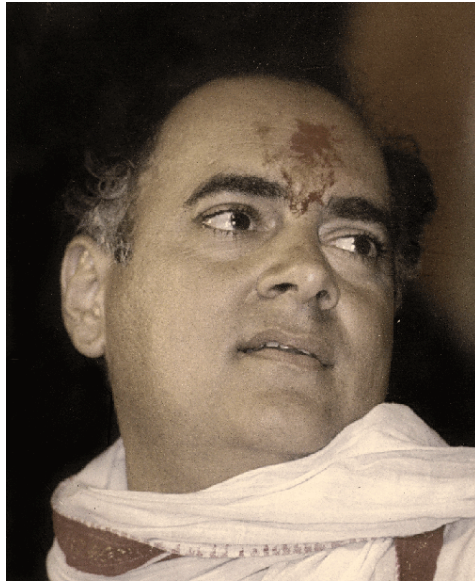


*19th Anniversary of the Martyrdom
of Shri Rajiv Gandhi
Vir Bhumi, New Delhi, 21st May, 2010*



On Patriotism

An excerpt from a speech by the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi

"It is not always realized how much effort is required to defend our national ideals. We cannot assume that just because the Constitution describes India as a socialist, secular, democratic republic, everybody accepts or follows secularism and socialism or democracy for that matter.

We all know of the continuing threat to our secular ideals from communal and fundamentalist elements. They tried unceasingly to weaken the secular base of our society by sowing suspicion between communities.

Strengthened by our national ideology, the overwhelming majority of the people refuse to be misled. Our basic philosophy has deep roots in our past and in the profound thinking and leadership of people like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. There can be no dilution of this philosophy; there will be no dilution of this philosophy.

Let me declare, here and now, that we shall not deviate. Let us make no mistake. The challenges that the country faces are no ordinary challenges. There are forces in the world who want to see India falter and be mired in internal squabbles. There are forces that actively encourage terrorism. There are forces that aim to deflect us from our chosen path. These forces must be met squarely. The only way to do so is to place national interest above the interest of group, class or party.

That is what patriotism means."