



Annie Besant

Annie Besant

"So long as I can serve India, I shall continue to do so. I love the Indian people as I love none other", so wrote Annie Besant, in her paper 'New India'. Born of Irish parents in London on October 1, 1847, Annie Besant made India her home since the day in November, 1893, when she landed at Tuticorin in Tamilnadu. Mahatma Gandhi once said about her that she awakened India from her deep slumber.

Few women of her generation had done so much to change people's minds, beliefs, and attitudes. Till her 46th year when she came to India, Dr. Besant passed through several phases of life including, housewife, and propagator of atheism, trade unionist, feminist leader and Fabian socialist. By 1889, there was scarcely any modern reform in England for which she had not written, spoken, worked, and suffered. In 1908 Annie Besant became President of the Theosophical Society and began to steer the society away from Buddhism and towards Hinduism.

Once in India she totally involved herself with the country's problem. With the theosophical society at Adyar in Madras (now Chennai) as her headquarters, she worked with tireless zeal for the freedom of the country. She named her movement 'Home Rule'. She started a paper called 'New India' for carrying on her furious agendas. She attended for the first time the 1914 session of the Indian national congress and later on became its first woman president in 1917. In the meantime she launched the home rule league but failed to get the support of Balgangadher Tilak who has also started his own home rule league. She was opposed to the Satyagraha movement of Gandhiji as she was a constitutionalist.

Dr. Besant was associated with the scouts, movement from 1917 and the women's Indian association from the same year. She started many educational institutions including the national college at Madanappalli and Hindu college at Banaras. She delivered the kamala lectures of the Calcutta University in 1925.

"She tried to follow truth", she wanted these words to be her epitaph. With her passing away on September 21, 1933 the life of a great political leader, a social reformer and a standard-bearer of Indian culture came to an end.

GURUDEVA.COM_NEW