

joins her is a Ganga, Garudaganga, Patalganga, Vishnuganga, Virahiganga, Rishiganga; and wherever two flows meet there is a Prayag- Rudraprayag, Vishnuprayag. At

Keshavprayag the torrential Sarasvati falls into Alaknanda.

Alaknanda is thrice holy--holy as the parent stream of the Ganga, as the sacred guide which leads you up to Badrinath and as the carrier of obsequial offerings to our ancestors at Brahmakapal. She is also a haven of peace to those who seek in her waters the solace which life has denied them.

The motor road up to Pipalkoti and the bridle path from there to Badrinath run along the left or right bank of Alaknanda. The river is ever variable and ever beautiful. Sometimes rushes wildly through narrow gorges. Sometimes she flows swiftly over a broad and shallow bed; sometimes she foams as if full of fresh milk or is muddy and

turbid; sometimes she courses through a thin channel at the base of two sky-scaling mountains; or sometimes she shyly disappears making her existence known only by the low murmur of her concealed waters. Sometimes receiving the greenish blue waters of some fall or those of some foaming milk-white stream; sometimes rushing over boulders or dancing round them or jumping from one rock terrace to another; sometimes sinking low, looking like a Colorado rushing near the Grand Canyon; sometimes imperceptible, hiding under heavy folds of snow; sometimes emerging, as at Badrinath, almost on the plains a few feet below road level, or swirling fast and furious as at the sacred rock of Naradshila in front of the Temple,--the Alaknanda rises beyond Mana from the road level, to be fed by the Vasundhara water-falls as they descend from Alakapuri, where Kubera, the God of Plenty, resides.



Dec. 3, 1884 to Feb. 28, 1963

From the Bhavan's
President
**Dr. Rajendra
Prasad :**
**The First
President of
Free India**

R. Venkataraman

Rajen Babu's identification with the Mahatma and the non-violent revolution was so total that he was looked upon as an authentic voice of Gandhiji and living representative of non-violence, truth, dedication to duty and total reliability. Rajen Babu was one of the distinguished Founder Members of the Bhavan.

One of the foremost disciples of Mahatma Gandhi, a front-rank freedom fighter, Congress President, President of the

Constituent Assembly, Union Minister, and first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad served the nation with uncommon devotion. The nation

will always remain indebted to him for his invaluable services. His depth of scholarship, breadth of vision, transparent sincerity, gentleness and humility made Rajen Babu not only a respected but a beloved leader.

Born to modest means, Rajen Babu rose high in the esteem of the country by his intellectual qualities. Winning a scholarship, Rajen Babu went to Calcutta for higher studies where, in his B.A. (Hons.), he got a first class, topping the list of successful candidates in the Calcutta University. He had a brilliant academic record and completed his education in 1910, securing a Master's Degree in Law from Calcutta University. He started practice in the Calcutta High Court thereafter.

Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, who was then the Chief Justice, was so impressed by the young lawyer, that he requested Rajendra Prasad, to simultaneously join the Law College, Calcutta, as a part-time professor. Rajen Babu could have easily entered Government

service and become a part of the Steel Frame. A judicial career was open to him. Yet, Rajen Babu wanted to join the Servants of India Society under Gunanidhi Gopalkrishna Gokhale and lead an austere life. Had it not been for the dissent from his brother, whom he venerated, he would have joined the Servants of India Society. Though he did not do so, he nonetheless became a Servant of India in a much larger sense.

Rajen Babu was one of the very first and most precious gems to have been 'mined' by Gandhiji in the cause of India's renaissance and liberation. Drawn to Bihar by the sordid plight of the indigo workers at Champaran, Gandhiji spotted Rajen Babu who had just then set up legal practice. Rajen Babu's assistance to Gandhiji during the Champaran Satyagraha was seminal. It is at Champaran that Satyagraha was launched in India as the most effective instrument of *swaraj*.

After the satyagraha in Champaran, Gandhiji's and

Rajen Babu's careers intertwined. Rajen Babu became a satyagrahi of Satyagrahis, understanding the concept and mastering the practice of the new creed. Nagpur was the scene of a major initiative by Rajen Babu in the year 1923. As you are all aware, the late Jamnalal Bajaj had organized there what became famous as the Flag Satyagraha.

Rajen Babu led the last batch of satyagrahis in the famous Nagpur Flag Satyagraha. Accompanied by the valiant Patel brothers--Vithalbhai and Vallabhbhai--he was the very image of an ideal satyagrahi: fearless but also completely free from bitterness or hate.

Rajen Babu's identification with the Mahatma and the non-violent revolution was so total that he was looked upon as an authentic voice of Gandhiji and living representative of non-violence, truth, dedication to duty and total reliability.

Rajen Babu was chosen by Gandhiji to become Congress President in 1934. The Congress took office in many States under

the 1935 Act and Rajen Babu provided the most mature and dynamic guidance to these Ministries. The Viceroy's proclamation on 8 September 1939 that India was at war, without consulting the Indian Legislatures, brought the Working Committee in direct confrontation with the British Government. Rajen Babu was elected Congress President for the second time then, once again at Gandhiji's instance.

The 1934 earthquake in Bihar which resulted in gruesome devastation and death needed urgent attention. Rajen Babu became an engine of activity, bringing succour to the afflicted. Appreciating the work put in by his lieutenant, Gandhiji said:

"Rajendra Babu has a gentle and unique hold in his Province such as no other leader has. He is the hero of the earthquake days when the whole of India put its trust in him. May he have the privilege too of being the messenger of peace in Bihar and through Bihar may be throughout India."

The period beginning with 1940 and ending on August 9, 1942 marked the final and decisive fight by the Indian National Congress against the British. Rajen Babu was yet again the Congress President at the time. Despite poor health, Rajen Babu provided a rare quality of leadership.

Rajen Babu's affectionate temperament, soft gentle talk, great humility and--above all--his transparent honesty of purpose endeared him to all classes of society. Dressed in simple homespun clothes, always speaking moderately in well-chosen words, and totally free of egoism, Rajen Babu could 'walk with kings nor lose the common touch'. The average Congress volunteer liked and trusted him no less than the leadership. Small wonder then that Gandhiji said if every Pradesh had one Rajendra Prasad, the goal could be achieved sooner.

Rajen Babu's contributions towards Khadi development, Harijan uplift and progress of the

tribals were outstanding. So was his devotion to Hindi. Rajen Babu wrote chaste Hindi and simple, effective English. He spoke with a soft voice which by its very gentleness commanded respect

Rajen Babu, after Independence, came to hold several offices with distinction. As Food and Agriculture Minister, he endeavoured to achieve the twin objectives of self-sufficiency in food and amelioration of the conditions of the farmers.

As President of the Constituent Assembly, he managed different and, often conflicting points of view and found solutions satisfactory to the differing groups.

Rajen Babu's legal background, equable temperament and innate gentlemanliness made him uniquely suited for shouldering the responsibilities of the Constituent Assembly. He was able to see the need for accommodating the various segments of our national life, in the new social order that was

being formulated.

Rajen Babu also was aware of the importance of consultation and consensus. He had the knack of winning people's confidence and carrying them with him. It was no ordinary task to frame a Constitution for this vast and diverse country with a population of about 400 million people. That this task came to be accomplished within the time-frame of three years, is in no small measure due to the fact that the Constituent Assembly had at its head the gentle and inspiring figure of Rajendra Prasad. The Constitution was adopted in the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949. At the Closing Session of the Assembly on that day, Rajen Babu observed: "It was a unique victory which was achieved by the unique method taught by the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, and it is up to us to preserve and protect the Independence that we have won and to make it really bear fruit for the man in the street."

As the first President of India,

he brought dignity and respect to the new office created by the Constitution and established rich and noble traditions.

The higher he rose, the nearer Rajen Babu became to the common people of India. Speaking to the people of India after his installation in 1952, Rajen Babu said: "My request to all the people of this country is to treat me as one of them." No greater identification of leader and led is possible.

A measure of the public's esteem for President Rajendra Prasad came from Prime Minister Nehru himself.

While unveiling a portrait of Rajendra Prasad in the Kerala Assembly on April 27, 1958, Nehruji remarked: "Rajen Babu not only occupies the highest office in our country but is something much more. Perhaps more than anyone else he embodies in his life the Indian national movement through which we have passed..."

As the President of the Republic, Rajen Babu established sound conventions.

His old practice of consultation and meticulous habits of work made for a most wholesome equation between the Head of State and Head of Government. Always willing to advise but never attempting to impose his views; ever ready to discharge his responsibilities but never eager to clutch at jurisdiction; always ready to help but never to interfere, Rajen Babu was a model, not only for India but for all Republics which provide for a Constitutional Head of State.

On taking over from him, his distinguished successor in office, Dr S. Radhakrishnan observed: "As the first elected Head of the State he symbolised the hopes and aspirations of our people and illustrated what a President should be according to our Constitution."

Rajen Babu had in him the

wisdom of the sages, the kindness of Gautama the Buddha and the self-denying equanimity of Mahavira.

Today, the nation is faced with difficult challenges. Terrorism stalks different parts of India and communal flare ups occur at the slightest provocation.

The spirit of brotherhood, the endearing communal harmony and commitment to *ahimsa* which informed our national struggle for freedom, have all disappeared once the goal was achieved.

We cannot bring back a Gandhi or Rajen Babu into our life but we can always bring back to our life the principles they stood for and practised. Lives of great men remind us that we may make our lives sublime.

SWEET THOUGHT

KOVAI

Sri Krishna Sweets

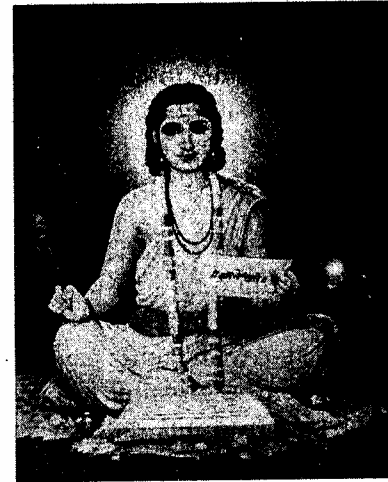
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**DELAY IS HATEFUL,
BUT IT GIVES
WISDOM.**

-Publilius Syrus

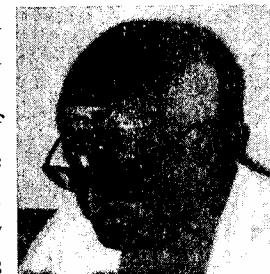


Adorations to Sant Jnaneshwar Obeisance to Jnaneshwari

S. Ramakrishnan

The **Jnaneshwari** of Sant Jnanadeva is a landmark not only in Marathi literature but a sacred text devoutly read or recited in every home by the pious sons and daughters of Maharashtra, wherever they are the world over. Sant Jnaneshwar is rightly acclaimed as the Adya Kirtankar of the modern era.

Maharashtra has a special place in the history of man's quest for the Supreme. Maharashtra's galaxy of saint-singers is very impressive--



S. Ramakrishnan

Jnanadeva, Namadeva, Gora Kumbhar and Savata of the 13th century; Narahari, and Chokhamela of the 14th century; Sena of the 15th century; Eknath and Tukaram