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ਸਿੱਖ ਬੁਲੇਟਨ

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AFTER NANAVATI

GUEST EDITORIAL

1984 was a crucial watershed in modern Sikh history. Much has been said and written about the events of that year, but for the Sikhs there has been no satisfactory conclusion to those tragic events. Following "Operation Blue Star" and the subsequent assassination of the then Indian Prime Minister (PM), Mrs. Indira Gandhi, an anti-Sikh pogrom was unleashed across India, particularly in Delhi. Thousands of innocent Sikhs were murdered and their properties destroyed for one reason alone – that they were Sikhs. Rajiv Gandhi, the only surviving child of Mrs. Gandhi, was thrust into the Prime Ministerial Chair, with just one qualification for that high office: he was a scion of the Nehru-Gandhi family. That evidently was enough for many Indians in general and for the Congress Party members in particular to elevate him to that office. To be fair to Rajiv Gandhi, it was a job that he neither wanted nor aspired to; he was a most reluctant politician. Whilst Rajiv Gandhi was quickly being sworn into office his country was on fire, or more accurately, the Sikhs of India were being burnt alive (literally). If he had been a seasoned politician, aware to the responsibilities of the office that he had assumed, he would, presumably, have been more objective and taken charge of the immediate problems with a firm and just hand (for that is what the office of PM demands). That, unfortunately, was not to be. Rajiv was a political novice, unaccustomed to the job he was handed; he was ill-prepared and clearly had no advisers of any integrity or substance. Worse still, he was Indira's son, and thus (understandably) emotionally involved in the events surrounding his mother's assassination. And so, "Nero (Delhi) fiddled whilst Rome (Sikhs) burned". Rajiv failed to put his stamp as an able leader when presented with a chance, tragic though it was.

Presumably, much later, he must have reflected upon the events of those days. He must have recognized that the Sikhs, a minority Community under his care, had been brutally traumatised by the criminal events of those several days, and that they had still not been given any justice. Even at that stage had Rajiv Gandhi made a public apology for his lapses (which could have been mitigated, given his experience, or rather lack thereof) and gone on to bring to book those responsible, he would have elevated himself from being a mere politician to being a statesman, and the Sikh community may not have felt alienated. Whilst the events that were to so dominate the Punjab in the next decade may never have been entirely averted, the scale of support for the Khalistan movement would not have reached the proportions it did. Rajiv had missed another chance. Perhaps he may have intended to make amends but the 'political realities' and his

(ill-) advisors may have stayed his hand. Still, all this is much conjecture and simply 'what might have been'.

'It took 21 years and nine commissions of inquiry for the victims of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots to get their first token justice...It took another six months for the Congress-led UPA Government to try to cover-up what Nanavati had sought to uncover...blatant clean chits were given to Union Minister Jagdish Tytler and Congress MP Sajjan Kumar.' [1] The Nanavati Commission "...considers it safe ...that there is credible evidence against Jagdish Tytler..." and that he "...very probably had a hand in organizing attacks on Sikhs." The Commission actually "...recommends to the government to look into this aspect and take further action as may be necessary". What more is needed to investigate and prosecute Tytler? For the Government to say: "It is clear from the remarks 'very probably' that the Commission itself was not absolutely sure about his involvement in such attacks" is a rather lame attempt at letting Tytler off the hook. In any other decent democracy, like the USA or UK (whatever their other shortcomings), an investigation would already have been underway. In such democracies the likes of Tytler or Sajjan Kumar would not have been elected to Parliament, let alone be made Ministers. But then this is India, and the rest of the world is not surprised by this.

The Commission says that "...there is credible material..." against several other Congress leaders in that they led the riots in many areas. The Commission Report is damning enough to allow further action if there is a political will to do so. In the case of Sajjan Kumar it says that "*Witnesses have accused Sajjan Kumar specifically and yet no charges were filed against him*". But the Government "Action Taken Report" glosses over this by stating that "He (Kumar) has not been accused by anyone who filed an affidavit before the Commission". So, how did the Commission come up with the statement that '*Witnesses have accused Sajjan Kumar specifically*'? Even so, isn't the word of Justice Nanavati, a retired Supreme Court Judge, enough to at least re-open the cases? Once again, the Congress-led Government has missed an opportunity to right a grievous wrong, and to assuage the pain of a deeply wounded Community.

Some Sikhs have expressed great disappointment with Manmohan Singh: they expected more. To be fair to Manmohan Singh, his hands are clearly tied. His eminent qualifications notwithstanding, the poor man is but PM by "default", in that he was thrust into that role by the real choice of the Congress, Sonia Gandhi. (Incidentally, it might be pertinent to add that this act of 'renunciation' by Sonia Gandhi was truly statesman-like even if some may see ulterior motives behind it. What's more, it is highly improbable that any true-blue, native Indian would have made such a selfless move.) Given a free hand and total support by the UPA (especially the Congress itself), I have

no doubt that Manmohan Singh would have done more. That may still be possible, but it will need another act of greatness by Sonia Gandhi.

Even now it may be possible to salvage the dignity of India, a nation aspiring to the greatness that it richly deserves, but for the mismanagement of its affairs by its political leaders across the nation and for the lack of insight of the majority of its population that continues to re-elect so many crooked representatives again and again.

Perhaps some justice may still be possible. It may not be out of place to get witnesses to file fresh police reports, using the Nanavati Commission Report as the basis. The "trail" of course is cold by now, and getting adequate evidence to get convictions may be well nigh impossible, but an effort must be made. All Governments since 1984 must share in the guilt for having allowed the "trail" to get cold. It's a shame that more than 3000 innocent Indian Citizens were murdered in cold blood in the Capital of the nation, right under the noses of the "authorities", and **NOT ONE** person has been convicted of the crimes even after 21 years. It **could never have happened** in the UK or USA, for example. It's said "Justice delayed is Justice denied", but that at least means some justice is finally done. In the case of victims of the 1984 massacre it appears that all that will be said to them is "JUSTICE DENIED!" Indeed that's all that has been said so far.

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Ref. *Politics of Shame* in India Today, August 22, 2005.

SOME ASPECTS OF NANAVATI COMMISSION REPORT

Gurtej Singh, Chandigarh

When it was first appointed, the Nanawati Commission inspired a lot of hope amongst the victims of the massacre of 1984. The Sikh people, ignoring *commission game* being played to the advantage of perpetrators of the massacre, thought a turning point had come. One look at what the earlier commissions and committees had done (see Appendix) would have sufficed to convince them that these had been so far *used to indefinitely postpone justice, to obliterate evidence, to reassure the culprits that no action was intended against them*, to demonstrate the might of the permanent cultural majority and to effectively bring home the extent of impunity enjoyed by it. The message sought to be effectively conveyed by this exercise was that, in spite of the whole world looking on, in spite of the indignation of the human rights people and the much advertised independent judiciary, the written constitution, the majority in 'free' India held the lives of people belonging to other nations and minorities in the palm of its brutal hand – it could snuff them out at will or it could allow them to live their life span. But the UPA government in 2001 was

perceived to be a shade more principled than the previous ones and the Akali Dal was in alliance with it. *Little did the Sikh people know that the Akali Dal had been admitted to the ruling circles only after a firm undertaking that it would not pursue the panthic agenda.*

It is obvious that the Nanavati Report was intended to be a verbose document repeating fashionable clichés using words so very carefully that none of its recommendations could be converted into basis of action. It is no more than an “empty trunk o’er-flourished by the devil.” The more improbable it knew to be a course of action, with greater emphasis it recommended it. It named police personnel like Hoshiar Singh and recommended action against them, in the full knowledge that they had retired long ago and under the country’s law no action was possible. Evidence was found that Dharamdas Shastri was guilty of inciting murderous crowds. The recommendation after 21 years of probing, is that commission’s recommendation be further probed. In the clear indictment of Jagdish Tytler (‘reliable evidence’ of inciting crowds) it put in the word ‘probably’ so that the government could have ample leeway to do nothing. It is the political context, the attitude of the opposition in the parliament, the growing awareness that a grievous injury has gone un-redressed and the response of the cornered Prime Minister that made its presentation a worth mentioning event.

Perhaps the only truth that the Prime Minister uttered while presenting a belated apology on the mass murder of Sikhs in Delhi and other Indian cities on and after October 31, 1984, is: “what took place in 1984 is the negation of the concept of nationhood enshrined in our constitution.”¹ He could not have been more right. History of the periodic mass murder of people belonging to smaller nations and minority communities comprising India, has been the greatest distinguishing factor of the democracy that the country has established after the British de-colonisation in 1947. One unwritten law enforced by the permanent cultural majority (PCM) in India is the one demanding that the state must periodically present it with a “riots” (read gruesome mass murder). In many cases this mass murdering festival has come close to the Durgapuja festival. The ancient belief that Mahakali’s bowl should never be in want of sacrificial blood, has remained by and large fulfilled. In almost all the years of decolonised India, Kali’s bowl has received fresh human blood in respectable measures.

It is not to say that the PCM has neglected the democratic niceties which must attend on these carnages in the age of open society and democratic functioning. So almost invariably a Judicial Commission headed by the sitting or retired judge of the Supreme Court or at least a High Court has been appointed to give democratic burial to the embarrassing evidence of mass murder that cannot be left un-destroyed in the interest of maintaining the tolerant image of

the ‘most ancient civilisation on earth’ and in the interest of preserving unsullied the image of the great leaders who bring this event about periodically. Exercise to the same effect is presently going on in Gujarat and in good time all evidence will have been washed clean. The technique is perfected in respect of mass murder of Muslims and it usually takes a single commission to mop up all the blood stains. Same applies to Christians with certain modifications since they are just a small minority in India. About the continuing blood-bath in the north-eastern states, no formalities are required as our brave armed forces have already been leaving no traces of incriminating evidence there.

Problem of the Sikhs was different for variety of reasons which need not be examined here. It took ten commissions to straighten things out and yet there are traces of murder persist. The latest to look into the cover-up operation was Justice Nanavati (a retired judge of the Supreme Court of India) Commission. His mandate was “inquire into the causes and course of criminal violence and riots targeting members of the Sikh community which took place in the National Capital Territory of Delhi and other parts of the country on 31 October 1984 and thereafter.”² *The Nanavati Commission amended its terms of reference and voluntarily confined itself to probing the Delhi carnage alone.* The reason it gave for doing so is as confusing as it is unconvincing and only a person well trained in metaphysics can decipher it. It will be sufficient to quote both the inconsistent versions of it here: “no fresh material or statement was received with respect to the incidents which had happened in other parts of the country and as no grievance has been made that no proper inquiry was made earlier with respect to these incidents or that no proper action has been taken against the offenders and policemen found guilty, this commission has thought it fit to refer to the material which was produced before the Justice Mishra Commission with respect to those incidents.” The other reason is given elsewhere in the report “though the full record of the Justice Mishra Commission did not become available to the Commission, it was decided to proceed with the inquiry as it became clear from the affidavits filed on behalf of the authorities concerned that in spite of their efforts the remaining record was not traceable.” The excuse may be weighed against the fact that 2557 affidavits were filed before the Commission from all over India and forty percent of these were from outside Delhi.

According to an oft quoted conservative estimate, more than three thousand Sikhs were killed during the period in Delhi and an equal number in other places.³ Simply by this master-stroke of amending its own mandate the Nanavati Commission halved the burden of those defending the mass murder of Sikhs. It was executed so neatly that no issue was made of it even by the opposition in the parliament when the

report came up for discussion.

The next manoeuvre of the deft Justice Nanavati appointed to pin down the guilty, was to exonerate the top leadership of the Congress party. He would have us believe that the Home Minister of India was not responsible although he was in Delhi throughout the period and was responsible for the law and order in the state. The reports of the ongoing blood-bath taking place in Delhi appeared in the daily papers on all the days of arson, loot, rape and mayhem. Reason for his exoneration may be heard straight from the horse's mouth: there was "no delay or indifference at the level of the Home Minister. He appears to have kept himself informed about the development in Delhi and had taken appropriate decisions and given necessary instructions in time."⁴ Nanavati has not mentioned what "appropriate decisions" he took and to whom he gave the "necessary instructions." In accordance with the accepted norms of procedure, he would have conveyed these instructions and decisions to P. G. Gavai the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. Mr. Gavai told the Press in reaction to the above assertion that, whenever he tried to meet P. V. **Narasimha Rao** the then Home Minister, for instructions and decisions he found him "**hiding like a rat**" under the bed. Meanwhile, the army was not called upon to quell the massacre and the police was allowed to remain inactive. Of course "they are all honourable men" because the Justice has so decreed.

*The other person that the Nanavati Report takes ample care to clear of the involvement is **Rajiv Gandhi**, the then Prime Minister. This is in spite of his well publicised notorious public statement during the happenings, to the effect that, "**when a big tree falls, the earth shakes.**" That was an earth shaking justification that the Prime Minister of India gave for the killing of the Sikhs on the second day of the week long killing spree. Can there be any doubt on which side was he? **In his speech in the Rajya Sabha Tarlochan Singh, who knows better, ascribed the mass killings to the coterie around Rajiv. He was referring to his classmates from school and a couple of cousins who surrounded him and made up his mediocre mind for him. This itself does not leave anyone in doubt that the orders to commit the genocide originated with him.** In his speech the Prime Minister has put in a word for Rajiv Gandhi's innocence by quoting his subsequent conduct: 'Rajiv Gandhi – provided new deal to the Punjab by signing the Punjab Accord. He brought Punjab into the mainstream.' Both aspects have many connotations but there is unambiguous evidence of his involvement also. His conduct during and subsequent to the 'riots' confirms that he, indeed was the one who perpetrated them. Mr. P. G. Gavai blamed the "deliberate delay by the then government in deploying the army to stop the massacre despite repeated requests. Gavai also said that P. Alexander, Principal Secretary to Rajiv Gandhi, had wanted the Lt. Governor to proceed on leave in the midst of the massacre"⁵.*

The report tries further to establish his innocence by ascribing the responsibility to junior congress leaders: it states that "*the acts of violence were apparently 'done' by local Congress leaders for "personal political reasons"*"⁶. The political profiles of all these 'local Congress leaders,' before and after the massacre, record that they were not disappointed. Their career graphs show a meteoric rise ascribable only to Rajiv Gandhi's patronage. Their political ascent has had no setback except for a temporary (?) eclipse now after Nanavati's report. "Blood for blood," the slogan of the mob, was projected on the state owned television, signifying government patronage for the policy of "khooon ka badla khooon." Those who had keenly watched the events then know and reports by the civil liberties' organisations amply bear out that the Rajiv Gandhi government tried very hard to sabotage the relief measures. One prominent example of it is worth quoting. The Gurdial Singh Dhillon Committee (1985) was constituted to recommend measures for rehabilitation of the victims. It mainly recommended the payment of insurance to the destroyed Sikh business establishments as all the insurance companies were owned by the government. The government did not agree and all insurance claims throughout the country were rejected. Can anyone say with a straight face that Rajiv Gandhi had no hand in that? The measures taken to keep the culprits immune and devious methods adopted to destroy evidence, also point only to the direct complicity of Rajiv Gandhi. All this readily available evidence was ignored by the Commission which appear to have had preconceived notions on the subject.

The eagerness to absolve him is responsible for statements like, "there is absolutely no evidence suggesting that Shri Rajiv Gandhi or any other high-ranking Congress (I) leader had suggested or organised attacks on Sikhs"⁷. The evidence did come up but was brushed aside by the Commission on the basis of its own deep rooted prejudice in favour of the actual perpetrator. "Some persons who deposed before the Commission had alleged that Rajiv Gandhi had told one of his officials that Sikhs should be taught a lesson." But Justice Nanavati categorically rejects the allegation, saying the evidence on this count is very vague and it is not "believable" that Gandhi could have said so to an official"⁸. And this "I believe" is the basis of the above categorical statement absolving Rajiv Gandhi. It is one rare part of the report in which Nanavati talks in absolute terms. The Prime Minister in his August 11 speech in the parliament is equally emphatic. Calling the suggestion of involvement a lie, he says with emphasis uncharacteristic of him, "this lie stands nailed conclusively."

The eagerness and emphasis appears to be no more than a thin veil. **The Prime Minister, when he was a minister of finance in the Narasimha Rao cabinet ordered a raid on a Bombay businessman's bank locker** to unearth evidence of

unearned wealth. The *locker yielded a most unlikely object; it was an audio tape featuring Rajiv Gandhi, Arun Nehru, Arun Singh, Narasimha Rao and another. In this tape Rajiv Gandhi was heard giving clear cut instructions that the Sikhs must be "taught a lesson."* This tape was brought to him by an official of the Central Bureau of Investigation who conducted the raid. He heard it played and became visibly nervous with his hands trembling spontaneously, gesticulating emphatically with his ashen face, terrified eyes and incontrolably trembling hands, *he (Manmohan Singh) asked that the tape to be taken away and destroyed.* Surely he has not forgotten the incident. *The same Indian Police Officer graphically narrated the incident to the author of this article.* 'Nothing is more confirmed then when it is officially denied' says a modern adage. The Commission was very near to the truth when it asserted, "but for the backing and help of influential and resourceful persons, the killing of Sikhs so swiftly and in large numbers could not have happened⁹." In India that fateful week, there was no more influential person than Rajiv Gandhi, the third generation of a dynasty ascending the throne of Hindustan for what appeared to be a long reign. Keeping in view the Indian political traditions, nothing could have gone on without his wishes in the capital of the country. The 'riots' were no big deal as Americans would say, any conscientious district magistrate could have quelled them had he been permitted to do so. The Lieutenant Governor of Delhi was severely restrained and through him the police and the bureaucracy. There is no doubt that this debility was imposed upon him by none other than the Prime Minister of the day bent upon 'teaching the Sikhs a lesson' for the assassination of his mother by her own hand-picked and Sikh bodyguards. *More than one probable theories of assassination have been current since the day of the deed, but they must await telling.*

II

There is no doubt that the Nanavati Report absolved several other guilty people and stated in the defence of some of them that no evidence was available although other Commissions had brought much of it on record.

It however, did lay the blame on the police officials including the police Commissioner S. C. Tandon and G. P. Gavai, the then Lieutenant Governor of Delhi¹⁰. These two officials are just scapegoats. They were fairly high in the Union Territory's bureaucratic hierarchy and yet mere puppets in the hands of sharks like the Home Minister and the Prime Minister who were calling the shots. It is obvious that the junior officials were not taken into confidence by the big sharks and were compelled to do their bidding on mere indications received from above. So they are not in a position to spill the beans. The most that Gavai could do was to raise a trembling finger at the then Home Minister who is long dead and therefore immune from retribution. He refrained from speaking against the 'dynasty.' Tandon will not go even that far.

There is much in the report that blames the junior police officials. That game has been going on from the day one that is, starting with the Ved Marvaha Commission. It all started with the civil liberties people naming the junior police officials on the basis of information gleaned from the affidavits and statements of the survivors obtained immediately after the massacre. All Commissions and committees coming after that had to do the same since the information was accurate. That ritual had to be gone through in the full knowledge that deliberate official dithering and prolonged procrastination had reduced the chances of any fruitful action to nil. The police could be fully blamed and that has been done¹¹.

The government had put the matter of punishing them into a rignarole of commissions and committees to avoid any action against them. The manoeuvre has been eminently successful and all (except one junior officer, of Muslim faith) have escaped punishment¹².

As the matters stand, the Action Taken Report (ATR) is able to state with a straight face that nothing against them can be done any more. It says no action can be taken against officials four years after their retirement and all of them have been honourably retired much longer than that. That in itself is preposterous as they are required to be punished for perpetrating an extraordinary event of mass murder. They connived with the offenders, conspired with them and at several places were known to be leading and encouraging the mob. There is no earthly reason why they cannot be prosecuted for that. In law a murder or its abetment are equally punishable and it is never too late for prosecution.

The third category of the culprits named in the Nanavati report are more important political leaders, who, as the history of commissions will show, have been known to have led the crowds. Almost all of them have been repeatedly indicted. The Report discovered new ways of absolving them and of enabling the ATR to skirt the issue of their punishment. 'While there was evidence indicating the involvement of Bhagat the Nanavati Commission did not pursue matter in view of his failing health. The ATR observed that there was "nothing against him as panel was not keen to pursue matter in view of his "mental and physical health." Of another the Report recommends examination of only those cases where the witness had made accusations against Sajjan Kumar specifically. The ATR swam through the action taking zone like an eel, by simply saying that the First Information Report in Sultanpuri Police Station is registered against unknown persons; Kumar is not named as accused. It ignored ample evidence available elsewhere and the fact that almost all past commissions had recommended his prosecution. About D. D. Shastri the Report says that there was evidence indicating his involvement. It recommends that the government examine

relevant material and direct further investigation. The ATR is quick to state that he is not named as an accused in riot-related First Information Report but very generously promises that ‘the government will look into the matter’¹³.

The only person that the Report was more definitive is Jagdish Tytler. It said that there was “credible evidence” against him. He “very probably” had a hand in organising attacks on the Sikhs¹⁴. The key words in the indictment are “very probably.” Nanavati has been a judge of the Supreme Court and was familiar with the judicial ‘doctrine of probability.’ The government was quick to pounce upon these two words. From a very high pedestal it serenely observed, “It is very clear from the remarks ‘very probably’ that the Commission itself was not absolutely sure about his involvement in such attacks.” In criminal cases a person cannot be prosecuted on the basis of probability, said the ATR tabled by the Home Minister Shivraj V. Patil, it was “decided that it cannot proceed on mere probability.” Special Secretary while briefing the Press said very serenely, “the Supreme Court is very clear about the law on probabilities¹⁵.” It ignored altogether that his involvement has been pointed out by all the commissions that examined the question. With such manoeuvring, the miracle of transforming bloodthirsty devils into angels was complete. The government and the Report had accomplished the mission impossible. ‘Jack could eat no fat and his wife could eat no lean. So betwixt the both of them they licked the platter clean.’ It is another matter that destiny willed otherwise.

III

A little bit more about the ATR will be instructive for it reflects the true mind of the government on the subject of Sikh massacre. Initially, there appears to have been a decision not to table the Nanavati Report in the Parliament. It was delayed to the very last day of the permissible six months period. It was submitted to the government on February 9 and presented on August 7, 2005. The presentation had been forced upon it by five days of high level activity outside by core political parties and determined opposition stir inside the parliament. Finally it was presented with the all revealing ATR prepared by the Home Ministry. The ATR was deemed so perfect that it was agreed to even without discussion in the Cabinet. Headline in one newspaper was “Cabinet cleared ATR without discussion¹⁶.” It had been put up as last item on the agenda list of the Cabinet meeting. It was also reported that it “was discussed by the “core group” which meets every Friday at Prime Minister’s residence to discuss key issues. The group comprises union ministers Pranab Mukerjee, Shivraj Patil, Arjun Singh and Ghulam Nabi Azad, the United Progressive Alliance chairperson Sonia Gandhi and her principal secretary Ahmed Patel¹⁷. Foremost amongst those who mattered politically in India had given their hardest parting kick to the Sikh massacre with the thought that it had swept everything successfully under the carpet. This situation has its own

significance for understanding the behaviour of those who rule in India.

One reading of it suffices to assure the reader of how lightly the matter was treated by the government. It has been quoted extensively above and in keeping with its central theme, its nomenclature could be changed to ‘model essay for justifying no action taken.’ In the fashion of the Roman Pilate, it had publicly washed its hands of all responsibility on the Sikh massacre. Ironically, it is the opposition parties’ desire to claim the scalp of the Sikh prime minister that turned the tide and the sheer instinct of survival made the prime minister tender a somewhat graceful apology on the floor of the Rajya Sabha.

It will have to be seriously considered where does it leave the Sikhs, other nations and minorities in India? Considered as above, the opposition hullabaloo turns out, at its core to be an anti-Sikh act and the prime minister’s apology no more than a mere skin saving device. Should the Sikhs and other often decimated people commence preparation for a fresh decimation? That appears to be the destiny firmly embedded for them in the heart and head of India, irrespective of political persuasion of political parties at the helm of affairs.

The Sikhs particularly have no friends within or without. Their own political body, the Shiromani Akali Dal has absolved itself of Sikh concerns since the Moga Conference of 1995. It played a visible part in forcing the government to table the report but the, circumstances suggest that it really has no interest in that area otherwise it would have taken some steps to expose the Sikh genocide much earlier as it had ample opportunities of doing so in the last two decades. It could have done that by simply preparing a directory of all the Sikhs killed by the state in the last half century. This could have been an effective deterrent to the trident holding bloodthirsty hooligans let loose by the political parties dead set on creating an ever expanding vote bank. In another tell-tale gesture the Akali Dal participated in the demolition of the Babari Masjid in 1992, thus aligning itself with fascist parties seeking the annihilation of other nations and minorities in India. It is aligned to the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) an important constituent of the erstwhile National Democratic Alliance government which raised hue and cry against the inadequacy of the ATR as a policy matter. It is certain that the Dal was motivated more by the urge to oblige the BJP than to assuage the hurt feeling of the Sikhs or to prevent such happenings in future.

IV

The circumstances clearly do not permit unqualified optimism. It may be worthwhile to consider whether the apology is meaningful and whether it is still relevant? An attempt must also be made to understand why it came at all?

The nature of Indian Media has undergone a change in the last decade and many new players find moral stances and human concerns rewarding. This small right minded section of Media acted as the pied piper and drew many skeletons out of old and firmly locked political cupboards. For the first time left parties, decided also occupy high moral ground even in matters concerning Sikhs¹⁸. The last straw on the camel's back turned out to be the Opposition sponsored adjournment motion on Nanavati Commission which triggered the seven hour debate in the Lok Sabha¹⁹. In this debate the emotional element dominated and several members went on a truth telling spree. All these elements contributed to a *trickle becoming a flood and eventually it literally swept the prime minister off his feet. To save himself from drowning he decided to swim with the tide. This is the genesis of his highly emotional and in parts much misleading, apology that he tendered in the parliament.*

In that not very reassuring scenario, the matter of prime minister of India's *apology* may be considered. Its *misleading part* may be analysed first. The Nanavati Report is not altogether "in the realm of probabilities" as he put it. Thousand upon thousands of individuals '*of a particular community*' to use the phrase made current by the prolonged history of communal conflict in India, died in state abetted, Congress led, organised violence and those at the helm of affairs must assume responsibility. His charge that the "Opposition was trying to separate the Sikh community from the great traditions of the Congress party," must be dismissed as *a meaningless political gimmick* for no other political party has tried harder to distance the Sikhs from the Congress and the national mainstream as the Congress itself. Slipping in this element reveals the *non-serious nature of the apology*. It is no business of the opposition parties to see that the Sikhs remain within the Congress fold.

Particularly false was his assertion that the progress achieved by the post-partition Punjab would not have been possible without Jawahar Lal Nehru. It is nothing but a blatant lie and an insult to the enterprising spirit of the Punjab. *Nehru did his best to ruin the Punjab economically by distributing its river water to the neighbouring states.* It can be said that he did it "*at gun point*" as was said of his daughter later. Everyone remembers the unprincipled stand he took against Punjabi speaking state and the depths to which he descended while blaming the Akalis. If Nehru had been the visionary that the present prime minister assumes him to be, there would have been no partition of the country, no bloodbath in 1947 (which he casually explained away as "*andaze ka galti*") and India would not be still struggling for internal harmony after six decades of independent existence.

The *apology* was an un-contemplated right about turn and therefore its *sincerity is in serious doubt*. Nevertheless, it contained certain elements which might be pointers to a new

beginning. In any case this is the best chance that the nation has afforded itself of lifting itself out of the quagmire of half a century. This chance, though only a chance, must not be dismissed without due consideration. The dominant theme of the prime minister's more operative sentences was the desire "to ensure that the country does not go this way again." He repeated it several times. At the Harmandar, according to him, both he and Sonia Gandhi had prayed "give us strength and show us the way that such things never take place in our country." Yet again he said while one could not rewrite the past, "as human beings we have the will power and we have the ability to write a better future for all of us." He emphasised, "*we as a united nation can ensure that such a ghastly event is never repeated in India's future.*" *This element in his speech deserves attention and must not be ignored.*

V

Fortunately there is no need to remain in the analytical or even contemplative mode while assessing the worth of the prime minister's assurances. It would be proper to concentrate and build upon the two most far reaching promises in this connection. His eagerness to know the truth, coupled with the strong desire of the Congress to shield the guilty, can be turned to country's benefit. *A Truth and Reconciliation Commission* on the analogy of the one established in South Africa was suggested by a Sikh convention at Delhi in the middle of August this year. If India has decided to turn a new leaf, let it confess to the snares it has so far set up to entangle and destroy the Sikhs. *Let individuals confess to their crimes against the Sikhs and humanity.* Let a comprehensive list of all killed in the process be compiled. The confessions must come with the same intensity of passion as the crimes were committed with. No nation can forget its dead; it is tantamount to leaving them un-cremated, with bodies scattered about at random. No secure future can be built upon such selective forgetfulness. In his speech the prime minister said that the opposition leaders had asked him to seek forgiveness. It can be safely assumed that the country is united in apologising and in what must come to make the apology sincere. He also said, about what happened in 1984, "*we all know that we still do not know the truth and the search must go on.*" We have indulged in that luxury for two decades, the time now is opportune to conclude matters once for all. Truth and Reconciliation Commission can ensure that.

His concern about the community getting out of the trauma of 1984 appears to be genuine as his assertion: "let us not do anything that will reverse the trend. Let us also do nothing to weaken its spirit." This apparently means that the India's armed forces are no more going to attack the Sikh places of worship and are not going to demand at gun point in future, that the ceremony of *amrit* be discontinued. The state will perhaps now abjure its pronounced prejudice against the *rahit* of *amrit*. *It also means that India's*

politicians are not going to prop up charlatans and fake scriptures to rival the eternal Guru Granth and to disrupt the essential unity of the panth. It means that the Sikhs are now free to choose their political and religious leaders and henceforth they will not be imposed upon them by dubious underhand means.

It may be suggested that the first problem to be tackled is that of the failure of the police which has been pointed out by every commission appointed to look into such matters. In addition, Peoples Union of Civil Liberties' report, *Who are the Guilty?*, names 13 police officers, one ACP, nine Station House Officers and three others who were seen instigating and assisting mobs. Measures should be taken to make the police effective in future. Provincial Armed Constabulary and other para-military forces created for special effect and efficient management of such situations have in the past clearly sided with the overwhelming permanent majority and have actually killed others so they are of no use in quelling communal riots. Maybe there is a case for establishing a special ***"Riot Police" manned by Sikhs, Muslims, Dalits and Christians*** in equal numbers. It should be placed under an autonomous statutory body or Commission like the Election Commission of India, composed of personnel from minorities and other nations. It was known that at several places the doctors did not attend to the injured or handed them over to the mob thirsting for their blood. That necessitates that there should likewise be a contingent of doctors and nurses to go into the field immediately along with the riot police, should such a situation arise in future.

All the commissions appointed to go into the 'riots' have failed to deliver justice. Root cause of communal flare ups has always been the prevailing perception of gross injustice. ***The judiciary has totally failed in its duty*** to take timely action to restore rule of law and has clearly perpetrated injustice, so no faith in it can be reposed any more. Failure of the courts to do justice to the Punjab on the issue of river waters is a good illustration of its attitude. A special, permanent conflict resolving machinery with judges equal in status to the judges of the Supreme Court of India should be appointed to go into questions of violation of law by the state that are likely to endanger communal harmony. Maybe, the loot of Punjab's river water is the first issue that such a body should take up. The next would perhaps be that of counting those killed by agencies of the state in the Punjab turmoil.

The truth is that in countries such as India, only the permanent cultural majority can afford to be communal. Since the nation is "not standing on any false prestige" as the prime minister said, ***let there be no hesitation in admitting that all religious mini-wars in India have been initiated by the permanent cultural majority, conducted by the state forces and have resulted in the killing of others in great numbers.*** Equally it must be realised that even after repeated

bloodbaths others have not vanished from the scene. The enmity must be cast out from the hearts of the permanent majority where it has come to reside since 1947. Undeclared wars on people perceived as others will automatically come to an end and so will also end the hatred of Sikhi, Islam and Christianity – the only cause of such conflicts in the country. Only this will ensure that the country's prime minister may never have to bow his "head in shame that such a thing took place." In the long run it is going to be worth it. Greatness of nations is ever built upon a rock which is a mixture of truth, justice, respect for other cultures and a firm policy of fairness under all circumstances.

The state can easily stipulate that all those who suffer like fate in future will be deemed to have been insured for some respectable sum and those who survive them will be compensated without delay. This may be an effective deterrent for future 'riots.'

In conclusion it can be said that the opportunity made available by the prime minister of India's regret is as great as the people of the country, especially the Sikhs and minorities can make it. A concerted effort must be made to air the solutions that seem to suggest themselves on the basis of the parliamentary debate. It is not being said that success in suppressing the communal virus is around the corner. The time however is ripe to get to those people who have been misled by fascist forces into believing that minorities and other nations are out to wreck the country and only possibility of survival of "nation's unity and integrity" is to eliminate these 'others' root and branch. That is the lie that needs to be finally nailed.

Appendix- How successive commissions wiped out good evidence!

'Hidden Agenda' of the Commissions appointed ostensibly to unearth evidence, was to destroy it. Those which understood the real purpose had no difficulty in functioning smoothly. They were allowed to remain in the lucrative business for a long time beyond their initial tenure. Ways and means were found by the state to cut short or outright thwart the work of others. A cursory look at the history of commissions will reveal their real purpose which was to bury the facts so deep that effective impunity is secured to the butchers of 1984. There is absolutely no doubt that this has been the state policy on the matter of the massacre of Sikh. This policy became the first cause of subsequent large scale Sikh resentment against the state and the rise of militancy.

The Action Taken Report currently presented in the parliament makes the 'hidden agenda' and the real purpose of appointing commissions, clearly visible.

1. Additional Commissioner Police- Ved Marwah

Commission (appointed in November 1984) was asked to enquire into the role of the police. It had almost finished the assignment in 1985 when it was asked not to proceed further as Mishra Commission had been appointed. **The entire record of the commission was taken over by the Central Government and passed on to the next commission except for the handwritten notes which constituted the most important part.** These papers are now untraceable.

2. Sitting judge of the SCI - Rangnath Mishra Commission (appointed on April 26, 1985) was constituted to find out whether the violence was organised. It submitted its report in August 1986 (made public in February 1987). **He contended that his terms of reference did not include identifying those responsible for the violence.** It recommended the constitution of three Committees namely; (a) Justice Dilip Kapoor-Mrs. Kusum Mittal (retired secretary to government from UP) Committee (1987) to enquire into the role of the police which the Marwah Commission had almost completed in 1985. It submitted its report (actually two individual reports) in March 1990. Seventy-two police officers were identified for connivance and or negligence. **It recommended immediate dismissal of thirty of these officers. No action was taken against anyone.** (b) Retired Judge of the Delhi High Court Justice M. L. Jain-A. K. Banerjee (retired IGP) committee to recommend registration of cases. It was the finding of the Mishra Commission that a great number of cases in which the accused were politicians and the police, cases had not been registered. **It recommended in August 1987 that case be registered against Sajjan Kumar. No case was registered.** In November 1987 this was noticed by the Press. In December 1987, co-accused Brahmanand Gupta filed a petition in the Delhi High Court and obtained a stay. **The government did not oppose the stay.** Citizen's Justice Committee filed an application for vacating the stay. The writ was disposed off in August 1989 and **appointment of the Committee was quashed.** Citizen's Justice Committee filed an appeal against the quashing in the Supreme Court of India (SCI). (c) The P. Subramanian Potti-Rosha Committee (appointed in March 1990 by the government under V. P. Singh) as successor to the Jain-Banerjee, **It also recommended registration of cases against Sajjan Kumar in 1990. The CBI team which went to make the arrest was itself 'arrested' by the mob.** (d) Retired Judge of Delhi High Court J. D. Jain-D. K. Aggarwal (retired DGP from UP) Committee (appointed December 1990) as successor to Potti-Rosha Committee. It recommended registration of cases against H. K. L. Bhagat, Sajjan Kumar, Dharamdas Shastri and Jagdish Tytler. It was wound up in August 1993. **The cases recommended by the committee were not registered.** (e) R. K. Ahuja Committee, was the third committee recommended by the Mishra Commission to ascertain the total number of killings in Delhi. It submitted its report in August 1987. It drew up a list of 2733 Sikhs killed in Delhi alone. Sant Longowal's estimate was 10,000.

3. Gurdial Singh Dhillon Committee (1985) to recommend measures for rehabilitation of the victims. It mainly **recommended the payment of insurance to the business establishments as all the insurance companies were owned by the government. The government did not agree and all insurance claims throughout the country were rejected.**

4. Narula Committee appointed by Madan Lal Khurana in December 1993. It submitted its report in January 1994 and recommended registration of cases against H. K. L. Bhagat, Sajjan Kumar and Jagdish Tytler.

4. M. L. Jain-E. N. Renision (1990),

5. Retired Judge of the SCI Justice Nanavati Commission was set up by the then NDA government in May 2000, as a result of a unanimous resolution of the Rajya Sabha. It was expected to submit its report in six months. It finally submitted its 339 page report on February 9, 2005. On August 7, 2005, it was presented to the Parliament along with the Action Taken Report (ATR).

"I am not standing on any false prestige. On behalf of the entire people of this country, I bow my head in shame that such a thing took place."

IG murder was a part of the logic she had initiated for establishment of the dynasty – the Hindu card and so on.

Guilty ones are those who undermined the reports of the nine previous committees and commissions.

Congress must do the introspection and give up policies that led to the disaster.

Might is right – a person enjoying political patronage is above the constitution-

He promised assistance to all widows, children and affected families so that they can lead a life of dignity and self-respect.

(Aspects of Nanavati Commission Report; Nanavati-ATR; August 23, 2005.)

¹ "I have no hesitation in apologising to the Sikh community. I apologise not only to the Sikh community but to the whole Indian nation because what took place in 1984 is the negation of the concept of nationhood enshrined in our constitution" - *Hindustan Times*, August 12, 2005, p. 1.

²*The Tribune*, August 10, 2005

³*The Tribune*, August 10, 2005.

⁴*Hindustan Times*, August 9, 2005 (1)

⁵*Hindustan Times*, August 14, 2005 p.2

⁶*Hindustan Times*, August 11, 2005 p.11

⁷*Hindustan Times*, August 9, 2005 (1)

⁸*Hindustan Times*, August 9, 2005 (1)

⁹*Hindustan Times*, August 9, 2005

¹⁰*Punjabi Tribune*, August 8, 2005

¹¹In the capital total of 587 cases were registered and files could not be traced for 241 cases – "There is ample material to show that no proper investigation was done by the police even in those cases which were registered by them," says Nanavati in the report. "Complaints or statements were not taken by the police and on the basis of these separate offences were not registered against the assailants whom they (the witnesses) had named." Report further says, "Even while taking their statements the police had told

them not to mention names of assailants and only speak about losses caused to them. There is also material to show that the police did not note down the names of some of the assailants who were influential. – police “refrained from protecting” the people – “The attitude of the police force was callous” – “There was a colossal failure in the maintenance of law and order and as head of the police force he (S. C. Tandon) has to be held responsible for the failure.” He should have taken strict action against defaulting officers immediately and ought to have given directions to be more strict with the crowd it added. *The Tribune*, August 10, 2005, 2

¹²Only 1 police officer Amir Khan from Trilokpuri Police Station has been convicted for 1984 riots – police turned blind eye to mobs led by politicians – Criminal cases were filed against 22 police officers, against 14 these could not succeed mainly because “files were untraced” – trial is pending against 5 of them – against 2 officers ‘no charge sheet was filed’ because no evidence was available – 5 others were acquitted – *The Tribune*, Aug. 10, 2005, 2.

¹³*Hindustan Times*, August 9, 2005 (1)

¹⁴*The Tribune*, August 5, 2005 (1)

¹⁵*The Tribune*, August 5, 2005 (1)

¹⁶*The Tribune*, August 12, 2005, 15

¹⁷*The Tribune*, August 12, 2005, 15

¹⁸See, *Punjabi Tribune*, August 10, 2005 p.1

¹⁹See *Hindustan Times*, August 9, 2005, p.1

[Prof. Gurtej Singh prepared this report at a short notice especially for The Sikh Bulletin for which we are grateful. Having worked in IPS and IAS he has an unparalleled understanding of the system and personal contacts with people who for obvious reasons cannot speak out themselves but impart valuable and crucial information such as the tape incriminating Rajiv Gandhi and his associates that Manmohan Singh, while Minister of Finance, had ordered destroyed. Ed.]

NANAVATI COMMISSION REPORT

An overview

By

Dr. Sangat Singh* New Delhi

As Mao Tse Tung said, a thousand miles journey starts with a small step. Has that step been taken? It was in 1984 that the Sikhs were killed gruesomely in a pogrom in Delhi and other parts of India. Now, on August 8, 2005, the action taken report (ATR) and the report of Justice G.T. Nanavati presented six months earlier, February 9, 2005, was presented to the Parliament. These evoked a furor. The widows or 1984 holocaust whose husbands/sons/other near and dear ones were subjected to inhuman and awful killings, some in their presence, performed a *siapa*, dirge, in New Delhi at both the ATR and the Report. This reflected the true feelings of the people concerned and members of the Sikh community who looked askance at the events. That represented a fairer assessment of 21 years of the people’s frustration. There are others, some select Sikhs too, who have looked at 1984 in a different manner. Such people have either been indifferent to the Sikh community right from the beginning, or have had, some should say, no brains. The 1984 events have seriously affected the Sikhs’ sense of participation or belonging, and their relevance to the Indian union. This, as seen in 1984 events for the Sikhs, or those of Godhra in Gujarat for

Muslims in 2002, practically reflect a Hindu framework, amidst a paper thin if not spurious, commitment to secularism.

Appointment of New Commission

The idea of a second commission to look afresh into 1984 events was the brainchild of the Sikh Forum, New Delhi, led by former Lt. General Jagjit Singh Aurora, assisted by Justice Ranjit Singh Narula, former Chief justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court, Justice Jaspal Singh, H.S. Phoolka a leading lawyer, their Secretary, former Sq. Leader. Randhir Singh Chhatwal, and others.¹ The idea was aired in November 1999 Conference at Constitution Club New Delhi, marking the 15th anniversary of the Sikh pogrom. People like K.R. Malkani, a prominent BJP leader and member of Upper House of Parliament was also present and welcomed the idea. The induction of NDA multi-party government in snap elections to Lok Sabha in October 1999 with BJP’S Atal Behari Vajpayee as Prime Minister provided the immediate provocation. ***Atal Behari Vajpayee had welcomed Operation Blue Star in June 1984***, rather as the one which came six months late. BJP, however, pursued a policy of duplicity to paper over the allies’ agenda.

The issue of another Commission came up in Upper House in the Budget Session of Parliament in early 2000 when people like Kuldeep Nayar and K. R. Malkani were sucked in. The BJP leaders looked to the Congress benches, but Dr. Manmohan Singh, leader of the Congress Party in Rajya Sabha was not amused. The real feelings of BJP-section of Government at the Centre were reflected in the contrived killing of 35 Sikhs of Chattisinghpura in Kashmir Valley in March 2000, during U.S. President, Bill Clinton’s visit to India, through state-sponsored surrendered-militants. Farook Abdulla, Kashmir Chief Minister, then in New Delhi, who came to know of the details of the incident, was silenced to toe the Centre’s line or keep mum. During this period, there was lot of interaction between Congress and BJP, which lacked a majority in the Upper House. The formation of Uttaranchal, Vanachal, and Chhatisgarh in 2000 was a case in point, when Badal Akalis unwisely sacrificed the interests of the people of Udhham Singh Nagar. During these confabulations, the name of Mr. Justice G.T. Nanavati who had recently retired as Judge of Supreme Court was agreed to. In my work, *The Sikhs in History* (2002 edition Pp.528-29) I wrote, *Advani had appointed G.T. Nanavati Commission to have a fresh look into 1984 genocide of the Sikhs only “after obtaining concurrence of Sonia Gandhi, and after assuring that no non-Sikh [i.e. Hindu or Muslim] would come to any grief for the Commission’s report.* This would be only of academic interest, if not a lollypop. The Commission’s report is expected later in 2002.”

This indicated that firstly, there was a tripartite agreement or

understanding between BJP's Lal Krishna Advani, Congress's Sonia Gandhi and Justice G.T. Nanavati that the Commission's work would only be an eye wash. If Mr. Justice Ranganath Mishra, who headed the first Commission, was termed by some one as a Commission Agent of the Congress, the position of Mr. Justice Nanavati, I am afraid, could not be any different. Secondly, the inordinate delay in submission of Nanavati Commission Report was simply not because of his being appointed to do the whitewashing of the Godhra Enquiry, but to other reasons.

Mother or Founder of State Terrorism

We may now look into what Mr. Justice Nanavati did not choose to do, or did not like to do.

Mr. Partap Singh, retired DIG of Border Security Force in his affidavit to Nanavati Commission mentions that in early 1984 as very senior officers he and some others, including Mani Shankar Iyer, then of Indian Foreign Service & now a Cabinet Minister, who incidentally is married to a Sikh lady, Montek Singh Ahluwalia then in Finance Ministry and others, used to be carried in a van early morning from their residences to Central Secretariat. One fine morning in early 1984, M.S. Iyer, to the hearing of all, mentioned that **at the instance of Indira Gandhi, "he was given an unpleasant job of portraying Sikhs as terrorists."** A few days later, Iyer stated that "against his wishes he had done that job,"². **This was before the Operation Blue Star, the orders for which had been delivered in January 1984.** From internal evidence, it seems that this note was used after the Operation Blue Star in Indian Army's *baat cheet*, talking points, saying that *amritdhari*, baptized Sikhs though looking very innocent were actually potential terrorists. The *baat cheet* unabashedly declared Guru Gobind Singh to be the fountainhead of the Sikh militancy, and virtually declared war on him.³

Early in 1960s Jawaharlal Nehru, a descendent of Gangu Brahmin, had conceived of state terrorism to confront Master Tara Singh's Punjabi Suba movement. Now, Indira was giving it a tangible shape. Looking into that, one could term Indira Gandhi as the mother, founder, originator of terrorism or state terrorism as a policy against the Sikhs: it was the hallmark of the government policy vis a vis the Sikhs for at least a decade.

Pertinently, the British intelligence agency in 1997 reported that the Punjab/Indian police in U.K./Europe was encouraging the movement for Khalistan, and P.C. Dogra, KPS Gill's successor as Director General Punjab Police, admitted in September 1997 that Punjab Police did play a role in encouraging militancy. Parkash Singh Badal was then Chief Minister of Punjab. Did he learn anything?

It is for the Sikhs in North America/Britain/Europe, etc to bring this to the notice of authorities – the US Presidency, Senators, Congressmen, Governors, members of the Cabinet

and Legislators in Canada, Britain, Europe, etc, **that the Sikhs were victims of state terrorism with Indira Gandhi as its mother/founder/ originator.**⁴ Nanavati Commission left it at that and not unexpectedly did not probe into that any further.

Indira's Psychology: Her Last Days

Normally a judge of Supreme Court is a learned man - learned not only in law, but also the matters that come into field of his enquiry. Mention may be made here of two works: one, of **Prof Cynthia Keppley Mahmood** of Department of Anthropology's, *Fighting for Faith and Nation : Dialogue with Sikh Militants* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press), 1996, and two. Memoirs of **Indira's Principal Secretary P.C. Alexander**, "My Years with Indira Gandhi" at first published in a series of articles in *Economic Times*, Delhi, in 1990 (and later published in a book from with some changes).

Cynthia mentions of three sources for Indira's Operation Shanti around November 8, 1984, when Sikhs would be busy with Guru Nanak's birthday celebrations: they were to be subjected to massive massacres. Large scale skirmishes, virtually amounting to war, were to take place along India-Pakistan borders, and it was to be given out that Sikhs had risen in revolt in Punjab and joined hands with Pakistani armed forces which had made considerable advances into Indian territory. Elaborate arrangements had been made with the help of hoodlums of Youth Congress. This plan got leaked to major international intelligence agencies. President Zia ul Haq made earnest attempts to ward off the war and at his instance Pakistan's Ambassador, bypassing the Indian Foreign Office, called on P.C. Alexander on October 25 to convey his President's proposal for senior level talks, without any preconditions. Alexander authenticates that. He also mentions that on October 27, 1984, Indira visited Kashmir Valley when, inter alia, she got an omen, confirmed in interpretation by her family astrologer, of her imminent death. This remained uppermost in her mind during her trip to Bhubaneshwar on October 29-30. Meanwhile, Beant Singh got contours of Indira's Operation Shanti, probably from Indira's Special Assistant, R.K. Dhawan, and with the help of Satwant Singh shot her to death early next morning. The Sikhs suffered heavily during next 3-4 days, but the loss would have been tremendous if Operation Shanti had gone into operation.

Justice Nanavati did not like to go into these events and perform his judicial functions. He did not call on P.C. Alexander or R.K. Dhawan as was with many others, to swear on oath and mention the truth. Nanavati must have earned the gratification of Congress stalwarts.

The Report & Aftermath

As already stated, J. Nanavati's report was expected to offer

only a lollypop, but the Government on August 8, 2005 presented the Parliament two lollypops.

One, the ATR, as adopted without a discussion in cabinet mellowed the whatsoever recommendations J. Nanavati could make: it said that in “Criminal cases, a person cannot be prosecuted simply on the basis of probability.” Hence, it sought to absolve Congress leaders at senior level.

Two, J. Nanavati in his report exonerated the top political leaders of all responsibility in the pogrom of the Sikhs. He did not want to believe that Rajiv Gandhi could have wanted the Sikhs to be taught a lesson, despite some non-Sikh witnesses telling him so, and swearing on oath.⁵ **He did not make any reference to Rajiv’s saying publicly that when a big tree falls, the earth below trembles. Did the earth consist only of Sikhs and had Hindus/Muslims taken leave to absent themselves from the land?** He dissuaded himself from referring to Rajiv’s using the anti-Sikh diatribes in December 1984 elections to gain the biggest number of seats in Lok Sabha and getting the biggest number of Hindu vote in elections.

Rajiv Gandhi was of course dead. What about Dr. P.C. Alexander, his Principal Secretary, and his Home Minister, P.V. Narasimaha Rao? He did not ask Dr. Alexander to swear on oath and be cross-examined, including contradictions in his Memoirs of his ‘Days with Indira Gandhi’ at first published in *Economic Times* in 1990 in a series of articles and 14 years later in book form. Similarly, he did not allow P.V. Narasimash Rao to be cross examined. Why? Here, Nanavati was not functioning as a Judge, but on his own personal whims, keeping in view the time he took in presenting his report.

Both Sikhs and non-Sikhs mentioned that Home Minister Narsimaha Rao showed mental and physical inertia, looked casual, unconcerned and lukewarm. How could he act, when his Prime Minister wanted the Sikhs to be taught a lesson? Nanavati Report (P.179) says, “Probably, there was a desire on the part of some persons to teach a lesson to the Sikhs”. Who they were or he was? The Commission, here, shirks its responsibility, or courage, or its orientation. It further says., “the attacks were made in a systematic manner and without much fear of police almost suggesting that they were assured that they would not be harmed while committing those acts and even thereafter⁶. Male members of the Sikh community were taken out of their houses. They were beaten first and then burnt alive in a systematic manner. This was a common pattern...an angry outburst became an organised carnage.”

Further that: “As the attacks on Sikhs appear to the Commission as organized, attempts were made to see who were responsible for the same. Whatever, acts were done, were done by the local Congress (I) leaders and workers, and

they appear to have done so for their personal political reasons”. The Commission mentions a number of times that this carnage would go on for 3 days, when the army would be called in and the incidents brought to a close. Who gave this time framework and of not calling in the Army? The local Congress (I) leaders, of whom Nanavati points to, were not capable to take any such decision. Who took that decision? But the Commission does not apply its mind and even by process of elimination could have come to the correct conclusions, unless it negated its biased character? More about Nanavati Commission will follow later.

The ATR and the Nanavati Report created a commotion in both the houses of Parliament: these had to be adjourned amidst accusations of Sikh-holocaust and Godhra one. The opposition NDA, including the crafty BJP, and the vociferous SAD (Badal), were, not surprisingly joined by the leftists – an important constituent of the ruling coalition. They tilted the balance to the shock of the government. They, in no uncertain terms, told those in power that they would vote for the opposition’s adjournment motion, leading to the fall of the government. Besides, it shocked the media – press and the TV channels – and the people. The Sikhs, especially affected by 1984 pogrom, burnt the Report, giving a tangible shape to their sense of resentment.

It was disclosed for the first time in 21 years that **Harkishan Singh Surjeet, considered as Indira’s main surrogate on Punjab, along with other senior leaders of Communist Party Marxist (CPM), were on November 1, 1984, at Tin Murti House to pay homage to the dead Indira, when he was spotted by the mob for his turban. He could have been lynched, but for the fortuitous circumstances of a senior Intelligence Officer asking him to reach his Jeep;** he was transported to the Party’s Central Office, where he remained for the next three days. I don’t want to recount here the wretched conditions of Giani Zail Singh who had committed the stupidity of inducting as Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, a nin-com- poop (not an M.P., much less a Minister) at the cost of Pranab Mukherjee who used to preside over Cabinet in absence of Indira, and who had vetted his bio-data prepared by Press Information Bureau, for being inducted as interim Prime Minister, as had happened twice earlier on death of Nehru and Shastri: or other Sikh leaders like Khushwant Singh, General Jagjit Singh Aurora, victor of East Pakistan, who now needed refuge to save their skins, and others.

While the CPI termed the ATR “thoroughly disappointing” it termed the Nanavati Report most “disappointing” and “self-contradictory in its conclusions.” The CPI (M) politburo stated that “after 21 years it is a dismal state of affairs that justice cannot be rendered to the thousands who suffered in the pogrom.” Both wanted that “wherever the Commission speaks of credible evidence, prosecution should be launched.”

The Left leaders specifically wanted action against the Unions Minister Jagdish Tytler & Lok Sabha M.P., Sajjan Kumar's role in the riots, action against the police officers who had retired or were retiring, and adequate compensation package for the widows and orphans of the pogrom.

Sonia Gandhi along with the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and others went into the huddle, and decided to accept the left's demands. Jagdish Tytler handed over his papers to Sonia Gandhi and not to the Prime Minister, and it was accepted on August 10, 2005. Sajjan Kumar was forced to quit as Chairman of the Delhi Rural Development Board with an annual budget of Rs.1 billion. The Government decided to amend the ATR as per Nanavati Report, and later set up two committees to look into reopening of the cases and into the compensation and other benefits to be paid to the victims.

What, however, stands out is Dr. Manmohan Singh's attempt on August 11, to tender an apology to the Sikhs for 1984 riots in Parliament. Personally, he was speaking from conviction when he said, "I bow my head in shame that such a thing took place", and that "I apologies not only to the Sikh Community but to the whole nation, because what took place in 1984 is a negation of the concept of nationhood enshrined in the constitution. I am not standing on any false prestige. On behalf of our government, on behalf of the entire people of this country, I bow my head in shame." *Here was the Prime Minister, who did not spell out that Indira was the Founder of State Terrorism vis a vis the Sikhs.* He, however, mentioned that both the Judicial Commissions, headed by Mishra and Nanavati, did not indict Rajiv Gandhi for his direct involvement. For the common man both had discarded their judicial functions, and acted as Commission Agents.

At one level, there was a lot of opinion praising the Prime Minister for his apology. One BJP spokesmen held it as an example, and wanted BJP to also tender a similar apology for Godhra violence in 2002. There were, however, others, like Sikh representatives who looked at it as a forced one, not unqualified, and wanted Sonia Gandhi as representative of the Congress and the Nehruvian family to apologise. The *Spokesman* (Chandigarh) in its issue of September 2005 put out a reasoned plea, asking for more.

Now we come to reaction of media. The press wrote profusely for justice for 1984 victims. ***Khuswant Singh in his syndicated column in the Hindustan Times was explicit : "it did not occur to Nanavati, or any other heads of Commissions of inquiry, that the police could never have behaved the way it did, had it not been told by those at the top level not to stand in the way of rioters.... Nanavati, you have done grave injustice to the nation."***

In a round table discussion over Television, Chief Editor of the prestigious weekly, Outlook, Shri Ved Mehta openly wondered that Delhi was on fire for three days, and how was it that both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister were unenlightened or uninformed of the gruesome happenings in their surroundings. He implicitly suggested the involvement of both. Some members of the Sikh Forum too appeared over TV stations, but did not catch the damage Nanavati Commission had done. Sukhbir Singh Badal, SAD (B) M.P tried to take credit that Nanavati Commission had been appointed by the BJP government, an ally of Akalis. What was there to take credit at the Commission's perfunctory work? Whether he was talking through his turban or head, I leave it to people to decide. Later, Parkash Singh Badal sought to make a point for action against those indicted by Nanavati Commission – the point which the Leftists had already performed effectively.

Nanavati deliberately let off police officers from worst massacre site, Trilokpuri, where gruesome massacre of Sikhs had taken place. Sewa Das, then SHO Trilokpuri, is now scheduled to retire in end-September 2005. He admitted to have got information on November 1, 1984 at 15:10 hours, and the Commission observed "vital information appears to have been suppressed deliberately by the police at all levels and the gravity of the situation was tried to be minimized." Since Sewa Dass had been exonerated by the departmental enquiry, the Commission did not recommend any action against him." The yardstick applied regarding South Delhi was quite to the contrary, because Nanavati was not a man of principles.

The real reason was that Kishori, a butcher, who had cut with his *toka*, butcher's knife, several Sikhs including three brothers known to him, came from Trilokpuri. He had been acquitted in four cases and sentenced to death by High Court in three cases. Two cases in which he had been sentenced to death came for review to a Bench of two Hindu Judges, including G. T Nanavati. Here the Bench manufactured a number of reasons: that medical evidence about the death of these persons was not available (if they had applied their mind they would have seen that medical reports in Indira's case were not produced in evidence and on that count Satwant Singh and Kehar Singh should have been acquitted) and it was twice mentioned that women and children were not killed and that was a redeeming feature: they did not mention that women were subjected to rape in certain cases. They reduced Kishori's death sentence to that of life imprisonment. Nanavati in his Report mentioned of half a dozen times of this butcher Kishori's exploits, and shows a lingering sympathy for him when he writes. "...so for as Kishori is concerned he had been convicted and is facing the death sentence." This only reflects his understanding that no non-Sikhs i.e. a Hindu or Muslim, was to be sentenced to death for killing, of what P.M. said,

4000 Sikhs in 1984. He did not want to open the wounds in East Delhi to help out Kishori, if need be.

If any of these Judges, four of them, who dealt with Kishori's death sentence at Supreme Court level, had any of their son/grand son butchered in a riot by say a Mr. K., he or his nominee would argue that the person who was killed was a Hindu, a caste Hindu at that, and that he belonged to the *ruling race*, and therefore the High Court Judgment sentencing Mr. K. to death should not be disturbed. The G.T. Nanavati judgment was not applicable in this case. Even the Judgment says. "It would be unfortunate if this ruling serves as a precedent to mitigate offences committed by such mobs." Kishori had killed some Sikhs who were irrelevant people, but Mr K's killing of a caste Hindu falls in a different category.

It is debatable that Nanavati's recommendations in cases against Congress M.Ps., or police personnel would yield some positive results. Time shall show.

Final Denouement

The work, *The Mitrokhin Archive, Volume II: The KGB and the World* which is to be published in mid-October, 2005, according to the main points published in *Times*, London, indicates the process of Soviet penetration in India right from 1970 and attributes the success to corruption that became endemic in Indira Gandhi's regime.

S.P. Bharucha, former Chief Justice of Supreme Court of India, said in February 2002 that 20 per cent of Judges at highest level were known to be corrupt. I spoke to a Senior Advocate of Supreme Court and was told that the number of corrupt Judges was rather 80 per cent. In such circumstances, where corruption reigns in highest judiciary, what the poor Sikhs can hope to obtain from one or the other Judges, especially when the Sikh leadership is inept, and uses the SGPC as source of money-making, rather than to advance Panthic causes.

The Akali Dals of various hues had ample opportunities to help the victims of 1984, but they did nothing to mitigate their sufferings. Rather Sikh widows like Darshan Kaur, Satwant Kaur and Satnami Bai were beaten and pressurized in 1997 at the instance of H.K.L Bhagat, not to tender evidence against him by senior leaders belonging to SAD (Badal) in Delhi who were rewarded amply by that doyen of the underworld. If victims of 1984 could obtain some tangible concessions in jobs and financial assistance, they should thank the Leftists for that rather than these so-called Panthic leaders.

The prestigious weekly *India Today*, New Delhi, of September 12, 2005, (Pp 66-74) brought out a special write up on 1984 consisting of five interviews with those affected

by the pogrom. It sadly commented that because of lawless Judiciary, "many are losing faith in the country itself." It quoted Mrs. Vibha Sethi, 65, to say: "I did not expect much from Nanavati Commission... I feel betrayed. I have lost faith in the country. Look at the way the system failed... Manmohan Singh's apology that came after so many protests carries no weight. All that he said was what he should have said before signing the Action taken Report... Why am I being treated like a foreigner in my country?" That truly represents the feeling of the general body of the Sikhs, except those who are surrogates of Congress/BJP and those whose hands are drenched in Gurdwara Funds, all over.

Foot notes

*Dr. Sangat Singh is author of *The Sikhs in History* (Amritsar, Singh Bros, 2005 or *Itihas 'ch Sikh*, (Punjabi) or *Itihas main Sikh* (Hindi), acclaimed by Prof Noel Q. King, Professor-Emeritus of History and Comparative Religions, California University, Santa Cruz (USA) in the Foreword as one of the greatest works on Sikh history from the days of Cunningham and Macauliffe. It is very unfortunate that the Sikh leadership of various hues, including the political and religious one is not inclined to read Sikh history or religion, despite the dire times lurking.

¹Parkash Singh Badal's Sharomani Akali Dal (Badal), running a Government in Punjab, had absolutely no role to play. The party had got 2 seats in snap polls to Lok Sabha in October 1999. as against 8 to the abominable Congress, and one each to BJP, Mann Akalis and Communists. Following expulsion of Tohra from SGPC and the party, the government had been pawned to BJP which was running amuck in carrying on propaganda of Hindutava amongst Sikh youth from the countryside, who had, then 80 percent of them, become apostate. It was on a high road to overwhelm the Sikh identity.

²Nanavati Commission Report, p.135.

³*The Sikhs in History*, 2001 edn. p.408:2002/05 edn, p.384

⁴Could one expect some thing from people in North America, including

Gurdwara set ups to apprise the people of the truth?

⁵n. 2 above, p.128, 135.

⁶Is this, "even thereafter" valid even now for Nanavati Commission?

Did not he live up to it?

[Dr. Sangat Singh wrote this overview especially for The Sikh Bulletin for which we are grateful. Having served in the Indian Foreign Service he has special insights into its workings. We have in stock his book "Sikhs in History" that should be in every Sikh household. Soft cover can be purchased for \$10.00 and hard cover for \$15.00 including postage. Ed.]

THE CANARY IN THE COAL MINE (Some Thoughts on the Nanavati Commission Report)

I.J. Singh, NY

Miners carry canaries to warn them of dangerous air in the coalmines, the Catskills have their songbirds to measure air pollution. And now India has the Nanavati Commission. It has been a full 21 years since the Indian government inspired carnage of Sikhs erupted, not just in the capital city of New Delhi, but also simultaneously in several cities across India. Within hours of the assassination of the Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, armed mobs in trucks

carrying lists of Sikh owned houses and businesses appeared in cities of India, including New Delhi. What followed was a systematic carnage of thousands of Sikh men, women and children. The army was not deployed to maintain order. The police stood by to watch. Credible witnesses labeled it attempted genocide by a government of its own people.

Why did the charge stick is not surprising if you know the socioeconomic realities of India. Arms – guns and all kinds of ammunition – are strictly controlled. Licenses to carry weapons are neither freely available, nor are they easily accessible, because they are so expensive and require the filing of a zillion papers with multitude of bureaucrats. Kerosene that was used to burn down houses, businesses and victims is rationed; it is not freely available in the marketplace. Trucks are hard to come by. Lists of property owners cannot be downloaded in an instant; such service does not exist in India. Then how is it that a poor country, not previously known for its organizational efficiency could muster, hordes of people within hours of Indira Gandhi's death and start them on a rampage? This speaks of awesome efficiency that is still not visible in much of Indian society.

Two days later the carnage stopped as suddenly as it had begun, as if the job had been completed to the extent that it had been desired and directed. Canny observers suspected the hand of the Indian government in the killing of Sikhs across India. After much stonewalling the Indian government admitted that in Delhi alone about 2300 Sikhs were killed in the 48 hour period, but labeled the killings random acts of violence spurred by the death of Indira Gandhi at the hands of her two Sikh bodyguards.

Rajiv Gandhi, who succeeded his mother Indira as the Prime Minister, continued to deny that there were any human rights violations in India, while reputable organizations like Amnesty International documented horrendous violations in Punjab and all over India. Six months later, under national and international pressure, Rajiv Gandhi signed a memorandum of understanding with Sikhs that agreed to an inquiry into the killing of Sikhs in 1984. Justice might happen, we thought.

I have lost count of the Inquiry Commissions that were appointed by the government. There were the Thakar Commission, Mishra Commission, Jain Commission, Bannerjee Commission, Nanavati Commission, and perhaps others that I do not remember. Twenty years have seen ten inquiry commissions. Each started hopefully, with its report to be buried. None of the reports was released to the public. None could identify any major or minor characters that might have committed any crimes against Sikhs. Last year five men were indicted – for killing over 2000 people within 48 hours in the capital city of the country! This bespeaks unparalleled levels of incompetence or dishonesty by the judiciary and the government or, alternatively, of an

efficient killing machine, the likes of which has never been seen in this world.

In the meantime evidence has been mounting against the continuing denial of justice and against some of the prominent leaders of the pogrom against the Sikhs. A comprehensive report "*Reduced to Ashes*" was published two years ago by a team headed by a non-Sikh human rights activist, Ram Narayan Kumar. One of his colleagues on the report, Jaskaran Kaur Grewal, a Harvard trained lawyer released an update "*Twenty Years of Impunity*" last year. The latest commission headed by Justice Nanavati was fortunate to come into being as times were changing. The report was ready a year ago, but to a government headed by the political party that masterminded the killings, its release was awkward. I have to commend the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, for mustering the courage to release it.

The problem is that the Nanavati Report now finds credible evidence of criminality against two and perhaps three stalwarts of the ruling party – Jagdish Tytler, Sajjan Kumar and Dharam Das Shastri. In fact Jagdish Tytler is a minister in the current government, in charge of building bridges with non-resident Indians. The irony is that survivors of 1984 have never wavered in their affidavits and evidence that these men were the ringleaders in directing the carnage. In the past this evidence against them was ignored. I suppose this was a war of attrition with the hope of the Indian government that soon enough evidence will become lost or tainted and the perpetrators will be home free.

The security forces of the Indian government killed thousands of Sikhs in Punjab, some in fake encounters, during the troubled 1980s and 1990s, all without trials and in the name of national security. Many Sikhs remain incarcerated without trials even today. It cannot be that the Delhi Police could not find any killers of Sikhs in over 20 years. Don't the police forces of Delhi and Punjab operate by the same laws and by the same training manuals?

Just as the canary speaks of the health of the mine and thus the safety of the miners, the Nanavati Commission report at this time speaks of the health of the Indian nation and the safety of its citizens. Actions must follow words. And that is the onus on the government. I know that indictment in a report does not equal conviction in a court of law. The canary has done its job. Is there a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel?

ijs1@nyu.edu, August 10, 2005

1984 SIKH MASSACRES: VICTORY TO THE MOB

By KHUSHWANT SINGH

Outlook, Aug. 22, 2005

The Nanavati report is utter garbage. All the killers are roaming freely.

I have only two words for Justice G.T. Nanavati's inquiry report on the butchery of Sikhs 21 years ago: **utter garbage**. I have the report in hand, all 349 pages, plus the Action Taken Report [A.T.R.] presented by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government in Parliament on Aug. 8.

I thought it would take a whole day or two to go **Photo: Sikh Massacres 1984** through it. It took only a couple of hours because it is largely based on what transpired in zones of different police stations and long lists of names which meant nothing to me. There are broad hints about the involvement of Congress leaders like H.K.L. Bhagat, Jagdish Tytler, Dharam Dass Shastri and Sajjan Kumar. He gives them the benefit of the doubt and suggests yet another inquiry commission to look into the charges against them. Yet another commission? For God's sake, is he serious? To say the least, I was deeply disappointed with the whole thing. But the game of shirking responsibility was to attain higher levels!

First, the government took its own sweet time to put the report on the table of the House, waiting till the last day allotted to it for doing so. Union home minister Shivraj Patil had assured the House when the report had been submitted to him six months ago that the government had nothing to hide. However, he hid it till he could hide it no more. That shows the government's mala fide intent in the whole business. Even the Action Taken Report makes sorry reading. Most of it is aimed at the policemen now retired from service and hence no longer liable for disciplinary action. Any wonder why, despite monetary compensation, the sense of outrage among families of victims has not diminished by the passage of years?

About 21 years ago, northern India down to Karnataka witnessed a bloodbath the likes of which the country had not experienced since Independence nor after. In Delhi, over 3,000 Sikhs were murdered, their wives and daughters gangraped, their properties looted, 72 gurudwaras burnt down. The all-India total of casualties was close to 10,000, the loss of property over thousands of crores.

What triggered off the holocaust was the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. On the morning of October 31, 1984, she was assassinated by two of her Sikh security guards. As the news of her death spread, rampaging mobs of Hindus shouting *khon ka badla khon se lenge* (we will avenge blood with blood), armed with cans of petrol, matchboxes and lathis set upon Sikhs they met on the roads - easily identifiable because of their distinct appearance - and set them on fire. Sikh-owned shops and homes were attacked and looted. Most of this mayhem and murder took place in Congress-ruled states. Word had gone round, 'Teach the Sikhs a lesson;' the police was instructed not to intervene.

It was then people realised how much ill-will Sikhs had earned because of the hate-filled utterances of Bhindranwale against Hindus and the years of killings carried out by his hoodlums in Punjab. No Sikh leader, neither Congress nor Akali, had raised his voice in protest. Consequently, when Mrs. Gandhi ordered the army to enter the Golden Temple to get Bhindranwale dead or alive, no Hindu condemned the action as unwarranted. Sikhs were deeply hurt by Operation Blue Star and ultimately two of them decided to murder Mrs. Gandhi.

What followed was largely condoned by Hindus and the Hindu-owned media. Girilal Jain, editor of *The Times of India*, wrote that Sikhs should have been aware of what lay in store for them. N.C. Menon, editor of *The Hindustan Times*, wrote that they had 'clawed their way to prosperity' and deserved what they got. There were few people left to share their pain. It must be acknowledged that some leaders of the Sangh parivar and the R.S.S., including A.B. Vajpayee, went out of their way to help the Sikhs. So did men like Ram Jethmalani, Soli Sorabjee and a few others.

Rajiv Gandhi, who flew in from Calcutta with his cousin and confidant Arun Nehru, was quickly sworn in as prime minister by Zail Singh without consulting other ministers or chief ministers of states. Rajiv was busy receiving foreign dignitaries coming to attend his mother's funeral. Days later, in his first public speech, he exonerated the murderers: 'When a big tree falls, the earth beneath it is bound to shake.' He meant to take no action in the matter and retained men named as leaders of mobs in his cabinet. Home minister Narasimha Rao did not stir out of his house. When a few eminent Sikhs approached him, he listened to them in studied silence. He remained, as he always was, the paradigm of masterly inactivity. With the three men at the top refusing to do their duty, little could be expected from the Lt. Governor of Delhi or the police commissioner. Section 144 of the I.P.C. [Indian Penal Code], forbidding gatherings of more than five people, was not promulgated or enforced; no curfew was imposed, no shoot-at-sight order given. A unit of the army was brought in from Meerut but when it was discovered that they were Sikhs, it was ordered to stay in the cantonment and not meddle with the civic unrest. The only word I could think of using for the way the authorities carried out its duties? Downright disgusting. It was like spitting in the face of all democratic institutions.

However, there were citizens' organisations which refused to allow a crime of this magnitude to go uninvestigated and unpunished. Leading them were Dr. Rajni Kothari and Justice (retired) V.M. Tarkunde. Kothari's report, *Who Are the Guilty?*, named men like H.K.L. Bhagat, Jagdish Tytler, Sajjan Kumar, Dharam Dass Shastri - all M.P.s and leaders of the Delhi municipality amongst leaders of *goonda* [hoodlum] gangs. None of those named took these men or

organisations to court for criminal libel. When Jagdish Tytler claimed that none of the commissions of inquiry implicated him in the anti-Sikh violence, he was lying. You can see it in the smirk on his satanic face. Only *sarkari* [governmental] commissions let him off the hook.

More important than Kothari and Tarkunde's findings were those of the non-official commission of inquiry set up under retired chief justice of the Supreme Court, S.M. Sikri. Comprising retired ambassadors, governors and senior civil servants (none of them a Sikh), the commission castigated the government in no uncertain terms.

The government could not ignore its verdict. Ultimately, Rajiv Gandhi took the Sikh problem in his own hands. He appointed Arjun Singh governor of Punjab to make contacts with Akali leaders in jails. They were released in small batches to create a favourable atmosphere. Secret negotiations with Sant Harchand Singh Longowal were started. Zail Singh, Buta Singh and others were kept in the dark. On July 24, 1985, the Rajiv-Longowal Accord was signed. Amongst other items, it provided for an inquiry commission into the incidents of violence of November 1984.

Justice Ranganath Mishra of the Supreme Court was appointed as a one-man commission. 'Operation Whitewash' had begun. Before Mishra was half-way through, the panel of lawyers representing victims of the holocaust led by Soli Sorabjee expressed its lack of confidence in the learned judge's impartiality and withdrew from the commission. Mishra went ahead and submitted his findings to the government. As expected, he held the Lt. Governor and the police commissioner of Delhi guilty of dereliction of duty. It must have occurred to him that neither of the two could have acted the way they did without the instructions of higher-ups, including the prime minister or someone acting on his behalf or the home minister. I doubt if Mishra can look at his own face in a mirror.

I don't think Rajiv Gandhi was himself a party to the anti-Sikh pogrom. If he was guilty of anything, it was allowing it to go on for two days and nights till his mother's funeral was over. Behind it all was his eminence grise who sent out the message: 'Teach the Sikhs a lesson.' No commission of inquiry, official or non-official, has looked into the role of this sinister character, although he is still very much alive and around in Delhi's political circuit. Nor, unfortunately, can I look into it at this stage.

After the Mishra Commission, nine others were instituted by the government. Their terms of reference were restricted. Nothing much came out of their findings as most of them focused on the shortcomings of the Delhi police in handling the crisis. Resentment against the government continued to simmer.

Ultimately, in May 2000, the government set up yet another commission of inquiry under Justice G.T. Nanavati. He was to submit his report in six months. At the leisurely pace he heard evidence tendered, it took him five years to do so. I did not expect very much from him. But H.S. Phoolka, who had taken charge of presenting victims' grievances, persuaded me to file an affidavit and appear before him. I did so, but the way the inquiry commission functioned didn't inspire much confidence. It was less like a court dealing with criminal charges and more like a tea party with lawyers on both sides exchanging pleasantries.

I told the commission what I had seen with my own eyes taking place around where I live: burning of Sikh-owned taxi cabs and the desecration of a gurudwara behind my flat, looting of Sikh-owned shops in Khan Market - all in full view of dozens of policemen armed with lathis lined along the road but doing nothing. I also told him of my futile attempts to get President Zail Singh on the phone.

There is no doubt about it: the November 1984 anti-Sikh violence will remain a blot on the face of our country for times to come. No one will take the findings of these sarkari commissions of inquiry seriously. It will be left to historians to chronicle events that led to this tragedy and the miscarriage of justice that followed.

A few salutary lessons that the experience has taught us should be kept in mind by our leaders. The most important is to understand that crimes unpunished breed criminals. Another equally important thing to bear in mind is that the State must never abdicate its monopoly of punishing criminals, if it overlooks its duty or delays dispensing justice beyond limits of endurance, it encourages aggrieved parties to take the law in their own hands and settle scores with those who wronged them. If we do not learn these lessons now, we will have more holocausts in the years to come.

Courtesy, sikhstimes.com

NANAVATI:

1984 SIKH MASSACRE WAS ORGANISED

By KULDIP NAYAR
Deccan Herald, Feb. 23, 2005



Photo: Kuldip Nayar it, is yet to place it before Parliament.

Riots were 'organised,' some Congressmen instigating the anti-social elements to 'target the Sikh community' without any 'meaningful intervention' by the police. This is the import of the report by former Supreme Court Judge G.T. Nanavati on the 1984 riots. Understandably, he is reluctant to reveal the contents of the report because the Home Ministry, to which he has submitted

But he makes no secret of his unhappiness over the nexus that has formed between some Congressmen and the police. He describes one as exploitative and the other indisciplined. Nanavati's observations more or less confirm what some N.G.O.s had said in the pamphlet, *Who Are the Guilty?* published soon after the killings in Delhi. The pamphlet said that 'the attacks on members of the Sikh community in Delhi and its suburbs during the period, far from being a spontaneous expression of 'madness' and of popular 'grief and anger' at Mrs. (Indira) Gandhi's assassination as made out to be by the authorities, were the outcome of a well-organised plan marked by acts of both deliberate commissions and omissions by important politicians of the Congress (I) at the top and by the authorities in the administration.'

Nanavati believes what happened in Delhi can happen anywhere in India and at anytime because the police knows no limits and politicians no norms of behaviour. 'I have seen the same pattern in Gujarat' where he is currently investigating into the rioting which had made Muslims as the target. He sees many similarities between the happenings in Delhi and Gujarat and he has no good word, either for the politicians or the authorities. 'The army was late to arrive,' says Nanavati. It was not familiar with Delhi and hence took some time to get acquainted with the different localities. To begin with, according to Nanavati, the army wanted to go only into the two areas that were adjacent to the Cantonment. However, he does not comment on the allegation that the government had purposely delayed the induction of the army. He is particularly harsh on the prosecuting agency. 'There should be something like the National Prosecuting Agency for the country' so that prosecution is independent, without any outside pressure.

Nanavati has no hesitation in saying that the authorities were not obeying instructions from above. 'I have seen the orders issued by the top but there was no implementation.' This is, indeed, a serious charge which suggests that the authorities, particularly the police, had become itself a mob, without any check or control. Connivance is bad enough but participation is something horrendous to contemplate in a democratic society. When it comes to action against the guilty, Nanavati expresses helplessness. After 20 years, he says, there was no concrete evidence to pursue, nothing to bring the killers to book. Still he has named four, five Congressmen, including a member of Parliament. Nanavati opened five or six cases from the many the police had closed but gave up because he found it to be a wild goose chase. Two or three cases were going on in the court against some police officials, he says. Apparently, he had not gone beyond.

Nanavati's report says that the first incident took place around 2.30 pm on October 31, 1984 in the neighbourhood of All India Institute of Medical Sciences when some Sikhs were dragged out from their vehicles. The then President Zail

Singh's motorcade was stoned around 5 p.m. Hell broke the following day, according to Nanavati. He is of the view that the fury lasted for one day, although some stray incidents took place subsequently. This is contrary to the general belief that the rioting continued for three days. Nanavati admits that he is conscious of 'limitations' in the report. To pick up the thread two decades later was not easy. Many people had died in the meantime and the court had given its verdict on several cases. Still he had done his best. 'I have not tried to whitewash anything. The report has to be read in its entirety to know where the blame lay,' says Nanavati. 'Some in the media were unfair to me because what was used as a leak was partly concocted and partly torn out of context.'

He takes the credit for suggesting two steps for the rehabilitation of victims and their families. One recommendation is to pay the same compensation in other parts of India as has been done in Delhi Rs. 3.5 lakh [1 lakh = 100,000] for every person killed. The second is to ask the government to provide a job to the son or any other person of the family which lost its breadwinner.

I wish the Nanavati Commission had gone beyond the rioting. I had something else in mind when I raised the demand in the Rajya Sabha for another commission. I wanted something on the lines of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission appointed by South Africa to go over the period of apartheid. The whites were asked to confess what they did and were promised that no action would be taken against them. Many came forward and told the truth. For example, one said that he tried to kill Nelson Mandela.

Had New Delhi gone about the same way, some from among the politicians and authorities might have come forward to tell the truth. We would not have been clueless as we are today even after several inquiry reports. Probably, our laws do not permit this. Even then, the commission's terms of reference should have been different. None expected any new evidence or something clinching to get at the guilty.

Nanavati was also for a similar commission. He says that he tried to pursue the same path but did not succeed in his efforts. 'I asked many witnesses and others who appeared before me to rise above politics. But it looks as if I did not succeed.' (The Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee was keen on finding the culprits and hanging them. It was not willing to condone their guilt even if they were to come out with the truth.)

Still we have the right to know why those who indulged in the rioting did so and how 'the organised' killing came to be planned and executed. The pattern in Delhi and elsewhere

was the same: looting and burning the property and then setting it on fire and even killing or burning the owners and occupants along.

The report, I am afraid, may not satisfy the Sikh community that has been wronged. But then even the most critical report cannot heal the wounds. Yet the government owes an explanation to the Sikhs or, more so, to the country. Let the prime minister say in Parliament at the next session that however limited the Nanavati report, the government seeks forgiveness from the nation and the victimised community. This will be statesmanship even though it may not serve the calls of politics.

Courtesy sikhtimes.com

1984 SIKH MASSACRES: TEN COMMISSIONS, PANELS

By R. SURYAMURTHY

The Tribune, New Delhi, Aug. 9, 2005



Photo: Jagdish Tytler The following list excludes the N.G.O. commissions, for example those set up under Dr. Rajni Kothari, former Supreme Court Justice V.M. Tarkunde, and former Supreme Court Chief Justice S.M. Sikri. Since the 1984 anti-Sikh riots that followed the assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in which Over 3,000 persons were killed, the government had appointed 10 commissions and committees to inquire into the incident. However, the victims claim that none of those who perpetrated the crime and instigated the mob have been punished. Here is a chronology of different committees and commissions, which the government has set up from time to time and their results.

1. The **Marwah Commission** was appointed in November 1984. Ved Marwah, Additional Commissioner of Police, was assigned the job of enquiring into the role of the police during the carnage of November 1984. Mr. Marwah almost completed his inquiry towards the middle of 1985 when he was directed by the Central Government not to proceed further as the Misra Commission had been appointed by then. Complete records of the Marwah Commission were taken over by the government and were later transferred to the Misra Commission. However, the most important part of the record, namely the handwritten notes of Mr. Marwah, which contained important information, were not transferred to the Misra Commission.

2. The **Misra Commission of Enquiry** was appointed in May 1985. Justice Ranganath Misra, was a sitting judge of the Supreme Court of India. Justice Misra submitted his report in August 1986 and the report was made public six

months thereafter in February 1987. In his report, Justice Misra stated that it was not part of his terms of reference to identify any person and recommended the formation of three committees. There was only one term of reference to this commission, i.e. whether the violence was organised.

3. The **Kapur Mittal Committee** was appointed in February 1987 on the recommendation of the Misra Commission to inquire into the role of the police, which the Marwah Commission had almost completed in 1985 itself, when the government asked that committee to wind up and not proceed further. After almost two years, this committee was appointed for the same purpose. This committee consisted of Justice Dalip Kapur and Mrs. Kusum Mittal, retired Secretary of U.P. It submitted its report in 1990. Seventy-two police officers were identified for their connivance or gross negligence. The committee recommended forthwith dismissal of 30 police officers out of 72. However, till date, not a single police officer has been awarded any kind of punishment.

4. The **Jain Banerjee Committee** was recommended by the Misra Commission for recommending registrations of cases. It consisted of Justice M.L. Jain, former Judge of the Delhi High Court and Mr. A.K. Banerjee, retired I.G.P. The Misra Commission held in its report that a large number of cases had not been registered and wherever the victims named political leaders or police officers, cases were not registered against them. This committee recommended registration of cases against Mr. Sajjan Kumar in August 1987, but no case was registered. In November 1987 many press reports appeared for not registering cases in spite of the recommendation of the committee.

In December 1987, one of the co-accused along with Sajjan Kumar, namely Mr. Brahmanand Gupta filed a writ petition in the Delhi High Court and obtained a stay against this committee. The government did not oppose the stay. The Citizens Justice Committee filed an application for vacating the stay. Ultimately, the writ petition was decided in August 1989 and the high court quashed the appointment of this committee. An appeal was filed by the Citizens Justice Committee in the Supreme Court.

5. The **Potti Roshia Committee** was appointed in March 1990 as a successor to the Jain Banerjee Committee. This committee also recommended registration of cases against Sajjan Kumar.

6. The **Jain Aggarwal Committee** was appointed in December 1990 as a successor to the Potti Roshia Committee. It consisted of Justice J.D. Jain, retired Judge of the Delhi High Court and Mr. D.K. Aggarwal, retired D.G.P. of U.P. This committee recommended registration of cases against H.K.L. Bhagat, Sajjan Kumar, Dharamdas Shastri and Jagdish Tytler. This committee was wound up in

August 1993. However, the cases recommended by this committee were not even registered by the police.

7. The **Ahuja Committee** was the third committee recommended by the Misra Commission to ascertain the total number of killings in Delhi. This committee submitted its report in August 1987 and gave a figure of 2,733 as the number of Sikhs killed in Delhi alone.

8. The **Dhillon Committee** headed by Mr. Gurdial Singh Dhillon was appointed in 1985 to recommend measures for the rehabilitation of the victims. This committee submitted its report by the end of 1985. One of the major recommendations of this committee was that the business establishments that had insurance cover but whose insurance claims were not settled by insurance companies on the technical ground that riot was not covered under insurance should be paid compensation under the directions of the government. This committee recommended that since all insurance companies were nationalised they be directed to pay the claims. However, the government did not accept this recommendation and, as a result, insurance claims were rejected by all insurance companies throughout the country.

9. The **Narula Committee** was appointed in December 1993 by the Madan Lal Khurana government in Delhi. This committee submitted its report in January 1994 and recommended registration of cases against Bhagat, Sajjan Kumar and Jagdish Tytler.

10. The **Nanavati Commission** was appointed by a unanimous resolution passed in the Rajya Sabha. This commission was headed by Justice G.T. Nanavati, retired Judge of the Supreme Court of India. The commission submitted its report in February 2004. The report said there was 'credible evidence' against the now Union Minister Jagdish Tytler that he 'very probably' had a hand in organising attacks on Sikhs and recommended to the government to take further action as may be found necessary. The A.T.R. [Action Taken Report, prepared by the Congress government in response to the Nanavati report], while exonerating Mr. Tytler, said, 'a person cannot be prosecuted simply on the basis of probabilities.' Courtesy sikhtimes.com

1984 SIKH MASSACRES: NEED MORE THAN AN APOLOGY

EDITORIAL

The Times of India, Aug. 13, 2005

The prime minister has done the right thing by apologising to the nation in Parliament for the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. His well-crafted speech was rich in emotion and promise. He now needs to deliver on his promise of justice to victims of the riots if the emotion is not to be construed as a hollow political tactic. The Congress needs to walk the extra mile to enable Manmohan Singh in his endeavour. This 'search for truth' has to be not just the prime minister's but of the entire

political spectrum. The nation needs apologies, and much more, if the scars of the riots are to heal.

There are enough reasons for sceptics to worry if the sentiments expressed by the Congress leadership in the last few days go beyond addressing the immediate political moment. The A.T.R. [Action Taken Report] on the Nanavati commission's report approved by the Union cabinet and submitted in Parliament had glossed over most of Justice Nanavati's remarks. The moral outrage in the media and the threat of U.P.A. allies to vote against the government pressurised the Congress to look at the commission's report anew. The party had begun rethinking its position on the '84 riots in the 90s itself. Sonia Gandhi's apology to the Sikhs went a long way in bridging the gap between the Congress and the community. But the sentiment was hardly reflected in the party's preference for politicians like Jagdish Tytler and Sajjan Kumar who were indicted by victims as instigators of violence. The A.T.R. prepared by the home ministry only raised doubts about the government's commitment to justice.

The challenge before Manmohan is enormous. Free India's history is a history of failed promises. Riot after riot has challenged the idea of a secular and democratic India. Institutions meant to protect constitutional guarantees of political and social freedoms have been trampled upon repeatedly by the mainstream political class. Delhi '84 and Gujarat '02 are evidences of the collapse of the state. Such memories erode the belief of the people in the Indian state and democracy. Justice to the victims of the anti-Sikh riots can go a long way to restore the confidence of the people not just in the state but in the political class as well. Which is why Manmohan can't afford to fail. Commitment to justice has to be a fundamental character of Indian democracy.

Courtesy sikhtimes.com

1984 SIKH MASSACRES: NO LONGER IN DENIAL

EDITORIAL,

The Indian Express, Aug. 12, 2005



Is our history of abdicating responsibility for riots finally coming to an end?

Jagdish Tytler's resignation - albeit a reluctant one - has set some new benchmarks for the pursuit of justice in Indian democracy. We are now sending a strong signal that politicians who appear to be complicit in riots will have to pay the political price. It is also not insignificant that the

Congress has acted upon some of recommendations of the

Nanavati Commission. While many parties, including the Left, have expressed some doubts over the Commission's findings, the Congress was at least responsible enough not to impugn the Commission simply because it was appointed by the N.D.A. government. Cynics might argue that this was largely due to the fact that the highest echelons of the Congress leadership had been exonerated by the Commission. But this should not detract from the fact that the Commission's findings are being respected and acted upon; that the Commission is not itself being targeted for partisan reasons.

No one should be under any illusions that the events of the last few days come anywhere near bringing a substantial measure of justice to the victims of the anti-Sikh carnage. The cases originally filed against alleged perpetrators produced few convictions. And even with brand new investigations the passage of time and the deteriorating quality of evidence will make securing legal justice an enormous challenge. The government should ensure that it now does the best it can to ensure these cases are investigated and prosecuted properly. But, in the meantime, assigning some measure of political responsibility for those events is at least a beginning.

Unfortunately, even small political steps are missing when it comes to other riots. A number of reports of other commissions still await action. The Srikrishna Commission Report, to take one example, has still not elicited a proper response from successive governments. So many riot victims in Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Bhagalpur - to name a few prominent instances - still await justice in any form: legal, political or moral. Will the tide finally turn? Will we finally get over the history of denials, partisan politics and abdication of responsibility that mark our attitudes towards riots? Our task is to ensure that Jagdish Tytler's resignation is not just an anomaly in the struggle for political justice

Courtesy sikhtimes.com

TRUE HEROES OF 1984

By SIMAR KAUR GORAYA

Simar Kaur Goraya is a human rights activist. She has interviewed human rights victims as well as prominent Sikh politicians such as Simranjit Singh Mann.

On Dec. 23, 2002, Sajjan Kumar walked out of court, acquitted of charges filed against him for his well-documented role in the 1984 genocidal attack on Delhi's Sikhs.

In their report entitled *Who Are the Guilty?*, the People's Union for Civil Liberties (P.U.C.L.) offered a damning indictment of the Congress Party for having stage-



managed the Sikh massacre in the days that followed the Oct. 31 assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at the hands of her

Sikh sentiments by sending the army into the holiest of Sikh **Photo: Sajjan Kumar** shrines, the Golden Temple or Darbar Sahib, to flush out Sikh militants.

Kumar is one of three senior Congress Party members that faced the prospect of charges in relation to the massacre of over 3,000 Sikhs. Of the other two, Jagdish Tytler escaped charges altogether and Union Minister H.K.L. Bhagat was acquitted in the last of the four "anti-Sikh riots" cases filed against him on Dec. 23, 2000 by the same judge, Manju Goel, who has now acquitted Sajjan Kumar.

The casual observer of these trials could hardly be faulted for arriving the conclusion that the killings of nearly 3,000 Sikhs never took place. The carnage has been handled just as if it was an ordinary misdemeanor and that the brutality which was unleashed on innocent people, including women and children, and recorded extensively by the media, never happened.

However, large sections of the media reported on what really happened and the blatant complicity of Congress politicians and government officials in the pogroms. *India Today* became a major national magazine almost overnight because of its coverage of the massacres. The magazine contained reports that actually named Congress politicians involved in the anti-Sikh genocide. Reports have also accused former Prime Ministers Rajiv Gandhi and Narasimha Rao of withholding information that could have helped to bring the guilty to justice. Bhagat, Tytler and Kumar are free today only because they enjoy the patronage of India's political leadership.

The Nuremberg trials successfully brought the Nazis to justice due in large part to the fact that the Allies were victorious after World War II. The Sikhs are a minority community and that status has put them in a precarious position where meting justice to the guilty is seen as acceding to Sikh demands rather than enforcing the rule of law in the world's largest democracy.

As a result, the 1984 massacres have turned out to be a precursor to similar incidents all over India. The absence of justice for 1984 has translated as a free ticket to those in power to use any means for garnering votes to get into and stay in public office. The Bombay and Gujarat riots and Ayodhya's Babri *masjid* [mosque] episode take their cue from 1984.

One cannot help but despair when one looks at the character of Indian leadership; the presence of proven criminals like Bhagat and Kumar in every major political party; party leaders like Sonia Gandhi who continue to support bad

elements for the sake of votes; judges like Manju Goel who serve to weaken the judiciary with their spineless verdicts and the law enforcement officials who protect the guilty.

Clearly, *the true heroes in this saga are, in fact, the victims who never gave up the fight for justice even under very hostile circumstances.* Women like Darshan Kaur and Anwar Kaur, now in their 50s and working as peons to support their families, demonstrated the courage to bring charges against powerful men like Bhagat and Kumar. Brave folks like Salawati Kaur and Fota Singh stuck to their testimonies until the very end in the Sajjan Kumar case. Lawyers like H.S. Phoolka put up a great fight for the victims. These true heroes of 1984 deserve our unflinching support. They are endeavoring on our behalf to ensure that the guilty do not go unpunished. The utter absence of justice in eighteen long years has failed to discourage the true heroes of 1984.

Courtesy sikhtimes.com

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ON NANAVATI COMMISSION REPORT

Public Statement

AI Index: ASA 20/031/2005 (Public), News Service No: 225, 16 August 2005

India: Victims of anti-Sikh riots face further delays

Amnesty International urges the Government of India to fulfil its promises to hold to account with speed and earnest commitment any individual, including police or government officials, found responsible for human rights violations during the violence against Sikhs in Delhi in 1984. The organisation is concerned about further delays in the pursuit of justice for these victims and continuing impunity for its perpetrators.

Twenty-one years after the violence against Sikhs in 1984, virtually no one has been held to account. Eight inquiry commissions concerning the anti-Sikh riots have preceded the Nanavati Commission, but victims have yet to see justice. According to local media, some victims see the latest government move to open new investigations as a tactic to "waste more time". NDTV, "Tytler's resignation an eyewash say riot victims", 11 August 2005.

After the Nanavati Commission report and the Government's Action Taken Report were tabled in Parliament last week, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh condemned the violence against Sikhs in 1984 and said criminal cases against individuals named in the latest report would be re-opened and re-examined "within the ambit of law." The Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, clarified that there would be no further commissions of inquiry but investigations by the appropriate authority into specific findings against persons named in the report. While Amnesty International welcomes these steps, the organisation is concerned about ongoing delays and urges the Government of India to hold any perpetrators to account in a speedy and transparent manner.

A similar pattern of delays to justice and impunity for perpetrators exists for other large scale incidents of human rights violations in the country.

During the period of militancy in the state of Punjab - mid 1980s to mid 1990s - Amnesty International received reports of torture, deaths in custody, extrajudicial executions and 'disappearances'. While there have been a small number of prosecutions and despite the recommendations of specially established judicial inquiries and commissions, impunity has prevailed in many cases. Amnesty International calls for an end to impunity in these cases.

Amnesty International is also concerned about the ongoing impunity for perpetrators of human rights abuses against Muslims in Gujarat in 2002. Over 2,000 people, mostly Muslims, were killed in targeted violence, including hundreds of girls and women who were publicly stripped, raped and gang raped, following a fire in a train in which 59 Hindu activists had died. While some cases are being tried outside Gujarat State and the Supreme Court has directed that over 2,000 previously closed complaints be reviewed with a view to possible remedies, few perpetrators have been held to account. Amnesty International urges the Government of India and particularly the Government of Gujarat to take urgent steps to end impunity in the state.

Courtesy Jagtar Singh <jagtarkhalsa@yahoo.com. ANZ_SIKHS

INDIAN PRIME MINISTER APOLOGIZES TO SIKHS FOR GENOCIDE OF 1984

Speech of Hon. Edolphus Towns of New York in the House of Representatives, Thursday, September 15, 2005.

Mr. TOWNS: Mr. Speaker, recently the Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, apologized to the Sikhs for the massacres of Sikhs that took place in November 1984. Over 20,000 Sikhs died in that massacre just in Delhi. Meanwhile, Sikh police officers were locked in their barracks and the state television and radio were encouraging more Sikh bloodshed. This is a sad chapter in the history of India and it is appropriate that the Government has finally admitted its own culpability and apologized for this atrocity. These kinds of admissions are always welcome. But Prime Minister Singh's apology is 21 years too late and it is only a baby step in the direction of justice. And an apology for the military attack on the Golden Temple in June of that year is still not forthcoming.

Mr. Speaker, there are families of those who died in this massacre who have still never been compensated in any way. We know that no compensation can bring back their loved ones, but at least it can help make their lives better. India must compensate the victims' families if this apology is serious. It must also bring to justice the officials responsible for the massacre. These are necessary steps for the apology to be taken as anything more than mere

empty words. But there is something else that India must do as well. It must make proper restitution to the whole Sikh Nation for this massacre and its many other atrocities against the Sikhs.

How do you pay such a huge debt, Mr. Speaker? How do you pay back an entire nation for atrocities against it? On October 7, 1987, the Sikh Nation declared its independence, declaring the new country of Khalistan. Since then, India has continued to occupy Khalistan. Over half a million Indian troops still carry out this brutal occupation to this day. These troops must be withdrawn and India must recognize the sovereignty of a free and independent Khalistan. That is how it can compensate the Sikh Nation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Indian Government maintains that there is no support for Khalistan among the Sikhs in Punjab, despite large marches that have occurred as recently as June demanding Khalistan. In June, 35 Sikhs were charged with a crime. Their offense? They made some speeches and raised the Khalistani flag. To quote my friend Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, president of the Council of Khalistan, "Is asking for freedom a crime in a democracy?"

So if India is democratic and there is no support for Khalistan, then why is the Indian Government afraid to have a vote on the matter? Why not simply have a vote and prove it? It is time for the United States to hold India's feet to the fire on its proclaimed democratic principles. We must stop our aid to India until it respects human rights and ceases activities such as the Delhi massacre, the arrests of activists for raising a flag, and the like. And we must demand self-determination for the people of Khalistan, Kashmir, Nagaland, and all the suppressed, captive nations of South Asia. In a democracy you cannot rule against the will of the people, and the essence of democracy is the right to self-determination. It is time to press India, the self-proclaimed "world's largest democracy," to do the right thing and let the people have their freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert the Council of Khalistan's press release on Prime Minister Singh's apology into the RECORD at this time. Thank you.

WASHINGTON, DC, Sept. 14, 2005 .--Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has formally apologized to the Sikh Nation for the genocide against the Sikhs in November 1984 in which over 20,000 Sikhs were killed in Delhi alone while Sikh police were locked in their barracks and Indian radio and television called for more Sikh blood.

We appreciate the Prime Minister's apology," said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. "It is more than any other Indian leader has done, but it is too little, too late--21 years too late, in fact." The Council of Khalistan

leads the struggle to liberate the Sikh homeland, Khalistan, which declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987. "We need to see if this apology is sincere or just another propaganda ploy by the Indian government." However, he noted that the Indian government's military attack on the Golden Temple, the center and seat of Sikhism, in June 1984 was more important to the Sikh Nation. "Where is the apology for that?," he asked.

India must pay full and appropriate restitution to the families and bring the officials responsible to justice," Dr. Aulakh said. "But the most appropriate and important restitution that can be made to the Sikh Nation is to withdraw all Indian forces from Khalistan and allow it to enjoy its independence," he said. "Only then can the Sikh Nation live in peace, dignity, and freedom, secure in the knowledge that these kinds of incidents will not happen again," he said. "If India and Prime Minister Singh truly believe in freedom and democracy, they have a moral obligation to withdraw from Khalistan and all the nations they occupy, such as Kashmir, Nagaland, and others," he said.

Professor Darshan Singh, a former Jathedar of the Akal Takht, has said, "If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh." The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1948, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, and tens of thousands of Tamils, Assamese, Bodos, Manipuris, Dalits, and others. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide." According the Movement Against State Repression (MASR), 52,268 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners in India without charge or trial.

The flame of freedom still burns bright in the hearts of Sikhs despite the deployment of over half a million Indian troops to crush it," Dr. Aulakh said. "Last year, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh signed a bill cancelling the agreements that allowed the diversion of Punjabi water to non-riparian states. The bill asserted the sovereignty of Punjab. Sardar Atinder Pal Singh, another former Member of Parliament, held a seminar on Khalistan in Punjab. It was well attended and featured outstanding presentations, including one by Professor Gurtej Singh, IAS, Professor of Sikhism," he said. "There have been several marches through Punjab demanding the establishment of an independent Khalistan. India is on the verge of disintegration," he said.

Cases were registered against dozens of Sikhs for raising the Sikh flag at the Golden Temple on the anniversary of the Golden Temple attack in the presence of over 30,000 Sikhs. Warrants have been issued for their arrest. The flag of Khalistan was also raised on Republic Day, January 26. 35

Sikhs were arrested at that time. Some of them have been denied bail. Dr. Aulakh demanded that India release all the people arrested for hoisting the flag and drop all charges against all these individuals. "Is it a crime to demand freedom in a democracy?," he asked. "Is this the freedom of speech that is guaranteed under India's constitution?"

History shows that multinational states such as India are doomed to failure. The collapse of countries like Austria-Hungary, India's longtime friend the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and others prove this point. India is a polyglot like those countries, thrown together for the convenience of the British colonialists. It has never been a single nation. It is doomed to break up as they did. Steve Forbes, writing in Forbes magazine, said that India is a multinational, multiethnic, multireligious, multicultural, multilinguistic state that is doomed to disintegrate like the Austro-Hungarian Empire. "India is not a homogeneous state," Forbes wrote. "Neither was the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It attacked Serbia in the summer of 1914 in the hopes of destroying this irritating state after Serbia had committed a spectacular terrorist act against the Hapsburg monarchy. The empire ended up splintering, and the Hapsburgs lost their throne." India is doomed to fall apart just as Austria-Hungary and the others did.

We must continue to pray for and work for our God-given birthright of freedom," Dr. Aulakh said. "While this apology is a small first step, only a free Khalistan will satisfy the Sikh Nation," he said. "We must continue to work until this goal is achieved."

PARTY LEADER GIVES SUPPORT FOR THE SIKHS RIGHT TO SELF DETERMINATION

Alex Salmond MP, the Leader of the Scottish National Party, addressed over 10,000 Sikhs at the recent National Sikh Convention organised by the Sikh Federation (UK). He said: "the reason I'm here is the high regard in which I and the Scottish National Party hold the Sikh community"

As expected he addressed the issue of the Sikhs right to self determination. He stated: "I have a particular interest in both human rights and indeed self determination in the Punjab. Self determination and human rights are indivisible, meaning that they must apply to all peoples in all countries every where. You cannot argue for self determination for Scotland and not be concerned with the right of self determination of the Sikh Nation."

The BBC reported "Mr Salmond gave his support to the Sikhs right to self determination, a measure recently publicly backed by the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party."

Earlier Patrick Mercer OBE MP the Shadow Homeland Security Minister spoke passionately about the Sikhs

recalling his personal experiences and that of his father. He referred to Sikhs as "the bravest of people and the best of friends". He thanked Sikhs for their courage that made "Sikhs stand as a proud and independent people."

Alex Salmon concluded his speech by stating: "I welcome this opportunity to speak to this great Convention, you have my best wishes for progress in all of your fields of endeavour." Jagtar Singh jagtarkhalsa@yahoo.com Sept. 21, 2005

MAMATA TRIED TO ORGANISE RIOTS IN 1984: Surjeet

Trinamool leader rubbishes charges; to move court

Tribune Reporters, Kolkata, August 19, 2005

Veteran CPM Politburo member, Harkishan Singh Surjeet has alleged that during the 1984 Sikh riots, Ms Mamata Banerjee and several other Congress leaders in Bengal, were involved in an attempt to kill Sikhs in Kolkata. But their attempts were foiled by the then Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu who gave shoot-at-sight orders against the miscreants. Mr Surjeet made these allegations in a writing published in the current issue of People's Democracy, the CPM mouthpiece, which the Rajya Sabha MP, Sitaram Yechuri edits.

Strongly reacting to the allegations, Ms Banerjee said it was false, malicious and defamatory and she was going to the court to seek legal action against Mr Surjeet. She alleged that the CPM was now launching a campaign against her and other political adversaries for making a political gain in the forthcoming Assembly elections. Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, who was in the city today, also denied the allegations, saying these to be "untrue". He expressed surprise that Mr. Surjeet could make such allegations against Ms Banerjee, who was then very much in the Congress (I).

Interestingly, the writing claimed that when the riots broke out in Delhi and several other places after the killing of Ms Indira Gandhi in December 1984, there was no Trinamool Congress and Ms Banerjee had been a popular and most courageous Congress (I) leader fighting against the CPM. Mr. Surjeet alleged that during the anti-Sikh riots, the "shouting woman leader" along with several other ruffians had been attempting to massacre the city's Sikh people in the city but their attempts were foiled due to the timely intervention of Mr Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister, who had then given shoot-at-sight orders if any attempts were made to kill Sikhs, claimed Mr Surjeet.

Ms Banerjee strongly reacted to the allegation and said that it was not only a lie but a false, malicious and defamatory charge for which the CPM leader was liable for punishment. She was not even in the city on that day when the assassination took place, said one of her close aides. Ms

Banerjee said a legal notice had already been served on the printer and publisher of the "People's Democracy" and also on Surjeet for writing something false, fabricated and malicious" against her.

NEW DELHI: *Reminiscing his personal experiences during the riots in which he "could well have been one of its numerous victims," the former CPM General Secretary also said that the then President Zail Singh had "pleaded utter helplessness" and even said that he himself dare not step out of Rashtrapati Bhavan.* In his article entitled "Remember the Day", Mr. Surjeet, recalling his personal experiences, says he himself could have become a victim of the 1984 riots. Mr Surjeet along with then CPM General Secretary EMS Namboodiripad, party stalwarts M. Basavapunniah and Samar Mukherjee had gone to pay homage to Indira Gandhi, whose body was lying in state at the Teen Murti Bhavan on November 1, 1984. *"While we were still inside the sprawling Teen Murti Bhavan, some from among the crowd spotted me and ran towards me. There was no way to escape them, I thought. I asked Comrade EMS and others to leave me alone, because it was amply clear that otherwise they, too, could be attacked. However, it was at this point of time that a CID officer hurriedly came to me and advised me to somehow reach his jeep that was parked at some distance," he writes.*

After the narrow escape, Mr. Surjeet says he went to the party central office, where he was forced to spend the next three days. Surjeet recounts that he saw a crowd of "no less than 5,000 people near the Teen Murti Bhavan raising "high-pitched" anti-Sikh slogans, a sight "that was enough to freeze anybody with horror". "It was clear that this was no spontaneous mob, nor were their slogans a spontaneous product of anger. Rather, to anybody who took a bit of trouble to watch the scene, it was clear that all this was being organised and orchestrated by some group working from behind the scene," he says.

SHARING OUR CULTURE

A Project of Manitoba Sikh Community

Manitoba's Sikh community is poised to build a cultural and seniors centre that will serve over 15,000 members of our vibrant society. We are proud of our accomplishments as new families in this Province and we look forward to creating a showplace to represent our heritage as well as a welcoming location for all Manitobans to experience our rich cultural roots.

To fulfill our dream, we have launched a major public appeal to raise \$7.5 million to build the Manitoba Sikh Cultural and Seniors Centre and to support related programming. For over 30 years, the Sikh community has been attracted to Manitoba because of its respect for ethnic diversity, its business opportunity and its high regard for family. We ask for your generous financial participation to an important cultural community that in turn makes enormous

contributions to all Manitobans. We invite you to help make our dream a strong reality.

A Proud Heritage

In 1897, India's Sikh Lancer regiment returned from Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee by way of Canada, to embark for the Asia Pacific. Having seen Western Canada by train, regiment members were impressed with the similarities to their own homeland. Their eyewitness accounts about Canada created interest for homeland villagers who wished to better themselves in a new country.

The first young Sikh men arrived in British Columbia (1899-1907) with the same dream as European immigrants: to establish financial opportunity and a better life for family. However, these Sikh pioneers experienced anti-Asian sentiment even as full British citizens. Barred from reuniting with their families, barred from employment rights, barred from citizenship — Canada's early Sikhs faced enormous hardship. The "**Komagata Maru**" incident of 1914 in particular, exemplified Canada's immigration practices and cultural fears of the time.

Early Sikh families wanted to fit into Canadian society. Their adjustment came with great agony in adopting Canadian dress over personal symbols of their Sikh faith. Where prejudice was experienced they adapted by working harder, accepting available opportunities, building friendships, and engendering admiration from others. Modesty and gratitude, energy and astuteness, moral courage and rightfulness went a long way in building early Sikh prominence.

By 1947, British Columbia's Sikh leaders had made huge strides having achieved voting rights and social equality. They also had achieved significant financial prosperity through hard work, education, frugality and by families helping each other. In 1967, the Canadian Govt. implemented new immigration policies resulting in Manitoba's first significant growth and Development of a Sikh community.

Our Community Today

Today, both the Manitoba and Canadian Sikh communities have become well known as enormous contributors to our new global world. By placing a high value on education Sikhs are scientists, researchers, educators, professionals and business owners. By deep commitment to a democratic Canada, Sikhs are members of Governing Boards, City Councils, Legislative Assemblies and Canada's Parliament. Through family loyalty, religious devotion and a willingness to work hard Sikhs are proud to build a stronger nation.

During the mid-1960's, just 45 professional families formed the core of Manitoba's Sikh community. In 1968 these families joined together to build Manitoba's first Gurdwara (temple). Today 15,000 community members thrive with an active network of Temples, cultural groups and seniors associations to maintain our Sikh heritage. **We are proud to live in Manitoba, Canada's only province to legislate official recognition of the five Sikh symbols of faith.**

The Sikh religious belief in a single God is common to Christians, Jews and Muslims. To be a Sikh denotes having strong moral

principles rooted in teachings that extend to family, community, professional, political and business arenas. Above all, Sikhs are modestly driven to succeed and to trust in the support of their extended family and community friendships.

In Manitoba, we share our ethnic diversity as a major strength in our society. Now our Sikh community looks forward to a Cultural and Seniors Centre, a public showplace to share our history and traditions with our fellow Manitobans.

The Financial Appeal

Since the inception of this initiative, the Manitoba Sikh Cultural & Seniors Centre has taken a business view to the development of a self-sustaining cultural facility. In its earliest stage, a professional community consultation study was commissioned to establish existing needs, program interests and physical design of the structure. Formal incorporation of the organization included Board member representation of fifteen organizations including Gurdwaras, cultural and seniors associations in the Manitoba Sikh community.

This initiative is based on a well-conceived business plan. Financial viability issues have been balanced between non-profit program necessities and revenue generation opportunities. Independent of this initiative, it is projected that 7,000 square feet of commercial space will create supplemental revenue streams. In the long-range plan, a seniors 'assisted living' centre and nursing home will bring further net revenues to the total complex.

A conservative annual operating budget will approximate \$364,000 per year on a break-even basis. In summary:

Revenues		Expenses	
Program	171,000	Salaries	65,000
Sales	85,000	Overhead	53,000
Tenants	108,000	Building	246,000
Totals	364,000	Totals	364,000

Initial support has been very encouraging. A three acre grant of land from the City of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Foundation's seed funding, an initial grant from the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program plus early private leadership gifts have affirmed the project.

Based on community consultation, the entire community is extremely supportive of the direction and scope of the project. Success will be guaranteed through the projected \$4.0 million in private funds generated through this capital campaign.

Source & Allocation of Funds:

Source of Funds

Government Grants:	City of Winnipeg	1,500,000
	Province of Manitoba	1,000,000
	Government of Canada	1,000,000

Private Funds:	Manitoba Sikh Community	2,000,000
	National Sikh Friends	1,000,000
	Corporate and Private	1,000,000

Total 7,500,000

Allocation of Funds

Capital Development:	Site Development	400,000
	Reception Hall	1,200,000
	Great Hall	2,200,000
	Catering Facilities	600,000

Meeting Areas	700,000
Library	550,000
Program Areas	400,000
Equipment Support	650,000
<u>Fees, Taxes & Contingency</u>	<u>800,000</u>
Total	7,500,000

To mail donations or make inquiries:

Manitoba Sikh Cultural & Seniors Centre Inc.
P.O.Box 2247, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4A6, Canada
Phone: 204-775-5190. Email : sikhcentre@mts.net

[ਅਕਲੀ ਕੀਚੈ ਦਾਨੁ॥ What have you done lately for your Qaum? Manitoba's Sikh community deserves the support of every Sikh family in North America for this unique and potentially extremely valuable community project which could be emulated by other communities with enlightened leadership. Our Gurdwaras, although awash in cash, are not meeting either our spiritual or social needs. Donate to this project instead of incurring expenses on an Akhandpath that is not on the lines laid out in Sikh Rehat Maryada i.e. either do it yourself or sit and listen for 48 hours. ED.]

“SIKH PARCHAARIC” OR “FAKE HOLY MAN”?

Sunday 4th September, 2005

Gurmukh Singh - Panthic Weekly Columnist



A member of the congregation bows to Ranjeet Singh as he places his hand on her head to 'bless' her.

This week, a video of Bhai Ranjit Singh Dhadrianwale has come to light in the public. The young man who at an early age has been renowned as a “Sant” by his followers, became popular for his charisma and attracting Sikhs who in large numbers by preaching Sikhi. On the stage Bhai Ranjit Singh Dhadiranwale has publicly said that no one should do matha tekh (bow down) to him and only matha tekh to Guru Granth Sahib Ji. He has focused on doing Amrit Parchaar and asking youngsters to give up intoxicants.

Controversy has built around the young Ranjit Singh Dhadrianwale who calls himself a “Sant”. His use of Gurbani and style of Kirtan has led to accusations that he sings “Kachee Baanee” (distorted Gurbaani). Furthermore it

has been suggested on certain radio stations and by Gurdwara Sahibs that Ranjit Singh is only driven by collecting money for himself and that he is “fake holy man”. The recent video of Bhai Ranjit Singh shows him wearing a Kalgi (plume) or something similar to it, and sitting on a high seat. On the wall behind him is a large painting of himself, and in front of his seat is a plastic basket. The video shows how Sikhs visiting him put money in the basket, give presents and then matha tekhs to him. Bhai Ranjit Singh shows no hesitation when the Sangat matha tekhs to him. He blesses those who bow to him by patting them on the head or back. The video shows how that Ranjit Singh casually sits on his seat and sometimes show little or no interest in those who bow to him with faith and sharda.

We must ask ourselves some hard questions. Firstly, why do some people insist on singing “Dharnaas” or Gurbaani mixed with their own lyrics rather than singing Gurbaani purely without addition or distortion? Is Gurbaani alone not good enough? Secondly, where does the money go, which is collected by the people who call themselves “holy men” and tour America, Canada, and the UK? If these people are coming abroad not to make money but to preach Gurmat, then why do they need to take away thousands and thousands of pounds and dollars raised in Gurdwaras abroad? How much of this money has been used to give bail to a Sikh sister held by Panjab Police and ensure that she doesn't get raped, tortured and abused while in prison? Thirdly, how many of these people have raised their voice for the Panth? How many of these “holy men” have used their status, connections, and platform to bring to light Panthic issues and how Sikh men and women are still languishing in Indian jails without trial or case?

Let us not blindly follow people and not become dependent on “sants”, “babas” or anyone other than Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The more we become dependent on others, and create middlemen between the relationship of us and Waheguru, the more we get trapped in situations of abuse, distortion and misdirection. Let us wake up as a Panth and unite as one under the umbrella of Guru Granth Sahib Ji, and follow the Guru Granth and Guru Panth.

Gurmukh Singh

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ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਭਰ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ
ਵੱਲੋਂ ਬਣਾਈ ਸੰਸਥਾ
‘ਕੈਟਰੀਨਾ ਤੂਫ਼ਾਨ
ਪੀੜਤਾਂ’ ਦੀ
ਮਦਦ ਲਈ ਵਚਨਬੱਧ—
ਬਾਬਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰੀ ਵਾਲੇ

ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ, 18, ੨੦੦੫ ਸਤੰਬਰ (ਗੁਰਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ)-ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਆਫ਼ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੇ ਸੰਸਥਾਪਕ ਮੁਖੀ ਸੰਤ ਬਾਬਾ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰੀ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਵੱਸਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ‘ਕੈਟਰੀਨਾ ਤੂਫ਼ਾਨ ਪੀੜਤਾਂ’ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ ਵੱਡੇ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਸ ਤਹਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ 5000 ਕੰਬਲ, ਗਰਮ ਕੱਪੜੇ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਦਾ ਸਾਮਾਨ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਸੰਤ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਆਫ਼ਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਪੱਧਰ ਦੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਅੰਤਰ-ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਭਲਾਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਆਫ਼ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਕਾਇਮ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ, ਨੇ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਦੇ 32 ਮੁਲਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਖਾਵਾਂ ਖੋਲ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਦੀ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਮਦਦ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਦੋਂ ਵੀ ਕੋਈ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਆਫ਼ਤ ਆਉਣ 'ਤੇ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਤਾਂ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਪੀੜਤ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਭਾਰੀ ਮਦਦ ਕਰੇਗੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ ਹੁਸ਼ਿਆਰਪੁਰ ਲਾਗੇ ਬਣਾਏ ਗਏ ਨਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵਿਚ ਹਰੇਕ ਮਹੀਨੇ 100 ਦੇ ਕਰੀਬ ਨਸ਼ਈ ਇਲਾਜ ਲਈ ਆ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ 400 ਸਾਲਾ ਗੁਰਗੱਦੀ ਦਿਵਸ ਜੋ 2008 ਵਿਚ ਆ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਸਬੰਧੀ ਵੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਆਫ਼ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਵੱਡੇ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸਰਗਰਮੀਆਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ‘ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਲਹਿਰ’ ਤਹਿਤ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਮੁਲਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਲੜ ਲੱਗ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ ਅਗਲੇ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ 400 ਸਾਲਾ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਪੁਰਬ ਦੇ ਸਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰੀ ਵਿਖੇ ਜੂਨ 2006 ਵਿਚ ਅੰਤਰ-ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਪੱਧਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਸਿੱਖ ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤਾਂ, ਵਿਦਵਾਨ, ਰਾਗੀ ਜਥੇ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਤ ਮਹਾਂਪੁਰਸ਼ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਲੈਣਗੇ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਵਿਚ ਪੁੱਜਣ ਲਈ ਸੱਦਾ ਪੱਤਰ ਘੱਲੇ ਜਾਣਗੇ।

Dear Amandeep Singh, Below is the response from the President of the New Orleans Gurdwara Sahib, Sumir Kaur In reference to the claim by Baba Chicagowale:

"I personally don't know of any other Sikh organization (other than UNITED SIKHS) working with the Katrina relief effort in Baton Rouge and vicinity. I have worked at the FEMA office with other voluntary organizations and have regularly attended LA VOAD (Louisiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) meetings. I have not met any other Sikh organization there. I must say that the UNITED SIKHS have done a remarkable job in serving the evacuees in several centers in this area with hot meals, medical services and medicines, and supplies of various kinds. They have done a commendable PR job for the Sikh community" : Sumir Kaur .

Gurvinder singh <iksinghi@yahoo.com> , United Sikhs Ghanaia Team Leader

ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਡਾ: ਮਨਮੋਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਖਿਮਾ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ

ਵੱਡਾ ਕੌਮੀ ਦੁਖਾਂਤ ਸੀ ਨਵੰਬਰ '84 ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਤਲੇਆਮ

ਉਤਰਾਵਾਂ-ਚੜ੍ਹਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਨੇ 11 ਅਗਸਤ, 2005 ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਅਹਿਮ ਮੋੜ ਕੱਟਿਆ ਜਦੋਂ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਡਾ: ਮਨਮੋਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਰਾਜ ਸਭਾ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਨਾਵਤੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਦੇ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿਚ ਬੋਲਦਿਆਂ ਨਵੰਬਰ 1984 ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਤਲੇਆਮ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰੇ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ ਲਈ ਵੱਡੀ ਸ਼ਰਮ ਵਾਲਾ ਅਤੇ ਵੱਡਾ ਕੌਮੀ ਦੁਖਾਂਤ ਕਰਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਭਾਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਮੂਲ ਪਾਠ ਪੇਸ਼ ਹੈ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਾਲਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ:

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਚੇਅਰਮੈਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਸ੍ਰੀਮਾਨ ਜੀ, ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਕਬੂਲਣੀ ਪਵੇਗੀ ਕਿ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਮੌਕੇ 'ਤੇ ਬੋਲਣਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਵੱਡਾ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਤਣਾਅ ਹੈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਮੁੱਦਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਸਾਡੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਗੋਂ ਪੂਰੇ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ ਦੇ ਭਵਿੱਖ 'ਤੇ ਡੂੰਘੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਪੈਣਗੇ। 1984 ਵਿਚ ਵਾਪਰੀ ਇਸ ਵੱਡੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਤ੍ਰਾਸਦੀ 'ਚ ਚਾਰ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਲੋਕ ਮਾਰੇ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਸਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਆਤਮ-ਚਿੰਤਨ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਮੌਕਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਕਜੁਟ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਜੋਂ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਕੀ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਵੇਗਾ? ਅਸੀਂ ਨਵੇਂ ਰਾਹ ਲੱਭ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਭਿਆਨਕ ਤ੍ਰਾਸਦੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਮੁੜ ਵਾਪਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ।

ਮੈਂ ਬੜੇ ਅਦਬ ਨਾਲ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਾਰਾ ਕੁਝ ਫਿਰਕੂ ਮਕਸਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਗੇ ਵਧਾ ਕੇ ਜਾਂ ਦੂਸ਼ਣਬਾਜ਼ੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਹਾਸਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕੇਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਵਜੋਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਕਹਿਣ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਝਿਜਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਮਹਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ, ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਜੰਗ ਅਤੇ ਅਮਨ, ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਲਾਮਿਸਾਲ ਸੇਵਾ ਕੀਤੀ, ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਬੰਗਲਾਦੇਸ਼ ਜੰਗ ਵੇਲੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਲਈ ਮਾਣਮੱਤੀ ਜਿੱਤ ਲਿਆਂਦੀ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੀ ਅੰਗ-ਰੱਖਿਅਕਾਂ ਹੱਥੋਂ ਮੌਤ ਇਕ ਵੱਡੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਤ੍ਰਾਸਦੀ ਸੀ।

ਜੇ ਕੁਝ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਾਪਰਿਆ, ਉਹ ਵੀ ਏਨਾ ਹੀ ਸ਼ਰਮਨਾਕ ਸੀ। ਇੰਦਰਾ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਖੁਦ ਨੂੰ ਕੁਝ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੇ ਬਦਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਇਕ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਏ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਬੂਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕਰਦੇ। ਅਸੀਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਖੇ ਵਾਪਰੇ ਦੁਖਾਂਤ ਅਤੇ 1984 ਦੀਆਂ ਹੋਰ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ 'ਤੇ ਉੱਚ-ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਹਲਕਿਆਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਦਬਾਅ ਪਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਅੰਗ-ਰੱਖਿਅਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਬਦੀਲ ਕਰ ਦੇਣ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਵਾਬ ਸੀ ਕਿ 'ਧਰਮ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਸ਼ੱਕ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਕ੍ਰਾਂਤੀ ਦੀ ਸੱਚੀ ਧੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣ ਸਕਦੀ।'

ਸ੍ਰੀਮਾਨ ਜੀ, ਮੈਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਕਹਿਣ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਕੋਈ ਝਿਜਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਇੰਦਰਾ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਕਤਲ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਜੇ ਕੁਝ ਵੀ ਵਾਪਰਿਆ, ਉਹ ਇਕ ਵੱਡੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਜ਼ਿੱਲਤ ਅਤੇ ਵੱਡਾ ਕੌਮੀ ਦੁਖਾਂਤ ਸੀ। ਮੈਂ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਧਿਰ ਦੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰਯੋਗ ਆਗੂਆਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਬਿਆਨ ਦੇਖੇ ਹਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਦੇਸ਼ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਆਫੀ ਮੰਗਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਪੰਜ ਜਾਂ ਛੇ ਸਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਵਿਖੇ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਉਥੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਕੱਠਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਰਥਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ 'ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਤਾਕਤ ਦਿਓ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਹ ਦਿਖਾਓ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਮੁੜ ਨਾ ਵਾਪਰ ਸਕਣ।' ਮੈਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਪੂਰੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਖਿਮਾ ਜਾਚਨਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਝਿਜਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਜੇ ਕੁਝ ਵੀ 1984 ਵਿਚ ਵਾਪਰਿਆ, ਉਹ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੌਮੀ ਭਰਾਤਰੀਭਾਵ, ਜੋ ਸਾਡੇ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਹਿਤ ਹੈ, ਨੂੰ ਰੱਦਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਮੈਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਝੂਠੀ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਸ਼ਠਾ 'ਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਰਹਿ ਰਿਹਾ। ਆਪਣੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਅਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਸ਼ਰਮ ਨਾਲ ਸਿਰ ਝੁਕਾਉਂਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਇਥੇ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਘਟਨਾ ਵਾਪਰੀ।

ਪਰ ਸ੍ਰੀਮਾਨ ਜੀ, ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਮਲਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਤਰਾਅ-ਚੜ੍ਹਾਅ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅਤੀਤ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਿਖ ਸਕਦੇ ਪਰ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਇੱਛਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਚੰਗੇਰਾ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਲਿਖ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਇਹ ਬਹਿਸ ਚੰਗੇਰੇ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਦੀ ਤਲਾਸ਼ 'ਤੇ ਧਿਆਨ ਕੇਂਦਰਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਕਰੇਗੀ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਨਾਗਰਿਕ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਨਾਲ

ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹੋਣ, ਆਪਣੇ-ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਸਨਮਾਨਿਤ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰ ਸਕਣਗੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਹਰ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸਾਡੀ ਪੰਜ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਸਾਲ ਪੁਰਾਣੀ ਸੁਨਹਿਰੀ ਪ੍ਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਾਲੀ ਇਸ ਭੂਮੀ 'ਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਨਾਗਰਿਕਾਂ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਤਿਕਾਰਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਵੈਮਾਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਬਤੀਤ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ। ਜੇ ਇਹ ਬਹਿਸ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਕੇਂਦਰਿਤ ਰਹੀ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਡੇ ਮਕਸਦ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਕਰੇਗੀ ਪਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਚੀਜ਼ ਦੇ ਗੈਰ-ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕ, ਜਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕ ਵੀ, ਚੋਣਵੇਂ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਮਕਸਦ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਵੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਧਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ। ਮੈਂ ਇਹ ਕਹਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਗੱਲ ਸੂਰੂ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਨਹਿਰੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਉਸ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਭਵਿੱਖ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਹਾਰ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਉਮੀਦਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਖਾਹਿਸ਼ਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ-ਵਟਾਂਦਰਾ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ। ਆਹਲੂਵਾਲੀਆ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਤੁਕ ਵਰਤੀ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਵੀ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਵਰੋਸਾਈ ਧਰਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਆਗਮਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਕਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਹਿਮ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਤਬਦੀਲੀਆਂ ਆਈਆਂ।

ਸਾਡੇ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਨੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਮੂਲੀਅਤ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਮਾਜ, ਧਰਮ-ਨਿਰਪੱਖਤਾ 'ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਜਿਊਣ-ਢੰਗ ਦਾ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਨੇ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਅੱਖੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇਖੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਵੱਡੀਆਂ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਮਿਸਾਲਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਚਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਾਤਾ-ਪਿਤਾ ਗਵਾਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਵੀ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਹੌਸਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਛੱਡਿਆ। ਇਹੀ ਸਾਡੀ ਵਿਰਾਸਤ ਹੈ। ਸ੍ਰੀਮਾਨ ਚੇਅਰਮੈਨ ਜੀ, ਇਸ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦਾ ਇਹੀ ਵਿਰਸਾ ਹੈ। ਵੱਡੀ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਵਾਲੇ ਦੌਰ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵਾਰ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਰਹੱਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਮਾਣ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਹਾਸਲ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਾਬਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦਿਖਾਇਆ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਅਗਲੇਰੇ ਮੋਰਚੇ ਪ੍ਰੰਪਰਾਗਤ ਢੰਗਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਤ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਇੰਜ ਵੀ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਦਾ ਦੂਰ-ਦੂਰੇਡੇ ਅਫਗਾਨਿਸਤਾਨ ਤੱਕ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਪਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਘਟਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਜੁੜਿਆ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਬੜਾ ਗੌਰਵਮਈ ਹੈ। ਬਰਤਾਨਵੀ ਰਾਜ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਨੇ ਹੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਨਹਿਰੀ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਆਬਾਦ ਕੀਤੇ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦਾ ਅੰਨ ਭੰਡਾਰ ਬਣਾਇਆ। ਵੰਡ ਕਾਰਨ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਡੇ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਦਾ ਸਾਹਮਣਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਿਆ। ਸਾਡਾ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਾ ਦੋ ਹਿੱਸਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੰਡਿਆ ਗਿਆ। ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਇਧਰਲੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਪਲਾਇਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਮੈਂ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਸੈਂਕੜੇ ਮਿਸਾਲਾਂ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਲੋਕ ਸਿਰਫ ਆਪਣੇ ਗਲ ਦੇ ਕੱਪੜਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਇਧਰ ਆਏ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਗੁਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਕੁਝ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਮੁਸੀਬਤ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਮੌਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਤਬਦੀਲ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਆਮਦਨੀ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਨੰਬਰ ਇਕ ਰਾਜ ਵਜੋਂ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਹਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਾਂਤੀ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤ ਤੋਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਨੰਬਰ ਇਕ ਰਾਜ ਕਰਕੇ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ।

ਮੈਂ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਧਿਰ ਦੇ ਮਾਣਯੋਗ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਮਹਾਨ ਰਵਾਇਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਖਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਮੈਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਝਗੜਨਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ। ਮੈਂ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਧਿਰ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਨਮਾਨਪੂਰਵਕ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਕਹਾਂਗਾ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਜਵਾਹਰ ਲਾਲ ਨਹਿਰੂ ਦੀ ਦੂਰ-ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਵਾਲੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਮਦਦ ਵੰਡ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਹਾਸਲ ਨਾ ਹੋਈ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਓਨਾ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਸੂਬਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਬਣ ਸਕਦਾ ਜਿੰਨਾ ਅੱਜ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਸਦਨ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਮੇਰੀ ਮਨਸ਼ਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਾਧਾ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਇਹ ਇਕ ਤੱਥ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਦੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਸੁਨਹਿਰੀ ਅਧਿਆਇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਫਿਰਕੂ ਲੀਹਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਵੰਡਣ ਵਿਚ ਰੁੱਝਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਮੈਂ ਕੋਈ ਅੰਕ ਹਾਸਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਹੈ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ 1967 ਵਿਚ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿਚ ਆਈ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਦੇ ਜੋ ਨਤੀਜੇ ਨਿਕਲੇ, ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਇਥੇ ਕੋਈ ਗੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਾਂਗਾ।

ਅਸੀਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਿਲਸਿਲੇ 'ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਇਕ ਢੁਕਵੇਂ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਦੇਖਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ 70ਵਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਦੇ ਅਖੀਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਪਰੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੇਲਾ ਆਇਆ। ਇਹ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਬਣੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਸੀ, ਜੋ ਸਾਡੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਜਖਮ ਲਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਮਕਸਦ ਨਾਲ ਘੜੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਦੁਖਦਾਈ ਪੌਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ, ਜੋ 90ਵਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਅੱਧ ਤੱਕ ਜਾਰੀ ਰਿਹਾ। 1984 ਦੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਮਹਾਂ ਦੁਖਾਂਤ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਇਕ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਸਨ।

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਉਦਾਸ ਅਧਿਆਇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਕੱਢਣ ਲਈ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਡੇ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਨੇ ਪਏ। ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੁਚਾਲਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਜਿੱਠਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਗਰੂਕਤਾ ਆਈ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਬਣੀ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਕੌਮੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਧਾਰਾ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਆਪਸੀ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤੀ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਹੋਈ। 1984 ਦੀਆਂ ਦੁਖਦਾਈ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਤਮ-ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਮੁੜ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਵੱਡਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਲੱਗਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਸੈਂਕੜੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਮਿਲੇ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਖਦਸ਼ੇ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਇਕਜੁਟ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਣ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਥਾਂ ਰਹੇਗੀ ਜਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ। ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਜਾਣ 'ਤੇ ਵੀ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਧਿਆਪਕ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ, ਵੱਲੋਂ ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਵਾਲ ਪੁੱਛੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਅਤੇ ਮੈਂ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਕੌਮੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਧਾਰਾ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਸਥਾਈ ਪਾਤਾ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰਨ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਵੱਡਾ ਕੌਮੀ ਦੁਖਾਂਤ ਹੋਣਾ ਸੀ।

ਮੈਂ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਦੇਸ਼-ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਤਾਕਤਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੁਚਾਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹਰਾਉਣਾ ਹੀ ਸਾਡੀ ਹਰ ਰੰਗਤ ਵਾਲੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਲੀਡਰਸ਼ਿਪ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚੀ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਂਜਲੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ, ਮੈਂ ਇਥੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਗਲਤੀਆਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਭ ਰਿਹਾ। ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਨੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਤਮ-ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਮੁੜ ਹਾਸਲ ਕੀਤਾ। ਮੈਂ ਮੰਨਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਅੱਤਵਾਦੀ ਤੱਤ ਅੱਜ ਉਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਜਿਵੇਂ 1980ਵਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਡਰ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ 'ਸੁਤੰਤਰਤਾ ਦੀ ਕੀਮਤ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਨਿਗਰਾਨੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ।' ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਸਦਨ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਵਰਗਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਪੀਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਨਾ ਕਰੀਏ, ਨਾ ਹੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਰਤੀਏ, ਜੋ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਇਕਜੁਟਤਾ ਦੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਸੂਮ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਖੇਡਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਫਿਰ ਸੂਤਰ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਦੇਵੇ। ਅਜਿਹਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਨਾ ਤਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ, ਨਾ ਹੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ। ਮੈਂ ਬੇਹੱਦ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਕੁਝ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਹੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ, ਉਹ ਉੱਪਰ ਬਿਆਨੇ ਮਕਸਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ 'ਚ ਮਦਦ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਮੈਂ ਸੂਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਅਤੀਤ ਨੂੰ ਪੁੱਠਾ ਗੇੜਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੇ ਪਰ ਅੱਜ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਇਕ ਚੰਗੇਰਾ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਸਿਰਜਣ ਦਾ ਮੌਕਾ ਹੈ। ਆਓ 1984 ਦੇ ਉਸ ਵੱਡੇ ਸਦਮੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਣ ਲਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਕਰੀਏ। ਸਾਡੀ ਸਮੇਂ-ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਲੀਡਰਸ਼ਿਪ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਇਸ ਮਕਸਦ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲਈ ਵੱਡੇ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਸਫਲ ਵੀ ਹੋਏ ਹਾਂ। ਹੁਣ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਕੁਝ ਨਾ ਕਰੀਏ ਜੋ ਇਸ ਵਰਤਾਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਉਲਟਾਉਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਸਾਬਤ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕੋਈ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਪਸੰਦ ਨਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਪਰ ਕੋਈ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਤੋਂ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਮੁਨਕਰ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ? ਮੈਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਜਵਾਹਰ ਲਾਲ ਨਹਿਰੂ ਦੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। 1984 ਦੀਆਂ ਦੁਖਦਾਈ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਰਾਜੀਵ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਕੌਮੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਧਾਰਾ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਪਸ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਲਿਆਉਣ? ਮੈਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਗੱਲ ਯਾਦ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਉਪ-ਚੇਅਰਮੈਨ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਆਖੀ ਸੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ 'ਇਹ ਮੇਰੀ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਤਰਜੀਹ ਹੈ।'

ਇਕ ਬੈਠਕ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਵੀ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਸੀ, ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਅਮਲ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਇਆ ਹੈ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਸੱਤਾ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਦੇ ਹੱਥ ਸੌਂਪ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਰਾਜੀਵ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਜਵਾਬ ਵੀ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ, 'ਇਸ ਗੱਲ

ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਅਹਿਮੀਅਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਜਿੱਤਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਹਾਰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਅਸਲ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤ ਅੱਗੇ ਵਧਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿਕਸਿਤ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ।' ਇਹ ਹੈ ਵਿਰਸਾ।

1984 ਦੇ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਕਈ ਖੱਪੇ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਹਨ। ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਦੀ ਜਾਂਚ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਅਜੇ ਤੱਕ ਵੀ ਸੱਚਾਈ ਤੋਂ ਜਾਣੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਤਲਾਸ਼ ਜਾਰੀ ਰਹਿਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ। ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਵੱਖਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਦੂਜੇ ਸਦਨ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਆਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਲੋਪਲ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਨੁਕਤਾ ਉਠਾਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਾਡੇ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਸਨਮਾਨਯੋਗ ਸਦਨ ਦਾ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਦੱਸ ਦੇਵੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਹੋਇਆ? ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ 1984 ਦੇ ਦੰਗਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਦਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਸਵਾਲ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਉਦੋਂ ਇਕ ਪੂਰਕ ਸਵਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਇਸ 'ਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਵਿਚਾਰ-ਵਟਾਂਦਰਾ ਵੀ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਮੈਂ ਉਦੋਂ ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਬੈਠਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਕੁਰਸੀ 'ਤੇ ਜਿਥੇ ਹੁਣ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਜਸਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਬੈਠੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਮੈਂ ਸੋਚਿਆ ਕਿ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨਕਾਲ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਢੁਕਵਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੀਟ ਤੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਉੱਠਿਆ। ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨਕਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਮੈਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਚਲਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਦੋਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਣਯੋਗ ਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਨੇ ਬਾਹਰ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਕੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ? ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ, 'ਮੈਂ 1984 ਦੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਾਂਚ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਡਾ: ਮਨਮੋਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਸਖਤ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕੀਤਾ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਸੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਮੈਂ ਇਹ ਆਪਣੀ ਯਾਦਦਾਸ਼ਤ ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਕਹਿ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਉਮੀਦ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਸਹੀ ਹੈ। ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਲਾਲ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਅਡਵਾਨੀ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਉਦੋਂ ਇਸ ਸਦਨ ਵਿਚ ਖਿਮਾ ਯਾਚਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਬਾਹਰ ਜੋ ਕੁਝ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਖਿਆ ਸੀ, ਉਹ ਸਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਉਦੋਂ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿਚ ਆਇਆ ਸੀ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਡਾ ਕਾਬੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਵਿਚਾਰੇ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਾਮਲਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਕੋਈ ਚੋਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਿ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਕੌਣ ਕਰੇਗਾ? ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਇਹ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਇਕ ਨਿਚੋੜ ਇਹ ਕੱਢਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਦੀ ਸਿਖਰਲੀ ਲੀਡਰਸ਼ਿਪ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਸਬੂਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਨ। ਪਿਛਲੇ 21 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਹਿਰ ਭਰਨ ਲਈ ਜੋ ਝੂਠ ਬੋਲਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਹੁਣ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਧਰਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਗਰਕ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਬਿਨਾਂ ਸ਼ੱਕ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਕੋਈ ਸਮੁੱਚਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਿਆ ਸਕਿਆ। ਸਾਰਾ ਕੁਝ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਹੀ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਦੂਜੇ ਸਦਨ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਇਕ ਗੱਲ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਦੀ ਵੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਕ ਗੱਲ ਸੰਸਦ ਦੇ ਸਦਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸੰਸਦ ਦੇ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਸਦਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਦਰ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਨਾਨਾਵਤੀ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਸ ਕਿਸੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਵੀ ਦੋਸ਼ ਲਗਾਏ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਜਾਂ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੂਝ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਗਲਤ ਵਤੀਰੇ ਜਾਂ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਦਾ ਦੋਸ਼ੀ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਹੈ, ਸੰਸਦ ਦੇ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਸਦਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਮੁੜ ਖੋਲ੍ਹੀਏ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਇਹ ਵਾਅਦਾ ਦੇ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਹਾਂ। ਮੇਰੇ ਇਕ ਸਹਿਕਰਮੀ, ਇਕ ਕੀਮਤੀ ਸਹਿਕਰਮੀ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਅਸਤੀਫ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਅਸਤੀਫ਼ਾ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਪੀੜਤ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੁੜ-ਵਸੇਬੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ ਸਵਾਲ ਉਠਾਏ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਮੈਂ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਕਬੂਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਕਈ ਘਾਟਾਂ ਰਹਿ ਗਈਆਂ ਹੋਣਗੀਆਂ। ਮੇਰੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੂਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਬੱਧ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦੰਗਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਪੀੜਤ ਵਿਧਵਾਵਾਂ, ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਸੰਭਵ ਮਦਦ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ। ਸਾਡੇ ਅੱਗੇ ਅਹਿਮ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਉਦਾਸ ਅਧਿਆਇ ਭੁੱਲ ਕ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਤੋਂ ਇਕ ਮਿਆਰੀ ਸਵੈ-ਮਾਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਬਤੀਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਸਮਰੱਥ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਕੁਝ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਅਫਸਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਕ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਨਿਯਮ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਅਫਸਰ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਰਿਟਾਇਰ ਹੋਣ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਚਾਰ ਸਾਲ ਤੱਕ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਕਈ ਸਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸੇਵਾ-ਮੁਕਤ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਦੇ

ਦਾਇਰੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਜਿਹੜੀ ਵੀ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ, ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ। ਜੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਆਗਿਆ ਦੇਵੇਗਾ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਮੁਕੱਦਮੇ ਚਲਾਏ ਜਾਣਗੇ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸ਼੍ਰੀਮਾਨ ਜੀ, ਮੈਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਯਕੀਨ ਦੁਆਉਂਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਇਸ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਦੀ ਤਹਿ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਲਈ, ਮਾਨਵੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਜੋ ਕੁਝ ਵੀ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੈ, ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਵਚਨਬੱਧ ਹੈ। ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨੇ ਕੁਝ ਦੋਸ਼ਪੂਰਨ ਟਿੱਪਣੀਆਂ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਜਾਂ ਕੁਝ ਸਿਫਾਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਝਾਅ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਹਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਨਜ਼ਰਸਾਨੀ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ। ਅਸੀਂ ਸਮੂਹ ਪੀੜਤ ਵਿਧਵਾਵਾਂ, ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਉਹ ਪੂਰੇ ਮਾਣ-ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਬਤੀਤ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ। ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਅਫਸਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨੇ ਟਿੱਪਣੀਆਂ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਅਸੀਂ ਦੇਖਾਂਗੇ ਕਿ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਦੇ ਦਾਇਰੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਕੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਮੁਕੱਦਮਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਜਾਂਚ-ਪੜਤਾਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ।

ਨਤੀਜੇ ਵਜੋਂ, ਸ਼੍ਰੀਮਾਨ ਜੀ, ਮੈਂ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਫਿਰ ਉਹੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ, ਜਿਹੜੇ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਭਾਸ਼ਣ ਦੇ ਆਰੰਭ ਵਿਚ ਕਹੇ ਸਨ। ਅਸੀਂ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਕੌਮ ਦੇ ਅਤੀਤ, ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਪਟ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ, ਜਿਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਵਾਇਤਾਂ ਬੜੀਆਂ ਦਲੇਰ ਤੇ ਸਾਹਸੀ ਹਨ, ਜਿਹੜੀ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਧਾਰਾ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦੇ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਵਿਚ, ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਆਬਾਦੀ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਪਾਤ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਕਿਤੇ ਵੱਧ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਪਾਇਆ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਲਾਘਾਯੋਗ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ, ਸਾਡੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇਕ ਵਧੀਆ ਰਾਜ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਹੈ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਗੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਕੌਮ ਦੇ ਦਿਲ ਅਤੇ ਸਵੈ-ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਠੇਸ ਲੱਗੇ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਖੜਗ-ਭੁਜਾ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਜਜ਼ਬਾ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਪੈ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਦੁੱਖ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਦੋਂ ਦੂਜੇ ਸਦਨ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਮਾਨਯੋਗ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਨੇ ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਮਿਸਾਲਾਂ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਲਿਆਂਦੀਆਂ ਕਿ 1984 ਵਿਚ ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਹਥਿਆਰਬੰਦ ਫੌਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਫਸਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਬੁਰਾ ਸਲੂਕ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਰਾਜਨਾਥ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਦੁਖਦਾਈ ਕਾਂਡ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਫਿਰ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ। ਮੈਂ ਬੜੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਕਾਂਡ ਸਾਡੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਬਹੁਤ ਦੁਖਦਾਈ ਕਾਂਡ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਕਾਂਡ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਰ-ਵਾਰ ਦੁਹਰਾ ਕੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਏਕਤਾ, ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਵਾਧਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਰਗੀ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਕੌਮ ਦੇ ਜਜ਼ਬਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੀ ਖੇਡ ਖੇਡਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਸ਼੍ਰੀਮਾਨ ਜੀ, ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮੈਂ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਫਿਰ ਇਸ ਸਦਨ ਨੂੰ ਅਪੀਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ 1984 ਦੀਆਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਪਰਿਪੇਖ ਵਿਚ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ। ਬੀਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਮੇਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ, ਨਾ ਹੀ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਬਦਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਆਓ, ਇਕ ਸੰਗਠਿਤ ਕੌਮ ਵਜੋਂ ਨਵੇਂ ਰਾਹ ਲੱਭ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਨੂੰ ਯਕੀਨੀ ਬਣਾਈਏ ਕਿ ਚਾਹੇ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਗੁਜਰਾਤ ਜਾਂ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਗ ਹੋਵੇ, ਸਾਡੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੁਖਦਾਈ ਕਾਂਡ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਾਪਰਨਗੇ।

ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ, ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਘੱਟ-ਗਿਣਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਡੇ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਤਿਕਾਰਯੋਗ ਥਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੈ। ਸਾਡੇ ਗਣਤੰਤਰ ਦੇ ਬਾਨੀ ਨੇਤਾਵਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਉੱਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਹੀ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਣ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਮੈਂ ਬਹਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਗ ਲੈਂਦਿਆਂ ਕੁਝ ਦਿਨ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ-ਯਾਤਰਾ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ, ਜਿਥੇ-ਜਿਥੇ ਵੀ ਮੈਂ ਗਿਆ, ਲੋਕ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ-ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਹੈਰਾਨ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਕਿ 100 ਕਰੋੜ ਦੀ ਆਬਾਦੀ ਵਾਲਾ ਭਾਰਤ, ਇਕ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਸਮਾਜ ਅਤੇ ਇਕ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਅਰਥ-ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਤਕਦੀਰ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਰਾਹ ਲੱਭ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹਾ ਭਾਰਤ, ਜੋ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਗਰਿਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਰੇ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਅਤੇ ਹਰ ਨਾਗਰਿਕ ਨੂੰ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਵੈਮਾਣ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਵਚਨਬੱਧ ਹੈ।

ਪਰ ਕਿਤੇ-ਕਿਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਬਿੜਕ ਵੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਇਨਸਾਨ ਗਲਤੀ ਦਾ ਪੁਤਲਾ ਹੈ। ਅੰਤ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਇਹੀ ਕਹਾਂਗਾ ਕਿ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਆਫੀ ਮੰਗਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਇਸ ਤ੍ਰਾਸਦੀ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਦੂਜੇ ਸਦਨ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਸ: ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੋ

ਅਕਾਲੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਿੱਤ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਸਨ, ਉਹ 35 ਸਾਲ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਿੱਤਰ ਰਹੇ, ਉਹ ਕਾਲਜ ਵਿਚ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਪੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਸਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਜਦੋਂ ਰਾਜੀਵ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਨੇ ਸੰਤ ਹਰਚੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਲੌਂਗੋਵਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਝੌਤੇ ਉੱਤੇ ਦਸਤਖ਼ਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਦੁੱਖ ਅਤੇ ਹਲਚਲ ਭਰਿਆ ਦੁਖਦਾਈ ਕਾਂਡ ਖਤਮ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਸੰਤ ਜੀ ਦੁਚਿੱਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਸਨ। ਸ: ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਦੱਸਿਆ, ਤਾਂ ਸੰਤ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੋਂ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹਾਂ। ਫਿਰ ਉਹ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਸ: ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਦੀ ਦੂਜੀ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲ 'ਤੇ ਚਲੇ ਗਏ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੋਂ ਵਾਕ ਲਿਆ। ਵਾਕ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਤੁਕ ਇਹ ਸੀ-

ਹੋਇ ਇਕਤੁ ਮਿਲਹੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਭਾਈ
ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਦੂਰਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਇ॥

ਇਸ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਹੈ : 'ਭਰਾਵੇ, ਆਓ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਬੈਠੋ। ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਤਿਆਗ ਕੇ ਸੁੱਭ ਕਾਰਜ ਵਿਚ ਧਿਆਨ ਲਗਾਓ।'

ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਮਹਾਨ ਸਦਨ ਨੂੰ ਅਪੀਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਆਪਣਾ ਭਾਸ਼ਨ ਸਮਾਪਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ। ਆਓ, ਅਸੀਂ ਕੌਮੀ ਇਕਜੁਟਤਾ ਲਈ ਅਤੇ ਹਰ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨਾਗਰਿਕ ਦੀਆਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਹੰਝੂ ਪੂੰਝ ਸੁੱਟਣ ਲਈ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹਤਾ ਤੇ ਦਿਲੋ-ਜਾਨ ਨਾਲ ਜੁਟ ਜਾਈਏ। ਇਹੀ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਸਾਡੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਦਾ ਸਰੋਤ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰਪਿਤਾ ਮਹਾਤਮਾ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਇਹੀ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਹਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਮਾਤਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਹਰ ਹੰਝੂ ਪੂੰਝ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ। ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਏਨੇ ਉੱਚ-ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੇ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲ ਹੋਵੇ ਪਰ ਇਹ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਸਾਡਾ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ-ਸਰੋਤ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਬਣ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਮਹਾਨ ਸਦਨ ਵਿਚ ਜੋ ਕੁਝ ਵੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਵਿਚਾਰੀਏ, ਜੋ ਕੁਝ ਵੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਰੀਏ, ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਹੋਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਆਪ ਸਭ ਦਾ ਧੰਨਵਾਦ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ।

ਅਜੀਤ ਜਲੰਧਰ ਐਤਵਾਰ 14 ਅਗਸਤ 2005 'ਚੋਂ ਧੰਨਵਾਦ ਸਹਿਤ

ਨਵੰਬਰ 84 ਦਾ ਕਤਲੇਆਮ

ਸੰਸਦ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ੋਕ ਪ੍ਰਸਤਾਵ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ ਜਾਏ

ਰਾਜ ਸਭਾ ਵਿਚ ਸ: ਤਰਲੋਚਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਭਾਸ਼ਣ



ਸ: ਤਰਲੋਚਨ ਸਿੰਘ : ਸ਼੍ਰੀਮਾਨ, ਮੈਂ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਬਹਿਸ ਦੋ ਦਿਨ ਤੋਂ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਸ ਮੁੱਦੇ 'ਤੇ ਬਹਿਸ ਹੋਣੀ ਸੀ ਉਹ ਮੁੱਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦੱਬ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਦੋ ਦਿਨ ਰਾਜ ਸਭਾ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਸਭਾ ਵਿਚ ਨਵੇਂ-ਨਵੇਂ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਨਾਅਰੇ, ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਤੇ ਇਕ-ਦੂਜੇ ਨੂੰ ਨੀਵਾਂ ਦਿਖਾਉਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਹੋੜਾਂ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਅਸੀਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭੁੱਲ ਗਏ ਹਾਂ ਜੋ ਦੰਗਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਰੇ ਗਏ ਅਤੇ ਅੱਜ ਤੱਕ ਕਿਸੇ ਇਕ ਦੋਸ਼ੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਈ। ਕੋਈ ਗੋਧਰਾ ਕਹਿ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਕੋਈ ਗੁਜਰਾਤ ਕਹਿ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਕੋਈ ਭਾਜਪਾ ਅਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਸਿਰਫ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਨਾਲ ਵਾਸਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਜੋ ਨਾਗਰਿਕ ਮਰੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਲਫਜ਼ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿਹਾ। ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਸੱਚਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਲੱਭਾਂਗੇ। 21 ਸਾਲ ਬੀਤ ਗਏ ਤੇ ਅਜੇ ਤੱਕ ਅਸੀਂ ਸੱਚਾਈ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਸਕੇ। 9 ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਬਣੇ। ਨਾਨਾਵਤੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੱਜ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਡਰ ਸੀ ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੱਚਾਈ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਆ ਕੇ ਫਿਰ ਵਾਪਸ ਚਲੇ ਗਏ। ਮੈਂ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੜਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਹੁਣ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਦੋ ਥਾਵਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ, ਹਾਊਸ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਕਾਪੀ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਲੈਣ। ਪਹਿਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਵਿਵਸਥਤ (ਯੋਜਨਾਬਧ) ਹਮਲਾ ਸੀ। ਦੂਜਾ, ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਪਤਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਐਕਸ਼ਨ ਨਹੀਂ

ਹੋਵੇਗਾ, ਪੁਲਿਸ ਐਕਸ਼ਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਵੇਗੀ, ਇਹ ਹੁਕਮ ਕਿਸ ਨੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ? ਇਸ ਮੁੱਦੇ 'ਤੇ ਆ ਕੇ ਉਹ ਵੀ ਚੁੱਪ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਅਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣਨ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਾਂ। ਤੀਜੀ ਗੱਲ, ਏਨੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਦਰਜੇ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਸਾਕਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਉੱਚ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਵਾਪਰ ਗਿਆ? ਇਹ ਨਾਨਾਵਤੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਚੁੱਪ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼੍ਰੀਮਾਨ ਜੀ, ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਫਸੋਸ ਸੀ, ਇੰਦਰਾ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਕਤਲ ਦਾ, ਜੋ ਸਾਰੇ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ ਦੀ ਨੇਤਾ ਸੀ, ਸਾਰੇ ਨਾਗਰਿਕ ਦੁਖੀ ਸਨ। ਪਰ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਬੜੀ ਹੈਰਾਨਗੀ ਹੋਈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਰਾਜਧਾਨੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਇਆ। ਅਸੀਂ ਕਦੇ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਾਰਾ ਕੁਝ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਰਾਜੀਵ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਕਰਾਇਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਅੱਜ ਤੱਕ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦੀ ਸਮਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਈ ਕਿ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਇਹ ਕਹਿ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਹਾਈ ਕਮਾਨ ਬਚ ਗਈ ਅਤੇ ਹਾਈ ਕਮਾਨ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਕੁਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਇਆ। ਕਿਸੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਜੋ ਅਮਲਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ 'ਟੀਚ ਲੈਸਨ' ਕਿਹਾ, ਉਹ ਕਿਥੇ ਗਏ, ਸਾਰੇ ਜਿੰਦਾ ਹਨ। ਉਪ ਸਭਾਪਤੀ ਜੀ, ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਦੋ-ਤਿੰਨ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਬੈਠਦਾ ਹਾਂ। ਗੱਲ ਬੜੀ ਸਾਫ਼ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਇਹ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਦੇ ਭੁੱਲਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ, ਅਸੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਕਦੀ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਭੁੱਲਾਂਗੇ। ਸਾਡੀ ਤਾਂ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਅਬਦਾਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਜੋ ਸਿੱਖ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਹੋਏ, ਉਹ ਹਰ ਰੋਜ਼ ਅਸੀਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਪੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਭੁੱਲਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਗੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਥੋੜ੍ਹੇ ਦਿਨ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ। ਅਰਜਨਟੀਨਾ ਦੇ ਜੋ

'Pinochet' ਲੰਦਨ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸੀ, ਉਹ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਰਜਨਟੀਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਭੱਜ ਗਏ ਸੀ। ਹਾਊਸ ਆਫ਼ ਲਾਰਡਸ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗ੍ਰਿਫ਼ਤਾਰ ਕਰਕੇ ਤੇ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਅਰਜਨਟੀਨਾ ਵਾਪਸ ਭੇਜਿਆ। ਇਹ ਦੋ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ। ਬੋਤਸਵਾਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਹੋਇਆ। ਉਥੋਂ ਦੋ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰਪਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਵਰਲਡ ਕੌਰਟ ਵਿਚ ਬਿਠਾ ਕੇ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਉਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ? ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਨਾਜ਼ੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਯਹੂਦੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਗੱਲ ਨੂੰ 60 ਸਾਲ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਅੱਜ ਤੱਕ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨੇਤਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਫੜ-ਫੜ ਕੇ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਭੁੱਲਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ, ਮੁਜ਼ਰਿਮ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਛੱਡਦਾ। ਅੱਜ ਨਹੀਂ, ਕਲ੍ਹ ਨਹੀਂ, ਮੇਰੀ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਸਾਫ਼ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸੱਚਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਲੱਭਣ ਲਈ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਤਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਸਰਕਾਰ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਕਹਿ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਦੇਖਾਂਗੇ, ਅਸੀਂ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ ਪਰ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਤੋਂ ਸੰਤੁਸ਼ਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਸਾਰੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ, ਸਾਰੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ, ਚਾਹੇ ਉਹ ਕਿਤੇ ਵੀ ਬੈਠੇ ਹਨ, ਪਿਛਲੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸੜਕਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਉਤਰ ਆਏ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਸਾਬਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਹਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਸ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਤੋਂ ਦੁਖੀ ਹੈ। ਸਾਡੀ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਹਾਊਸ ਨੂੰ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦੋ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਰੋ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਤਾ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਸਾਰਾ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਨੇ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ, ਪੁਲਿਸ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੀ। ਕੋਈ ਐਫ. ਆਈ. ਆਰ. ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਜਾਂਚ ਤੋਂ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦੀ। ਕੋਈ ਆਦਮੀ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਏਗਾ, ਨਾ ਅੱਜ ਤੱਕ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੋ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਰੇ। ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੈਲਸਨ ਮੰਡੇਲਾ ਨੇ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਜਦੋਂ ਸਾਊਥ ਅਫਰੀਕਾ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਹੋਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਬਣਾਈ। ਉਸ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ 'ਟਰੂਥ ਐਂਡ ਰੀਕੌਂਸਿਲੀਨੇਸ਼ਨ' ਸੀ। ਆਓ, ਤੁਸੀਂ ਉੱਠੋ, ਅਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ। ਸਿੱਖ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ 'ਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਜੋ ਮਾਫ਼ੀ ਮੰਗੇ, ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਫ਼ੀ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਪਰ ਜੋ ਦੋਸ਼ੀ ਹਨ, ਉਹ ਖੜ੍ਹੇ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਕਹਿਣ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ, ਅਸੀਂ ਮੁਆਫ਼ੀ ਮੰਗਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਅਸੀਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਆਫ਼ ਕਰ ਦੇਵਾਂਗੇ, ਪਹਿਲੀ ਗੱਲ। ਦੂਜੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਸੱਚੇ ਦਿਲੋਂ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਉੱਠ ਕੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਲਵੇ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਦੋਸ਼ੀ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਆਫ਼ੀ ਮੰਗਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਹੀ ਸਾਡੀ ਮੰਗ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ

ਜੀ ਨੇ ਹੁਣੇ ਮੁਆਫ਼ੀ ਮੰਗੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਪਾਰਲੀਮੈਂਟ ਵਿਚ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਸਦਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਜਦੋਂ ਭੁਪਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਗੈਸ ਦੀ ਦੁਰਘਟਨਾ ਹੋਈ ਤਾਂ ਇਥੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਸ਼ੋਕ ਪ੍ਰਸਤਾਵ ਪਾਸ ਕੀਤਾ। ਹੁਣ ਲੰਦਨ ਵਿਚ ਜੋ ਕੁਝ ਹੋਇਆ, ਉਸ ਦੇ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਕਿਹਾ। ਇਸ ਸਦਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਫ਼ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਆਫ਼ੀ ਮੰਗਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ। ਦੋਵਾਂ ਸਦਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਪਾਰਲੀਮੈਂਟ ਵਿਚ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰਸਤਾਵ ਲਿਆਏ, ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਮੁਆਫ਼ੀ ਮੰਗਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਜੋ ਉਸ ਵਕਤ ਦੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਸੀ, ਸਰਕਾਰ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਤਾ ਕਿ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਜਪਾ ਕੌਣ ਹੈ? ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਫ਼ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਸਦਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰਸਤਾਵ ਲਿਆਏ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਮੁਆਫ਼ੀ ਮੰਗਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਸਦਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਲਈ ਮੁਆਫ਼ੀ ਮੰਗੇ ਅਤੇ ਕਹੋ ਕਿ ਜੋ ਕੁਝ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਗ਼ਲਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਪਾਰਲੀਮੈਂਟ ਵਿਚ, ਦੋਵਾਂ ਸਦਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਘੱਟੋ-ਘੱਟ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਦੇਸ਼ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੈ। ਸ਼੍ਰੀਮਾਨ ਜੀ, ਮੈਂ ਇਕ ਗੱਲ ਹੋਰ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਬੈਠਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਬੜੀ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ੰਸਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਖੁਸ਼ ਹਾਂ, ਵਧੀਆ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਇਕ ਗੱਲ ਮੈਂ ਆਪ ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਕਰਾਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ 1947 ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਫ਼ੈਸਲਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿਣ ਜਾਂ ਇਥੇ ਆਉਣ। ਇਹ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਚੀਜ਼ ਹੈ, ਇਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਬਰਤਾਨਵੀ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਛਪ ਚੁੱਕਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਜਿਨਾਹ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਕੋਰਾ ਚੈੱਕ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਤੇ ਕਿਹਾ, ਤੁਸੀਂ ਜੋ ਮਰਜ਼ੀ ਲਿਖੋ, ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਰਹੋ। ਪਰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਫ਼ੈਸਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਭਾਰਤ ਨਾਲ ਹਾਂ, ਸਾਡਾ ਘਰ ਉਥੇ ਸੀ, ਸਾਡੀ ਜਨਮ ਭੂਮੀ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਹੈ, ਸਾਡੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ ਸਥਾਨ ਨਨਕਾਣਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਹੈ। ਲੱਖਾਂ ਲੋਕ ਮਰੇ, ਪਿਟੇ, ਪਰ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਲੀਡਰ ਸਨ। ਅੱਧਾ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵੰਡ ਕੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਆਇਆ, ਵਰਨਾ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਦੀ ਸਰਹੱਦ ਗੁਜ਼ਰਾਓਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ, ਅਗਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਤਾਂ। ਪਰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦਾ ਸਾਥ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਵੰਡ ਕੇ ਅੱਧਾ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਤਾ, ਅਸੀਂ ਮਰੇ, ਪਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਕੋਈ ਅਹਿਸਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਤਾ ਰਹੇ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਵਾਸੀ ਹਾਂ, ਅਸੀਂ ਕਦੀ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਟੇ ਪਰ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਬੜਾ ਅਫਸੋਸ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਗਿਆ, ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਆ ਗਈ, ਕੋਈ ਕੁਝ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਕੁਝ? ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਦੁਖੀ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਜਿੰਨੇ ਮਰਜ਼ੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਦਿਉ, ਜੋ ਮਰਜ਼ੀ ਕਹਿ ਲਵੇ ਪਰ ਇਹ ਭੁੱਲਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਭੁੱਲੇਗਾ, ਸਦੀਆਂ ਤੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਭੁੱਲੇਗਾ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦੋਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਲੋਕ ਏਨਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਹਾਦਸਾ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਕਿ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਮੱਥੇ 'ਤੇ ਕਲੰਕ ਹੈ, ਸਾਰੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀ ਬਦਨਾਮੀ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ 'ਤੇ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਕੀ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਸ ਲਈ, ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਕਿੰਤੂ-ਪ੍ਰੰਤੂ ਨਾ ਲਾਓ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਕੀ ਹੋਇਆ, ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕੀ ਹੋਇਆ? ਪਾਰਲੀਮੈਂਟ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਮੁੱਦਾ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨੇ ਕੀ ਕੀਤਾ, ਵੈਸੇ ਮੈਂ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਕ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਾਂ। ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਤਾਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਸਮਾਂ ਖਰਾਬ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਡਰ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ। ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਕੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਇਹ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਹੈ। ਰਿਪੋਰਟਾਂ ਅਰਕਾਈਵਜ਼ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਅੱਜ ਤੱਕ ਸਾਡੇ ਦਫ਼ਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ 40-50 ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਿਪੋਰਟਾਂ ਪਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਮੇਰੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਭਰਾ ਘੱਟ-ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਬੈਠੇ ਹਨ, ਜਿੰਨੇ ਵੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਘੱਟ-ਗਿਣਤੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਬਣੇ ਹਨ, ਅੱਜ ਤੱਕ ਕਿਸੇ 'ਤੇ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਈ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਕੋਈ ਭਰੋਸਾ ਨਾ ਕਰੋ। ਇਹ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਇਕ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਾਂ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਏਨਾ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਗੱਲ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ। ਧੰਨਵਾਦ।

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