Alfred Bernhard Nobel
The Founder of the Great Global Awards

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Alfred Nobel was born in Sweden, but lived in many countries in Europe at different points of time. He went through many ups and downs during his life. He invented dynamite, a controllable explosive, which greatly enhanced the pace of industrialization by accelerating the process of construction of roads, railways, canals, bridges, tunnels, dams and other structures, and the digging of mines. His business swelled and spread to many parts of the globe. He braved many adverse situations including poor health and frequent factory explosions, one of which took the life of his young brother, hostilities and criticisms. At the same time he earned a huge fortune. He set aside most of his wealth to institute awards, now known as Nobel Prizes. Nobel was not only a prolific inventor (with 355 patents), but also was endowed with literary talent.

Every construction work, be it a bridge, building, dam, tunnel or canal or digging a mine or quarrying stone, needs blasting of rocks at some stage. For all these activities dynamite is being used since a century and a half. Even today it is widely used in mining, quarrying and construction works. The invention of dynamite greatly enhanced the pace of industrialisation by making it easier to lay roads and railroads in difficult terrains and build canals which helped transportation of goods and humans economically by cutting distance, time and cost enormously. The success of dynamite was so great that its inventor-producer Alfred Nobel became the richest man of Europe within a short span of time.

There are few inventors who could be placed in the same class as Alfred Nobel. He combined in him many great qualities. Apart from being a prolific inventor with 355 patents to his credit, he was a very successful entrepreneur, a polyglot with equal fluency in Swedish, English, German, French and Russian and wrote volumes of letters in all these languages, a writer of novels,
poetry, drama, with love for English literature and poetry, a scientist with interest in Physics and Chemistry, and finally a philanthropist. It is unusual for a man who is proficient in literature to be such a successful inventor and to have such entrepreneurial skill as Alfred Nobel.

**Early Life in Sweden and Russia**

Alfred Nobel was born on 21st of October 1833 in the Swedish capital city of Stockholm, to Immanuel Nobel (1801–1872) and Karolina Andriette Ahlsell-Nobel. Immanuel Nobel was an architect and engineer having the business of construction of buildings and bridges. Being in this kind of enterprise, he was making gun powder for blasting rocks. He was an inventor who designed rotary lathe used for making plywood.

Alfred was the fourth child among eight siblings of whom only four survived, namely, himself, his two older brothers (Robert and Ludvig) and one younger brother (Emil). Alfred was a sick child and it was only because of his mother’s assiduous care that he survived. This perhaps made him have a special bond of love with his mother throughout her life. His health remained fragile all through his life. Immanuel’s construction work was running well. But unfortunately, he underwent huge losses and became bankrupt as some barges with his construction materials sank in the same year Alfred was born. As a result he could not revive his business and left Sweden in 1837 to find a better place to re-establish his business, leaving behind his family in Stockholm. He first went to Finland and then to St. Petersburg in Russia.

The difficult task of running the household and taking care of the small children unexpectedly fell on the shoulders of Andriette (who came from a wealthy family of Ahlsell into prosperous Nobel family). She opened a grocery shop and with the modest income it generated she managed to look after the family.

Immanuel Nobel started a mechanical workshop in St. Petersburg and produced equipment for the Russian Army. He designed naval mines and demonstrated their explosive power in submerged condition.