

Anthony J. Raimondi

Sanat N. Bhagwati

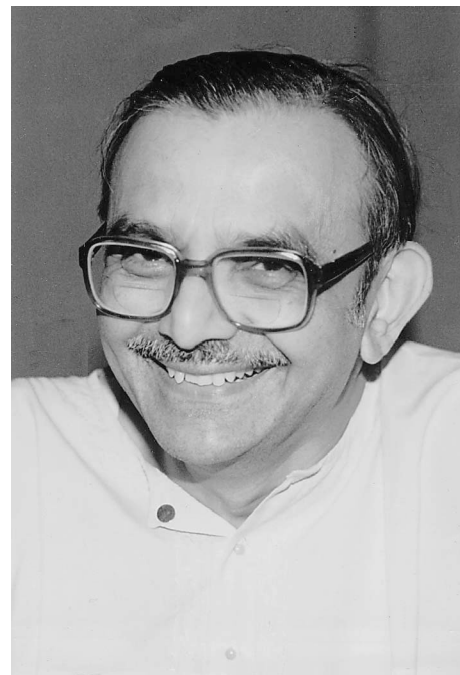
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At the very end (17 December) of 1928, in a community (Ahmedabad, India) certainly unknown to almost the entirety of the Western world, Sanat N. Bhagwati was born to a patriotic, religious, Hindu family with a very strong social conscience.

Helping those in need – and surely India has more than its share of the disinherited – in the areas of both health-care and justice seems to be a common thread upon which the Bhagwati pearls are strung. Sanat’s father, a lawyer, was an activist in the Indian movement working through prolonged, quiet suffering and peaceful resistance toward freedom from the British Empire (throughout the transition years from colony to one of the major free countries of the world), serving first as a judge at the Supreme Court of India and then as Vice-Chancellor of the very prestigious Benares Hindu University. His intellectualism moderated his activism, permitting him to contemplate the need for justice for both vassal and lord. His time at the Supreme Court allowed these thoughts to mature, and permitted him to digest the intricacies of the legal system, so that when he moved to the vice-chancellorship at Benares he was able to participate in the establishment of an aid system that provided free legal assistance for litigation. He was also able to impart the mechanics of his mission to his first son, Sanat’s older brother, who went on to become the Chief Justice at the Supreme Court of India, introducing into his country the concept of judicial activism and accountability, for both elected and appointed high officials of the state. With this accomplishment behind him he then proceeded



to expand his area of influence, going on to represent India in the Human Rights Commission at the United Nations.

Sanat chose a career in medicine but more about this later. Sanat’s younger brother was also drawn into international activities, immigrating from India to accept the Chair in Economics at Columbia University in New York. The “haves” must look after the “have-nots” has been the inspiring philosophy of the Bhagwati family.

Following his elementary studies, Sanat went on to preparatory school at Saint Xavier’s and then Elphinstone College before beginning his medical studies at the Seth G. S. Medical College of Bombay University, where he distinguished himself academically. He was awarded a degree in medicine with distinction in 1952, and then started work

for his Master's degree in General Surgery, which he obtained in 1956. It was in general surgery that he first worked in neurosurgery at the KEM Hospital in Bombay, finding himself challenged by the long hours of work, the demanding need for delicacy and intricacy of hand movements, and the human bond linking the patient to the physician through total dedication.

In 1956 the Atkinson Morley's hospital in London was the very top place for cerebral vascular surgery: the director of its Neurosurgery Department, Sir Wylie McKissock, opened the doors to aneurysm surgery, and Mr. Lawrence Walsh both gave practical demonstrations and taught clinical theory. As a young registrar there, Sanat N. Bhagwati, became active in a cooperative study undertaken at this time, one might add for the very first time in the history of aneurysm surgery, at Atkinson Morley's, subsequently progressing to become senior registrar and then working in the very new field of stereotactic surgery for abnormal movement disorders. During this same period, Mr. Kenneth Till, surely the leader of pediatric neurosurgery in Great Britain at the time and certainly one of its pioneers in the world, dedicated one session a week to the Atkinson Morley's, permitting Sanat and Kenneth to work together in an association that developed into a life-long friendship strengthened by mutual respect and opened the path to pediatric neurosurgery for Sanat.

The "Chicago school" of pediatric neurosurgery (Children's Memorial Hospital/the University of Chicago/Northwestern University) had already established itself as the first (and then with Boston Children's Hospital one of the two most outstanding) teaching hospitals developing the techniques for the diagnosis and treatment of neoplastic and congenital diseases in children. Sanat was able to work one afternoon a week in Dr. Percival Bailey's new laboratories (he had left the University of Chicago during the previous decade) at the Neuropsychiatric Institute, and two afternoons a week in the experimental neurophysiology laboratories of Dr. Schneider at Northwestern University. At the Children's Memorial Hospital Sanat became legendary for his technical skills in carotid angiography and the collation of a set of teaching slides, along with Dr. Harvey White, on pneumoencephalography. He became fascinated with the problem of craniopharyngioma and was the first to face up to the challenge of pediatric lead encephalopathy and the cerebral edema it caused.

When his fellowship at the Children's Memorial Hospital was came to an end, Sanat Bhagwati chose to follow in the footsteps of his father and his elder brother, to return to India to work with his own countrymen, to work for India and to help his fellow Indians in their greatest moments of need. He was immediately appointed consultant neurosurgeon at the Bombay Hospital, 1962, and then Honorary Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery at the Grant Medical College in the same year. There was certainly enough work to do: in all Bombay there were only 5 neurosurgeons and all India could only claim 20. It was not

possible to limit oneself to any area of sub-specialization, so Sanat treated all surgical cases of central nervous disease in patients of all ages, never forgetting his interests in Parkinsonism and continuing pediatric neurosurgery to develop as best he could. Tuberculous meningitis, tuberculomas, and other "specific" infections that afflicted the pediatric population of his community were areas in which he was fortunate enough to work successfully, identifying the fact that hydrocephalus contributed significantly to the mortality and morbidity of children with tubercular meningeal infections, describing the CT characteristics of tuberculoma and setting out the parameters that limited the surgical indications for the treatment of tuberculosis once antitubercular medications became available.

Regarding academic accomplishments, peer recognition, socially conscious activities, Sanat became a member of the Executive Committee of the Neurological Society of India, and then first its Treasurer and secondly its Secretary before being elected President in 1989, when the World Congress of Neurological Surgeons was held in New Delhi. This permitted him to serve in the capacity of Treasurer of the World Congress of Neurological Surgeons, maintaining the stewardship of the funds generated by it, which he has since used so positively to sponsor three postgraduate courses in pediatric neurosurgery under the auspices of the International Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery.

At the present time, Sanat Bhagwati is Vice-President of the Asian and Australasian Society of Neurosurgeons, a member of the International Society for Functional Surgery, a corresponding member of the British Society of Neurological Surgeons, the Geographic Editor for South Asia and Australasia of *Child's Nervous System*, a member of the Editorial Board of *Neurology, India*. He is a member of the World Health Organization Working Group in Neurosurgery, and one of its three experts on pediatric neurosurgery. Dr. Bhagwati has presented approximately 150 papers to national and international conferences and published 75 scientific articles.

Those who have known Sanat and had the opportunity to sit with him in executive sessions, at dinner, over a cup of tea, feel the deep strength of this lithe, intellectually penetrating, perfectly straightforward human being. As they do so, they must see within him the message: we are all of God and we must all do with and for one another what humanity needs to realize its gifts and overcome its afflictions.

Curriculum vitae

Sanat Natwarlal Bhagwati

Place of birth: Ahmedabad, India

Present position and title:

Prof. Emeritus of Neurosurgery, Bombay Hospital Institute of Medical Sciences from January 1995

Honorary Consultant Neurosurgeon BARC from 1972
 Honorary Consultant Neurosurgeon Bai Jerbai Wadia Hospital for Children, from 1990

Civil status: Married (Rashmi)

Children: 2

Academic degrees:

Diploma – St. Xavier's High School

Bachelor – Elphinstone College

Doctor in Medicine and Surgery – Seth G.S. Medical College of Bombay University, June 1952

Masters in General Surgery – Seth G.S. Medical College of Bombay, June of 1968

Qualifications:

MS (Bombay)

FACS (USA)

FAMS (India)

Postgraduate training:

General Surgery: KEM Hospital, Bombay from January 1953 to October 1956

Neurosurgery:

1. Registrar and Senior Registrar, Neurosurgery with Sir Wylie McKissock at St George's Hospital, London, November 1956 to December 1960

2. Research Fellowship in Neurosurgery at the Children's Memorial Hospital, Chicago, USA, January 1961 to May 1962

Academic appointments previously held:

1. Professor and Head of the Dept. of Neurosurgery Grant Medical College and J.J. Group of Hospitals, Bombay till December, 1986

2. Honorary Consultant to the Department of Neurosurgery, Grant Medical College and J.J. Group of Hospitals, Bombay, 1987–1988

3. Consultant Neurosurgeon and Head of Department of Neurosurgery, Bombay Hospital, Bombay, up to December 1989

4. Professor and Head of Department of Neurosurgery, Bombay Hospital Institute of Medical Sciences, January 1990 to December 1994

Merits and awards:

Merit Award in F.Y. MBBS and Lord Sandhurst Gold Medal for Pathology in final MBBS

Outstanding personality in the field of Medicine by North Bombay Jaycees in August 1986

Awarded Fellowship of the National Academy of Medical Sciences (India) 1986

Guru Shiromoni Award 1990

Award of Honour for services in the field of Neurological Surgery in 1996 at the 5th National Neurotrauma Conference

Visiting professorships and guest lectures:

Visiting Professor to the Department of Neurosurgery, St. George's Hospital, UK, 1983

Visiting Professor to the Department of Neurosurgery at Fujita-Gaiken Health University, Japan, 1986

Visiting Professor to the Department of Neurosurgery at PGMIMER, Chandigarh, 1989

Dr. R.N. Cooper Memorial Lectureship in Surgery, 1986

Faculty member 5th International Skull Base Study Group, Siena, Italy, 1990

Faculty member of the III Official Postgraduate Course of the European Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery (Bialowieza), Poland, 1990

Delivered Ginde Oration of Neurological Society of India, December 1995

Delivered Dr. K.T. Kholakia Oration in 1996 at Western India Regional Orthopedic Conference

Offices in societies:

1. Neurological Society of India, Executive Committee Member 1975–1977

Treasurer 1978–1980

Secretary 1981–1983

Vice-President 1988

President 1989–1990

2. International Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery

Member of Executive Board 1991–1993

President 1995–1996

3. Trustee, World Federation of Neurological Societies (India) Trust

4. President, Research Society of Grant Medical College and J.J. Group of Hospital 1990

5. Treasurer of the 9th International Congress of Neurological Surgery 1989

6. Congress President, 17th Annual Meeting of the International Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery 1989

7. President, Indian Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery 1990–1994

8. Founder and President, Skull Base Surgery Society (India) 1993

9. Vice-President, Asian-Australasian Society of Neurosurgeons, 1995

10. Appointed as WHO expert on neurosurgery, World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies Task Force, 1996

Editorial appointments:

1. *Neurology, India*

2. Geographic Editor South Asia and Australasia – *Child's Nervous System*

Membership in societies:

Neurological Society of India

Association of Surgeons of India

Board of Neurosurgery of the National Board of Examination, India

Board of Surgery and Allied Subjects of Bombay University, 1985–1988

Indian Medical Association

Fellowship of the American College of Surgeons 1974, FACS

World Society for Stereotaxic and Functional Neurosurgery

International Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery

Corresponding Member of the British Society of Neurosurgeons

Congress of Neurological Surgeons

Publications:

75 papers published in national and international journals and chapters contributed to various text books

Speaking engagements:

Over 150 papers read at National and International Conferences.

Chaired sessions at many of these conferences