

THE NEHRU PHENOMENON: THE CORNERSTONE OF NATIONAL LIBERATION AND MODERN INDIA

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Abstract. This article highlights the life, political activity, and personal qualities of Jawaharlal Nehru, a great political figure who played an important role in the struggle for India's independence and left a deep mark on the country's history. Nehru's participation in the national liberation movement, his role in the Indian National Congress, his struggle against British colonialism, his position in the field of international relations, his humanistic views, and loyalty to the principles of social justice are analyzed. His personal life, family, and connections with Gandhi and other prominent figures are also examined. The article also analyzes Nehru's visit to Uzbekistan, in particular to Samarkand, and his high assessment of the historical and cultural heritage. His thoughts about the Baburids in the work "The Way of Life in India" and his respect for the scientific heritage of Abu Rayhan Beruni are cited as a historical source.

Keywords: Jawaharlal Nehru, Indian National Congress, independence movement, Gandhi, Babur, Biruni, Indian political history, anti-colonialism.

“I will be the last Englishman to rule India.”
(Referring to the fact that he was educated in England)
– **Jawaharlal Nehru**

Jawaharlal Nehru, a great political and state figure, was one of the leaders in the struggle for India's independence and later became the country's first Prime Minister. He was born on November 14, 1889, in Allahabad, India. His rich and meaningful life was dedicated to the development of a newly independent India. Nehru was a key figure in the Indian national liberation movement, alongside leaders such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

Jawaharlal Nehru's father, Motilal Nehru, was one of India's most renowned and influential lawyers. He was actively involved in the country's largest political party – the Indian National Congress (INC). Nehru was raised in a privileged environment. His father arranged for him to be educated at home by private tutors and governors.

From an early age, Nehru was interested in science and theosophy. A family friend, Annie Besant, invited him to join the Theosophical Society when he was just thirteen years old. However, his interest in theosophy did not last long, and soon after his tutor, Ferdinand Brooks, left, Nehru also abandoned the society. He later wrote:

“For about three years [Brooks] was with me, and in many ways, he had a great influence on me.” His interest in theosophy led him to study Buddhist and Hindu scriptures.



At the age of 16, under the urging and insistence of his father, Jawaharlal Nehru went to England to continue his education. He studied at Harrow School and Cambridge University. In 1905, when he began attending Harrow, one of England's leading schools, he earned the nickname "Joe". In 1910, Nehru graduated from Cambridge University with honors.

After returning to India, Nehru was registered as a lawyer at the Allahabad High Court and attempted to pursue a legal career. However, unlike his father, he was not particularly interested in the profession. He disliked both legal practice and the legal community itself, stating:

“The environment offered no intellectual stimulation, and I began to feel that life was utterly meaningless.” Eventually, his involvement in nationalist politics began to replace his work as a lawyer.

In 1916, Jawaharlal Nehru married Kamala, the daughter of a Kashmiri Brahmin. From this marriage, their well-known daughter Indira Gandhi was born – who would later become a major political figure in her own right and spend much of her youth alongside her father. They also had a son, but sadly, he lived only a few days.

In 1921, the British colonial authorities arrested Jawaharlal Nehru together with his father, Motilal Nehru. Over the years, Nehru was imprisoned multiple times, enduring a total of ten years behind bars. After his release from prison in 1923, he was elected General Secretary of the Indian National Congress. In 1927, he took part in the Anti-Imperialist Congress of Oppressed Nations held in Brussels (Belgium), where he met with the leaders of national liberation and revolutionary movements from Europe, Asia, and Africa.

In 1929, Nehru was elected President of the Indian National Congress.

In 1936, Nehru faced a deep personal tragedy. His wife Kamala, who had long suffered from an incurable illness, died in Switzerland. While returning to India via Rome, Mussolini, one of the founders of Italian fascism, invited Nehru for a meeting. However, Jawaharlal firmly rejected the invitation. This was a clear political statement from a leader who strongly opposed fascism. When asked at the time who he disliked the most, Nehru reportedly answered:

“Hitler.”

Even in those days, Nehru was already widely recognized on the international stage as a determined and courageous advocate of peace, justice, democracy, and progress, as well as a fierce critic of fascism and militarism.

Jawaharlal Nehru was a sincere, kind, modest, yet extremely diligent, demanding, and courageous individual. He was a true admirer of poetry, literature, and the arts. Those who met Nehru were deeply impressed by his personality. He embodied the wisdom, industriousness, and sincerity of the Indian people. In the 20th century, with the exception of Mahatma Gandhi, no one had a greater impact on Indian society than this “Jewel of India” (as the name *Jawaharlal* means “Red Gem”).

In 1955 and 1961, Jawaharlal Nehru visited Uzbekistan together with his daughter Indira Gandhi, gaining a close understanding of Uzbek life, culture, and history. Nehru and Gandhi also visited the ancient and ever-young city of Samarkand. They marveled at the architectural wonders of the city and toured its historic sites—mausoleums, mosques, the Gur-e-Amir complex, and Ulugh Beg's observatory.

At one of the monuments under restoration, Nehru asked a local artisan:

“Are there still specialists capable of creating such masterpieces today?” The craftsman hesitated at first but, seeing the kind expression on Nehru's face, replied via the interpreter: “We still have skilled masters who are capable of doing even more complex work



today. Their craftsmanship is widely used in decorating modern buildings.” Nehru expressed his satisfaction with a nod and smile.

In his work *The Discovery of India*, Jawaharlal Nehru speaks respectfully about Babur and his grandson Akbar, saying:

“Babur was a charming figure, a typical Renaissance ruler—brave, enterprising, a lover of arts and literature, and fond of comfort. His grandson Akbar was even more admirable, endowed with many excellent qualities.”

Nehru also held great admiration for the renowned encyclopedic scholar Abu Rayhan al-Biruni and highly praised the scientific and historical value of his book *India*. He wrote:

“Biruni learned Sanskrit in order to study Greek philosophy. He was amazed by the similarities between Indian and Greek philosophical traditions. His book not only presents factual data but also shows that, despite war, looting, and massacres, scholars continued their work.”

In 1962, Nehru’s health began to steadily deteriorate. In the spring of that year, he contracted a viral infection and spent most of April bedridden. A truly great intellectual figure of the 20th century, Jawaharlal Nehru left a lasting legacy in modern world history. Loyal to the ideals of human progress, Nehru passed away on May 27, 1964, due to a heart attack. On May 28, in accordance with Hindu tradition, his body was cremated at Shantivan on the banks of the Yamuna River.

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