

GURU JI DAOOD KHAN RAMAYANI, the Chocolate Grandfather

By | Feb 2, 2017

Daood Khan Ramayani recites the 'Ramcharit Manas'. Those who know him, affectionately call him 'Guruji'. Children know him as the 'Chocolate Grandfather' because he gifts a chocolate to every adult or child whom he sees going by. He is 93 years old but is absolutely fit. He still goes for his morning walk daily.



Guruji was just as popular as a teacher in his time. And there is a reason for this.

Daood Khan Ramayani ji breathed his last on September 9, 2016. Heart-felt condolences on behalf of the Teachers of India portal.

"On both sides of the gate of this school there used to be marigold flowers. It seemed as if you were being accorded the guard of honour. There was a full-fledged garden with chillies, egg-plant, coriander, fenugreek apart from lots of fruitful trees including cashew-nut. This was all thanks to the efforts of Daood Khan Guruji." This is what Shiv Prasad Sarwan had to say, who had worked as a fellow-teacher with Guruji. Sarwan is still in the same Loharsi Secondary School – Daood ji worked in the primary wing of the school from 1963 to 1983. Both the schools are in the same compound.

We talked to Daood ji about how all this was made possible. He said, "The most important is the nature of our relations with people. If relations are not good, even the best of situations will turn worse. And if the relations are good even a bad situation can be transformed into a good one. When I came here, all that the school had was a building. The first thing that came to my mind was that it should have an enclosing wall. This was a plot of around two and a half acres. A surrounding wall of around five and a half feet height was to be constructed. We organized a Ramayana programme for this.

"All knew that Daood Khan Guruji is coming, and he recites the Ramayana. Four times I recited the Ramayana – and I said that it was not enough that I recite and you hear. What is important is to actually do in practice what the Ramayana teaches. I asked them to have a look at the school, reminding them that in this two acres' plot, animals have a free play at night and in the morning animal-dung has to be collected and disposed of. Wherever Lord Ram made a hermitage, it always had an enclosing wall made by Rama, Lakshmana and Sita together. The school too should have one. Rama acted not like a king but like one serving.

"What I said had its effect. Masons worked free of cost, brick-makers gave bricks without charging anything and cement too was provided free. Just imagine the number of bricks that must have been required for this wall of around six feet in a two-acre area. What would have cost at least twenty thousand rupees in those times cost us nothing. I did not have to make people understand what co-operation means. Once you are joined together by love, the most difficult of tasks becomes easy to do. And if there is tension, even an easy task becomes difficult to achieve. This is what people learnt from what they had done in practice."

Before this, Daood Khan was posted in the Kharenga Primary School. About his experience there he says, "In Kharenga the most important thing I did was about water. The water of Mahanadi would dry up. The village would suffer for want of water. I got a 10-foot high check-dam of sand and gravel built in just a day, on top of which was a one-foot wide path to walk on. Thus in a 10-foot high dam 9 feet of water would be stored. This was like a water-reservoir coming to a people who were crying for a drop of water. They used to dig into the

river-bed and had to search for spring-water. In just one day, the dam was built, all took interest in it and they realized that it was this collective strength that could bring results – they gained such confidence that they were sure of bringing not just a river but a sea to the village. They saw it all take shape before their very eyes. Nothing is thus impossible : all you need to do is this – love and link people to people.

“Because of these acts I got the President’s Award in 1972. V.V.Giri was the President then. I was sent a ticket for first-class train-travel and all other arrangements too were made. I was a guest in the Rashtrapati Bhavan for 8 days and my Ramayana Recital was organized there. When the President asked me how I was feeling on getting the award, I responded by saying that Daood Khan has already been rewarded by the Lord of the World and is being awarded by the President today.”

We had gone to that school in Loharsi but neither the garden nor the enclosure remains. All that one sees are some remnants of the enclosure here and there. Daood Guruji had also got plantation done – many of those trees are now old and many are no longer there.

“On each tree we had got pasted the name of an elder of the village and they were all very happy because of this. Love has a great effect on people. But this will actually happen if there is behavioural change in practice”, said Daood ji.

He not only spent time on the beautification of the school but also paid attention to teaching. His colleague Shiv ji says, “Daood Guruji used to be very busy in the school. He paid attention to teaching and gardening as well as the basics of education. In spite of this he used to take three classes daily.”

Amar Singh Sahu, one of the elders of those times says, “How much can I tell you about him – there is no other guru ji like him in this world.”

Purushottam Singh Thakur, Azim Premji Foundation, Dhamtari, Chhatisgarh shared this Spotlight. You may read it in Hindi [here](#).

Ramnik Mohan translated it into English.

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