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DIAMOND

The General Secretary, AIBEA, Com. C H Venkatachalam always used to hail Com. H L Parwana as DIAMOND of AIBEA.

Diamond is not only a sparking, scintillating, splendorous metal, it also lasts forever, for it cannot be melted.

There is a saying “Diamond is forever”, yes, Com. C H Venkatachalam is right. The memory of Com. H L Parwana and his inimitable services to AIBEA cannot be forgotten, but will always, forever, remain in our memory like a Diamond, lasts forever.

Just when AIBEA comrades, will starts celebrating Platinum Jubilee of AIBEA on 20th April, remember also, that earlier, in the year 1975, on 18th April, this precious jewel passed away, at an young age of 52 years, emaciated, tired, fatigued, facing his 3rd Heart Attack at Delhi. Though his mortal soils were consumed by the pitiless fire, the fiery spirit he kindled in the hearts of thousands of comrades, all our India continues to rage even now, after 46 years.

Many Biographies and Anecdotes have been written about him by several comrades. The story of his life is well known.

Just two instances, I recall here. When he was around 40 years old, he was asked as to why he is not thinking about his marriage, he replied.

I know I am due to marry. But I realised as to how much, the young girl, will dream of her married life. A small house, few clothes, little jewellery, materials for food and living, bringing up her children and expecting her husband to go to office at 10.00 AM and return around 6.00 PM. And once in a way, going out with him. Tell me comrades, from where are the resources, for me, to fulfil all these natural ambitions of a girl, whom, I am supposed to marry.

What reply we can give. But he continued. A similar situation arose earlier. I was dismissed by the PNB management, along with 130 comrades and it took 13 long years for the Supreme Court to reinstate me. But by then, I was in charge of Delhi Office of AIBEA. I used to work from 9.00 AM to midnight every day. The movement was expanding in the neighbouring states of undivided Punjab, MP, Rajasthan, UP etc. I was deeply involved. Hundreds of court cases, I was handling. If I leave all this work, and join duty at PNB, where I have to work from 10.00 Am to 7.00 PM, all 6 days in a week, in order to earn my wages, what would happen to AIBEA work, which will come during working hours. So I thought over. I was tempted. Bank job would have given me financial security and many comforts. But organisational work would have come to stand still. No hesitation, No temptation, I quietly declined to join for duty at PNB and resumed my work in the Union office. I have nothing to regret. In 1971, when the massive Silver jubilee of AIBEA, was held, I felt a sense of unusual satisfaction, that my decision to decline the job at PNB, was fully vindicated. We understood, the enormity of his sacrifice.

Once, Parwana came to Bangalore (1970) to participate in All India RBI Class IV Employees' Conference. He stayed here for 3 days. On the last day, I told him, that, we from KPBEF would like to give him some memento. Laughing, he said, yes, I need around 6 to 8 ordinary Handloom Sarees. Com. N. Jagannathan, our President went out, purchased 10 sarees from Handloom House for Rs. 30/- each, and gave the packet to Com. Parwana. He was very happy. Out of curiosity, I asked him, as to why he needs sarees and for whom, when he himself was a bachelor. He said, comrade Sundaresan, next time, when you come to Delhi, I will show you".

Two months later, I was in Delhi, to attend a meeting of AIBEA Office bearers. Parwana told me, that since I was staying in a Hotel, very near AIBEA office, I should meet him next day early morning at 6.00 AM at AIBEA office. I was perplexed. I said yes. Next day, at 6.00 AM I went to Ballimaran, Chandni Chowk, to meet him. Com. H L Parwana , was waiting for me, in the platform Tea Shop. He offered me a cup of Tea. We both walked around behind the lanes and gullies.

"Do you see, what is going on, he asked, I saw around 5 to 6 young women, Safai Karmacharis, sweeping the road, with long broomsticks.

He asked me “look at them carefully, then I noticed, that, they were all warring colourful cotton sarees.

Com. H L Parwana told me, that all these women workers are being paid by the contractor, Rs. 30/- per month, with no uniforms. They come to work in old torn sarees. I used to see them, in the morning, doing this laborious job of sweeping the road. I wanted to gift them good clothes to wear. So I asked you, for a packet of Sarees”.

Tears swelled my eyes. What a large hearted comrade he was, when his own heart got damaged thrice.

Com. H L Parwana , was and is, an embodiment of sacrifice and dedicated service, towards the building process of dear AIBEA. There were and are, today, numerous comrades at State and Bank wise level of our organisation, who gave up their own promotional opportunities and faced pay cuts and wage losses, while this building process of AIBEA went on.

The present generation of comrades should remember all of them, on 18th April 2021, just before we celebrate the Platinum jubilee of AIBEA on 20th April 2021.

P S SUNDARESAN