



## **An Entirely Ordinary Life - Jit Paul**

Work was worship and Jit Paul seamlessly combined his life with his work. "I am never busy. I am available twenty-four hours a day and three sixty five days of the year." At work he entertained a stream of visitors, making them feel at home. Yet he was a very private person. This was not a paradox; it was the essence of Mr Jit Paul, who passed away on June 3, after a brief illness bravely borne.

Surrounded by his family Mr Jit Paul left this life after almost eight decades of struggle, success, triumph and tragedy. Born in 1923 on April 1, in Jullundur, into a modest, small manufacturing family, Mr Jit Paul decided early on that he would dedicate his life to building the business.

From 1938, when he formally joined his father in the steel business, Mr Jit Paul utilised his acumen to convert Amin Chand Payarelal into Apeejay Surrendra as one of India's leading business houses. His close knit family, the capacity of all four brothers – Styra Paul, Jit Paul, Swraj Paul and the late Surrendra Paul – to convert a boundless, restless enthusiasm for work into a focused determination to build and transform, changed Amin Chand Payarelal into a leading importer of steel and manufacturer of steel pipes and other steel products. Propelled by an infectious zest for work, the momentum of success led to the diversification of Amin Chand Payarelal into shipping, hotels, real estate, tea and book retail.

His acumen was a rare amalgam of shrewd calculation, a legendary capacity for hard work, deep insight and a flair to recognise opportunity ahead of rivals and above all a great joy in doing things. His business was founded on the concept that he described as "reliability;" undertake what can be done and complete it to the satisfaction of the "other party." He believed that destiny provided him with the opportunity and his role was to take it and nurse it.

He learnt as he worked with his father in Jullundur, quitting school after completing his matriculation. He was joined by his elder brother Mr Styra Paul. Together they worked and nurtured a modest business into a robust one. Along the way, they ensured that the two younger brothers – Swraj and Surrendra – received the best

education that could be provided. Both younger brothers went to MIT

Mr Jit Paul started visiting Kolkata, then Calcutta, to seek orders for the steel business in the early 1940s. By 1951, the compulsion of business necessitated Mr Jit Paul's relocation to Calcutta.

Apeejay was built from scratch. It was built on love and trust. "Performance builds image not the other way around," was Mr Jit Paul's belief. His simplicity, infectious enthusiasm and attention to detail permeated everything he did.

Wealth is a trust and Mr Jit Paul shared his wealth with a very large number of people and organisations, Ramakrishna Mission, Arya Samaj, Deen Dayal Research Institute, Bharat Sevasram. His gifts were quietly given, for he sought no gratitude. His gifts were to make a positive change for the intended beneficiary. Mr Jit Paul valued education and the schools he



established and nurtured were institutions to not merely educate but also instil the values of integrity, service and humility.

His simplicity was intrinsic, because he despised consumerism. His curiosity was ceaseless because he, despite loudly asserting his lack of formal education, was a pursuer of knowledge. He read and absorbed, he questioned and was a seeker. His ideal was Mahatma Gandhi, and a photograph of the Father of the Nation adorned a wall of his office.