

## **37. Dr. Nemichandra Shastri**

Dr. Nemichandra Shastri was a sea of knowledge in real sense. He has been a devotee of the goddess of learning (Saraswati) for the whole of his life. He was a master in Indian philosophy, Astrology, ancient and middle age history of Jainism, grammar of Prakrit and Sanskrit languages and literature. He is considered to be an outstanding personality of the Jain world of present age.

### **Birth and Childhood:**

The Dhaulpur village of Rajakhed District in Rajasthan is the meeting place of Vedic and Jain cultures. Rajasthan is particularly known for giving great warriors and famous kings. Shri Ratanlalji was well known in the surrounding area for his religious fervor and piety. His son Shri Balvirlalji was leading happy family life with his Shri Javitribai. A brilliant child was born to them in the morning in 1915 AD. The child was the only issue to the couple and hence he was very much loved in the family. The father Shri Balvirlalji, however, expired when this child was of only two years of age and hence his maternal uncle Dayaram brought up the child.

The child was very clever in study. He was especially skillful in arithmetic. After completion of his secondary, it was decided to send the boy to Kashi for further study. The boy faced many troubles but did his study well. He obtained degrees in the oriental studies of Sanskrit, Prakrit, Religion, literature, spiritual logic, astrology etc at the age of only 24. He was now holding the degrees of Nyaya Tirth, Jyotish Tirth and Kavya Tirth.

### **Family Life and Teaching Activities:**

He married to Sushilabai, daughter of Shri Chiranjilal, resident of Agra in 1939 after having been betrothed in 1936. He had now the responsibility of maintaining the family. One gentleman named Mangalsen appointed him as a teacher in night school of Aara to teach religious subjects at the salary of Rs.30 per month. Here, he could get the advantage of the company and spiritual discourses with celibate Chandabai. He had triple duties to perform here: Teaching Sanskrit at Jain Balashram in daytime, teach religious subjects at night in one Pathshala (school for religious learning) and then to work as the Head of library at Siddhanta Bhavan.

### **Government Service and Resignation:**

He was performing these triple duties very well and hence he was much popular in the whole village. By and by he increased his own studies and made sure his basis of future greatness. With the advice of some of his friends, he accepted service in the Education Department of Bihar Government and now he had to stay at Sultanpur near Bhagalpur. Nemichandraji was a man of self-respect and he could not suit himself with the domination of officers and routing work of office. He, therefore, resigned from the service and came back to his original field at Aara. He engaged himself day and night in Siddhanta Bhavan to finish his remaining life work.

### **Devotion for Learning and Service to Literature:**

Nemichandraji studied continuously and obtained the degrees of Shastri, Jyotish-Acharya, Sahitya Ratna, M.A., Ph.D., and D.Litt. He was, thus, truly a sea of knowledge by now. He was appointed Head Professor at the Jain College of Aara in 1955. He was not determined to propagate the Jain principles with the help of his wide knowledge. In this work he could get full co-operation and help from Dr. Rajaram Jain and Pandit Bhujbali Shastri and then the Jain Siddhanta Bhavan of Aara in Bihar became a famous research and study place of all-India culture, art and literature. A grand diamond jubilee celebration of this Siddhanta Bhavan of Aara was held in 1963 with the inspiration and encouragement of Dr. Nemichandra Jain.

He convened several meetings and programs for the development of Hindi language, to popularize Bhojpuri literature and to propagate Jain principles. He arranged conference; lectures, meetings and discussions to honor learned personalities to publish Jain literature, and to enhance common causes of the society. He took active participation at Indian Digambar Jain learned personalities' conference and he was selected to be the president for the conference to be held at Khatuli in 1970. He held an important position of President of Prakrit and Jain Darshan (scripture) selection at the annual conference of Oriental Learnings held at Ujjain in 1972.

### **Great Teacher, Writer and Research Scholar:**

He was an examiner for Ph.D. and D.Litt. degrees of several Universities. As many as 11 students obtained Ph.D. degree by getting his guidance and many of the are now high level professors and famous learned persons all over India. There was only one voice from him until the end of his life: Sincere study and Research. He was a life-long literary person and 34 of his works have since been published. He wrote many note-worthy essays on astrology, journalism, and editing and miscellaneous subjects. Service to Literature and enhancement of studies was his life-long profession. This is evident from the following works:

- Tirthankar Mahavir and His Acharya Tradition: This is the last great work of Dr. Nemichandraji. It the most important among all his works and it a last tribute of this great personality at the feet of Lord Mahavir. This was published in 1974 on the date of 2500<sup>th</sup> Nirvan-day (The day of Lord's leaving this world) of Lord Mahavir. This great work is in four parts: (a) Tirthankar Mahavir and his daily life. (b) Shrutdhar and Saraswatacharya: One who has learnt by hearing and who is more learned than the most learned. (c) Prabuddhacharya and Parampara Poshakacharya: A great teacher and up-holder of traditions and (d) Acharya Tulya Kavyakar and Lekhak: A Poet and a writer of very high caliber as Acharya.
- Hindi-Jain Sahitya Parishilan: Assimilation of Hindi Jain Literature. This work is in two parts. The first part has seven chapters and the other has four chapters. In the first part, there is poetry of old-age poets while the second part contains the poetry of modern poets.
- Adipurana Pratipadit Bharat: India expounded in old scriptures. Dr. Nemichandra Shastri studied various forms of Indian life in Adi Puran written by Shri Jinsen Acharya and brought out new faces touching the old Indian life.
- Vishva Shanti and Jain Dharma: World Peace and Jainism: This is perhaps the first book of Dr. Shastri. The causes of unrest in the world are hate, attachment, anger, pride, greed etc. and there and be no peace without coming out of these causes-This is the message of this great work.
- Mangal Mantra Namokar: An Introspection: It is the essence of this book that Namokar Mantra-An important spiritual stanza of Jainism-is everything of all Dwadashang Jivani. Dr. Shastri has made all efforts to prove this from several angles of thinking. There is also deep comparative study connecting psychology, arithmetic, yoga and Agam (scriptural) literature with each other in this enlightening book.
- Bharatiya Jyotish: Indian Astrology. This is his best work among all other works given out by him astrology. The book is divided into five chapters and almost all subjects like: Division of time, comments on principles, future-telling on the basis of horoscope, year wise predictions including supporting and non-supporting of stars among themselves are presented in depth.
- Guru Gopaldas Baraiya Smruti Granth: A memorial book on the great teacher Gopaldas Baraiya. The book contains life sketch of Shri Gopaldasji, some introduction about his literary works with a collection of some of his writings. Alongwith this many other writings of high caliber writers on religion, scriptures, literature, history, archaeology etc are also included Prakrit, Bhasha Aur Sahitya Ka Alochanatmak, Itihas: Critical History of Prakrit Language and literature: The grammar of Prakrit language is important even today and this book is written.

Keeping this point in view. The whole book is divided into two parts: The first part deals with the language and the second part contains criticism on literature.

In addition to these books, Dr. Nemichandra Shastri wrote: Bhagya Fal, Bhadrabahu Sanhita, Ratnakar Shalak, Alankar Chintamani, Bharatiya Sahitya Sansad, HemShabdaNushasan-a study, Abhinav Prakrit Vyakaran and so on.

### **Sickness and Accidental Death:**

He was not yet out of the exertion from his services connected with Ujjain Archaeological studies Conference, then he had stomach-ache in December 1973 but without giving any mind to it he went to teach the students of the college. The pain increased when he returned home. The famous surgeon Dr. Shahi made immediate operation on him. Since he was suffering from diabetes, the operation did not take a serious turn. Very famous and learned person like Dr. Kailashchandra Shastri, Dr. Kothiyaji and others came to see him from Kashi, but his health continued to worsen. He continued reciting Navkar stanza till the end but it was not acceptable to the Almighty, and Dr. Nemichandra Shastri breathed his last on January 10, 1974.

After the demise of the Kashi-resident and most well-known learned personality on Jainism, only three or four intellectuals of old generation were left who assimilated Jainism and speak with authority on the subject. These persons were also passing away by and by. It was, therefore, necessary that young students should come forward to take interest in Indian culture, literature and language and carry forward the task of teaching Jainism and Jain scriptures in schools and colleges. Let us hope that the life of Dr. Nemichandra Shastri will inspire and encourage the youth to ardently follow him.