



Ethical Values from the Life of Lal Bahadur Shastri

For Mains: Ethical Values from the Life of Lal Bahadur Shastri

Why in News?

In 2nd October, **India celebrates the 118th birth anniversary** of [Lal Bahadur Shastri](#), the nation's second Prime Minister.

How can we Learn from Shastri's Life?

▪ **Against the Caste System:**

- Lal Bahadur Shrivastava was the son of Ramdulari Devi and Sharada Prasad Shrivastava. However, being against the prevailing caste system, he decided to drop his surname.
- The title '**Shastri**' was given after he completed his graduation at Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi in 1925.
- The title 'Shastri' refers to a 'scholar' or a person, adept in the holy scriptures. Shastri in this way showed a broad outlook at a very young age.

▪ **Taking Responsibilities during Adverse Times:**

- He was one of the giants in public life, who always took the country's myriad responsibilities on his shoulders.
- In adverse situations, too, he came forward, held himself accountable, and demonstrated the qualities of a true leader.
- He served as the **Railway Minister in Jawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet** and was so conscientious that he resigned following a train accident at Ariyalur in Tamil Nadu in 1956.
- His gesture was hailed by all including Nehru, whom he considered as his "hero".

▪ **Inseparable Public and Private Life:**

- In 1965, **India was embroiled in war with Pakistan** and the country was facing acute food shortage.
 - There was added pressure with the United States threatening to cut supplies.
- Faced with the crisis, Lal Bahadur Shastri announced to his family one evening that for the **next few days they would all give up on their evening meal.**

▪ **Morality:**

- It is said that **he had a Chevrolet Impala car for official use**, which his son once used for a drive.
 - When Shastri learned about it, he asked his driver to check the distance the car was used for and later **deposited the money in the government account.**

What Makes Shastri's Values Relevant Today?

- Indians should **emulate the simplicity, humility, humanism, austerity, hard work, dedication, and nationalism** displayed by the unassuming second prime minister of India today.
- Shastri's maiden Independence Day speech in 1964 is as relevant today as it was then, as he **emphasized character and moral strength**, which has acquired special significance as we

witness all-round degeneration of values.

Source:IE

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