



Sarojini Naidu

Sarojini Naidu was one of the front rank leaders of the freedom struggle. She knew no fear as a person and as a patriot. Presiding over the 41st session of the Indian National Congress, she had said that, "in the battle for liberty, fear is the one unforgivable treachery and despair, the one unforgivable sin". That one statement tells us a lot about one of the most reputed women leader of Indian freedom struggle.

Born to Aghornath Chattopadhyaya and Barada Sundari Devi in Hyderabad on February 13, 1879, Sarojini matriculated with distinction at an early age of 12. She continued her education in England, at the King's college, London and Girton College, Cambridge. Before she could complete her education, she returned to India to married the person she loved. The chance encounter with Gopal Krishna Gokhale in Calcutta changed her life forever. Initially she joined Annie Besant's Home Rule League and later joined the congress. By 1919 she had emerged as a strong political leader in her own right. Leaders across the political spectrum used to look at her with respect and awe.

Sarojini Naidu met Gandhiji in London in 1914. After returning from London she went round the country lecturing on welfare of youth, dignity of labour, women's emancipation and nationalism. She presided over the Indian National Congress in 1925 and courted imprisonment during the salt Satyagraha in 1930. She was jailed again in 1942 when the Quit India movement was launched. She presided over the Asian Relations Conference in 1947 and made one of her most memorable speeches.

Sarojini Naidu was also a wonderful poetess. As a poetess, she belonged to the romantic school. Her poems appeared in four collections, 'The Golden Threshold', 'The bird of Time', 'The Broken Wing', all collected under the title "The Sceptred Flute", and 'The Feather of Dawn'. She was indeed a poet of freedom, love, and beauty. She was multilingual and she was equally proficient in Persian, Urdu, English, Bengali and Telugu.

After independence, Sarojini Naidu was made the Governor of Uttar Pradesh. It was a well thought decision. But soon, she passed away suddenly on March 2, 1949 at the age of 70.