



Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne

Founder and the Emeritus President of the
Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement

May He Attain

The Supreme Bliss of Nibbana !



சரீவோதயம்
Sarvodaya
சர்வோதயம்

1931 - 2024

Farewell to great son of the soil who awakened the greatness of humans

Many are the things bequeathed to the country, the world and humanity by the founder of the Sarvodaya Movement, Dr. A.T. Ariyaratna who has bidden farewell to the nation. Amongst the iconic personalities of the twentieth century, he was held in high esteem for introducing to the world a development philosophy endowed with greatness of humanity. Sarvodaya, which had its roots in India was a concept of Mahatma Gandhi. Dr. Ariyaratne was able to transform Sarvodaya which was based on ideals of Vedaism was to be in consonance with the Sri Lankan society. The most venerable Balangoda Ananda Maithree Thero opined that Sarvodaya was functional Buddhism. The training of Buddhist monks on community development was initiated at Pathakada Community Leadership Bhikkhu Training Centre under the aegis of the venerable Henpitigedara Gnanaseeha Thero. None of these initiatives were against any religion. It was a spiritual endeavor predicated on goodness of human beings. Hence, any individual could join and work with Sarvodaya whilst fostering one's own dignity and belief.

Sarvodaya means 'the awakening of all' and not the 'will of the majority'. Pioneers of Sarvodaya led by Dr. Ariyaratne worked towards making this endeavor a reality through religious awakening. He was instrumental in shaping Indian Sarvodaya to be in harmony with Sri Lankan nation and the world. It is a participatory development model based on spirituality. Indian people used the honorary title 'Gandhi of Sri Lanka' to refer to Dr. Ariyaratne. His tireless efforts for propagating Gandhian principles in a foreign country earned him many accolades. He received Jamnalal Bajaj award in 1990 and Gandhi Peace Award in 1996 by Indian leaders and he received the Gandhi Award from the Gandhi Development Trust of South Africa in appreciation of his services to promote peace and reconciliation. He was also the recipient of many other international awards from a number of countries for his service to all mankind. Dr. Ariyaratne's name has found its way to the list of greatest personalities of the twentieth century for advocating an innovative developmental vision, for fostering interracial harmony and for his services to fight against hunger and poverty.

Dr. Ariyaratne was born on 5 November 1933 at Unawatuna, Galle as the third child in a family of five siblings. His father was Ahangama

Thummhewage Henrik Jinadasa and his mother was Rosalima Gajadeera Arachchi.

His house was located adjacent to Peelagoda Vihara, Unawatuna. Ariyaratne's great grandfather Gabosingh, a devout Buddhist had donated a two acre land belonging to the family for the construction of Peelagoda Chaithyalankara Vihara. For Dr. Ariyaratne whose first teacher was the Venerable Ahangama Sri Sumanajothi Thero, an erudite Buddhist scholar of the Southern Province, the temple was a place that illuminated the path of his life. He received his early education from the village school and was admitted to Grade 4 of Meddekanda Buddhist Mix School, Balangoda. He continued his primary education at Buona Vista Senior Boys' English School, Galle and enrolled in Mahinda College Galle for secondary education in January 1946 becoming the highest scorer at the entrance examination for the admission of students to Grade 6.

He was a member of both Sinhala and English debate teams and also played for the school cricket team. He served as the editor of the school magazine published by students of university entrance classes. While still at school, he was in the forefront of social service activities in his school and village and played a leading role in forming a society for coir rope makers. Due to economic difficulties experienced at the time, he gave up university entrance and entered Teachers' Training College, Maharagama and passed out as trained teacher of mathematics and science. Subsequently he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Sri Jayawardenapura University.

He served as a member of the Buddhist Association, Sinhala Literary Association, Psychology Association and Sinhala and English debate teams of the Teachers' Training College. He also edited the English magazine of the Teachers' College. Whilst undergoing his training at the Teachers' Training College, he undertook a socioeconomic survey along with 24 of his colleagues at the Dumwatta Colony inhabited by those in the lowest strata of the caste hierarchy. It was his first experience with the people of underprivileged social class.

After graduating from teachers' college, Dr. Ariyaratne embarked on a teaching career at Nalanda College, Colombo. The principal of Nalanda College at the time was Mr. M.W. Karunananda. In 1957, the then vice

chairman of the Social Services Union of Nalanda Mr. Abeysekrara had organized a 'Shramadana Camp' at Kanatholuwa village in Kurunegala. Previously Dr. Ariyaratne had gained some experience about developmental activities in poverty-stricken rural villages while being attached to the Department of Rural Development and Small Industries. Along with Japanese Expert Morito, Dr. Ariyaratne also visited people living in abject poverty in Madras and Bombay in India during the tail end of 1957. He was also emboldened by experiences gained from his association with coir rope producers society in his native village and people living in penury at Meddekanda village in Balangoda. Knowledge acquired by engaging in leftist politics, religious experiences drawn from the Peelegoda Vihara and various activities undertook while being a student at Buona Visata and Mahinda Colleges and the Teacher's Training College had fortified his will to engage in social services.

Issuing a congratulatory message to Kanatholuwa shramadana camp on 12 December 1958, the then Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike lauded the efforts made by Nalanda Social Services Association for selecting a village of marginalized people disregarded by the society and working for the advancement of villagers therein. The camp received wide publicity over the media and encomia from the people. This itself resulted in allegations being made against the camp. However with unwavering commitment, Dr. Ariyaratne remained undeterred and steadfast.

Making schoolchildren aware of social service activities, mutually helping each other, boosting national development by involving students in such activities, raising social consciousness of children, affording opportunities to schoolchildren to study village life and understanding the importance of social service were some of the key objectives of the camp.

With a view to uniting people who remained distanced due to ethnic riots in 1956, Dr. Ariyaratne launched a social discourse through the 'Janma Bhoomi' newspaper thus broadening relationship with the Tamil and Muslim communities. Twelve schools were established for underserved, underprivileged children in Jaffna area and this mission was expanded to cover the Eastern Province, too.

Following the unqualified success at Kanatholuwa and Manana camps, similar camps were held in Deniyaya, Wathuruwa, Opanayake, Akarella, Panichchankeni I Batticaloa and Nirweli and Kaithadi in Jaffna bringing different communities together and underscoring racial unity. As a result people were able to better understand different cultures and formed strong bonds.

Whilst listening to a lecture delivered by Professor Ramachandran in New Delhi in October 1959, Dr. Ariyaratne gained a thorough understanding about Sarvodaya and its philosophical foundation. During this visit, Dr. Ariyaratna had the opportunity of meeting the spiritual successor of Sarvodaya's guiding force Mahatma Ghandi, Dr. Vinoba Bhave who is best known for the Bhoodan Movement. It is manifest that this meeting had a profound effect on the life of Dr. Ariyaratne.

Sarvodaya envisions a fully nonviolent revolution in the social, moral, political and economic spheres. It is a development philosophy based on spirituality. The vision of Sarvodaya as implemented in fifteen thousand villages across the country and earned accolades nationally and internationally. Dr. Ariyaratne's mission becomes even more relevant and important as he established thousands of preschools, introduced partner organizations, promoted self-help by forming Shramadana societies as independent legal entities, mobilized Sarvodaya Shanthi Sena to provide relief to the affected and foster national unity, nurtured interracial amity since 1958, formed 'Kulangana' forum for women's empowerment, established a legal aid programme to assist those subjected to injustice, initiated Suwasetha and Masevana care centres for child care purposes, started presses to publish newspapers to propagate independent views and opinions, earned foreign exchange to the country by establishing industrial units for farm products, batik products, carpentry, steelwork industries and children's sports goods, initiated hundreds of potable groundwater supply schemes, established rural industrial units for rural construction work, conserved forests, brought about a cultural revival, offered guidance to hundreds of thousands of young people, worked for the betterment of the country without no greed for power, confronted injustice without any fear, came forward during national calamities, expressed his opinion fearlessly at the time of crises, established Artha Dharama Centre, expanded economic programme of Sarvodaya, set up

the Sarvodaya Trust using prize money received with international awards and donated cash gifts to those who served the country with distinction.

The Sri Jayawardenapura University and several other internationally acclaimed universities have awarded honorary doctorates on Dr. Ariyaratne. He has been honoured by the three Buddhist chapters of the country. In the truest sense of the word, Dr. Ariaratne was a humble and simple person. He was a master of time management and launched development initiatives to suit each decade and guided the Sarvodaya movement imaginatively and innovatively to harmonize with emerging social trends.

It is no secret that he commended respect from all heads of the state of the country. The vision of Sarvodaya became basis of the national development policy. Sarvodaya development vision believes in the empowerment of people at the grass root in stark contrast to grabbing political power at the highest level. It aims to establish 'Grama Rajya' or self-reliant villages. It is an approach of two extremes. It must also be noted that criticisms by Dr. Ariyaratne were given due regard by political leaders. Those who did not heed his advice were rejected by the people. There have been many instances where he faced seemingly insurmountable challenges. He was able to overcome them with the strength derived from the people, his international image and the blessings of religious dignitaries. Tamil and Muslim political leaders and community leaders constantly invited Dr. Ariyaratne to visit their areas and held him in high esteem. They appreciated his efforts to foster national unity.

At the beginning, Sarvodaya activities were centered on temples and places of worship which was the approach employed by Dr. Ariyaratne. The number of religious ceremonies he was involved in and the number of lectures he delivered are too voluminous to be counted. He has addressed people from all walks of life from preschool children to university academics. The number of books he has authored is well over hundred and has delivered thousands of lectures at international fora. The meditative walk from Kataragama to Nagadeepa in 1983 conducted by him was a historical phenomenon for promoting national unity and amity. On 3rd June 1987 he commenced a peace march from Kandy which culminated with his arrival at Ruwanwisesaya with nearly one hundred thousand peace marchers on 10th June to coincide with the Poson Full Moon Poya Day. A similar meditation programme was held at

Sri Pada to douse the flames of racial hatred in the upcountry. The community charter on peace adopted by Sarvodaya is more relevant today than never before.

Dr. Ariyaratne married Miss Neetha Dhammachari during the period he was involved in the first Sramadana camp. A girl guide, she remained a tower of strength through all trials and tribulations in the life of Dr. Ariyaratne. She guides the 'Suwasetha' a broad based national programme. The couple is blessed with six gifted children. The eldest daughter, Dr. Samya Charika Marasinghe handles activities connected with Sarvodaya Vishwa Nikethana. Dr. Vinya Ariyaratne is the incumbent Chairman of Sarvodaya. Captain Jeewan Ariyaratne is a snior pilot. Sadeewa Sanadeepa and Nimna Hayanthi are the other two daughters and the youngest son Diyath Samantha is a computer engineer.

Institutions collapse and businesses become bankrupt with the demise of their founders. But this does not hold true for Sarvodaya. With his farsighted vision, Dr. Ariyaratne gradually built a youth leadership and delegated responsibilities to emerging leaders within the movement. The 65- year Sarvodaya journey of Dr. Ariyaratne is a testament of running an exemplary organization. Dr. Ariyaratne treated Maha Sangha and with utmost respect and he was equally respectful of the clergy of other religions. He always listened to them. He awakened the glory of humanity in all its splendor transcending differences in race, cast, creed and politics. He worked cordially with international donor agencies and at times they were guided by his vision thus winning kudos as an international reputed luminary.

Though he was not in the good books of some for expressing his views in no uncertain terms, it never bothered him. Having completed a fruitful journey of 92 years, he has bidden farewell to us. The vision of Sarvodaya, which he turned into a practical reality is very much alive. The best way to honour this great son of the soil is to align with the nonviolent development model introduced by him. May he attain the supreme bliss of Nibbana.

Note - Professor Kamal Waleboda

Awards to Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne

Awards / Rewards (International)

01. 1969- The Ramon Magsaysay award awarded for community leadership by the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation of Philippines.
02. 1982-Borduin State award awarded by the Palace of Brussels, Belgium in recognition of the service rendered for international development.
- 03.1986- Alan Shawn Feinstein award awarded by the Brown University of Road Island, America for reduction and eradication of starvation in the world.
- 04.1990-August Floral award awarded by the International teetotalers' association of Copenhagen, Denmark.
05. 1990- The Jannalal Bajaj award awarded by the Jannalal Bajaj Foundation of Bombay for popularizing Gandhi principles outside of India.
06. 1992- Niwako Peace award awarded by the Niwako Peace Foundation of Japan.
07. 1995- Ilga Memorial public service award awarded by Korea
08. 1996- Hubert M. Humphrey award awarded by the Minnesota University of USA
09. 1996- The Gandhi Peace Award awarded by the Indian government in Rashtapathibhavan, New Delhi, India.
10. 1999- Award on the achievements of life awarded by the Asian Foundation of United Kingdom.
11. 2002-Moraji Desai Award awarded for enhancing literacy.
12. 2004- The award awarded by the Nowartis Foundation of Switzerland for the lifetime universal services
13. 2004-Universal Global Peace Award awarded by the Inter religious association of America on behalf of the outstanding contribution made for Peace making and Non violent social transformation.

14. 2005- Professor Ram Lal Pareek International Award for excellent public education and peace education awarded by the Gujarat College of Ahmedabad, India.
15. 2005-Special Award awarded by the Mayor of Saint Juwan, Puerto Rico State, USA.
16. 2005-Award to recognize and honor the service for mankind by the New Human Society Collective of Puerto Rico State, USA
- 17.2006- Dr. Sushil Kumar International Peace Award awarded by the Toronto University of Canada.
18. 2006- The Gandhi Award awarded by the Gandhi Development Trust of South Africa for the commitment made for peace and Reformation to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Sathyagraha Movement.
- 19.2007-Special Brotherhood award awarded by the Jewish Distribution Committee of America
20. 2007- Vision and Value Award awarded by the Institution of International Trust and Values of the James Madison University of America.
21. 2007- Honorary award awarded by the Governor of Mijigar State, America.
22. 2011-Basawa Sri Award-2010 awarded by the Sri Muruga Math monastery of Chithra Gurga city of Karnataka State, India.
23. 2011-The Cultural award awarded by the Japanese Buddhist Association or the Bukkyo Dendo Niyonai Institution for the World Missionary Service.
24. 2012- "The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold rays with pink Ribbons" Award awarded by the Japanese Emperor.
25. 2012-The 'Mystical Order' International Peace Award established under the name of Saint Peters Saint.
26. 2016- 'The Award for Human Excellence' awarded by the Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Trust of India. 2016.11.23

Awards / Rewards (Local)

01. 1986- Deshabandhu class 01 award awarded by the President's House, Colombo for the praiseworthy service rendered on behalf of the nation.
02. 1995 – Wijaya Dharma Sri Shasanalochana Title awarded at the Dhamma school 100th anniversary celebration
03. 1996- The Vishwa Prasadini Title awarded by the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka
04. 1996 – Samaja sewa Shiromani Honorary Degree Title awarded by the Sangha Sama Sri Help Foundation of the three Chapters on the 01st of July 1996 .
05. 1998- Mahaweli Ran Diyawara Award awarded by the United Engineers Association of the Sri Lanka Mahaweli Authority.
06. 1998- The Shanthiduutha Award awarded by the Indian Association on the Future of Humankind.
07. 2000- Paratha Dharma Visharada Honorary Title awarded by the World Buddhist Foundation.
08. 2000- Vishwa Sarana Sahashra Award awarded by the Sri Lanka National Voluntary Organizations' Alliance for the excellent contribution in social development.
09. 2001- Manawa Dharma Sansthapana Shiromani Honorary title awarded by the Vidyalankara Piriwena Institute of Peliyagoda.
10. 2002- The Vishwakeerthi Sri Jathikabhimani Honorary title awarded by the Board of Sangha of the Sri Lanka Ramagnna Chapter on the 29th of January 2002.
11. 2003-Sri Sudheeshwara Honorary Degree Title awarded by the Amarapura Muula wanshika Chapter on the 09th of November 2003.
12. 2003- Rohana Pradeepa Honorary Title awarded on behalf of the excellent service rendered to the Community Development sector on recommendation by the Senate and the approval of the Board of Control of the University of Ruhuna.
13. 2004- Award with the Sri Lanka Dhaja Vishwarthachari Honorary title awarded by the Young Buddhist youth Association of Galle.

14. 2006- Honorary appreciation awarded by the Jana Sarana Committee and the Founder of Janasarana, Dr. Soma Edirisinghe for the whole-hearted commitment made on Jana Sarana Community endeavor.
15. 2006- The traditional Vishwakeerthi Sri Janaranjana Lakamanya Honorary title awarded by the Sri Lanka Amarapura Chapter to appreciate the service rendered.
16. 2006- The Jagath Wishrutha Yashobhimani Honorary title awarded by the Sri Kalyani Samasri Dharma Sangha Sabhawa, Kotte.
17. 2007- The Sri Lankabhimanya Award awarded by His Excellency the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka on 2007.12.01
18. 2009- Doctorate awarded by the Faculty of Good Governance of South Asia of the Samadeepa Social Centre , Anuradhapura on 2009.04.25
19. "Lokartha Siddhi Shiromani" Honorary Degree, which is the highest honorary degree awarded by the Maligakanda Vidyodaya Pirivena, Colombo on 2014.04.29
20. 2017-The award awarded by Sri Lanka Unites to the ideal figures that render a significant service towards Peace, reconciliation and development of Sri Lanka, 28th of January,2017
21. 2017- The Sri Jayawardhanapura Pradeepa Honorary Award awarded by the Alumni Association of the University of Sri Jayawardhanapura.

**Agenda of the funeral ceremony of
Sri Lankabhimanya Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne,
the founder and Honorary Chairman of Sarvodaya**

20.04.2024 – At the premises of the Independent Square, Colombo

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|------------------------|---|
| 1.00 p.m. | Cortege leaving the Sarvodaya Headquarters |
| 2.15 p.m. to 2.45 p.m. | Cortege arrives at the entrance of Independence Avenue, Colombo 7. Casket is carried from the entrance of Independence Avenue to Independent Square |
| 2.45 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. | The remains are placed at the Independent Square premises for the public to pay their last respect. |
| 4.00 p.m. to 4.45 p.m. | Conducting religious rituals: Offering Pansakoola and administering Pansil
Offering of Mathaka Washra
Anusasana |
| 4.45 p.m. to 4.50 p.m. | Conducting Hindu religious rituals |
| 4.50 p.m. to 4.55 p.m. | Conducting Catholic/Christian religious rituals |
| 4.55 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. | Conducting Islamic religious rituals |

Funeral orations of laymen

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| 5.00 -5.05 p.m. | For Sarvodaya Movement and Civil Society Collective |
| 5.05 – 5.10 p.m. | For Old Boys' Association of Nalanda College |
| 5.10 – 5.15 p.m. | For Sarvodaya International |
| 5.15 – 5.20 p.m. | For the overall Sarvodaya community |
| 5.20 – 5.30 p.m. | Message of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition |
| 5.30 – 5.40 p.m. | Message of the Hon. Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka |
| 5.40 – 5.50 p.m. | Message of the Hon. President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka |
| 5.55 – 6.00 p.m. | Vote of Thanks |
| 6.00 p.m. | Setting fire to the funeral pyre |