



ACHARYA
J. B. KRIPALANI



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
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Acharya Jiwantram Bhagwandas Kripalani, popularly known as Acharya Kripalani, was one of the towering personalities of the Indian freedom struggle and our national life. By his limitless courage and infinite wisdom, he endeared himself to the people of the country. His selfless dedication and unwavering determination to free India from the shackles of the foreign rule catapulted him to the forefront of our country's freedom struggle. Acharya Kripalani was a multi-faceted personality—a Gandhian, parliamentarian, academician, crusader for social justice and above all, a votary of value based politics. He was also renowned for his crusade both within and outside Parliament for building a just, progressive and prosperous society.

J.B. Kripalani was born at Hyderabad, now in Sind, Pakistan, on 11 November 1888. He did his early schooling in Sind. Having passed the Matriculation examination, Kripalani joined the Wilson College, Bombay, for higher studies. Subsequently, he shifted to D.J. Sind College, Karachi, and later to Fergusson College, Pune, from where he graduated in 1908. Kripalani took his MA in History and Economics from the Bombay University.

Even during his University days, Kripalani was actively involved in the freedom struggle. He was an authoritative exponent of the Gandhian philosophy and was deeply influenced by Gandhiji and his profound commitment towards the freedom of the country. When Gandhiji started his political journey from Champaran, Bihar, by personally experiencing the pathetic conditions of the indigo planters, Acharya Kripalani accompanied him along with others and recorded the statements of peasants. Later, Kripalani was with Gandhiji when the Mahatma continued his political sojourn with the Ahmedabad Mill Strike, Kheda Strike and the Salt Satyagraha. In 1917, Acharya Kripalani gave up his

job to devote his time to the cause of the freedom struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. In the years that followed, Kripalani was in the forefront of the national liberation movement.

From the late twenties, Kripalani devoted himself wholly to the Congress Party work. He steadily rose in the organisation, and from 1934 to 1945, he served as the Party General Secretary. He took part in all the Congress movements since 1921 and was jailed on different occasions. Acharya Kripalani was elected President of the Indian National Congress in November 1946 and steered the organisation through the critical days of the transfer of power. Kripalani resigned from the Congress Party in 1951 and formed a new political party known as the Krishak Mazdoor Praja Party which subsequently merged with the Praja Socialist Party. But in 1954, he resigned from the PSP and became an independent for the rest of his political life.

Acharya Kripalani's rich and varied experience was effectively put to use in the formative years of independent India. He was a member of the Constituent Assembly and was entrusted with the Chairmanship of the very important Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee.

In the later years, Acharya Kripalani graced the Lok Sabha for four terms. He was elected to the Lok Sabha from Bhagalpur and Sitamarhi in Bihar in the 1952 and 1957 General Elections and from Amroha in Uttar Pradesh in 1962, and Guna in Madhya Pradesh in 1967. In his long and illustrious parliamentary career, he stood for the high ideals of free debate and discussion and consistently upheld parliamentary ethics and values. As a staunch and articulate champion of democracy, he believed that a constructive Opposition was a pre-requisite for the success of democracy. Kripalani was convinced that power that is not checked had the tendency to become absolute, and it is the Opposition parties which provide a healthy check on that undesirable tendency. He tried to consolidate the democratic values and relentlessly fought for the cause of the country and the common people for whom his love was

boundless. It is a testimony to Acharya Kripalani's selflessness that despite his long parliamentary career, he never accepted any government post.

Verily a many-splendoured personality, education was a passion for Acharya Kripalani. He was appointed Professor in the Department of Political Science at the prestigious Banaras Hindu University in 1919 and stayed on there till 1920. Acharya Kripalani served and led the Gujarat Vidyapith started by Mahatma Gandhi as Acharya (Principal). It was during his days at the Gujarat Vidyapith that he came to be called as the Acharya. He served the institution till 1927 and was instrumental in imparting value based education to the students to prepare them towards serving the country and sharing their knowledge with the uneducated and underprivileged masses of the country. Later, from 1927, he became fully engrossed in the Sri Gandhi Ashram work to disseminate education and for constructive works in the Gandhian way.

A socially sensitive leader, Acharya Kripalani strongly felt that any economic development was meaningless unless it took into its contours the development of villagers and villages. He argued for remunerative employment and social security for the Indian masses. Like Gandhiji, he too supported the idea of decentralised industrialization which could meet the primary needs of the people. Kripalani was of the view that unemployment was one the greatest problems facing the country which must be tackled on a priority basis to remove the blight of poverty. It was his firm conviction that it is small and cottage industries which could provide support to a large section of our people rather than the big, centralized industries with large investments which use less human labour for production. He was of the view that a simple rise in national per capita income did not mean much. Acharya Kripalani firmly believed in the need for building the economic capacity of the downtrodden in a sustained manner. Favouring decentralized industrialization, he argued that it would avoid the unequal industrialization in different areas and States.

Despite his full time devotion to the freedom struggle and to constructive and social works, Acharya Kripalani managed to engage himself in writing and reading. He authored many books and also penned his autobiography named *My Times*. He also started a weekly in between titled *Vigil*.

An embodiment of integrity and uprightness, Acharya Kripalani passed away at Ahmedabad on 19 March 1982. Paying his tributes to Acharya Kripalani, the then President of India, Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy, said: "With the death of J.B. Kripalani the country had lost a stalwart of the Gandhian age... He never aspired for any public office or position of power. He pleaded untiringly for cleanliness in public life... He had a record of selfless service to the country in the true Gandhian spirit for 60 years." The then Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi said: "In his long public life, there were many vicissitudes but Acharya Kripalani will be remembered for the outspokenness with which he espoused his beliefs... He was a link with the earliest days of Satyagraha.... I join the nation in paying rich tributes to this stalwart."

[The Portrait of Acharya J.B. Kripalani, painted by Shri Sumaanav, will be unveiled by the Vice-President of India and the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat. The Portrait has been donated by the Gandhi Ashram, Lucknow and the Acharya Kripalani Memorial Trust, Delhi.]