

Lala Lajpat Rai

Essay No. 01

India: Well Known Freedom Fighter

Birth: 1865 Death: 1928

As a freedom fighter, Panjab Kesari Lala Lajpat Rai differed from other leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale who advocated a moderate approach to win freedom. Lala Lajpat Rai on the other hand, with Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal 'did not believe in non-violence for throwing off the yoke of the British slavery. These three leaders are famous in the history of Indian freedom struggle as 'Lai, Bal, Pal'. Throughout his life Lala Lajpat Rai fought for the freedom of his country and ultimately sacrificed his life in unchanging the barriers of British domination. He was under deep influence of Swami Dayanand, the founder of 'Arya Samaj' and worked actively for the establishment of 'Dayanand Anglo-Vedic' (DAV) Colleges in Punjab. He was always ready for social service and had devoted himself wholeheartedly in the service of the sufferer's of 1899 famine that swept the entire country.

He joined the freedom struggle at a very early age. He attended the congress conference in Prayag in 1888 at the age of 23. In 1907, he was exiled for Six months for his political activities. He also visited England several times to confer with the British about the betterment of Indians. During the First World War, he toured America, for seeking the American public opinion in favour of India's freedom. During his stay in America he founded the Indian 'Home Rule League' and also started a monthly paper Young India. Around this time, he also wrote Self-Determination for India and some other famous books. In 1920, he led the 'Non cooperation Movement' in Punjab and was sent to jail. He led the black flag demonstration against the Simon commission. When he visited Lahore on 30th October 1928, and suffered the severe lathi blows. He succumbed to these injuries the same year.

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Lala Lajpat Rai was one of the greatest freedom fighters of India. He was a martyr who laid down his life for the freedom of India.

He was born at Dhudike in the Ferozepur district in Punjab on 28th Jan. 1865. His father Lala Radha Krishan was a school teacher. He did his matriculation from Ambala in 1880 and joined the govt. college, Lahore. He did law and started practice at Hissar. He became quite a successful lawyer.

Lajpat Rai had an inborn tendency to do social service and help others. He joined the Arya Samaj and started the work of social reforms. He was very much interested in educational matters. He founded a Sanskrit School at Hissar and took great pains to collect funds for starting the Dayanand Anglo Vedic college at Lahore. He also did a lot of social work to help the famine victims in 1899.

He joined the Indian National congress in 1888. IN 1905 he and Gopal Krishna Gokhale were sent to England by the congress to express the views of the party and the Indian people to the British rulers.

He was not only a great orator but a good writer also. He started "young India, a monthly paper and wrote several books to arouse the Indian people to the necessity for demanding freedom from the British rule. He was also a great unionist and became the first President of the Indian Trade Union congress. He was even jailed for his unionist views.

He later joined the Swarajist party which was started by Moti Lal Nehru and Deshbandhu Das. He was even elected to the Central Legislative Assembly on the ticket of this party.

The Simon Commission arrived in Lahore on 31st Oct. Like all the patriotic people Lalaji objected to the Commission being all whites. He led a forceful but non violent demonstration against the commission. He was assaulted by Mr. Scott. A cruel British police officer and was given severe lathi blows. He died on 17th Nov. 1928 as a result of these lathi blows.