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Vande Bharat during the inauguration in Jammu.



gettyimages
Credit: Hindustan Times



*Kashmir To
Kanyakumari,
India is now One
through all-weather
surface transport.
Vande Bharat high*



speed train services started between Srinagar and Jammu with effect from 02nd May, 2026

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Brig Keshav Chandra(Retd)
Mob: 78884- 22631
E-mail: keshac.18 @gmail.com

Editor:

Er Tejinder S Kalra
98761-73490
tejkalra@gmail.com

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THE STORY OF A WOMAN CALLED JEANNE

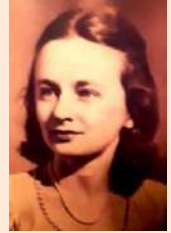
-Dr Savitri Sawhney
MOB: +91 98182 48681



Today, 10th May, on Mother's Day, I write these few lines as a tribute to my dear Mom, knowing that nothing can ever do justice to her as a mother or as an individual.

Born in Brussels on the 1st of June 1913, she was named Jeanne Alexandrine. As a child she saw the worst of the Inter-War era. The hardship of those days remained forever etched in her mind. She used to tell the story of how her mother fainted while waiting in the food line for a few potatoes.

JEANNE IN 1947



GEETANJALI WITH NANI-NANA

This is the story of a remarkable woman: she was a beautiful, self-willed young woman; her behaviour many times bordering on eccentricity. She was my mother, a caring devoted mother whose energy knew no bounds. She ran her life following the dictates of her heart and her very practical intellect. One of the many facets of her intellect was the appreciation of art in its many forms. Her brother as an antiquarian had taught her well. She not only loved western music but poetry and India represented the epitome of art.

Living in Nagpur in the Fifties, I still remember my mother scouring the markets, for what she called "finds". One day she came running like a child, leaving her man-pulled *rickshaw-wallah* broadly smiling, "Savitri, Savitri, come and see this" and out she pulled a blackened piece of brass of a Devi in a sitting pose. My heart sank; on a Freedom Fighter's pension, we could ill afford knick-knacks. It was the time of the stainless steel rage, people were selling and melting their copper and brass vessels and exchanging them for stainless steel articles. It was only many years later that I came to know that this piece represented Tara, a Buddhist deity. I asked some historian friends and I was told that studying the pedestal, jewellery and hairdo of the deity it was probably made in the Ninth or Tenth Century. I never dared going to an art historian to confirm this, for me it was my mother's memory coming alive. She supplemented our meagre pension by selling some of her "finds" to a Parsi collector from Mumbai.



TARA IN PANCHLOHA

I remember her *every day* when we sit for breakfast and admire the lovely walnut table. This remarkable find was found in a garage: they had drilled holes and used this dirty piece of wood as a worktable. This piece of black oil-stained wood was a work of art; an example of Kashmiri *Karigari* not to be seen these days. The edges of the table like a wavy sea-shore and a centre piece of carved flowers and leaves. I must say that the recovery and restoration is owed to my husband who found a master carpenter who lovingly brought this table to its former glory.



WALNUT TABLE

Nagpur is known for its magnificent teak wood and my mother found chairs in a mixture of colonial and Indian Royal styles and, of course, an antique Victorian console. It was looking ghastly with broken parts, all painted funereal black. Now, the pride of place in my entire mother's collection! As I sit in my wheelchair practically in 'house arrest,' I rest my eyes on this wonderful console that complements my house décor, thinking old memories and wondering how well my mother faced all the vicissitudes of her life.



CHAIRS & CONSOLE

This can only be a tribute to a woman who migrated from one continent to another and ultimately left familiar surroundings for love. Marrying a Hindu revolutionary many years her elder that plunged her into a totally different world and how well she navigated the turbulent seas of her life

(Dr Savitri Sawhney, our regular contributor, is the daughter of Indian Revolutionary Late Sh Pandurang Sadashiv Khankhoje, one of the founding fathers of the Indian Ghadar Party, and Jeanne Alexandrine of Belgium----- Editor)



Tributes to Mothers and Fathers:

There are five beautiful, touching articles on Mother, Father, at pages 2, 5, 10, 12 & 18 of this issue. International Mother's Day was on 10th May, second Sunday of the month of May. Father's day is kept on third Sunday of the month of June – 21st June, 26.



Anshula Rao and Pammi Lamba highlight that these specific days are picked up as per the Western culture where children, after getting into adulthood, and parents live separately. One day in a year is earmarked to recreate the bond that exists between parents and their children. Brig Bains brings out beautifully the loving bond that existed between him and his father; but he realised it only when his dad was no more. Rajesh Nigam, page 12, dwells on his fulfilling sacrifice and still achieves more than his aimed achievements

As per our way of life, we must realise and upkeep our continuous bonding with our parents. Whatever your age, it pricks you deeply when you look at their garlanded framed photographs, when they are gone for ever. I'll like to quote from two well-known lyrics:

मा ने ज़िन्दगी दी, यह मुझे याद रहा; बाप ने बनाई ज़िन्दगी, यह में कैसे भूल गया।.....

मां ने आंसू पोंछे , यह मुझे याद रहा;; बाप ने आने ही नहीं दिए , यह में कैसे भूल गया।-----

ਨਾ ਧੁੱਪ ਰਹਿਣੀ, ਨਾ ਛਾਂ ਬੰਦਿਆਂ , ਨਾ ਪਿਓ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਨਾ ਮਾਂ ਬੰਦਿਆਂ।.....

ਰਹ ਸੈ ਨੇ ਆਖਿਰ ਮੁਕ ਜਾਣਾ, ਇਕ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਰਬ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਬੰਦਿਆਂ।.....



Kamla Mirchandani, page 18, highlights the blissful effects of 'Aashirwad' that you get from your elders and grand elders when you touch their feet, the practice that is slowly vanishing from our life styles.

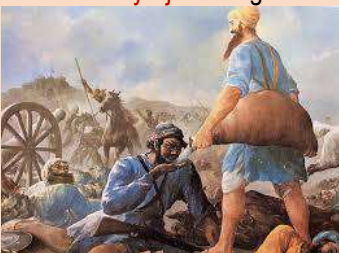
There is no substitute of pure love & care from your Ma, Pa and the grand Ma/ Pas; exchange it with them in abundance when they are in our midst.

World Red Cross Day:

World Red Cross Day 2026 was celebrated on **May 8, 2026**, marking the 128th anniversary of the global event. The day honors the birth anniversary of Henry Dunant, the founder of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the first-ever Nobel Peace Prize recipient.

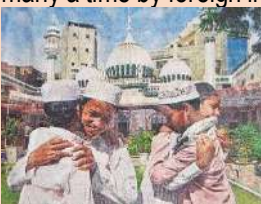
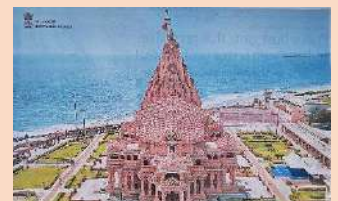


Bhai Kanhaiya ji: During Guru Gobind Singh ji's times of 1700s, during the battles between Sikh and Mughal armies, Bhai Kanhaiya ji is famous for attending to the injured soldiers by feeding them water and bandaging their wounds, without differentiating between the Khalsa and the enemy soldiers, on the plea that once a soldier is fallen in the battle field and unable to fight, he then is not an enemy, but simply a wounded person. That happened 200 years ago, after which, on the same principles Red Cross was set up.



75th Anniversary Of Reconstruction and Consecration Of SOMNATH Temple, on May 11 2026:

This magnificent temple on the serene sea shore of Gujarat had been plundered and destroyed many a time by foreign invaders. Finally, after reconstruction, the then President Dr Rajendra Prasad inaugurated it on May 11, 1951. It marked a defining moment in the resurgence of India's Sanatan belief system, cultural & heritage glory.



Eid ul-Adha (also known as Bakrid or the Feast of Sacrifice) was observed by the Muslim community on May 28, 2026. The observance lasts for 3 days and centres around the act of *Qurbani* (animal sacrifice), communal prayers, and community service. The festival symbolises faith, compassion, gratitude and charity, with families coming together for prayers, meals and acts of kindness.



RESILIENCE: OUR STRENGTH IN THE SILVER YEARS

-Vinay Goyal

MOB: +91 98729 80454



When we talk about resilience, we don't mean becoming hard like stone. We mean becoming flexible like bamboo — the kind that bends in the storm but doesn't break.



For us, senior citizens, resilience is the ability to adapt, recover, and stay hopeful when life changes. And let's be honest — every stage of life brings changes: health may fluctuate; friends may move away; children may get busy with their families; retirement may change our daily rhythm.

But resilience says: **"I MAY FALL SEVEN TIMES, BUT I WILL STAND UP EIGHT."**

How do we build this? I'll give you **A-R-M-O-R** to remember — five simple pieces we can all wear.



A – Adapt to change. Technology, new routines, smaller homes — instead of fighting them, let's learn one new thing at a time. Yesterday it was smartphones, tomorrow maybe something else. We've learned bigger things in life. We can learn this too.

R – Reach out. Resilience is not a solo sport. Our Association, our *Guldasta* family, our morning walk groups — these are our safety nets. Call a friend when you're low. Share a laugh. Isolation weakens us; connection strengthens us.

M – Meaning. We are not retired from purpose. Mentor a grandchild, teach at a school, volunteer at a temple, tend to your garden. When we feel useful, we feel stronger.

O – Optimism. This doesn't mean denying problems. It means saying, "My knees hurt, but I can still do chair yoga." Focus on what remains, not just what's lost. Gratitude is a daily tonic.

R – Routines. Regular sleep, timely meals, daily walk, medicine on time — these simple routines are the armor that protects our body and mind. They give us stability when other things feel uncertain.

Friends, we have already lived through Partition, career struggles, raising families, health scares. We are resilient — we just need to remind ourselves.

LET'S WEAR OUR **A-R-M-O-R** EVERY DAY

(**ADAPT, REACH OUT, FIND MEANING, CHOOSE OPTIMISM, AND KEEP OUR ROUTINES**)

(Sh Vinay Goyal is Joint Secretary, All India Senior Citizens Confederation ----- Editor)

MOTHER'S DAY



Er ANSHULA RAO
97797 - 38189

(The 10th -Second Sunday Of May)



PAMMI LAMBA
98784 - 05459

Here comes the 2nd Sunday of the month of May,
That has been deemed to be called the Mother's Day.
To receive loving flowers, cake and a nice fabulous gift
And all at the nick of time, with joy it must say.
Sonny took trouble to browse and look around,
What to send and when to book the items found.
Well, our generation was brought up to feel & be aware,
Every day is a parent's day for giving respect & show care.
Also still, the nine nights (Navratri) is a regular celebration,
Of Divine mothers, aspects of whom we *would* find
Reflected in our own mothers in great wow & attention.
With media marketing, in late 1990s, Mother's Day
Became a modern-day addition to Indian calendar.
Coming from West and spreading commercially here,
But the biggest gift to moms is Respect, Kindness & Care
How time flows on & on
Regularly altering our faces and forms,
Be it night or dawn
The kids grow big from small,
Parents shrink, no more tall.
Neither any form or feeling will
Ever remain the same.
Have to accept our Creator's
Puzzling perplexing game.

Mom Ma Mother
A person who knows how to smother
Be it human, or animal!
She can take care of her brood
Like no other!!
She feeds her children with so much
love and care!
Not bothering whether anything is left
for her to spare!
She recognises the cry of her child
From any distance!
And leaves everything she is doing, at
the same instance!
Her heart takes a turn indeed
Hence her child may not be in need!
Even if her child is wrong
She will cover his faults and try to
make him/her strong!
Even if a little thorn pricks him/her
Her heart starts beating fast to
protect him / her!
Be it hundred children in a room
A mother will recognise the cry of her
child and rush to help in his/her
gloom!
Why did she not bother about the
others?
What is the bond that ties her to her
own brood!
So we come to the conclusion that
God has created a unique species!
Who not only gives birth ,
Feeds them milk from her breast
But also takes care of him/her till she
is dead!!!
Happy Mother's Day to all the
beautiful moms in the world!!

WAY OUT OF NOOSE TIGHTER THAN STRAIT OF HORMUZ

-Col Avnish Sharma (Retd)

MOB: +91 98889 74763



It was a Saturday in October 1981. As newly commissioned Second Lieutenants, we were undergoing young officer's (YOs) course at our alma mater, Armoured Corps Centre and School (ACC&S), Ahmadnagar (now Ahilyanagar), Maharashtra. This fateful day, our mid-term exams had just got concluded, leaving us with that palpable mix of relief for those who aced them and a never say die feel for the rest.

In those days, the open air theatre at the Annex was the social heartbeat of the station. An open air theatre at the Annex was a popular "go to" place for all officers posted or undergoing courses at the school. For YOs, in the age group of 21-23 age-bracket, it was the only place to be at. The hallmark of the Annex at ACC&S is its character of informal social bonhomie and relaxed camaraderie. Saturday coupled with end of an important training session ensured a house full at the venue. Icing on the cake was the ongoing Kumar Gaurav and Vijayta's hit movie 'Love Story'.

Forty two-wheelers of all kinds streamed into the humble parking of the Annex and smart, swaggy YOs representing elite Cavalry regiments made their way, most straight to the open air bar, and balance to the booking window. The movie got over and YOs, now in a happy state of mind, accelerated their bikes and took off towards their quarters. Presumably, the evening wrapped up harmoniously.

Next day, our course senior, a rather flamboyant Cavalier informed us of an order posted at the notice board of our living quarters which read, "USE OF TWO WHEELERS BY YO STUDENTS IS BANNED WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT". This meant all movement on foot, be it classes, training areas, mess, Ahmadnagar town or the Annex. This was a big blow akin to a pilot getting grounded. As it unfolded, two motorbikes in full acceleration with their riders 'in high spirits' overtook the legendary dodge car of the the Commandant of the ACC&S, who with the first lady, was heading to the Flag Staff House after watching 'Love Story' the previous evening. Well, it was an act of misdemeanour on two counts, of reckless driving and showing disrespect to authority.

Our course senior, who himself heralded the leading bike on the occasion was sheepish to say the least. It was his adventurism which jeopardized the movement of his comrades. However, taking it as a *fait accompli* of the unwritten law in the Army that a mistake by even one of the group transcends penalty to the whole group, a brain storming session was held to surmount the noose which felt rather debilitating. Finally, after a claustrophobic week of literal imprisonment, the bright idea from an upwardly mobile comrade got approved despite the huge risk involved.

The next Saturday dawned. Feedback from the environment including the Faculty and posted staff was that the evening at Annex would be a dull affair without YOs presence in their typical bike-borne entries, quite contrary to the potential upbeat mood in the light of Sanjay Dutt's debut movie Rocky alongside the petite Tina Munim. Perfectly timed with military precision, five horse drawn Tongas, summoned at a price from the Ahmadnagar Railway Station stopped at the entrance of the Annex. Forty, immaculately dressed second lieutenants alighted in style and quietly made way to the bar and the booking window. All this in full view of about 300 officer strength of ACC&S with their families, led by the Commandant and his wife. Post movie as we headed back in our newly-discovered conveyance, there was a sense of apprehension as to what would the fallout be!

Next morning, at breakfast the notice board at the officers mess was crowded akin to a JEE results display. The short notice read, "RESTRICTION ON USE OF TWO WHEELERS BY THE YOS IS HEREBY WITHDRAWN. COMMANDANT COMPLIMENTS THE YOUNG CAVALIERS ON AN OUT-OF-BOX AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTION TO THE CHALLENGE AT HAND!"

Decades later, looking at the global headlines, I can't help but think: if only a similar bit of cavalry ingenuity could resolve the imbroglio around the Strait of Hormuz!

TWO SELECT POEMS---- ਮੈਂ ਰਾਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੁਰਦਾ; ਲੱਗੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ



SURJIT PATAR
(14.01.1945 – 11.05.2024)

ਮੈਂ ਰਾਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੁਰਦਾ, ਮੈਂ ਤੁਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਰਾਹ ਬਣਦੇ

ਮੈਂ ਰਾਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੁਰਦਾ ਮੈਂ ਤੁਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਰਾਹ ਬਣਦੇ
ਯੁਗਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਕਾਫਲੇ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਇਸੇ ਸੱਚ ਦੇ ਗਵਾਹ ਬਣਦੇ

ਇਹ ਤਪਦੀ ਰੇਤ ਦੱਸਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਰਸਤਾ ਠੀਕ ਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ
ਇਹ ਸੜਦੇ ਪੈਰ, ਠਰਦੇ ਦਿਲ, ਮੇਰੇ ਸੱਚ ਦੇ ਗਵਾਹ ਬਣਦੇ
ਜੁ ਲੇ ਮੱਥੇ 'ਚੋਂ ਫੁੱਟਦੀ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਅਸਲੀ ਤਾਜ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ
ਤਵੀ ਦੇ ਤਖਤ 'ਤੇ ਬਹਿ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਸੱਚੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਬਣਦੇ

ਇਹ ਪੰਡਤ ਰਾਗ ਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਸਦੀਆਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਨੇ
ਮੇਰੇ ਹਉਕੇ ਹੀ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਮੇਰੀ ਵੰਝਲੀ ਦੇ ਸਾਹ ਬਣਦੇ
ਅਸਾਨੂੰ ਰੀਤ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਕੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੀ ਪਰੀਤ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਹੈ
ਤੂੰ ਲਿਖ ਲੇਖਾ ਤੇ ਲਿਖ ਜਿੰਨੇ ਵੀ ਨੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਗੁਨਾਹ ਬਣਦੇ

ਰਾਂਝੇ ਨਾ ਵੀ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਨਾ ਬਣਦੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਕੈਦੋਂ
ਅਸੀਂ ਜਾਂ ਨਾਥ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਜਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਲੁੱਡਣ ਮਲਾਹ ਬਣਦੇ
ਉਦੋਂ ਤਕ ਤੂੰ ਹੈਂ ਸਾਡੀ ਹਿੱਕ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਮਹਿਫੂਜ਼ ਮਰ ਕੇ ਵੀ
ਜਦੋਂ ਤਕ ਜਿਸਮ ਸਾਡੇ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੜ ਕੇ ਸੁਆਹ ਬਣਦੇ

ਫ਼ਕੀਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੁਖਨ ਕੁਛ ਯਾਰ, ਕੁਛ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਦੇ ਮੰਜ਼ਰ
ਜਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਜ਼ਖਮ ਖਾ ਲੈਨਾਂ ਮੇਰੀ ਖ਼ਾਤਰ ਪਨਾਹ ਬਣਦੇ
ਮੈਂ ਇਕ ਗੱਲ ਜਾਣਦਾਂ ਕਿ ਹੈ ਕੋਈ ਸੈਂ ਇਸ ਵਜੂਦ ਅੰਦਰ
ਉਹ ਜਿਹੜੀ ਲਿਸ਼ਕ ਉਠਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਭ ਰੁਖ ਸਿਆਹ ਬਣਦੇ

ਕਦੀ ਦਰਿਆ ਇੱਕਲਾ ਤੈਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਆਪਣੀ
ਜ਼ਮੀਂ ਦੀ ਢਾਲ, ਜਲ ਦਾ ਵੇਗ ਹੀ ਰਲ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਰਾਹ ਬਣਦੇ
ਅਚਨਚੇਤੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਬਿੰਦੂ 'ਚੋਂ ਚਸਮਾ ਫੁੱਟ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ
ਇਹ ਦਾਅਵੇਦਾਰ ਦਾਅਵੇਦਾਰ ਐਵੇਂ ਖਾਹਮਖਾਹ ਬਣਦੇ

ਜਦੋਂ ਤਕ ਲਫਜ਼ ਜਿਉਂਦੇ ਨੇ ਸੁਖਨਵਰ ਜਿਉਣ ਮਰ ਕੇ ਵੀ
ਉਹ ਕੇਵਲ ਜਿਸਮ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਨੇ ਜੇ ਸਿਵਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਆਹ ਬਣਦੇ
ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਲੋਚਿਆ ਬਣਨਾ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਪਿਆਰ ਦੇ 'ਪਾਤਰ'
ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਸੋਚਿਆ ਆਪਾਂ ਕਿ ਅਹੁ ਬਣਦੇ ਜਾਂ ਆਹ ਬਣਦੇ

ਲੱਗੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ

ਲੱਗੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ, ਏਦ੍ਰੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਉਤਾਰੇ।
ਲੈ ਕੇ ਮਿਰਚਾਂ ਕੋੜੀਆਂ, ਏਹਦੇ ਸਿਰ ਤੋਂ ਵਾਰੇ
ਸਿਰ ਤੋਂ ਵਾਰੇ, ਵਾਰ ਕੇ, ਅੱਗ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਸਾੜੇ
ਲੱਗੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ, ਏਦ੍ਰੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਉਤਾਰੇ।

ਮਿਰਚਾਂ ਜ਼ਹਿਰੋਂ ਕੋੜੀਆਂ, ਮਿਰਚਾਂ ਸਿਰ ਸੜੀਆਂ
ਕਿਧਰੋਂ ਲੈਣ ਨਾ ਜਾਣੀਆਂ, ਵਿਚੜੇ ਵਿਚ ਬੜੀਆਂ

ਪਹਿਲੀ ਭਰਵੀਂ ਫਸਲ, ਇਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਓਦੋਂ ਲੱਗੀ
ਜਦ ਆਪੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਛੱਡੀ

ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਅਗਲੀ ਫਸਲ ਦੇ, ਬੀ ਗਏ ਖਿਲਾਰੇ
ਵੱਢੇ ਗਏ ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ ਜਦੋਂ, ਰਾਹ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਮਾਰੇ
ਵੱਢਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਕੋਣ ਸਨ ਇਹ ਭੇਤ ਨਾ ਲੱਗਾ
ਪਰ ਬੇਦੇਸ਼ਾ ਖ਼ੂਨ ਤਾਂ ਪੱਗਾਂ ਸਿਰ ਲੱਗਾ

ਓਹੀ ਛਿੱਟੇ ਖ਼ੂਨ ਦੇ, ਬਣ ਗਏ ਬਗ਼ਾਨਾ
ਸਾਡੀ ਪੱਗ ਨੂੰ ਪੈ ਗਿਆ ਆਪਣਾ ਬੇਗ਼ਾਨਾ

ਜਿੱਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਛਾਂ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਅੱਗਾਂ ਹੀ ਅੱਗਾਂ
ਚੋਕ-ਚੁਰਾਹੇ ਸੜਦੀਆਂ ਪੱਗਾਂ ਹੀ ਪੱਗਾਂ

ਪੱਤੇ ਬੂਟੇ ਡੋਡੀਆਂ ਫੁੱਲਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਲੜੀਆਂ
ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਅੱਗ ਵਿਚ ਸੜ ਗਿਆ, ਮਿਰਚਾਂ ਨਾ ਸੜੀਆਂ
ਉਹ ਮਿਰਚਾਂ ਜ਼ਹਿਰੀਲੀਆਂ ਏਦ੍ਰੇ ਸਿਰ ਤੋਂ ਵਾਰੇ
ਸਿਰ ਤੋਂ ਵਾਰੇ ਵਾਰ ਕੇ ਅੱਗ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਸਾੜੇ ।

ਅੱਗ ਪਿਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਜੀਭ ਰੈਓਦੀ ਭੇਟਾ ਚਾੜ੍ਹੇ
ਉਹ ਪਿਤਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਬੀਜਿਆ ਬੀਤੇ ਸੰਗ ਸਾੜੇ ।

ਲੱਗੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ, ਏਦ੍ਰੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਉਤਾਰੇ।
ਲੈ ਕੇ ਮਿਰਚਾਂ ਕੋੜੀਆਂ ਏਦ੍ਰੇ ਸਿਰ ਤੋਂ ਵਾਰੇ ।

(Surjit Patar – Celebrated Punjabi poet of modern era - Sahitya Academy and Padma Shri Award Winner;
His second death anniversary fell on 11th May this year.....Editor)

बढ़ती उम्र अच्छी या अभिशाप ?



--Wg Cdr Tarsem L Bhardwaj (Air Veteran)

Mob: 94171-66318

किसी वृद्ध व्यक्ति से मैंने पूछा, क्या बढ़ती उम्र अच्छी है या अभिशाप? क्योंकि कुछ लोग इकट्ठे खड़े हुए थे, एक महिला ने कहा, यह आपकी सोच के साथ प्रश्न है। अगर किसी महिला से पूछ रहे हैं तो अभिशाप जरूर है क्योंकि वास्तविकता में बढ़ती उम्र में ही लोगों को प्यार की जरूरत होती है और स्त्री को तो परिवार में, तकरीबन बच्चों से और लोगों से प्यार मिल जाता है पर शायद उसके पति को नहीं।

किसी आदमी से पूछे, तो वह भी शायद बढ़ती हुई उम्र अभिशाप ही कहेगा, क्योंकि जो पारिवारिक झगड़े होते हैं, उसमें या आदमी धकेल दिया जाता है या उसको सॉल्व करने के लिए उसका रोल अत्यंत जरूरी होता है जिसके लिए कोई शाबाशी नहीं मिलती, हाँ दुःख की अधिक संभावना है।

दूसरी तरफ देखते हैं, जब इंसान की उम्र बढ़ती है तो शारीरिक और मानसिक रूप से कमजोर होने लगता है। ऐसे समय उसे किसी के सहारे की जरूरत होती है तो किसी का सहारा पाने के लिए उसे किसी न किसी से तो प्यार करना ही पड़ेगा, यह ऐसा प्यार अभिशाप कैसे हो सकता है; प्यार किसी भी उम्र में क्यों ना किया जाए, वह कभी भी अभिशाप नहीं होता। सम्भवता प्रश्न ही गलत लगता है, बढ़ती आयु को रोका नहीं जा सकता; सुखमय बनानेके लिए आदतन परिवर्तन जरूरी है, अपनों में ही जीवन का विशेष मज़ा होता है। अभिशाप शब्द को वार्ता से निकाल दो, सब वृद्ध लोगों ने एक आवाज़ में बोला।

दुःख का कारण स्वयं में होता है। कई बार व्यक्ति के साथ उम्र के किसी भी पड़ाव पर, चाहे वह बचपन हो या जवानी, ऐसा हादसा या अनहोनी हो जाती है जिससे वह वक्त के साथ भुला तो देता है लेकिन कहीं ना कहीं, उसका अवचेतन मन उसे पछतावे या तकलीफ में जी रहा होता है। जिसकी वजह से उसका इनर चाइल्ड स्वाभाविक खुश या प्रभावित हो जाता है। भविष्य में इसके कई दुष्परिणाम होते हैं जिसकी लोग कल्पना नहीं कर पाते। अगर कोई इस तकलीफ से जूझ रहा हो तो आप खुद से हल कर सकते हैं। बचपन में कई बार जाने अनजाने हमारे साथ कुछ ऐसा हो जाता था, हम उस घटना को नहीं समझ पाए थे, हमारे मासूम मन पर इसका गहरा प्रभाव पड़ता था। कई बार ऐसा भी होता था कि हमें लगता है कि हम भुलाकर आगे बढ़ गए हैं लेकिन ऐसा असलियत में नहीं होता। बल्कि हमारा अवचेतन मन, न केवल उस तकलीफ को पकड़ कर रखता है, बल्कि आंतरिक रूप से हमारी सोच समझ और व्यवहार को प्रभावित करता है।

एक पल ऐसा भी आता है जब आप अपने जीवन में मित्रता करना चाहते हैं लेकिन आपको मुश्किल होती है क्योंकि आप अतीत के अनुभव को भूल नहीं पाते। तो कुछ लोग जीवन में गलत आदतों को शामिल कर लेते हैं जिनका उन्हें एहसास भी नहीं होता। अगर आप इनर चाइल्ड से दूर हो गए हो तो थैरेपी थोड़ा मुश्किल हो सकता है। जिसमें आपके अंदर उदासी, हीन भावना, क्रोध जैसी भावनाओं को कम करने का प्रयास किया जाता है। जो लोग चाइल्ड ड्रामा से अनजान रहते हैं और जब उन्हें पता चलता है, तब तक बात इतनी बढ़ जाती है कि उन्हें प्रोफेशनल की जरूरत पड़ती है। यह थैरेपी आपके अंदर छिपे बचपन का अनुभव समझने, उन्हें जोड़ने में मदद करती। जरूरत है इनर चाइल्ड हीलिंग की, इस संसार में कोई ऐसा व्यक्ति नहीं है, जिसके साथ कभी कुछ बुरा ना हुआ हो। अगर, खुद को लेकर हीन भावना या किसी पीड़ा से जूझ रहे हैं, आपको अपने इनर चाइल्ड फीलिंग की जरूरत है।

वजह पर शांति में बैठकर ध्यान दें, सोचें कि आपका मन कैसा है, समस्या क्या है। और क्या समस्या का हल हो सकता है! हीलिंग के लिए आप स्वयं स्वीकार करें कि, आप अपने मन की आवाज़ सुनें और खुद को समझो कि आप सुरक्षित है और आप भी प्रेम और खुशी के हकदार हैं। यदि आपने किसी के साथ गलत किया है और उस चीज की गिरफ्त में है तो खुद को माफ कर दें; और गलती सुधार सकते हैं तो सुधार लें। यदि किसी ने आपके साथ बुरा किया है तो उसे माफ कर दे, माफ करने का मतलब अब आपको उस व्यक्ति से या दोषी चीजों से कुछ लेना-देना नहीं है। बढ़ती आयु अभिशाप नहीं हैं, केवल स्वयं का अवलोकन करना है। इनर चाइल्ड को उजागर करना है। पंजाबी में कहते हैं, आसां कदे बन्दे दियां हुन्दिआं न पूरीआं, कलप्दा बथेरा, फेर भी रहन्दिआं अधूरीआं। खुश रहो, आबाद रहो।

READING LIFE'S SIGNALS



--Col KL Viswanathan
Mob: +91 98450 01693

The neighbour's dog had a problem. It couldn't stand the sight of me. Or so I thought.

I love my dog, and I bear no ill will towards this one. Yet, every time I stepped out of my gate or returned - there she was, at the opposite gate, barking as if announcing my arrival to the entire street. How she sensed my movements, I could never quite figure out.

When I mentioned this to a friend, she smiled and said, "Maybe she likes you. That's her way of greeting you; sending you off and receiving you back.

I wasn't convinced.

That evening, as I returned home, I stopped by her side. This time, I decided to observe, not react. I watched her carefully, especially the tail. Not a wag. Not even a token movement. If she liked me, surely the tail would have betrayed it.

That settled it, I thought. She disliked me. Perhaps for loving my own dog.

But the next day, something changed. The barking stopped. In its place came a quiet wagging of the tail. Not dramatic, not overdone, just enough to be noticed. The pattern continued over the next few days. Occasionally, I stopped, gave her a pat, and moved on.

It took me a week to understand what had really happened. All she wanted was attention.

The barking was not hostility, it was a call. The day I paused and gave her that minute; she got what she had been asking for. From then on, she no longer needed to bark. A wag of the tail was enough. The conversation had begun.



That set me thinking.

In life too, we often misread signals, assuming we understand them simply because we recognize the sound. A harsh word becomes disrespect. Silence becomes indifference. Repetition becomes irritation. We conclude quickly, rarely pausing to ask what lies beneath.

Animals are simple. Their signals may be crude, but their intent is rarely layered. We, on the other hand, are complex and so are our interpretations. Sometimes what we perceive as hostility, is merely an unrefined way of asking to be noticed.

Recognition is not understanding.

And often, what we resist is not dislike, but a simple, awkward request to be acknowledged.

Enjoy, smile, laugh !

A TRIBUTE TO MY FATHER

-Brig. Balwant Singh Bains (Retd)

MOB: +91 94176 30049



When my son, who recently retired as a Major General in the Armed Forces, came on a short leave to Chandigarh, hugged me and thanked me for being his support system in his life, I felt deeply touched by his gesture. It triggered a realisation in my mind that the same was the case with respect to my relationship with my late father, Maj Bachan Singh. I felt that not only should I have hugged him but also told him about the role he played my life both spiritually and materially to achieve my goals.

My father, born on 15 Jan 1902, belonged to a small farmers' family from village Mianpur near Ropar and completed his medical education from the Medical College, Agra. He and my mother were deeply religious. I was lucky to inherit my spirituality from my parents which guided me throughout my life.

The first awareness of my life was in 1943 in the Queen of hills, Simla (now, Shimla), where my father was posted as the Officer In-Charge of the Civil Laboratory located near the Mall when I started my schooling in the Govt School located below the Bus Stand. From there we moved to many places on postings. He finally retired in 1952 from 85 Field Ambulance located near Srinagar.



MAJ BACHAN SINGH

At the personal level he had full faith in Waheguru Ji and always accepted the good and bad occurrences in his life. Twice in his life he lost his household goods: once when he moved from Assam on posting to the Military Hospital, Patna and his luggage was looted by dacoits; second, when he came home for the last rites of his father, to his surprise the entire household goods had been taken by a near relative (the villagers who were witness to this informed him of it). Both times all he said was that the Almighty had taken away the goods and he was sure that HE will bless him with much more. It was a great lesson for me.

Not only was his faith in God justified in abundance but He also helped him in building a three-story house in Sector 2, Chandigarh. The surrounding areas of our house were totally underdeveloped. The villages on the periphery had very poor medical facilities. Not only did he provide free medical consultation but also free medicines for their treatment.

He wanted me to join the Indian Army as an Officer. He found the best route for education through the Rashtriya Indian Military College, located at Dehradun. When I got commissioned in the JAT Regiment, he reiterated me to have full faith in the Almighty and firmly believed that whatever good or bad happens, it will always be good in the long term. He also said that I should not wish ill for anyone, as it will come back to me and my family. He further told me that I will be rewarded or pulled up at times, even though I may not have been guilty, I should take it in my stride. He taught me the *Sanskars* and value of family bonding.

He always believed in living within his means and never took a loan in his life except once for the marriage of his daughter. To repay the loan he cut down on expenses and worked overtime to repay the loan.

All these enabled me to lead my life in a balanced way and bring up our children the same way that he had done. I have no words to thank him, but I deeply regret that I did not hug him and tell him how grateful I was for all the values my mother and he gave me.

He was a pious man and breathed his last on 20th Nov 1987 in front of the Gurudwara. I am sure that he resides in the lap of the Lord.

(Father's day is celebrated on the third Sunday of the month of June; it'll be on 21st June this year.....Editor)

MENACE OF COUNTERFEIT DRUGS – HIDDEN COST



-Dr DK Verma
MOB: +91 98765 04958

Counterfeit drugs are drugs made by a person or a manufacturer other than the genuine approved manufacturer imitating the genuine product without an authority and in violation of trademark rules and regulations. It is a thriving industry growing rapidly due to non-existent and weak regulatory mechanisms and systemic corruption at various levels. Moreover with the advancements over the years, the counterfeiting has become so sophisticated that it is virtually impossible to distinguish a fake drug from a genuine product.

The growing menace of counterfeit/ fake drugs not only undermines severely the healthcare systems but also poses the grave risks with treatment failure, drug resistance and hundreds and thousands of annual deaths.

As per WHO, 10% of drugs being sold in the developing countries are counterfeited with no active (or insufficient) active ingredients despite the fact that the same poses a major threat to public health. India being the pharmacy of world, because of huge population, is grappling with the growing menace of counterfeit drugs due to huge demand and lower prices as compared to authentic drugs. The fake drug manufacturing industry is not only generating huge profits by evading Government revenues but also hits the genuine manufacturers by using names similar to their brand names.



Identification of fake drugs is not easy, being similar to the genuine drugs, but a careful physical examination at times can reveal the difference:

- a. Some of the formulations/ tablets in the strip may be damaged or cracked.
- b. Some may have spelling errors and may not bear any expiry date.
- c. In some of the cases, product name and its ingredients may be different.
- d. Some of the fakes may not have any active ingredient or insufficient ingredient.

It is the much higher and prohibitive price of the authentic medicine that makes people go in for cheaper version. Antibiotics, especially Amoxicillin, are commonly counterfeited due to higher prices. Other drugs being commonly counterfeited are Viagra, Levitra for erectile dysfunctions and some of the life-saving drugs and ones used for HIV/ AIDS.

Hidden Costs: The flourishing fake drug manufacturing industry is a grave public health concern resulting in severe health issues like failure of treatment, damage to various organs of the body, severe allergic reactions and, at times, death.

The increased morbidity and failure of treatment can drain the entire life time savings of an individual with unbearable financial problems for the family.

What we need to check the menace is, strengthening of regulatory systems, regulating online sales, creating awareness and punitive deterrent action against fake drug manufacturers!

(Dr DK Verma is a medical graduate who joined Indian Revenue Service and retired as Principal Commissioner Central Excise and Customs. Currently doing Social Work as Member Director, SOSVA Editor)

त्याग या समर्पण

{A story by Wg Cdr Dr RAJESH NIGAM (Retd); Mob:88376-78780}



मेरा नाम राज शेखर है। मैं किराना दुकान चलाता हूँ, हालांकि मैं आईआईटी बॉम्बे से कंप्यूटर साइंस में गोल्ड मेडलिस्ट था, और मेरे पास सैन फ्रांसिस्को की एक कंपनी का ऑफर लेटर आज भी अलमारी में रखा है, जिस पर सैलरी लिखी है 2,40,000 डॉलर सालाना। कहानी 1998 से शुरू होती है। कानपुर के किदवई नगर में दो कमरे का घर, ऊपर टीन। पापा रेलवे में क्लर्क, माँ ट्यूशन पढ़ातीं। मैं इकलौता बेटा। पापा की सैलरी 8,000 रुपये। माँ की ट्यूशन से 2,000। हम मिडिल क्लास भी नहीं थे, लोअर मिडिल। पर पापा का एक सपना था, बेटा बड़ा आदमी बने। वह सिर्फ कहते, बेटा, जितना पढ़ना है पढ़, पैसे की चिंता मत कर। मैं पढ़ता गया। दसवीं में 95 प्रतिशत, बारहवीं में 97। कोचिंग की फीस एक लाख थी। पापा ने पीएफ निकाला। माँ ने अपनी चूड़ियाँ बेचीं। मैं कोटा गया। दो साल पंखे के नीचे पढ़ा, मच्छर खाए। 2012 में रिजल्ट आया, AIR 147 - आईआईटी बॉम्बे, कंप्यूटर साइंस में। जिस दिन लेटर आया, पापा मिठाई का डिब्बा ले कर पूरे मोहल्ले में बाँट आए।

आईआईटी में मैं पड़ा। कोडिंग, हैकाथॉन, इंटरनशिप। तीसरे साल में गूगल समर इंटरन, एक लाख स्ट्राइपेंड। मैंने पहली सैलरी से पापा को फोन दिलाया, माँ को वॉशिंग मशीन। पापा ने फोन पर कहा, बेटा, अब तो रिटायरमेंट में आराम करूँगा। फाइनल ईयर में प्लेसमेंट। मैं दिन रात तैयारी करता। दिसंबर 2015, मेरा इंटरव्यू हुआ; एक कंपनी से, नाम था स्ट्राइप जैसी पेमेंट स्टार्टअप, बेस सैन फ्रांसिस्को। चार राउंड, आखिरी में सीटीओ ने कहा, वी वांट यू। ऑफर आया, 240k डॉलर, H1B, रीलोकेशन। अगस्त 2016 जॉइनिंग।

मार्च 2016 में होली पर घर आया। पापा कमजोर लग रहे थे। खॉसी। मैंने कहा, डॉक्टर को दिखाओ। बोले, कुछ नहीं, ठंड लग गई। माँ भी थकी थकी। मैंने सोचा, उम्र है। अप्रैल में फोन आया, माँ का। पापा गिर गए, अस्पताल में। मैं भागा। डॉक्टर ने कहा, लंग्स में इंफेक्शन, साथ में हार्ट की प्रॉब्लम। एंजियोप्लास्टी करनी पड़ेगी। खर्च, 3 लाख। मैंने अपनी इंटरनशिप के पैसे, 2 लाख, निकाल कर दिए। ऑपरेशन हुआ। पापा बच गए।

मैं वापस बॉम्बे गया, फाइनल प्रोजेक्ट। मई में फिर फोन, माँ को चक्कर आए। जांच हुई, ब्रेस्ट कैंसर, स्टेज-2। डॉक्टर ने कहा, कीमो शुरू करो, 6 साइकल, हर साइकल 80 हजार। कुल 5 लाख, प्लस सर्जरी। मैं सुन्न। पापा रिटायर हो चुके थे, पेंशन 12 हजार। घर में सेविंग खत्म। मैंने दोस्तों से उधार माँगा, 1 लाख मिला। जून में मैं घर बैठा था, ऑफर लेटर हाथ में। वीजा इंटरव्यू 15 जुलाई को था। फ्लाइंट 10 अगस्त की।

मैंने पापा से कहा, मैं लोन लेता हूँ। पर घर गिरवी रखना पड़ेगा। मैंने कहा, रख देंगे। पापा ने मना किया, बोले, ये घर तेरी माँ की निशानी है। उस रात मैं छत पर बैठा। दूसरी तरफ माँ नीचे दर्द में। मैंने अपने मेंटर को मेल किया, क्या जॉइनिंग डिफर हो सकती है, 6 महीने। रिप्लाई आया, सॉरी वी नीड पीपल नाउ। यू कैन रीअप्लाई नेक्स्ट ईयर। मैंने फिर मेल किया, नो। 14 जुलाई की रात। वीजा इंटरव्यू कल। माँ की दूसरी कीमो परसों। पापा दवाई लेने गए थे, लौटे तो पर्ची गिर गई, झुक कर उठा नहीं पाए। उस वक्त समझ आया, मैं अगर चला गया तो ये दोनों कैसे रहेंगे।

मैंने सुबह वीजा इंटरव्यू कैंसिल किया। कंपनी को मेल लिखा, थैंक यू फॉर ऑफर, इयू टू फैमिली मेडिकल इमरजेंसी आई एम अनेबल टू जॉइन। दोस्तों ने फोन किया, पागल है क्या, 1.6 करोड़ की जॉब छोड़ रहा है। पापा को बताया। वह चुप रहे, फिर बोले, बेटा तेरा करियर।

मैंने कानपुर में ही नौकरी ढूँढी। एक लोकल सॉफ्टवेयर कंपनी, सैलरी 35 हजार। मैंने जॉइन कर ली। सुबह 9 से शाम 6 ऑफिस, शाम को अस्पताल। कीमो में माँ के बाल गए, वह रोती। मैं विग ले आया। पापा की दवाई टाइम पर देता। 2016 से 2018, दो साल ऐसे निकले। माँ की सर्जरी हुई, रिकवरी हुई। कैंसर रिमिशन में आया। पापा की तबीयत स्थिर। पर पैसे खत्म। मैंने लोन लिया, 7 लाख। 2018 में कंपनी बंद हो गई। मैं बेरोजगार। इंटरव्यू दिए, बेंगलुरु से ऑफर आया, 18 लाख। मैंने मना किया। पापा बोले, जा बेटा। मैंने कहा, अब नहीं छोड़ सकता। माँ को हर तीन महीने चेकअप, पापा को डायबिटीज। कौन देखेगा। दोस्त बोले, तू अपना करियर मार रहा है। मैंने कहा, करियर मेरा है, माँ बाप भी मेरे।

मैंने घर के नीचे छोटी सी दुकान खोली, पापा के नाम पर, शर्मा जनरल स्टोर। धीरे धीरे दुकान चली। मैं सुबह 6 बजे होलसेल मंडी जाता, सामान लाता, दिन में दुकान, रात को फ्रीलांस कोचिंग। 500 डॉलर की वेबसाइट बनाता। 2019 में माँ पूरी तरह ठीक। डॉक्टर ने कहा, क्लियर। 2020 लॉकडाउन। दुकान एसेंशियल में खुली। लोगों को राशन चाहिए था। मैंने होम डिलीवरी शुरू की। साइकिल पर जाता। पापा हिसाब लिखते। माँ पैकिंग करती। उस लॉकडाउन में हमने 2 लाख कमाए। मैंने लोन का आधा चुका दिया।

2021 में मैंने दुकान के साथ एक छोटा कंप्यूटर क्लास शुरू किया, बच्चों को कोडिंग सिखाने। फीस 500 महीना। 20 बच्चे आए। मुझे फिर से कोडिंग (coding) का मजा आया। 2022 में एक बच्चा, अंश, जो मेरे पास पढ़ता था, उसने नेशनल ओलंपियाड जीता। न्यूज में आया, 'कानपुर के किराना वाले आईआईटीयन से सीख कर जीता'। वह आर्टिकल वायरल हुआ। उसी हफ्ते मुझे मेल आया, स्ट्राइप के उसी सीटीओ से। लिखा था, वी आर ओपनिंग इंडिया ऑफिस। वुड यू लाइक टू लीड एजुकेशन इनिशिएटिव, रिमोट, पार्ट टाइम। मैंने हाँ कहा।

कभी कभी रात को वह ऑफर लेटर निकालता हूँ। 2,40,000 डॉलर। फिर माँ की हँसी सुनता हूँ, पापा की खॉसी कम हुई है, देखता हूँ। और लेटर वापस रख देता हूँ। लोग पूछते हैं, पछतावा होता है। मैं सच कहता हूँ, पहले होता था। अब नहीं। क्योंकि मैंने करियर का त्याग नहीं किया, मैंने करियर को रीडिफाइन किया। क्योंकि कुछ त्याग घाटा नहीं होते, वे निवेश होते हैं, प्यार में।

PO-I-KALYAN — THE SPIRITUAL HEART OF BUKHARA

-Col Mohan Joseph (Retd)

Mob: +91 99708 49657



Among all the architectural ensembles of Bukhara, Uzbekistan, none captures the scale and civilisational confidence of the Silk Road era quite like the Po-i-Kalyan Complex.

Rising above the historic skyline of Bukhara — once regarded as one of the great centres of Islamic scholarship in the medieval world — stands the Kalyan Minaret, a 12th-century creation around which the historic complex evolved. The name “Po-i-Kalyan” means “The Foot of the Great”, referring to the towering minaret built in 1127 CE during the rule of the Karakhanids, a Turkic Muslim dynasty that governed much of Central Asia during that period. Over the centuries, the minaret became not only a religious landmark, but also one of the defining symbols of Bukhara itself.



Standing nearly 47 metres tall, it served not only as the mosque’s minaret, but also as a landmark for caravans approaching Bukhara across the deserts of Central Asia. Remarkably, the minaret survived the Mongol invasion of Genghis Khan in 1220, numerous earthquakes, and Soviet bombardment during the Russian Civil War in 1920, when the Bolsheviks moved to eliminate the independent Emirate of Bukhara and bring the region under Soviet control. It thus became one of the oldest surviving monuments in the city. Legend says Genghis Khan was so impressed by the minaret’s height and beauty that he ordered it to be spared, even as much of Bukhara was destroyed. Looking closely at the brickwork, one notices the intricate decorative bands created through brick patterns, giving the tower its distinctive character.

Facing the minaret is the Kalyan Mosque, rebuilt in the 16th century under the Shaybanids, another major Turkic Muslim dynasty that later ruled Central Asia. With its immense courtyard, arcaded galleries, and blue dome, it could accommodate thousands of worshippers at a time.



Directly opposite stands the Mir-i-Arab Madrasa, built in the 16th century during the Shaybanid period and named after the Yemeni spiritual scholar Sheikh Abdullah Yamani, popularly known as Mir-i-Arab. One of Central Asia’s most important Islamic seminaries, it continued functioning through much of the Soviet era, unlike many religious institutions that were shut down, and remains active even today.

Beyond its historical significance, what makes Po-i-Kalyan unforgettable is its architectural harmony. The balance of domes, arches, geometric tile-work, Arabic calligraphy, and towering brick structures, creates a space that is both monumental and deeply spiritual. Added to this are the *muqarnas* — the cascading honeycomb-like ornamentation seen in Islamic architecture across Central Asia.

Architecture along the Silk Road was never merely functional; it was an expression of beauty, geometry, faith, and celestial order.

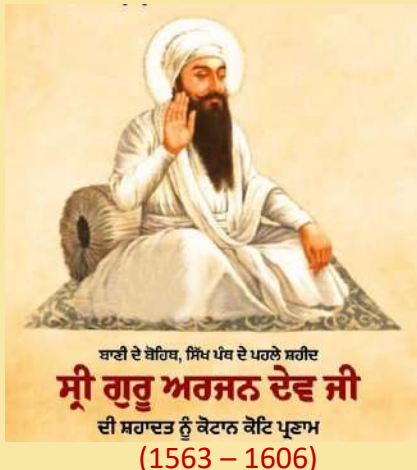
Yet beyond all its architectural splendour, it is perhaps the Kalyan Minaret itself that leaves the deepest impression. More than a monument, the minaret stands as a witness:

- Witness to empires rising and falling,
- Witness to caravans arriving and departing,
- Witness to visitors coming and going,
- Witness to a city that has reinvented itself many times.



MARTYRDOM OF GURU ARJAN DEV

GURU ARJAN DEV JI, the 5th Guru in the lineage of Guru Nanak, was martyred at Lahore, on the orders of Mughal emperor Jehangir, on jyeshth sudhi - जयेष्ठ सुधी - ਜੇਠ ਸੁਧੀ 4 (then corresponding to 30th May 1606), presently 18th June 2026. He holds a very elevated position in Sikhism, being the builder of Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) at Amritsar and the compiler, plus part composer of the Adi Granth - the everlasting Guru of the Sikhs.



He became the first Sikh Guru to attain martyrdom while standing firm for truth, justice and religious freedom. His sacrifice continues to inspire millions to walk the path of faith, humility, peace and resilience, even in the face of daunting adversity.



Guru Sahib made to sit on a hot iron plate and hot sand being poured on him from top.

Our most humble, respectful homage to his everlasting spiritual memory.

Sri Harmandir Sahib: Established by the fourth Guru Ram Das in 1577, the site was developed by Guru Arjun Dev, who invited the revered Muslim Sufi saint Mian Mir of Lahore, to lay the foundation stone of the temple in 1588; the sacred pool and the temple were constructed at a lower level to promote humility. The main structure was completed in 1601 and the Adi Granth was installed inside it in 1604.

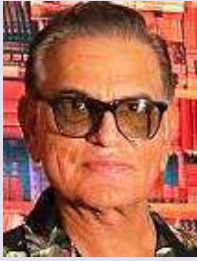


SUKHMANI SAHIB - the Jewel of Peace, composed around 1602, is the master piece of his writings. It is deeply revered for its soothing and comforting effect on mind. It's a set of 192 *padas* (stanzas of 10 hymns). It belongs to Raag Gauri, with 'gauri' meaning 'pure'. It is divided into 24 *Ashtpadis* (sections); each *Ashtpadi* containing eight *padas* of 10 hymns each. Before the *Ashtpadi* begins, there is a Shalok of two lines. *Ashtpadi* is a Sanskrit word for a verse that has eight (*Asht*) metrical feet(*padas*).

AUSTERITY IS THE BEST POLICY

-Rajbir Deswal

Mob:+91 96469 99366



A true nationalist today does not merely wave the Tricolour, wear perfume and Italian shoes. Nationalism now demands sacrifice — we are expected to curb shopping, foreign travel and, occasionally, even tea made on an LPG stove. Inspired by the Prime Minister’s austerity drive, I have transformed myself into a model patriot.

To begin with, I have stopped buying gold altogether. This is not because prices have become so frighteningly high that a bank loan is needed to purchase a nose pin. Luckily, there is no wedding in the family. Otherwise, patriotism might have receded into the background before the glitter of jewellery. Besides, I was never gifted with the spunk of Bappi Lahiri, who wore enough gold to outshine the arc lights.

Retirement has helped my nationalist mission. Since I no longer go to the office, I save a lot of fuel. I remain stationed either at home or on the golf course. Golf, by the way, is no longer a luxury sport. It contributes to the nation’s green cover and physical fitness regime. Every missed putt strengthens my humility and weakens foreign influence.

Gas consumption in my house has fallen dramatically. Why burn imported fuel when the sun provides abundant energy? Our solar heater performs so efficiently that at times even tea is made using hot water from the tap. Traditionalists may say that such tea lacks flavour, but patriots are not supposed to bother about trifles.

Foreign travel has been postponed indefinitely. This is largely due to the steep airfares that resemble property prices. Instead, I invite foreign friends and relatives to spend their dollars in India. “Come here,” I tell them proudly, “we offer spirituality, spices and unlimited advice from retired people.”

My petrol/ diesel worries are over as I own an electric vehicle. The car moves so silently that cows often fail to notice it approaching. Earlier, loud engines symbolised power. Today, patriotism hums gently while searching for a charging point.

My wardrobe, too, has become gloriously self-reliant. I wear *kurta-pyjamas* handed down from my father. Therefore, no Old Navy, no Marks & Spencer, no Levi’s, no Nike! Only ancestral cotton, Hawaii *chappals* and *desi juttis*.

Even my viewing habits are now indigenous. I avoid foreign channels and remain loyal to Doordarshan and All India Radio, where the news still moves at the majestic speed of a government file.

And if the PM again asks us to light *diyas*, clang *thalis* or ring bells, I shall obey wholeheartedly. After all, symbolism is our national strength. I shall stand proudly on my balcony with a brass plate and spoon, contributing acoustically to nation-building while neighbours wonder whether dinner has been announced.

Thus, I continue my patriotic journey — dressed in inherited kurta-pyjamas, sipping “solar” tea, driving silently and marching in *chappals*. Surely, the nation must feel proud.

(The writer is a retired IPS officer of the Haryana cadre Editor)

तेरी यादों के संग -- वाहिगुरु का सदैव शुकुराना



SATWINDER KAUR

80581-00147

एक पत्र — आपकी यादों के संग ।

प्रिय कैप्टन मुखजोत सिंह
तेरी यादों का दीपक आज भी जलता है,
हर कोना तेरे प्यार से ही महकता है।
भले ही तू आँखों से ओझल हो गया **Capt Mukhjot Singh**
Merchant Navy
पर हर धड़कन में तेरा साया बसता है।
स्वर्गीय विवाह वर्षगाँठ पर आज ये मन कहता है,
तेरा दिया हर आशीर्वाद परिवार संग रहता है।
तेरे प्यार का वो सुंदर वृक्ष अब लहरा रहा है,
आरयन और अरजुन-पोतों, के रूप में, घर मुस्कुरा रहा है।
दीपजोत, दीपमाला व बेटा चेतन तुझे बहुत याद करते हैं,
हर खुशी, हर आँसू में तेरा एहसास भरते हैं।
तेरी सीख, तेरा स्नेह, तेरी बातें अमूल्य हैं,
तेरे बिना भी तेरी मौजूदगी के पल अनमोल हैं।
साथ भले ही अब धरती पर अधूरा लगता है,
पर आत्माओं का रिश्ता कहाँ कभी टूटता है।
तेरी दुआओं की छाँव आज भी साथ चलती है,
इसी विश्वास से ज़िंदगी हर दिन सँवरती है।



THANKS ALWAYS (सदैव शुकुराना)

When life becomes heavy
and silent tears fall at night,
Waheguru lights a little lamp
inside the heart with hope so bright.

When roads seem broken,
and nothing feels the same,
He gives us strength to rise again
and walk through fear and pain.

He designs our destiny gently,
with wisdom deep and true,
Every storm becomes a lesson,
every dark sky turns blue.

He heals the wounds unseen,
the ones words cannot explain,
And teaches us that after sorrow
comes sunshine after rain.

So never lose your courage,
never let your spirit fall,
The One who created this universe
is watching over all.

Keep kindness in your nature,
keep faith in every way,
For miracles bloom silently
when hearts learn how to pray.


No matter what tomorrow brings,
stand strong and smile always,
With gratitude in every breath—
Shukarana always.



एक खूबसूरत सीच

जिंदगी को आसान नहीं.. बस खुद को मजबूत बनाना पड़ता है, सही समय कभी नहीं आता.. बस समय को सही बनाना पड़ता है।

अभ्युदय साहित्य



मदिरों मस्जिदों में सज़दा शामों सुबह करते हो, खुदा वहां भी है साहब जहाँ तुम गुनाह करते हो।

एक और इंट गिर गई, दीवार ए जिंदगी से, नादान कह रहे हैं, नया साल मुबारक हो।

गुलज़ार । अभ्युदय साहित्य

कबीर रेड़ा होए रहु घाट का उजि मन का अडिमानु ॥
ऐसा केटी दासु होए उाहि मिलै भगवानु ॥१४६॥

वे कबीर! (जे खुद नुं मिले दी उाँव से, उाँ) अहंकार बँड के राघु रिच धरे होरे वरुदा से साप (जे एहेक कपी से लेके सहाच)। जेकरा केटी मनुख अजेरा मेरक घट जिया है, एउस नुं परमात्मा मिल होरा है।

Kabeer let yourself be a pebble on the path; abandon your egotistical pride. Such a humble slave shall meet the Lord God.



*** (Salok Bhagat Kabeer Ji : Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji - Ang-1372) ***

जिसकी कोई गारंटी नहीं, उसका नाम जिन्दगी है, और जिसकी फुल गारंटी है, उसका नाम मौत है।

किसी को पता है क्या? – (ट्यायंग्य)

गलतिओं पर डालने वाला पड़दा कहां मिलता है? और गलतिओं के हिसाब से यह कितना लगता है?

धोखा खाने के बाद पानी पी सकते हैं, कि नहीं ?

अगर किसी से चिकनी चुपड़ी बात करनी हो तो कौन सा घी सही रहेगा ?

पाप को हमेशा घड़े में ही क्यों भरते हैं, ठंडा रहता है क्या?

यह दिल पर रखने वाला पत्थर कहां मिलता है और वोह कितने किलो का होता है?

किसी के ज़ख्मों पर नमक छिड़कना हो तो कौन सा सही रहेगा -टाटा का या पतंजली का?

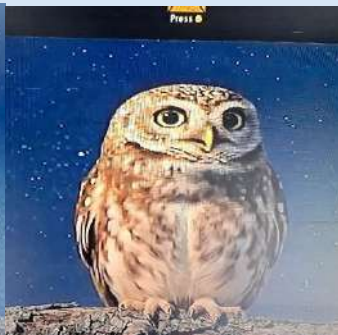
जो लोग कहीं के नहीं रहते, वह आखिर रहते कहाँ हैं?

सब लोग इज़्जत की रोटी कमाना चाहते हैं, कोई इज़्जत की सब्जी क्यों नहीं कमाना चाहता ?

गुस्से में कहते हैं न की भाड़ में जाओ; उसके लिए कौन सा वाहन ठीक रहेगा-ऑटो या टैक्सी?



OWLS



BATS (CHAMGAADARHs)

(They are also GOD's beautiful Creations. – Why associate them with bad omens?)

आशीर्वाद

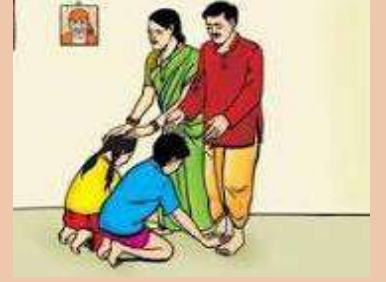


--Kamla Mirchandani

Mob:98884-23934

"आशीर्वाद" एक ऐसा शब्द है जो हमारे जीवन में बहुत महत्व रखता है। हमारे घर में यदि कोई बड़ा बुजुर्ग है, हम सुबह उठकर उनको प्रणाम करते हैं, उनका आशीर्वाद लेते हैं, तो हमारा सारा दिन बहुत अच्छा निकलता है, हम हर काम खुशी-खुशी से करते हैं, हमारी दिनचर्या

बहुत अच्छी और सफल बन जाती है। अक्सर बड़े बुजुर्ग अपने बच्चों को यह आशीर्वाद देते हैं, सदा सुखी रहो, खुश रहो, उन्नति करो, अपने मां बाप का नाम रोशन करो आदि आदि। आज भी कई घरों में यह परंपरा पनप रही है कि सुबह उठकर बड़ों को न केवल नमस्कार करना है बल्कि पैर छूकर आशीर्वाद भी लेना है। आशीर्वाद में दिल से निकली हुई दुआएं और प्यार होता है जो हमारे जीवन को सकारात्मक दिशा में ले जाता है।



लेकिन केवल आशीर्वाद लेना ही हमारी दिनचर्या नहीं है, हमें अपने बुजुर्गों का ध्यान भी रखना है, उनको समय पर चाय-नाश्ता देना, दोपहर का खाना देना, उनके जरूरतों का ध्यान रखना, स्वास्थ्य का ध्यान रखना, दवाई आदि लेकर देना, उनके साथ बैठकर कुछ समय बिताना आदि आदि भी आशीर्वाद का एक हिस्सा है।

आशीर्वाद केवल पैर छूने या उनका सम्मान करना ही नहीं है, बल्कि आशीर्वाद का असर तभी होता है जब हम उसे अपने दिल से स्वीकार करें। अक्सर बच्चे मां-बाप के कहने पर बड़ों के पैर तो छू लेते हैं, उनका आशीर्वाद तो ले लेते हैं, परंतु उसको दिल से नहीं स्वीकार करते। वह इसको एक फॉर्मलिटी समझते हैं कि मम्मी पापा ने कहा है तो हमें बात माननी है। वह उसकी गहराई को नहीं समझ पाते, आशीर्वाद के मतलब को नहीं समझते।

जैसे बच्चा जब पैदा होता है और जैसे-जैसे बड़ा होता है और जो अपने बड़ों को करते हुए देखता है, वैसे ही करता है। परंतु जब वो बात समझने लायक होता है तो वह अपनी मर्जी करता है। जैसा अपने दोस्तों को देखता है वैसे ही करता है, फिर चाहे मां-बाप कितना भी समझाएं, कहता है...जब मेरा दोस्त नहीं करता तो मैं क्यों करूं? बहुत कम परिवार ऐसे हैं, जो कि इस परंपरा को आदि से लेकर अंत तक निभाते हैं। परंतु जिस परिवार में आशीर्वाद लेने की परंपरा है, वह परिवार हमेशा सुखी, समृद्ध और खुशहाल रहता है।

यहां में एक बात बताना जरूरी समझती हूं कि आशीर्वाद और दुआयें एक दूसरे के पूरक होते हुए भी इनमें अंतर है, पैर छूने में, किसी का काम करने में हमें आशीर्वाद मिलता है। पर अगर हम किसी भूखे को रोटी खिलाते हैं, किसी कमजोर की मदद करते हैं तो वह हमें दुआएं देता है। एक गाना भी बना हुआ है "लेजा लेजा दुआएं मां बाप की" भूखे व्यक्ति को अगर पैर छूकर आशीर्वाद लिया जाए तो वह नहीं देगा क्योंकि उसे खाने की आवश्यकता है। उस समय अगर उसे खाना दिया जाए तो वह हमें ढेर सारी दुआएं देगा, जिसे हम आशीर्वाद भी कह सकते हैं।

चलिए अब आप हमें आशीर्वाद भी दीजिए और दुआएं भी दीजिए कि हमारा यह आर्टिकल आपको पसंद आया। अगर पसंद आया हो तो आशीर्वाद भी दे दीजिए और दुआ भी कीजिए कि हम आगे से इस तरह के लेख लिखते रहें।

धन्यवाद।

SOME EMBOLDENING EVENTS IN MY LIFE

- M M Malik (96)

Mob: 73473-82110



I was born in a highly educated family during the colonial era. That was the period when the education policy framed by Lord Macaulay was adopted by the British for Indians, that turned out to be a factory to churn out "Clerks" to manage lower administrative aspects of the British East India Company.

But that was not the case with our family. My father was a law graduate. I passed B.A with honours in Mathematics from Punjab University. My late sister was MA in English. Later on, while in service at Delhi, I joined evening classes in law and qualified myself with law degree from Delhi University.

I was steadfast in keeping up with the well-established Darwin theory - "Survival of the fittest". I would like to narrate one incident in my official career. The criteria for promotion to a higher rank in an organization where I worked, was subject to passing a prestigious and toughest departmental examination. One could attempt six times. I was told that most of the lower rank officials could not pass the examination and after exhausting all six attempts, they felt very disgusted. Despite knowing all this, I kept my spirits high. Even though working hard in the office during day time, I fully utilized the time left, to preoccupy myself with preparatory work. I cleared in the very first attempt. I was the youngest officer amongst my counterparts similarly placed.

Most important thing which has ever touched my heart is "Work and work alone", with no feeling about the attachment of sophisticated standards. After retirement, having served in various Central Government Departments & Ministries, in various capacities, covering audit, accounts, admin, purchases etc, on service deputation basis, with whatever activity entrusted to me beyond my usual job profile, while holding a senior rank position in Central Civil Accounts Department as Deputy Controller of Accounts, I was appointed to serve as Officer On Special duty in DAV College Management Committee. The committee had an overall control in all activities concerning administrative, financial and allied matters, over not less than 600 model and unaided schools & colleges, spread throughout India. It was a pleasurable experience having served there for seven years while dealing with admin & audit matters, most important one being about promotion of college lecturers as Principals of colleges.

That required preparation of joint seniority list of lecturers. I did this job by putting in strenuous efforts, after getting detailed particulars of lecturers of all colleges, at a short notice, by visiting them during the violent ridden period, after the demise of Indira Gandhi. That had created a large scale rift between Hindus and Sikhs, even leading to physical attacks, while travelling in buses to different colleges, mostly in Punjab, Haryana and also in Chandigarh. Simultaneously I attended to other duties, especially time bound detailed scrutiny of proposed annual budgets of colleges/model schools and allied matters at Headquarters office, as entrusted to me.

I remained emboldened throughout my life by facing odd situations like taking the role of presiding officer in departmental examination, held at an outstation with no possibility of alternative arrangement, at the nick of time while myself suddenly catching up very high fever, a little before the very start of conducting the examination, with sealed papers in my hand.

Reminiscing those emboldening events, at this ripe old age, my heart with pleasure fills and blooms with those days of spirited bliss.



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- Prem Sagar (92) (b. 29 May 1934). *Diwana Mujhko Log*. <https://youtu.be/PagFIAJQ2p4?si=R7gHCWKVrFPbVQec>
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