

**WELCOME
MR. CHAIRMAN, SIR**

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Rajya Sabha Secretariat
New Delhi

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Preface

Shri K.R. Narayanan assumed the office of the Vice-President of India on 21 August, 1992. As per the provisions of the Constitution, the Vice-President of India is also the *ex-officio* Chairman of the Council of States (Rajya Sabha). Shri K.R. Narayanan is the ninth Chairman of Rajya Sabha who took over from Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma, who is presently adorning the office of the President of the Indian Republic. Shri Narayanan was the unanimous choice of all the political parties to occupy the high office of the Vice-President of India and the Chairman of Rajya Sabha.

On 25 November, 1992 when he came to the Rajya Sabha to occupy the Chair of the Presiding Officer, encomiums were showered on him and his great qualities of head and heart were referred to by the Members while offering felicitations to him. Members referred to his background as a journalist, diplomat, administrator, minister, educationist and, above all, a person who worked for the welfare of the poor and deprived sections of our society.

This booklet provides a glimpse of the many - splendoured personality of Shri K.R. Narayanan, as seen through the eyes of the Prime Minister, Leader of the House, Leader of Opposition, Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Leaders of various parties and groups and other Members.

We hope that this publication will be received well by those who are concerned about the affairs of the State and want to know more about those who run these affairs.

New Delhi
December 1992.

SUDARSHAN AGARWAL

Contents

	Pages
K.R. Narayanan: A profile	i-ii
1. A source of inspiration <i>P.V. Narasimha Rao</i> <i>Prime Minister of India</i>	1
2. A distinguished choice <i>S.B. Chavan</i> <i>Minister of Home Affairs and Leader of the House</i>	2 - 3
3. Gentle and firm <i>Dr. (Shrimati) Najma Heptulla</i> <i>Deputy Chairman</i> <i>Rajya Sabha</i>	4 - 5
4. कामयाबी के रास्ते के रहनुमा सिकन्दर बख्त सदन में विपक्ष के नेता	6
5. A multifaceted personality <i>S. Jaipal Reddy</i> <i>Janata Dal</i>	7 - 8
6. The harbinger of rapprochement <i>Dipen Ghosh</i> <i>Communist Party of India (Marxist)</i>	9
7. The epitome of achievement <i>Yashwant Sinha</i> <i>Janata Lal (S)</i>	10
8. A gift to the nation <i>Marasoli Maran</i> <i>Dravida Munetra Kazhagam</i>	11 - 12
9. Representative of the poor <i>G. Swaminathan</i> <i>All India Anna Dravida Munetra Kazhagam</i>	13 - 14
10. A true Gandhian <i>N.E. Balaram</i> <i>Communist Party of India</i>	15

	Pages
11. Man of varied experience <i>Mentay Padmanabham</i> <i>Telugu Desam</i>	16
12. An erudite scholar <i>P. Upendra</i> <i>Independent</i>	17
13. A pleasing personality <i>G.G. Swell</i> <i>Hill State People's Democratic Party</i>	18
14. Wishes of Gandhiji redeemed <i>H. Hanumanthappa</i> <i>Congress (I)</i>	19
15. Meek but not weak <i>Vishvijit P. Singh</i> <i>Congress (I)</i>	20
16. विद्वान और अनुभवी आनन्द प्रकाश गौतम निर्दलीय	21
17. Seeking cooperation, support and goodwill of the House <i>K.R. Narayanan</i> <i>Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha</i>	22 - 25



Shri K.R. Narayanan
Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha

K.R. Narayanan : A profile

NARAYANAN, SHRI K.R. : b. at Uzhavoor Village, Meeanchil Taluk, Kottayam District, October 27, 1920; M.A. (English Literature), University of Travancore, Kerala (1943), stood First Class First; B.Sc. (Econ.), London School of Economics, First Class Honours, specialised in Political Science (1948).

m. Shrimati Usha Narayanan, June 8, 1951; 2 d.;

Lecturer in English Literature in Travancore (1943);
Journalist with 'The Hindu', Madras and 'The Times of India', Bombay (1944-45).
London correspondent of 'Social Welfare' a Weekly, published from Bombay, and edited by Shri K.M. Munshi (1945-48);

Joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1949; served with the Indian Missions in Rangoon, Tokyo, London, Australia; Consul-General of India, Hanoi; India's Ambassador to (i) Thailand (1967-69), (ii) Turkey (1973-75) and (iii) The People's Republic of China (1976-78); & (iv) United States of America (1980-84).

Vice-Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi (1979-80);

Held important positions in the Ministry of External Affairs; Director, (i) East Asia Division and (ii) External Publicity Division; Joint Secretary, Policy Planning Division; Additional Secretary in 1975-76; Secretary in 1976;

From 1954 to 1955 was on leave from the Indian Foreign Service and taught Economic Administration at Delhi School of Economics and headed the Orientation Centre for Foreign Technicians;

Was awarded the Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship in 1970-72 for a study of Nehru's Non-alignment, and during this period was also Professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in the School of International Studies.

Member of Indian delegation to (i) United Nations General Assembly 1979 and (ii) to Conference of Non-aligned Nations at Harare in 1986;

Honorary Fellow of the London School of Economics and also of the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, Kerala;

Was awarded Honorary Doctorate by the University of Toledo in U.S.A. in 1987;

Elected to Lok Sabha thrice - 1984, 1989 and 1991 from the Ottapalam Constituency in Kerala; was Minister of State for (i) Planning, January - September, 1985, (ii) External Affairs, September, 1985 - 1986 and (iii) Science and Technology, Atomic Energy, Space, Electronics and Ocean Development; Vice-President, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, October, 1986 - December, 1989;

Vice-President of the Republic of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha since August 21, 1992;

President, (i) Indian Council for Cultural Relations; (ii) Indian Institute of Public Administration; Chancellor of Delhi University, Panjab University; and Gandhigram Rural Institute (Deemed University).

Chairman of the International Jury of the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding; Chairman of the International Jury for the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development.

Publications: Author of many articles on literature, politics and international affairs including three books - 'India and America: Essays in Understanding', 'Images and Insight' (Published by Allied Publishers in 1987), and 'Non-alignment in Contemporary International Relations' (jointly with Prof. K.P. Misra);

Favourite pastime and recreation: Reading poetry and literature; walking.

Special interests: Politics, international affairs and literature.

Sports and Clubs: Member, India International Centre, New Delhi.

Travels abroad: A number of countries in Asia, Europe, America and Africa.

Present address: Vice-President's House, 6, Maulana Azad Road, New Delhi-110011.

FELICITATIONS TO HONOURABLE CHAIRMAN

A source of inspiration

*P.V. Narasimha Rao
Prime Minister of India*

Mr. Chairman, Sir, on behalf of my Government and my party and all the Members of this House, may I extend a very warm welcome to you. We feel privileged to have you with us here to conduct the proceedings of this House.

The rich experience in such diverse walks of life as journalism, academics, diplomacy and politics that you have brought with you will, I am confident, be of immense value to all of us. Your erudition and intimate knowledge of Parliamentary procedures will be a source of inspiration and guidance. Your quiet, confident demeanour that endeared you to your colleagues in the other House will help this House in functioning smoothly. For our part, we assure you of our full co-operation.

Mr. Chairman, we have worked together so long that we have got used to look upon you more as a brother. Now it will be a little difficult to look upon you in an exalted position.

I cannot help recalling the invaluable service you rendered to this country as our Ambassador to the United States. Yes, diplomats have a job cut out for them. But you helped India; you helped the Government in more ways than as a diplomat, particularly in the academic field. I do not recall any other Ambassador having done so much as you did. I shall never forget the great contribution in that sphere which you rendered as Ambassador. It is not easy for the same diplomat to be successful, on behalf of India, both in China and the United States. The job is so different; the atmosphere is so different, and I am glad, and I am proud of you that as the first Ambassador to China, as India's first Ambassador to China after a period of comparative tension, you were able to bring down the tension and bring our relations to almost normal level within a very short time. This is the kind of persuasiveness which I found in you and I am quite happy to see you here because the same persuasiveness will be needed in a greater measure in this House.

I wish you all the best.

A distinguished choice

S.B. Chavan
*Minister of Home Affairs and
Leader of the House*

Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is my privilege to tender very respectful and cordial felicitations to you on your election as the Vice-President of India and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. Today is your first day of occupying the distinguished Chair of this august House after your assumption of office as the Vice-President of India on August 21. May I, therefore, on behalf of all of us, extend a very hearty welcome to you?

It is really a question of welcoming you to this House only in a new capacity. You are no stranger to this House, having been Minister of State, holding the portfolios of External Affairs, Science and Technology, Atomic Energy, Space, Electronics, and Ocean Development, for four years.

In your election to this exalted office, Members of Parliament have fulfilled the dream of Mahatma Gandhi and acted in consonance with the secular beliefs of Jawaharlal Nehru. However, it is your accomplishment that makes you a distinguished choice. You had proved to be an able diplomat, an academician of repute and an efficient parliamentarian.

You have a variegated and highly successful record. I may mention here that your term in the United States as Indian Ambassador was highlighted by a new turn to Indo-US relations. As Vice-Chancellor of the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University, you were instrumental in widening the scope of the University. As Minister of Science and Technology, you were instrumental in implementing the missions of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, to transform the tradition-bound India into a progressive, modern nation.

Your life has been a saga of struggle against adverse circumstances, social and economic. You faced and overcame them, undaunted and undeterred, to traverse

from village to Vice-Presidency of India. Without doubt, your wide-ranging experience as teacher, journalist, academican, diplomat, administrator, Member of Parliament, Minister and author will stand you in good stead. In electing you, therefore, to this high office, we are not only honouring you but honouring ourselves. I have no doubt that you will be a fine example of constructive co-operation among political parties and of India's vibrant democracy.

With these words, Sir, I once again extend to you, on behalf of the entire House, our warmest felicitations.

Gentle and firm

*Dr. (Shrimati) Najma Heptulla
Deputy Chairman
Rajya Sabha*

Honourable Chairman, Sir, it gives me great pleasure, today, to welcome you, along with Members of the Rajya Sabha, as the Chairman of this august House. This House of Elders has had the privilege of being chaired by eight outstanding luminaries, and you, Sir, represent yet another jewel in this chain of illustrious personalities.

During my tenure as the Deputy Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha, I had the proud privilege of working under the Chairmanship and benign guidance of Shri R. Venkataraman and Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma, who went on to adorn the highest office of this country. Similarly, Sir, I shall now look forward towards your kind guidance, co-operation and confidence. It will be my constant endeavour to fulfil, to the best of my abilities, the tasks and responsibility you bestow upon me. Needless to say, Sir, that your very presence will bring grace and discipline to the functioning of this House.

In conducting the proceedings of the House, you have a vast repository of experience to draw from. Besides being an eminent writer, journalist, teacher of economic administration and international affairs, you have had national and international exposure as a seasoned diplomat and a capable administrator.

We are honoured to have in you a man of wide and varied experience. You have been the Vice-Chancellor of the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University. Your interests in national and international affairs will surely enrich the Members during discussions. Your understanding of the masses and the political temperature of this country has earned you the distinction of having been elected to the Lok Sabha for three consecutive terms and your administrative capabilities were fully demonstrated under your Ministership of Planning, External Affairs, Science and Technology, Atomic Energy, Electronics and Ocean Development.

You had taken up challenging and innovative responsibilities in the past. Now that you are on the other side of the House, you will surely contribute towards healthy and fruitful discussions on national and international issues.

Though the Members of this House are forthright in putting forward their views, their commitment and zeal sometimes results in heated discussions and hurt sentiments. Your presence would stimulate honourable Members to be more diplomatic and reasonable, I hope, in putting forth their points before the House. You embody the qualities of gentleness and firmness, both proving to be your strength in running this House with ease and efficiency.

I welcome you again and assure you of my fullest cooperation in conducting the proceedings of this august House and if I remember the words of our great poet, Dr. Sir Mohd. Iqbal, perhaps he said them for a person like you :

यकी मोहकम अमल पैहम, मोहब्बत फातहे-आलम ।
जिहादे जिदगानी में ये हैं मरों की शमशेरें ।

Translated into English, it means, unflinching confidence and continuous striving, love and affection to the whole world, these are the swords for those people like you to win over the world in the battle of life. These words must have been said for people like you.

I thank you very much and felicitations to you again.

कामयाबी के रास्ते के रहनुमा

सिकन्दर बख्त
सदन में विपक्ष के नेता

सदर साहब, जिनंदगी की मजबूरियां भी अजीबो-गरीब होती हैं। कल आप पहली बार तशरीफ लाए और इस सदन की कुर्सी-ए-सदरत को संभाला, लेकिन कम हम लोगों की बैठक बड़ी मुश्किल थी, हमारे वे साथी जो हमसे बिछड़ गए वे उनको याद किया और सदन खत्म हुआ। स्वागत की बात आज पर रही। आज बाकायदा कारोबार इस सदन का शुरू हो रहा है। आप कुर्सी-ए-सदरत पर जलवा अफरोज हैं। आपका इस्तकबाल, आपका स्वागत।

फारसी की एक बात है, जिसमें कहा गया है कि अगर पहली ईंट टेंढ़ी रखी जाए तो उस ईंट पर बनाई हुई दीवार अगर आसमान तक भी पहुंचे तो टेंढ़ी होगी। इसी मायने में अगर पहली ईंट सीधी रखी जाए, वो फारसी में कहावत है- 'खिश्ते अव्यल गर निरुज मेमार कज, ता सूरिया भी रबद दीवार कज'- पहली ईंट अगर दुरुस्त रखी जाए तो उस पर बनाई हुई दीवार आसमान तक भी जाएगी तो सीधी जाएगी। आपके चुनाव का तरीका ही बहुत काबिले तारीफ था। हिन्दुस्तान की हर सियासी जमात ने आपको इतफाके-राय से चुना। यह चुनाव जाना ही इस चीज की दलील है कि आपकी रहनुमाई में जब यह सदन चलेगा तो मजबूती के रास्ते से चलेगा, कामयाबी के रास्ते से चलेगा, इसका कारोबार खुश-उमलूबी से पूरा होगा।

मैं और मेरी पार्टी खुले दिल से आपका स्वागत करती है। मैं उन तजुर्बात की तफसीलालत में जाना बहुत गैर-जरूरी समझता हूँ क्योंकि बहुत सारे हजरात ने उनका जिक्र कर दिया बल्कि मैं यह मानता हूँ कि हर सियासी और जिक्रि की हर कौमी पहलू पर आपका तजुर्बा मुकम्मल भी है और कामयाब भी है। यह नया तजुर्बा, इस सदन की सदरत का तजुर्बा, मैं उम्मीद करता हूँ कि यह तजुर्बा भी उनकी रास्तों पर चलेगा, जिन रास्तों पर आप कामयाबी की मजिलें तय करते रहे हैं।

दुबारा अर्ज करना चाहूंगा कि आपका स्वागत है और यह यकीन दिलाना चाहूंगा कि मेरी पार्टी की तरफ से पूरे एहताराम, पूरी इज्जत, पूरे तानुन के साथ आपका कारोबार चलेगा। आपका बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद।

A multifaceted personality

S. Jaipal Reddy
Janata Dal

Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is with immense joy and pride that I join the Prime Minister and other Members in offering warm felicitations to you on your election as the Vice-President of India and also I am welcoming you as the Chairman of this House on behalf of myself and on behalf of my party, the Janata Dal. Your candidature commanded spontaneous support from all the political parties across the board, which is proof positive, if proof was ever needed, of your multi-splendoured merit.

Everybody in this House knows about your brilliant academic record and about the fact that you have been a distinguished author, an eminent educationist, a great diplomat, a successful Minister and a good parliamentarian. We also know that in your 20's you were imaginative enough to have gained a personal audience with the Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, and you were gifted enough, in your 20's itself, to have been a favourite student of that celebrated Professor, Harold Laski, and to have been handpicked by none other than Jawaharlal Nehru for induction into the Foreign Service.

In 1990 I had the rare opportunity of spending a few days with you in Moscow in undivided solitude. I had occasion to have a glimpse into your multifaceted personality. You are scholar extraordinary. What is more, you are a scholar with a difference. Your scholarship, though massive, is not of the mildewed or pedantic kind. It is modern, multidisciplinary, practical and professional. It is said in the Bible, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." Everybody is struck by your gentleness, but I have seen that behind your gentle exterior you possess a beautiful blend of firmness of purpose and clarity of direction. We are, therefore, very proud and fortunate to have in you a person who combines in himself versatile talent, profound commitment and cheerful temperament. It was Lord Tennyson, I think, who said—and I quote—"Wearing all that weight of learning lightly like a flower."

It is known from your chequered career that you have risen from the lowest rung of society to this very exalted office. I am pleasantly surprised to note that the wear and tear of your long social march has not left any trace of fatigue on your face. If

anything, this Odyssey while deepening your understanding psyche has only broadened your smiles. In your conduct of the proceedings of this august House, you will need to use your smiles and frowns too. As a Member sitting on this side, I can only request you to reserve your smiles for this side of the House and frowns may be directed towards the places where they are well-deserved.

With these words, I pledge to extend my unstinted cooperation on behalf of myself and on behalf of my party. I welcome you once again, Sir. Thank you.

The harbinger of rapprochement

*Dipen Ghosh
Communist Party of
India (Marxist)*

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have a proud privilege to felicitate you as the Chairman of this august House. Literally you have a many-splendoured life, from a journalist you rose to be the Vice-President of our country and thereby the Chairman of this House. Our Prime Minister was right when he mentioned particularly your role which you had played as a diplomat in bringing a thaw in the hitherto embittered relations between the two great neighbouring countries in Asia. I hope that a person like you, the persuasiveness in you, would bring a thaw in the embittered relations between the two sides of the House; would certainly help in bringing together the two embattling sides in this House, on the right and the left, particularly at a point of time when the nation is facing very serious problems, sometimes confrontationist issues. Obviously, this House cannot remain oblivious to what is happening and what will be happening outside of this House. As the representatives of the people we may reflect the feelings of the people inside the House, either from this side or that side. I hope that you as the Chairman of this House will be in a position to bring a rapprochement between the two sides and take the nation to a better future and a greater advancement.

Sir, already the Prime Minister, the Leader of the House, the Deputy Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Janata Dal have stated a lot about your personal qualities and already we have got a taste of it on the eve of this session how your persuasiveness could avoid a confrontation and I hope that this spirit will last as long as you are sitting on that Chair and we are here.

With these few words, on behalf of my party, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), on behalf of my colleagues and on my own behalf, I once again felicitate you and welcome you to this House as the Chairman of this august body.

Thank you.

The epitome of achievement

Yashwant Sinha
Janata Dal (S)

Sir, I join my colleagues, on my own behalf and on behalf of my party, to felicitate you on this very happy occasion.

When I rise to relate myself to you, I feel a special kinship. A certain part of your background is similar to my background. I have, therefore, a special reason for rejoicing in your elevation.

Much has been said about your many-splendoured personality, the many facets of your personality so far. I feel that any one of these facets would be a matter of pride for the life-time of an ordinary human being. If he had held any of the positions that you have held in the past, that would be considered the epitome of achievement for an ordinary or even a distinguished person. But you have gone from one mile-post of success to another and I have no doubt, in voicing the sentiments — I am sure — of many here in this House, that you have still miles to go before you rest. It has been said that some people derive their dignity from the Chair they occupy and some people lend dignity to the Chair they occupy. You have always lent dignity to the various Chairs that you have occupied in the past and I have no hesitation in saying that this particular exalted Chair that you are occupying will also get some dignity from you. You have, in your life, translated into practice the ancient saying of 'simple living and high thinking' and it is an example for all of us and for the rest of the country.

I am sure that during your tenure here we will have a very good time together. I can only tell you, I would like to warn you, well, you might have managed the Chinese and the Americans, but it might be, at times, difficult for you to manage us in this House. But, as my colleague, Mr. Dipen Ghosh, would say, you have already won our hearts in the very brief meetings that we have had with you yesterday morning and this morning. We do realise that whatever excitement that might be there in our hearts is immediately cooled when we interact with you. I am sure this is the way it is going to be. We may be naughty, we may be difficult at times, but I am sure, in your wisdom, you will be able to direct the House and conduct its proceedings in the manner in which you have done it so far.

With these words, I join my colleagues, as I said, in offering our congratulations and felicitations to you and wishing you all the good luck for the future. Thank you.

A gift to the nation

Murasoli Maran
Dravida Munetra Kazhagam

Honourable Vice-President and Chairman, Sir, I feel highly elated to join hands with my friends, on behalf of my party, the DMK, and on my own behalf, in offering encomiums to you.

To use the phrase of Rabindranath Tagore: "From the humble among the poorest, the lowliest and the last section of society", you are the first one to reach this high office and you can rightly be called the common man's Vice-President. Your choice is an eloquent testimony to the fact that the Indian society is passing through a critical stage of social change and the impact is most striking among the lowest strata of society because these strata had remained relatively immobile in the past and their progress cannot be stopped in future. Therefore, your victory is a victory of our ideas and an assertion of the sense of social justice. That is why you have got a remarkable outpouring of national affection and national respect.

Your life is a saga of struggle and conflict, trials and tribulations and finally of success and achievement. You are like one of Bernard Shaw's characters who never blames circumstances for what they are and who never believes in circumstances to favour him but assiduously and dogmatically makes circumstances, creates circumstances. When there were hardly any concessions, when it was difficult to pay even two rupees per month as school fee, you found your way to become an honoured journalist, diplomat, academician, administrator and a great politician. That is why when the Dewan of Travancore, Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, just offered a clerical job to you in spite of your excellent academic credentials, you refused it probably to become the Vice-President of India.

Like Dr. Ambedkar, for you, darkness, as the poet has said, is light enough to pursue your goal. It is my fond hope that your life will enthuse our younger generation because you made it by working hard and by trusting the logic of events which always favour the bold, the active and the prepared. As Jaipalji has stated, you have been brought up under the tutelage of the legendary Professor Harold Laski. It is yet another feather in your cap. More than anything else, Pandit

Jawaharlal Nehru had many gifts to the nation and you are one among them. We are proud of you. As a successful diplomat we know your amiable disposition, tact, persuasive skills and understanding of men and matters and you would be practising Dale Carnegie all the time and, therefore, we have no doubt that you would be holding the scales even or appear to hold the scales even. More than anything else, you were the Vice-Chancellor of the Jawaharlal Nehru University—a tumultuous institution—and had an insight into all the operational forces of Indian politics. I have got an interesting news to remind you that at the time when you were the Vice-Chancellor, the student union leader, who gheraoed you, is here as an honourable Member. He is none other than Shri Digvijay Singh, who was a Minister of State in Chandra Shekharji's Government. I don't think he will repeat the performance. He told me that even at that time, you tackled the situation in a very diplomatic way. It seems the students made an offer to you to take meals and you refused to take meals until the students also took meals. You defused the situation in such a way with a Gandhian approach and we have no doubt that you would be a great success in this House with such a powerful weapon in your hands.

Sir, on behalf of my party, I offer fullest cooperation to you. Thank you.

Representative of the poor

G. Swaminathan
All India Anna Dravida
Munetra Kazhagam

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am very glad that I have got this unique privilege and opportunity to offer my felicitations to you as the Chairman of this House. In the recent elections in U.S.A., one of the candidates, Mr. Clinton, who has been recently elected as President of that country, was born in a place called 'Hope'. Some of my friends who came back from U.S.A. and who had watched the elections told me: "To a large extent, the slogan was that Clinton was born in 'Hope' and he is contesting the election to give hope to America". That was the slogan that was given in that country. When I was going through your bio-data, I found that you were born in Travancore State in a place called Uzhavoor. Uzhavoor in Tamil means agriculture. Most probably that is the meaning in Malayalam also. In India, as everybody knows, 75 per cent of the people are living in villages and agriculture is the most important thing in this country. Sir, as one born in a place called Uzhavoor which represents the agriculture of this country, I am sure that you will represent the poor people of this country and you will help this august House to voice their aspirations.

I also find that you were born in a family of *Vaidyas* who had been practising traditional medicines. It has also been said that your father was practising traditional medicines in his village. In spite of the fact that you have travelled many times abroad and you have been our diplomat in many countries, you belong to a family which has been practising traditional medicines and you will definitely maintain the traditions, the culture and the ethos of this country, in spite of your long innings in the other places. It has been said that you have been our diplomat in many countries starting from Rangoon and you had been in China, in USA and many other countries. I also understand from Jaipalji that you were in Moscow too as one of the diplomats. Many people when they go abroad assimilate only wrong things of the other countries and come back to our country. Only a few people go and select the best out of the other countries. You are the one who had selected the best in other countries—the best culture, the best in every country and you have come back. You had proved it from your first appointment in Rangoon, you picked

up the best lady in Rangoon and married her and made her your best half. He told me how you assimilated the best things of other countries. We will be able to gain from your experience. It has also been said that you have been a poet, a journalist and an educationist. My friend has also said that all parties have unanimously elected you to this House. Only one more thing I will add regarding your persuasiveness before I end my speech. Yesterday when we had been there, you said, "It so happens that sometimes I have to start Rajya Sabha with obituaries" Then you also mentioned that it may not be an ill-omen because when you went as an Ambassador to China and when you landed in Peking, most probably, the Head of the State died and you were informed about it. They also said that you would be able to present your credentials only after a long time because the Head of the State died. Immediately you sent a message to the Foreign Office: "I am sorry the Head of the State has died and I may be able to present my credentials only after a long time. But I am happy that the funeral is not mine". With that we all laughed and we were all happy, the heat of the discussion yesterday with that kind of anecdote you mentioned went deep into our heart.

I take this opportunity to felicitate you on behalf of the AIADMK party to which I belong and of which party I am a leader. I wish you all the best as the Chairman of this House and during your Chairmanship, we also wish ourselves all the best so that we will be able to conduct the proceedings harmoniously. Thank you very much.

A true Gandhian

N.E. Balamram
Communist Party of India

Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is with great joy that I am joining my colleagues to felicitate you on this occasion. Our personal friendship for the last four decades does not permit me now to speak much. You as a true Gandhian and I as a true Marxist, were working together on several occasions and I know those experiences. So I do not say anything at this juncture about that.

As a scholar, educationist and great social reformer of uncommon brilliance, your services will be remembered by all sections of the people, in all walks of life, that you have served. I think that your rich experience in different walks of life will definitely enrich the contribution of the House to the betterment of the society. I do not want to say anything more than that.

I extend the full cooperation of my party to you. Thank you, Sir.

Man of varied experience

*Mentay Padmanabham
Telugu Desam*

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I offer my sincere felicitations to you on your unanimous choice as the Vice-President of India and also as the Chairman of this august House on behalf of my party, Telugu Desam, and on my own behalf. You have rich and varied experience as an academician, as a diplomat and as a politician. You have done your greatest service to this country as a diplomat and your stint as the Vice-Chancellor of the Jawaharlal Nehru University is still remembered by a number of students as well as the staff of the University as a period when the institution had achieved tremendous reputation. My friends on this side have said many things and expressed their feelings about your achievements and I don't want to repeat any of them.

At the end, I extend our full cooperation to you as Chairman of this House on behalf of my party and on behalf of my colleagues. Once again, I offer my congratulations to you.

An erudite scholar

*P. Upendra
Independent*

Sir, on behalf of the non-aligned, unattached and miscellaneous Members of this House I extend a warm welcome to you as Chairman of this House. Your election as the Vice-President of this country is a great tribute to the vibrant democracy that we are having in this country which enables even a man of the humblest beginning to reach such a position of high eminence. It is also a recognition of your qualities as a leader and also as an erudite scholar. Your near-unanimous election is an indication of the supreme confidence various political parties have in your capacity to handle this difficult job. I am sure, with your scholarship, your temperament, your knowledge and your experience you will be able to make this job a successful one. Though the Rajya Sabha is considered as a House of Elders, it is much younger in behaviour and response. It is turbulent at times though some of the trouble-makers, like me, have been neutralised since then. When your name was announced as the Vice-President, some people and the media said that you were too soft for this job. But I know that behind the facade of softness there is firmness, a firmness coupled with tact. Moreover, for a man who handled the affairs of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, it should not be difficult to handle the Rajya Sabha.

We are fortunate in having you as the Chairman of this House. A glorious future awaits you and I am sure, by the turn of this century Mahatma Gandhi's dream will be fulfilled and you will occupy the highest office in this land.

Thank you.

A pleasing personality

G.G. Swell
Hill State People's
Democratic Party

Mr. Chairman, others including the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and the Deputy Chairman of the House have narrated the highlights of your long, chequered and distinguished career before you came to occupy your present office as the Vice-President of India and the Chairman of this House. We have known each other for some time. My vivid recollection is the many encounters that I had with you in the Parliament Library where you were often seen browsing at journals, magazines, and papers and where we had occasion to sit down together and exchange information and views on various important events, national and international. Those encounters will now be only memories. They are behind us. You as Chairman, I as a Member of this House will still have occasions to meet and exchange views on various events and developments. I am happy that circumstances have led you to occupy the present Chair where you have to run the affairs of this House and I am more than sure that with your intellectuality, your information, your rationality, your pleasant personality, your pleasant exterior, you should be able to control this House which sometimes can be quite boisterous and troublesome. The qualities that you have are just the qualities that this House needs. The qualities that you have are just the qualities that this country needs today. We are living in difficult times. We are living in times when confrontation seems to be the order of the day. We are living in times when tempers are high. This House is in a way a reflection of the nation and the way this House behaves will, to a great extent, influence the shape and the development in the nation. Much will depend on your performance. Intellectuality, rationality, information, these are just the things that are necessary and very much depends on the man sitting in that Chair. To allow these qualities to come to the surface, where do we see these things? I have had the experience of sitting in the Chair of the other House where I had tried them and I found that it worked. Sir, whenever the House is in trouble, when the Members know that you are fair, you like to do the best for them, and more than that, you follow every word that they say, that you appreciate their information, their articulation, the Members will respond to that kind of approach, the House will become more receptive, more rational in its discussions. You, Sir, have a responsibility.

I wish you Godspeed. We welcome you and we wish you every success. Thank you.

Wishes of Gandhiji redeemed

H. Hanumanthappa
Congress (I)

Mr. Chairman, Sir, while joining my other senior colleagues, I am unable to control myself on this occasion being the mover of the resolution to place the demand of redeeming the wishes of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, before the nation. Having thrown the ball into the ring, for some time, I was a worried man. That was the situation, an occasion when the air was thick between merit and Mandal. I was confronted everyday by my friends and even the Press friends asked me whom I was having in view. I had only one belief. Even Mahatmaji did not have anybody in view when he placed the demand before the nation. Let the *Daridranarayana* occupy the highest post in this country.

During those two months when we were confronted with these questions, I spent many sleepless nights, having moved the resolution. The capacity of the intelligentsia of this country was able to find out a man who could be an administrator, an ambassador, a vice-chancellor, a minister and a parliamentarian and who could also be the Vice-President of India and the President of India when the occasion comes. Today I welcome you, I felicitate you and I also thank all those people who are responsible, all the parties, all the leaders including my party leader and the Prime Minister for redeeming the wishes of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. I thank one and all who are responsible, who have lent their hand including all my friends who worked with me throughout and all the party leaders and every citizen and every countryman. I thank them for giving an opportunity to the *Daridranarayana* not only in name but who actually had no money to pay the fees, who could not have higher education, who had no facility and who later on with the help of scholarship, with the help of a Maharaja, could come up. All this has been narrated. This is the real Indian, this is the real Indian villager occupying the highest place, which was the wish of Mahatma Gandhi.

I once again welcome you and felicitate you on this occasion.

Meek but not weak

Vishvjit P. Singh
Congress (I)

Sir, in unison with all my colleagues who have spoken before me, I welcome you to this august House. You have a very special responsibility. For the first time in my life I find myself in total agreement with my friends in the Opposition who have praised you. My friend, Mr. Jaipal Reddy, spoke the truth when he quoted from the Bible, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth".

You are meek, Sir, in the sense of humility rather than any weakness. You are meek, in the sense of gentleness again, rather than any weakness. Everybody must be surprised why I am speaking today. I have a certain right to speak because I have been your neighbour for many years. Living in the house next to yours I have seen you at close quarters. I am exercising my right as a neighbour. I wish to warn you, don't believe in everything that you have heard today. There are many testing times ahead of you but don't worry. These very people who have praised you today, tomorrow they will trouble you a lot. I am a seer of the future.

With these words I congratulate you once again and welcome you amidst us.

विद्वान और अनुभवी

आनन्द प्रकाश गौतम
निर्दलीय

समापति महोदय, आज सर्वोच्च सदन की सर्वोच्च कुर्सी पर पदासीन होने पर मेरी हार्दिक बधाई स्वीकार करें। स्वतंत्र भारत के राजनैतिक इतिहास में पहली बार आपके व्यक्तित्व के रूप में देश के कमजोर वर्गों को यह सम्मान में समझता हूँ कि मिला है। जो आपको यह सम्मान मिला है संविधान के तहत इससे सारे देश के कमजोर वर्ग के लोग गौरवान्वित अनुभव करते हैं। महोदय, आज बाबा साहब डा० अम्बेदकर की भावनाओं का एक समादर इस देश में हुआ है। राष्ट्रपिता महात्मा गांधी की आत्मा भी प्रसन्न हो रही होगी। आपके घुने जाने में सभी राजनैतिक दलों ने जो सहमति दिखाई वह सभी लोग बधाई के पात्र हैं। मैं उनको भी बधाई देना चाहता हूँ जिन्होंने समाज के कमजोर वर्गों को गांधी जी की भावना के अनुसार तथा बाबा साहब डा० अम्बेदकर की भावना के अनुसार देश की सर्वोच्च कुर्सी पर बैठाने की बात की और राष्ट्रीय बहस का मुद्दा बनाया — वह थे वी०पी० सिंह जी और मैं अनुसूचित जाति, जन-जाति के संसदीय फोरम को भी धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ जिन्होंने भी एक अपनी मांग राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर रखी थी। इन सबके फलस्वरूप यह अवसर मिला, यह वक्त आया कि आज आप इस सदन की सर्वोच्च कुर्सी पर आसीन हैं। मेरी आशा है कि आपकी विद्वत्ता और अनुभव से भारत के संसदीय इतिहास में एक नया पन्ना जुड़ेगा और आपके इस पद पर आने से — जो एक बहुत बड़ी विद्वत्ता का पद माना जाता है — देश में एक जो पुरानी विचारधारा चली आ रही थी कि विद्वत्ता किसी वर्ग विशेष में ही सन्निहित है, उस पर भी कुठाराघात होता है।

पाठों लाइन से ऊपर उठ करके सदन में जो स्वतंत्र विचार रखते हैं उन लोगों की ओर से और अपने दलित वर्ग के संसदीय माथियों की ओर से मैं आपको हार्दिक बधाई देता हूँ। इन्हीं चंद शब्दों के साथ, मैं पुनः आपको हार्दिक बधाई देता हूँ।

Seeking cooperation, support and goodwill of the House

K.R. Narayanan
Vice-President of India and
Chairman, Rajya Sabha

Honourable Prime Minister — though he is not at the moment here — honourable Leader of the House, honourable Deputy Chairman, honourable Leader of the Opposition, leaders of all the political parties, honourable Members, I am deeply moved by the kind, warm and generous words with which you have welcomed me to this House of Elders, as it has been called. Actually, this is the first time I have been praised in this manner straight in my face. Perhaps, this is an earnest of speaking other things also straight in the face. If the speeches were not full of such goodwill and relieved by such wit and humour, the characteristic of this House, it would have been almost unbearable for me. As I said, I have not been used to such praise ever in the past. I stand here with great humility before you today. This is a Chair which has been adorned by such eminent personalities as Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Zakir Husain, Shri V.V. Giri, Shri G.S. Pathak, Shri B.D. Jatti, Shri M. Hidayatullah, Shri R. Venkataraman and Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma. It is not easy for me to rise up to the great traditions set by these great Chairmen of this House. But I think that these traditions will be an inspiration to me. At the same time, they make me feel very humble and they fill me with a sense of heavy responsibility. My only hope is that with your goodwill, with your cooperation and with your generosity, it would be possible for me to fulfil the heavy responsibilities that have been placed on me. I find here many familiar faces because I have had the good fortune to interact with this House as a Minister of State sitting in the treasury benches. I had tremendously enjoyed and profited a great deal from that experience. And to see the old, familiar, friendly faces and many new friendly faces makes me feel a little at home at least on this day of felicitations. I think that is a good beginning.

The manner in which I was elected and the manner in which all of you have expressed your goodwill towards me makes me a little bold to face this House. A mention has been made to the element of social justice in this election. I also feel that my election was a very powerful expression of the sense of fairness and justice

that resides deep down in our society. In spite of its differences, its inequalities, I think we have to strive to give some scope to this inherent sense of fairness and justice that is in our society. If we do so, it will come to the surface and I think many of our problems will become manageable.

My previous experience has been mentioned by almost all the honourable speakers. But I doubt very much if my previous experience would be very relevant to this. One honourable Member has already pointed out that it may not be just like managing the Chinese or the Americans. That management was within the framework of certain diplomatic rules and etiquette. There are rules and regulations, etiquette and traditions in this House also. Therefore, I think as long as we play according to the rules, it would be possible for me to manage this House. The other thing which has really struck me in my election is that it is a manifestation of our democracy. We do not often realise how precious this democratic heritage of ours has been. I think it is because of this and because of the freedom which allows the expression of differences and discontents that we have been able to survive, cohere as a nation when many other nations have not been able to do so. It is through this, shall I say the magic of democracy which brought about a certain unity among all parties, that I have had the good fortune to be elected to this high post. My honourable neighbour* has mentioned that this is the first occasion that he found it possible to agree with people on the other side. I do sincerely hope that this will not be the last occasion. I think it is absolutely necessary for us to carry on the traditions of agreeing to certain basic things. A great Dutch philosopher had once mentioned that democracy means to learn how to differ decently. I think that is the secret of the success of the parliamentary work also. All of us have differences and some of these differences would be very, very intense, sometimes based on deep ideological divisions. But the art of parliamentary democracy is in the expression of these differences. We have to learn the art of differing decently and this has been manifested in this House and in our Parliament on innumerable occasions. I believe that the other things are only exceptional. Even the Mother of Parliaments has been called a great talking shop. This is also a great talking shop. One of the Professors who taught me, Dr. Popper, the Logician, used to define the human being as a talking animal, a discussing animal. That is the distinguishing quality of the human being. If that is so, then, a talking shop is very important and discussing and talking about things is a substitute for brute and blind action. It is

* Shri Vishvijit P. Singh, Member of Rajya Sabha

a kind of, shall I say, Parliament is a kind of mighty bloodless substitute for violent revolutionary action. And, as long as we learn how to talk about our ideas, that will lead to wise and civilized action here as also outside in the nation as a whole. Therefore, I feel that even tumultuous debates are not fruitless. They are ultimately productive, because they are a substitute for non-peaceful action, non-peaceful interaction among the people. This great quality of democracy, I think, can be maintained if we fix our attention on certain basic things.

Gandhiji used to say that when you are in doubt about any decision, you imagine the face of the poorest man you have seen and see if what you are going to say or do will benefit this poorest man. I think if our debates here are centered on the problem of the poorest man, if we bear in mind the face of the common man in India, then, I think we will automatically get a minimum basis on which we can agree while the methods of helping this poor man may be debated. We may have many differences about it. But the fundamental aims of all our words, all our actions, should be directed to the benefit of the common man in India. That would be the only basis, the sure basis, on which we can take common action and find a certain minimum unity.

We are today, I think, passing through a great crisis. Our values are being eroded from every side, by a kind of pervasive process. There is a certain visible and invisible disintegration of values taking place which we cannot face at one place at all. And, if we have to prevent this, the invisible eroding of the value systems in this country, I think we have to put the common man at the centre of things and direct our attention to him. Then, I feel, everything else will fall in place.

You have given me this very heavy burden of presiding over this august House. I know that it is not easy for me probably to control this House. But I can assure you that as someone who believes in the free play of democratic rights and as someone who believes that from the clash of words and ideas and opinions truth will finally emerge, I would strain every nerve to give full scope for discussion, full scope for expression, to every Member of this House. But, of course, that has to be within the framework of the rules of the game. And that has also to be controlled, if I may say so, by what Gandhiji used to say, "I obey only one dictator; that is my watch." And, I think, one has to look at the clock also and obey the clock, if not the rules, if we are to debate.

I think, Parliament obviously has to be a very lively place. It cannot be a tame club. It has to be full of excitement, full of debate. Without it, I think, you do not run a Parliament but some other kind of a tame club. And one should welcome such things. Otherwise, it would be very uninteresting to sit here for the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman.

I also can assure you that it would be my endeavour, constant endeavour to uphold the rights and privileges and the dignity of this House and every Member of this House because if you do not uphold this dignity, the rights and privileges of this House, then there would not be any platform on which we can erect our edifice of democratic Government. And in this, I hope you will lend me co-operation, support and goodwill in the same way you have offered me such overflowing goodwill and support when you elected me to this high office. I want to thank you for the very generous words, encouraging words you have said today. And I also want to thank you for something which was behind it, the support you gave me for my election to this high office which I had never dreamt of, never. Thank you all.