

'Samaj-Bhushan' (Jewel of the community) Late Shri Jaswantmalji Sethia—A full and complete personality

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The important thing is not how long one lives but how one lives? According to Indian philosophy, it is very rare to be born as a human being. Actually it is very difficult to get these four things—human life, hearing things related to religion, faith in religion and to put religion to practice in life. By sheer good luck, one may be born as a human being but very often, this human life is not used for the formation of character of one's own and of others. Man is a social being. To live in society, development of group consciousness is very necessary. Living together peacefully, adjustment with others, harmony, brotherhood and friendship—these are the qualities which are required in social life. Without developing these qualities, life is incomplete and remains disturbed. Only the person, who has the feeling of helping and serving others, can serve society and one can do so only when one rises above one's selfish motives. The important thing is to live not only for oneself but for others also. This feeling is known as the consciousness of serving others. Consciousness is of two kinds—consciousness of doing good to oneself and consciousness of doing good to others. Thinking of oneself is very necessary for a social being as one has one's own body and one's own family to take care of. One has to provide for his family but the time that one devotes for the welfare and benefit of humanity, shows his consciousness of doing good to others.

Late Jaswantmalji Sethia possessed a full and complete personality. Listening to sermons, acting on them and putting them into practice was his speciality. He laid great emphasis on formation of character, be it of one's own self or of others. His group conscious was fully developed. He possessed the rare qualities of head and heart—harmony, co-existence, fellow-feeling and good will for others. He was devoted not only to worldly duty but also to religion, his guru and the whole humanity. He was filled with these rare virtues to the full. It was because of these specific qualities

that the Terapanth Mahasabha awarded him the title of "**Samaj Bhushan**"—Jewel of the community, in the year 1968 in the auspicious presence of lustrous Acharya Shri Tulsi. Gurudev Tulsi described him as "Ajat Shatru" one, who didn't have a single enemy. He obeyed all the commands and instructions of his guru with great zeal and enthusiasm. A small hint was enough for him. He lent money on interest but he never charged interest beyond limits. He went to have the "*darshan*" of his guru every year and practicing equanimity and renouncing something or the other had become his habit. In the critical situation that arose in Raipur (M.P.) on the dispute of the book 'Agni Pariksha', he presented a rare example of the service of the order of religion. He led on a authentic life, conduct and service being its dominant features. Shri Sethia had cherished two dreams in his life—to persuade Gurudev Tulsi to come to Madras and to construct a Terapanth building there. Fortunate are the persons whose dreams are realized. Shri Sethiaji was a very lucky man. Both his dreams came true. He put into practice the maxim "*sarve bhavantu sukhinah : sarve santu niramaya*". All the people in the world be happy, all be healthy and did many things to make others happy.

He knew well that he had a duty towards human unity and society and performed it in a very good manner. Dame fortune was very kind to him; it provided him great prosperity but Shri Sethiaji didn't enjoy his good fortune and prosperity alone, he let others also enjoy the fruits of his good luck. He knew how to make good use of money. All these habits of Shri Sethiaji were hereditary. He had inherited them from his ancestors. He never disappointed anyone who went to him for help for a social cause. He held important and responsible post in many of the top institutions—Terapanthi Mahasabha, Shri S.S. Jain Education Society, Lord Mahavira Nirwan Samiti, organized by Tamilnadu government, Jain Medical Relief Society and Shri Jain Shwetamber Terapanthi Manav Hitkari Sangh, Ranavas. His consciousness for the good of others was well-developed. That is why he was fully and whole-heartedly devoted to the cause and well-being of others. He believed in harmony, adjustment and co-ordination but he didn't hesitate in pointing

out frankly if he found someone at fault. He didn't approve neglect of duty and wrong conduct. His outlook was very broad. He fixed present and planned future, taking inspiration and lessons from past. Shri Jaswantmal Sethia was an excellent planner. People came from far and wide to take his advice in the planning and running of some industry or enterprise. He was of the opinion that the aim should be big so that it may be executed in a big way and on a large scale. He was a fearless speaker and an efficient manager. Even in his family life, he sought the co-operation of all its members. He valued the ideas of all—young or old. He had practiced the doctrine of manifold predications in the real sense of the word. He put into practice the great maxim composed by Acharya Tulsi, "*Agrahahin gahan chintan ka dwar hamesha khula rahe*"—the way to unbiased and deep thinking should always be kept open.

On the whole, Shri Sethiaji possessed a very grand, impressive and complete personality. His being born as a human being proved extremely useful and meaningful. He lived every moment of life, maintaining high standards of conduct and morality. He maintained a balance between theory and practice. He was good in every respect—as an individual, as the head of the family, as a member of society and as a good citizen of the country. His life was fruitful and exemplary to all. He left for his heavenly abode on 29th December, 1996. The best and most appropriate homage to him will be to pray for the spiritual progress of his soul and to resolve to follow his virtues and ideals. I pay my heartiest tribute to the deceased soul.