

## **18. A Great Sympathizer Shri Motilal Kapadia**

### **Childhood and Learning:**

Shri Motilal Kapadia was born in December 7<sup>th</sup> 1879 at Bhavnagar (Gujarat). He has dedicated whole of his life in all the activities for the uplift and development of Jain community. He studied upto B.A. at Bhavnagar and then came to Mumbai to study further for LL.B. He passed the examination for solicitor in 1910 and then started a firm under the name of "Motichand and Devidas" with the help of his friend Devidas Desai. The well-known personality of Jain community Shri Kunvarji Kapadia was his uncle. Shri Motilal gained deep religious inspiration from him and took much interest in the study of Jain scriptures.

### **Social and National Activities:**

He became very much famous as a professional solicitor. All his colleagues loved him. He did various activities in public life. There was not a single activity of Jain community in which Motilal had not contributed liberally. His name will be ever remembered with Shri Mahavir Jain Vidyalaya and Shri Jain Shwetambar Moortipujak conference started in Jain society. With a view to provide residential accommodation to Jain students studying in the colleges at Mumbai, he established Shri Mahavir Jain Vidyalaya in 1916 AD. He was secretary of this institution from the very beginning. He was the main personality connected with this Vidyalaya. He had collected money by moving door to door for the development of this Vidyalaya and he was constantly thinking for its further and further development. This institution developed very fast and it holds many branches at several places in India today. Shri Motilal Kapadia worked for about 34 for this Vidyalaya and its development is solely due to the hard efforts of Shri Motilal Kapadia.

In the same way, he has worked hard against many difficulties to establish and continue. Shri Jain Shwetambar Moortipujak Conference. He had deep feelings for this Conference and he remained an important person in the development of this conference.

There was change in his thinking with the changing time. He had deep faith in Jain religion. He was working with co-operation and compromise on disputed matters. He mattered much for concrete work rather than long-time thinking. He hardly displeased anyone and worked with affection with all types of men in all sorts of religions and social activities. He took care of old persons and joined hands with new people. He helped in all good works without much consideration of caste, creed, community, religion or region. His thinking was very high and his public activities were also aimed for the good of the common people.

### **Thirst for Knowledge and Service to Literature:**

As he was busy with various social and religious works, so also he was engaged in reading and writing. His field of reading was very wide. He took exceptional interest in the study of Jain literature. He used to read many periodicals on various subjects. He was turned to writing since his student life. He wrote many articles in Jain Dharm Prakash and then he wrote many books which were published very soon and read with interest by all. Major portion of his writings is of critical nature on the books of famous Jain Acharyas. These are quite exhaustive and explain the philosophical matters in simple and acceptable language. He was turned to spiritual books from the very beginning and he wrote very much to create the feelings of detachment towards worldly affairs. His first critical book was on Adhyatma KalpaDrum of Shri Mooni Sunder Soori and it was published in 1909. This book earned applause from all corners of Jain community. Then the first part of AnandGhan Padya Ratnavali was published. Shri Motilalji has given detailed criticism and discussion on the fifth poems of Shri AnandGhanji in this heavy book. He translated the whole of Upamiti Bhav Prapanch Katha; the

famous and voluminous book in Sanskrit written by Jain Mooni Shri Siddharshi Gani and this was published in three parts. In one of these three parts, Shri Motilalji has given historical and spiritual summary and comments on the life and literary works of Siddharshi Gani. He published an interesting commentary on the poetic epic named ShantSudha Ras and this work was much appreciated by the learned Jain personalities. He also translated and published the biography of Shrimad Hemchandracharya written by Dr. Bullar. In addition to this he wrote many books and poems like "Jain outlook on Yoga", "A Jain of the present age", "Yashodhar a character", "Life and works of Sheth Motisha" and "Much gone, little remains" and so on and these are all published in due course of time.

He wrote detailed commentary on the well-known scripture named Prashamarati during the period of two and a half years from August 1948, when he had recovered from his major illness, till the end of his life. He completed his work of writing commentary on the remaining poems of Anand Ghan Padya Ratnavali and also a Chovisi. He wanted to collect all poems, devotional songs, prayers, and other writings on Lord Mahavir in one book and he had divided this plan in 25 parts. He had completed first part of this plan, which was on the previous lives of Lord Mahavir and had started, with the second part a few days before his death. Thus, there is a big lot of unpublished literature created by Shri Motilalji. The books, which are already published, are also awaiting their re-print.

### **His Literary Style:**

His style of writing indicates that he was a man of common people. He looked to the people who were not much educated and whose power of understanding was much limited. He deeply longed to lead these people on the path of religion, spirituality and detachment with worldly affairs. He, therefore, repeated one and the same matter many times. He was never tired of putting up one philosophical idea in many different forms and words. He believed that repetition is not a drawback in spiritual literature. He held that common man couldn't understand serious issues in brief writings. Hence, he adopted simple language; several illustrations to explain complicated subjects and poetic tone.

### **Special Qualities and Culture:**

He was always hopeful of bright future. This was his most important virtue. Even in the circumstances driving to hopelessness, he found out a way and encouraged every one to work hard to face the situation.

He never spoke harsh words to any one. He called on everybody by love and sympathy. He was pleased to work for others. He helped others as much as he could. He had deepest attachment with Jainism and yet he never disrespected other sects or religions.

He was always active. He never felt tired of continuous working. He passed through serious sickness at the age of 69 but he was fully active before this age. He never liked to keep any work half way.

He was always humble. Whenever he worked for any institution, he did his duties with total devotion, hard work and sincerity. If he had to follow others, he followed with interest. He never disliked going behind others and accepted new things from all corners and from everyone without hesitation.

His life was fully busy in outward activities as well as inward activities. He was handling several institutions with doing literary work at home. His life is worth following and initiating. He lived long but left leaving many immortal works behind. He had worked so much that hardly any one could even imagine. We receive all-round inspiration from his life.