cousins, Banwarilal, was his classmate. Between them they had one set of books. As Banwarilal was not so good at his studies he would always keep the books with himself. But Deendayal never complained. He read the books only when Banwarilal did not need them or was asleep.

When Deendayal was in the 9th standard brother Shiv Dayal (Shibu) got typhoid and fell seriously ill. The best doctors were called, but in vain. He died in November 1934 in Bharatpur. There was great love between the two brothers and there was deep sorrow in Deendayal's heart.

From Rajgarh Deendayal went to Sikar and joined the high school there. His teachers in Rajgarh were unhappy at his leaving their school, as they were sure he would have brought it honour and prestige. A few months before the examination, he fell ill, and yet stood first in the examination, securing distinction in every subject. He topped the list in the entire area covered by the Ajmer Board and established a new record of marks.

When the Maharaja of Sikar was told about this brilliant student he called Deendayal and asked, "What would you like to have as a present?" Deendayal replied, "Your blessings". Pleased with the reply, the Maharaja gave him a gold medal, Rs. 250 for books and a monthly scholarship of Rs. 10.

So far no one in Radha Raman's family had had college education. When he asked friends about higher education for Deendayal, they advised him to have the boy admitted to some college in Agra. But Deendayal expressed a desire to study at Pilani. Accordingly in 1935 he was sent there.

The next year he passed the first year examination, standing first and maintaining his brilliant record. A notable feature of Deendayalji's student days was his great concern for others. Generally he would study late at night after everybody else went to sleep. At the same time he took care to see that his late hours did not disturb anybody. He would not use the electric light; instead, he would sit in a corner and read in the light of a lantern.

His fellow-students would often come to him for guidance and gradually their number increased so much that he formed their association and called it 'Zero Association'.

In 1937 Deendayalji passed the Intermediate Board Examination with distinction in every subject, thus again setting a new record. Till that time no student of Birla College had secured such high marks. Pleased with the young student's memorable achievement Shri Ghanshyam Das Birla presented Deendayal with a Gold Medal. The Intermediate Board also gave him another.

When Shri Birla asked Deendayalji, "What present would you like to have?" Deendayalji gave the same reply he had given to Maharaja of Sikar – "Your blessings".

"That of course you have, but what else would you like to have?" Shri Birla asked. "I do not want anything else," Deendayalji replied.

Asked about his High School studies, Deendayalji told him that in the school final examination also he had stood first and that the Maharaja of Sikar had given him Rs. 250 as a prize and a monthly scholarship of Rs. 10. On this Shri Birla said, "I shall also give you a gold medal, a monthly scholarship of Rs. 10 and an amount of Rs. 250."

As a matter of fact Shri Birla wished to give him something more. He offered Deendayalji a good job, which the latter politely declined, saying he wished to complete his studies. Shri Birla said, "Well, there will always be a place for you here". As it happened, no occasion ever came for Deendayalji to ask the Birlas for a job.

After completing his studies at Pilani, Deendayalji went to Kanpur for B.A. and joined the Sanatan Dharma College. He stayed at the college hostel and one of his intimate friends during this period was Shri Sunder Singh Bhandari, now the General Secretary of the Jana Sangh. Another close friend was Shri Balwant Mahashabde, at whose instance he joined the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh in 1937. Gradually Deendayalji's interest in R.S.S. activities grew and he started devoting time to R.S.S. work along with his studies. In 1939 he took his B.A. in the first division.

From Kanpur Deendayalji went to Agra to do his M.A. and joined the English Literature Course. By this time Shri Nanaji Deshmukh and Shri Bhau Jugade had reached Agra to begin R.S.S. work there. Deendayalji joined forces with them. But even while engaged in R.S.S. work he passed the M.A. previous examination with first class marks.

About this time Rama Devi, a cousin for whom Deendayalji had special affection, fell ill and was sent to Agra for treatment. His responsibility of taking care of her fell on Deendayalji. With this duty added to his studies and R.S.S. work, Deendayalji faced a difficult decision-should he read and appear for the examination, which was fast approaching, or should he attend on Rama Devi, whose health was deteriorating day by day?

He decided to give up his studies for the time being and nurse his cousin. He attended on her day and night and tried all methods of treatment, but to no purpose Rama Devi passed away. Deendayalji felt so depressed that he could not appear for the M.A. examination. His education was interrupted and both his scholarships- awarded to him by the Maharaja of Sikar and Shri Birla-were discontinued.

Some time later, at the instance of his aunt and against his own inclination, Deendayalji appeared for a Government-conducted competitive examination. But there was a problem. Indian to the core that he was, he had no Western-style suit with him, but his friends had told him that a suit was essential for the candidates. He thought a good deal about it, but felt he could not ask his uncle for money, as uncle Radha Raman was unhappy at Deendayalji's not sitting for the M.A. Examination. So he took the money from his aunt, bought a suit-length and gave it to a tailor, telling him that he required the suit for an interview on a particular date. But tailors are tailors, and when Deendayalji went to collect the suit the tailor told him it was not ready but that he would stitch it immediately. Deendayalji calmly replied, "So God wills it thus. It is all for the good, now I do not need the suit". He took back the cloth and went home.

When he went for the interview he saw that all other candidates were wearing fine suits, while he alone was in a 'dhoti' and 'kurta', with a cap on his head. The candidates made fun of him and remarked, "Panditji has come". This was the first time he was called Panditji, - an appellation millions were to use with respect and love in later years. Deendayalji felt he would not be selected as he was in completely Indian dress while the interviewer was an Englishman. But when the results were declared his name was the first in the list of selectees.

However, a Government job had no fascination for Deendayalji and with his uncle's permission he went to Prayag to do B.T. He stayed in the college hostel and regularly engaged himself in R.S.S. work.

After his B.T. Deendayalji dedicated himself completely to the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh. In 1942 he became an enthusiastic full-time worker of the R.S.S. and was sent to the Lakhimpur District in U.P. as organizer.

This was a period of great unrest in the country. The 'Quit India' movement had been launched against the British, and Deendayalji's uncle and aunt were very much worried about his being arrested. His uncle wanted him to get a good job, get married and settle down. He showed Deendayalji's horoscope to many astrologers, but they all told him the same thing-there was no prospect either of marriage or a Government job. They said should he be married forcibly, the result would not be good for him. They added it was probably that he might even have to sacrifice his life. All these predictions plunged Radha Raman in sombre thought.

Deendayalji on his part was reluctant to visit his village for fear that his uncle would settle his marriage. Once, however, he did have to go home and was put the question of questions. In reply he told about an astrologer who had predicated that if one of his other uncles married, he would have to pay for it with his life. And it had come to pass-the uncle had died soon after marriage. Narrating this incident he said to his uncle and aunt, "If you want me, do not ask me to marry. On the other hand if you want a daughter-in-law, go ahead". From that time, the issue of marriage never came up again.

While thus Deendayalji remained single and also disentangled himself from domestic ties, he continued visiting his relations on special occasions. When on tour he would unfailingly visit any relation living in the place of visit. For the whole day he might busy himself with the work of the Party, but at night he would visit his relatives and they would receive him gladly.

In 1955, when Deendayalji was Joint Provincial Organizer of the R.S.S. in U.P., he went to Agra during the course of his tour and called at his grandmother's place. Uncle Radha Raman and his aunt were present, and in the course of the conversation it became clear that they were worried about the marriage of his cousin Shakuntala, as no suitable Youngman was available. Deendayalji readily took upon himself the responsibility of finding a suitable match. He not only found out a handsome youth but himself made all the arrangements for the marriage. Significantly enough

his wedding gift to Shakuntala was two books on family life, and to this day she cherishes that present.

The days passed. Deendayalji continued striving to realize the ideal for which, it may be said, he was born. He established the publishing house 'Rashtra Dharma Prakashan' in Lucknow and launched the monthly magazine 'Rashtra Dharma' to propound the principles he held sacred. Later he launched the weekly 'Panchjanya', and still later the daily 'Swadesh'.

Of these three periodicals 'Panchjanya' has achieved the status of an all-India weekly journal and is now published from Delhi. The monthly 'Rashtra Dharma' also continues publication, while the daily 'Swadesh' has been replaced by a new daily, 'Tarun Bharat', which comes out from Lucknow.

These three publications are living monuments to Deendayalji's industry and preserverence. He served them in all possible capacities, from editor to compositor, machineman and even dispatcher. In short he took the place of any worker who happened to be absent, and ensured that the work was not interrupted. He had imbibed the true spirit of the dignity of labour and never allowed any distinction of high and low to be observed among the workers of the press and the periodicals.

Deendayalji would amaze even his close associates with his utter devotion to work. Once he himself carried the packaged bundles of the newspaper to the railway station on a bicycle, as the boy who did this work had not turned up. With such little acts he became a constant source of inspiration to those around him.

During a visit to his native place he received the news of uncle Radha Raman's death. His grief was so great that he sobbed for long like a child. On the 13th day he performed the funeral rights with his own hands.

Now Deendayalji concentrated all the more on the work of the Sangh and was entrusted with the work of the organisation in U.P. With the unfortunate murder of Mahatma Gandhi the Government clamped a ban on the R.S.S. although it had no connection with the crime. This was obviously a political manoeuvre to discredit the Sangh, and the Sangh responded with an organised protest in the form of a countrywide Satyagraha.

Deendayalji was put in charge of the agitation in U.P. and discharged his responsibility with such ability that he could foil the Government's attempt to provoke the Satyagrahis and give a violent turn to the peaceful agitation. He was then only 32. The agitation achieved complete success and the ban was lifted.

Even during the agitation Deendayalji's pen did not remain idle. He wrote articles glowing with the warmth and fire of nationalism. The Government felt it necessary to stem the flow of this burning lava of patriotism and put a ban on 'Panchjanya', which he edited. Nothing daunted, Deendayalji started another weekly journal by the name 'Himalaya', and when that too was suppressed by the Government, he came out with 'Rashtra Bhakta'. Nothing could stop his pen, not even the repeated onslaught of the all-powerful Government.

On January 26, 1950, India was declared a Republic and the new Constitution came into force. The soul of the nation had received great injuries from the gravely wrong policies of the Congress Party. Partition was the greatest tragedy, during which the Hindus had suffered untold miseries at the hands of Pakistani fanatics. Pakistan had committed aggression in Kashmir, yet India had not only written off its assets of about Rs. 300 crores but had even agreed to pay Rs. 55 crores to Pakistan as its share of the common assets. The Nehru-Liaquat Ali agreement was signed, in which there was not a single word condemning Pakistani violence and aggression. Under the new agreement Pakistan was to receive all the benefits and India was to share all the burdens.

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji, then Minister for Industries at the Centre, strongly opposed this Pact. He suggested that India should demand territory from Pakistan for the rehabilitation of refugees and should not sign the Pact till the demand was met. He boldly opposed Pandit Nehru in the Cabinet meeting, but finding the demand unacceptable to others he resigned his Ministership in 1950 and joined the opposition to build a common front of democratic forces.

Dr. Mukherji also demanded that Kashmir be declared an integral part of India without the special privileges guaranteed under the Instrument of Accession. He began to feel that an alternative to the Congress on an all-India basis and based on sound principles was necessary. He also felt the need of dedicated youngmen to take up this work and requested Shri Guruji,

Sarsanghchalak of the R.S.S., for them. As a result Deendayalji and a handful of other selected workers were put at his disposal.

On September 21, 1951 Deendayalji convened a state-level political convention of U.P. and founded the state unit of the new party, Bharatiya Jana Sangh. A unanimous resolution urging youths to come forward to give Jana Sangh all-India shape was passed in it. Exactly a month later, on October 21, an all-India convention was held in Delhi, in which representatives from all over India participated. Deendayalji was the moving spirit and Dr. Mukherji presided. Now the Jana Sangh formally became an all-India party.

The General Elections of 1952 were fast approaching. Though the new party could not expect to win many seats, it was necessary to make its presence felt all over the country. So it was decided to fight elections everywhere. Deendayalji was naturally placed in charge of the election in U.P. Shri Nanaji Deshmukh was his associate in this responsibility. They travelled all over the state and selected Jana Sangh candidates for every seat.

Pandit Nehru bitterly opposed the policies of the new party and carried on a countrywide campaign against it with all the prestige and position at his command. He abused it as communal, medieval and even as responsible for the Mahatma's murder. But the Jana Sangh gave a tough fight and when the results were announced it had officially acquired the status of an all-India Party.

The Jana Sangh won three seats at the Centre, one of which had returned Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji. He raised the Kashmir problem for discussion in the Lok Sabha, and accused the Prime Minister of bungling in the matter. Pt. Nehru fulminated with rage and said, "I shall crush this crushing mentality." Dr. Mukherji gave a befitting retort – "I shall crush this crushing mentality."

The elections were over. The Kashmir problem remained where it was despite efforts by the Government. In the Kanpur session of the Jana Sangh in 1952, a resolution was passed to the effect that a satyagraha should be launched to force the Government to solve the question once for all. This was the first annual session of the party and Dr. Mukherji was in the chair. Impressed by Deendayalji's genius for organization, Dr. Mukherji appointed

him to the high post of General Secretary of the party. It was in this conference that he declared with great admiration, "If I could get two more Deendayals, I will change the whole political map of India."

The same session took the decision to put Deendayalji in charge of the Satyagraha on the Kashmir problem. Entrusted with this new responsibility Deendayalji had to shift his headquarters from Lucknow to Delhi.

A wave of new consciousness on the Kashmir problem ran throughout the country. A series of meetings was held in various towns and at last the campaign culminated into a satyagraha. The slogan of the new movement was "Ek Vidhan, Ek Nishan, Ek Pradhan" (One Constitution, One Flag, One Prime Minister). With saffron caps on their heads and saffron flags in their hands Jana Sangh volunteers from all over the country began to offer Satyagraha in Delhi. The jails filled up as days passed. Dr. Mukherji himself led a batch of Satyagrahis towards Jammu and Kashmir. He was arrested and put in Srinagar Jail, where, after a few days, he died in suspicious circumstance.

The whole nation was shocked. Meetings were held all over the country and telegrams poured in from different places demanding a post-mortem examination of the body and an enquiry into the circumstances of Dr. Mukherji's death. But Pt. Nehru was deaf to them all.

The death of the founder-president was a great blow to the Jana Sangh, which was then an infant organisation. The whole responsibility of the party now fell on the shoulders of Deendayalji. Putting aside his grief at the loss of the leader, Deendayalji plunged into the task of building up the party. For 15 years, from 1953 to 1967, he remained the General Secretary and nursed the party, which was a tender sapling when he came to it, into a mighty banyan tree. The same Jana Sangh which was an insignificant entity in 1952 was next only to the Congress in 1967.

By his unique organising skill Deendayalji lifted the party from the slough of despondence into which it had fallen after Dr. Mukherji's death. The mighty demonstration of August 16, 1965, in which five lakh volunteers marched through the streets of Delhi with saffron flags in their hands and raising the slogan, "Repudiate the Kutch agreement, else vacate the seat of power", was organised by him.

Finally came the red-letter day in the annals of the Jana Sangh when this utterly unassuming leader of the party was raised to the high position of President in the year 1968. On assuming this tremendous responsibility Deendayalji went to the South with the message of the Jana Sangh. The streets of Calicut were strewn with flower-garlands and there were flowers, flowers all the way. Slogans wishing him long life rent the skies, and a mighty flood of praise for his work and ability flowed from anywhere.

But perhaps human beings who are too good for this world return to the Almighty too soon. This saintliest of men had unknown enemies who marked him down and plotted to rob the country of one of its noblest sons. On the dark night of February 11, 1968, Deendayal Upadhyaya was fiendishly pushed into the jaws of sudden death.



DEENDAYAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Siyaram Kutir
Chitrakoot - 485331
Zilla Satna (Madhya Pradesh)