

Engineer P. Dayananda

It was indeed sad to hear the demise of uncle Dayananda who was a friend of my father. I was surprised to hear of his untimely demise as he was still in his prime. Prior to his death Uncle Dayananda never showed any signs of sickness or impending ill health. When I heard of his demise I wondered about all things impermanent and the surprising way of nature and all mankind. Ironically uncle Dayananda believed that we have to be healthy to serve the society. The body that is strong and healthy can achieve anything. Uncle Dayananda was the epitome of its meaning.

He was a graduate in Engineering, having followed a profession of his choice. Perhaps he may have been much impressed with the art of construction and development. Or perhaps he may have had a genuine desire to be part and parcel of development and progress. He always believed that health was wealth and he was particular to keep his mind and body strong. Yet uncle Dayananda had high humanitarian qualities which won the appreciation of all those who strived to live a just life. He was of the view that all of us should use our wealth to help the sick

and the needy. To uncle Dayananda it was true charity, true righteousness and true sacrifice. I came to know uncle Dayananda through my father who is also a fellow engineer.

I envied both of them as they were the practitioners of a noble profession which at present in any developing country commands deep respect and popularity. There cannot be any development without the services of an engineer and for the engineering profession there are new and sophisticated developments and progress which enhance the needs and services of the contemporary engineer.

Uncle Dayananda was a humble human being whose character never in its fold exalted position of authority or wealth.

He was a genial fun loving and considerate person among his friends and colleagues. To me Uncle Dayananda was simply an awe inspiring gentleman who was within the fraternity of Engineers which my father belonged. As young people we had many opportunities to learn from the likes of Uncle Dayananda and the rest. Some times I wondered the struggle, sacrifice, and perseverance that gentlemen like Uncle Dayananda

had to be inculcated with to climb in the ladder of success. Uncle Dayananda firmly believed if poor people come to you that we should comfort them. He believed that there is no other action needed to earn grace. To him service was very important. Punctuality and wasting no time kept uncle Dayananda firmly concentrated to work.

To him work was worship and duty was god. He believed that all work undertaken as sacred. He believed in the great merits obtained from service. To him all human beings are bound by action and the body is given only to perform dharmic activities. HE firmly believed that all of us should ceaselessly serve our country. Service rendered regularly makes us more energetic. Uncle Dayananda in many ways was fascinating.

Surprisingly there is divinity in all. Many years ago I still remember uncle Dayananda, myself and my father travelling every weekend together from Kandy to Colombo. Uncle Dayananda was a spirited pleasant conversationist keeping all three of us much interested in his numerous anecdotes. There was never a bored moment while Uncle Dayananda rambled on about life in gen-

eral. I heard many of his exploits in far away districts when duty had him stationed. Every morning my father and myself during those weekends went to uncle Dayananda's house to pick him up. He had a wonderful house built near Kandy deep in the thick vegetation in salubrious environs. As a lover of nature he preferred to stay closer to the Kandyan interior where a myriad of birds habituated his garden. In the morning anyone could see his house covered in thick mist amidst the biting cold. The very nature uncle Dayananda had great faith has snatched away another life in its prime. The gentleman whom I was reminded as the epitome of kindness has departed from the living. Everything is impermanent. As Christ in my own religion says un to dust thou will turn. So another genial human being has gone to his eternal rest. Another exemplary Engineer has been lost to the intelligentsia of this country. Uncle Dayananda has left behind many of his work to be emulated. As now I remember him with nostalgia, I wish his soul eternal peace, and may his memory remain among all who came to know him.

- Miran Perera