

## Chapter - V

### **Have we done justice to the Real Heroes of 1857 War of Independence? And the Role of our Historians.**

In the 1<sup>st</sup> war of Independence movement five distinct groups of people were involved. One group was Kings, Rajas, Nawabs. In this category Bahadur Shah Zafar, Nana Rao, Maha Rani Laxmi Bai, Babu Kunwar Singh, Begum Hazrat Mahal Hyder Ali and Teepu Sultan are considered as freedom fighters because they were involved in the fight with British for one or the other reason. Teepu Sultan is the only Ruler whose fight was purely on National consideration. On the other hand the following Kings, Rajas & Nawab such as the Sindia of Gwalior, Holker of Indore, Nizam of Hyderabad, Rajas of Jodhpur & Mewar, Nawabs of Bhopal, Tonk and Pataudi, Rajas of Patiala & Nabha, Nawab of Rampur, Raja of Jind and all Sikh Chieftains of Punjab & the Maharaja of Kashmir, not only did not support the rebels but gave active support to British to suppress the revolution.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> group was comprising of Talukedars, Zameendars, Money lenders, Merchants, Jagirdars. This group entirely supported the Britishers

The 3<sup>rd</sup> group was of Generals and High officials of certain Rajas, Nawabs and Moghal Kingdom. This comprised of Tantia Tope, Khan Bahadur Khan, Hasan Ali, Mohamood Hussain Khan, Nahar Singh, Brigadier Jwala Prasad, General Bakht Khan, General Mehmood, Beghum Alia of Oudh & Shahzada Firozshah.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Group comprised of soldiers or Sepoys which were in the employment of British Government. IN this group the most prominent group was of "Bengal Army". This was the most trusted Armed force out of British army. It comprised of people mostly from Oudh & Bihar. It comprised of over one hundred thirty five thousand soldiers all natives but under the 100% command of British. The highest post any Indian could be promoted was Subedar and all

higher post was exclusively reserved for Europeans. This was the figure given in British Parliament in 1858.

The 5<sup>th</sup> group consisted of people out of common men. This group was led by:-

Syed Ahmed Shaheed of Rai Bareli, Syed Amir in Peshwar, Maulvi Ahmedullah Madrasi in Oudh & Rohel Khand, Maulvi Liyaqat Ali Khan in Allahabad, Maulvi Peer Ali Khan of Village Mohammedpur Distt. Azamgarh area of operation in Patna Division, Mohammad Khan of Bijnore, Abdurrehman of Jhajhar, Walidad Khan of Malagarh, Ahmad Ali Khan of Farukhabad, Mehdi Hasan of Sultanpur, Fazle Azim of Rai Bareli, Banda Husain, Mehdi Hasan, Maulvi Sarfraz Ali of Gorakhpur, Maulvi Sikandar Shah of Faizabad, Ghaus Mohammed Khan of Sikandra Rao, Maulvi Mohammad Naeem Khan of Village Mohammadpur Distt. Azamgarh, Rajab Ali of Village Bamhur Distt: Azamgarh, Tula Ram of Rewari, Maulvi Massiuzzaman & Babar Ali of Oudh and Waris Ali Khan etc. and lacs of their supporters & followers.

As for the 1<sup>st</sup> groups of kings, Rajas & Nawabs are concerned their engagement with British started after the 3<sup>rd</sup> group revolted purely on religious ground on the issue of Greased cartridges. The sepoys objected the introduction of greased cartridges which according to them was having cow & pig fat. The Hindu & Muslim soldiers both objected and when British insisted that it will continue to be used, the soldiers revolted. The rebel soldiers wanted some leader to lead them and also to employ them so that their livelihood is also not put to danger. Some of the Rajas, Nawabs who had the grudge against British found the opportunity of well trained soldiers fully motivated to fight with British hence they took these sepoys with them promising them to supply of arms & salary with the hope to grab their lost territory and regain their title and pension denied to them by British. Some of the Rajas & Nawabs were forced by these deserter soldiers to lead them or face their onslaught. It is another thing that once they agreed for what ever reason these rajas Nawabs put their full strength to fight the British. But such Rajas or Nawabs literally cannot be put under category of genuine freedom fighters. They were brave men/ women fought bravely against the enemy of the country but not on National consideration. Here I am not giving details of each and every Raja or Nawab the cause of their discontent against British as it will be too lengthy.

However it is this class which is being given the maximum publicity homage by Historians, & Media and are being put on the highest of patriotic pedestal. One may accept it but what is most disturbing is that after the independence of the country in 1947 all those Rulers who supported the British and were responsible for killing our own people for British shamelessly changed their loyalty in favour of various political parties and are again in ruling group. Our Historians prior to Independence to earn the goodwill of British and its loyal rulers wrote about these people in High esteem, for personal benefits. These British loyal families should have been indicted and blacklisted at least after 1947 instead we Indians have made them as leaders and vote them to power.

The rebel soldiers were arrested & killed their properties confiscated made poor, remained poor up to 1947 and continue to remain poor even there after.

The Generals who had taken under their command the Baghi soldiers were ultimately killed by British one by one. No one even thinks about them. Their families properties were wiped out by British then and there.

It is the Generals and the common men who really had no personal reason or grouse against British except their love of the country. It is they who suffered the most. They are the one who are forgotten and their deeds are buried in the Archives, they belonged to poor families and became still poorer. The elite class or those who are in a position to highlight their sacrifices for the Nation kept them away from the knowledge of the people even after the independence of the country. By doing this have we done justice to the real Martyrs? We should peep to our "Gareban"?

The sacrifices of common men of this country who had no vested interest except the National interest has been systematically erased rather buried in the confines of the Archives. The Historians, then and even now ignored them. As far British Historians or those loyal to British, had the reason to ignore the fighters of freedom because the fight was against the British design to enslave India. But the role of Indian historians claiming to have Nationalist tenor still

ignoring such Martyrs, put them in Dock ? It has provided open field to those whose forefathers were loyal to British, and supported the British to enslave India to claim Nationalist status. Some of them, just before India was at the verge of getting the freedom, publicly surrendered the titles of “Sir”, “Khan Bahadur “ or “Rai Bahadur” to include themselves in the front row of Freedom fighters’ family, i.e. “Khoon laga kar shaheed kahlaney ke liye”.

In my recently published book “Excavation of Truth-Unsung Heroes of 1857 War of Independence” I have mentioned that “I have concentrated here, only on one region i.e. Patna Division as it existed in 1857..... What happened in other parts of India other than Patna Division and Azamgarh is given in brief and hope some one will take up the cause of such Martyrs and bring them to limelight for the future generation to know their past.” , which is not being done even now.

I quote hereunder an interview/ article published in “Times of India”, Lucknow Edition dated 27.04.2006 for you to see yourself as to why and how the real freedom fighters are being ignored:-

**Times of India, Lucknow Edition dated 27.04.2006**

***Allahabad: Dr. RK Mishra, curatorial associate (in charge of the manuscripts) Allahabad Museum, had managed to fish out photocopies of two important manuscripts from the Allahabad archives, a few years back with great difficulty. These two documents relate to the Urdu-Persian records regarding the Proclamation of the transfer of power from the East India company to the British Crown and another document that named the Bagis (rebels) of the 1857 uprising, along with Maulana Liyaqat Ali.***

***In an exclusive interview to TOI, he said that the original documents kept in the archives are in bad shape. Both these documents are post-1857 uprising. The document regarding the transfer of power to the British Crown has been documented under the detail, Basta No. 43, File No. 37, Allahabad. This document bears the officials stamp of that time.***

***The document detailing the list of the traitors is in old Persian language, said Mishra. He went to several Persian scholars, including some people in the Urdu-Persian department of Allahabad University. It was of little help. However, one person, managed to decipher the content. Other than the name of the file Bagi, the police records of that time also contained the names of those who had participated in the revolt against the East India Company's rule. It also has an ishtihar (advertisement/ proclamation) stating that Liyaqat Ali should be caught dead or alive. Yet another paper is about the police report against a young revolutionary of the uprising.***

***The museum has the clothes of Liyaqat Ali. If these documents are translated, then these too might be placed in the proposed Freedom struggle gallery, which would be opened to the public by next month. Articles of the last Moghul Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar is also with the museum. If some scholar helped the museum authorities translate the Urdu-Persian texts then the museum could pay some remuneration, said Dr. SK Sharma, director of Allahabad Museum.***

***Mishra felt that Allahabad Museum, one of the four national museums of the country, might ask the Allahabad archives to handover the originals of both these precious documents to the museum, where these might be restored and exhibited, in the Freedom Struggle gallery.***

On 27<sup>th</sup> April 2006 I was in Azamgarh hence I could lay my hand to this Lucknow edition of Times of India" and read the said article. On reaching back to Delhi I wrote to Dr. RK Mishra on 6.7.2006 requesting him to kindly provide me the copies of the documents referred by him in the newspaper at my cost. I also objected the use of word "Traitor" to those Martyrs which included Maulvi Liyaqat Ali. In reply Dr. Mishra wrote by his letter dated 19.07.2006 which is reproduced hereunder:-

**From:-  
Dr. R.K. Misra,  
Curatorial Associates  
Allahabad Museum  
Allahabad.**

***Dated 19/07/2006***

***Dear Sir,***

***I am in receipt of your letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006. You may please write to the Regional Archives Officer, Regional Archives Office, Mano Vigyan Shola Campus, Lowtter Road, Allahabad as all original records relating to the documents required by you are available with that office. I may add that the list contains the names of only those persons who were active in Allahabad along with Maulvi Liyaqat Ali at that time. As far the use of Traitor appearing in the interview report published in the Times of India Lucknow Edition. I may state that I had given the interview in Hindi.***

I wrote to the Regional Archives office with copy to Dr. R.K. Misra to help me to get the copies. No reply from either of them. Reminder also were not even acknowledged. I also enquired from Dr. R. K. Misra as what word he used which the reporter translated as “traitors”? But Dr. Misra did not reply to my quarry. One can understand in what situation he was to answer my quarry.

What a shame, we not only forgot the great deeds of our common men who sacrificed for the nation without any personal reason but for national cause. Even now after 150 years of 1857 what we are highlighting is the fight of some of the rulers who reluctantly joined the revolt because either they had personal grudge which they wanted to settle with British when they found that a ready made army was available out of the rebel sepoys or they were forced by the rebel sepoys to lead them and provide them with the equipments to fight.

Let us at least now remember the real freedom fighters and their followers out of common men who gave their lives for this great Nation Hindustan under the leaders such as Syed Ahmed Shaheed of Rai Breli, Syed Amir (in Peshwat) Maulvi Ahmedullah Madrasi of Oudh & Rohel

Khand, Maulvi Leyaqt Ali Khan of Allahabad, Maulvi Peer Ali Khan of village Mohammedpur Distt. Azamgarh leader of revolution in Patna Division, Mohammed Khan of Bijnore, Abdurrehman of Jhajjar, Hasan Ali of Dojana a former Governor of Gorakhpur in Oudh Nawab Rule, Walidad Khan of Malagarh, Ahmed Ali Khan of Farukhabad, Mehdi Hasan of Sultanpur, Fazle Azim of Rai Breli, Banda Hussain, Mehdi Hussain, Maulvi Sarfraz Ali of Gorakhpore, Maulvi Sikandar Shah of Faizabad, Ghaus Mohammed Khan of Sikandra Rao, Mohammed Hussain Khan of Gorakhpore, Maulvi Mohd. Naeem Khan of Village Mohammadpur Azamgarh, Rajab Ali of village Bamhur Azamgarh and Nahar Singh of Ballabgharh, Tula Ram of Rewari, Brigadier Jawala Prasad (hanged near Chausa Ghat) and General Bakt Khan, General Mehmood Khan, Khan Bahadur Khan of Bareilly and Tantia Tope, Maulvi Massihuzzaman and Babar Ali of Oudh, and those whose names are in the list referred by Dr. RK Misra and thousands rather lacs of people whose identity is buried in the Archives and district records mostly in U.P. & Bihar.

What we have done and are doing? We are sumptuously rewarding those loyal to Crown. Such people are enjoying the reap of Independence on the dead bodies and the soil, soaked with the blood of Martyrs even after the Independence. The Martyrs sacrificed but their future generation is suffering even today. Those who with no shame or embarrassment flaunted their loyalty to the beastly British and arrayed against their own motherland and its people and had sold the Motherland to British now claim nationalist status. These people have not suffered any stigma in public or in official dispensation rather they hogged encomiums and limelight for their "Unique Contributions" and we Indians take them on our heads as our leaders.

**A.K. Biswas has rightly said:-**

***"The Nation that substitutes its patriots with traitors that degenerates its heroes, and anoints slave owners, remain enslaved."***

November, 2007.

This paper was sent by me to Hameedia Girls Degree College Allahabad for the seminar organized by them. The references about Dr. R.K..Misra and his correspondence with me, and

the Bhargava family who were involved in getting the information about the hideout of Bhagat Singh to the British Collector and for said treachery how they were made one of the richest families of Allahabad, was deleted and then published in their Journal published in commemoration of the seminar held on 25<sup>th</sup>.and 26<sup>th</sup>.November,2007On my enquiry from the convener of the seminar as to why those portions were edited, She expressed, sorry but said that Dr. Misra was one of the invitees and Bhargavas are one of the prominent elite of Allahabad hence it was felt advisable to avoid any adverse reference to them.

Hindustan Times, New Delhi in its issue dated 12<sup>th</sup>. May 2008 published a write-up of Mr. Chetan Chauhan with the title, "Rs. 130 Cr. 'Wasted' on 1857 celebrations." The write-up says, 130 cr. spent without constructing a memorial for the martyrs or a directory. It also terms the expenditure as "National Tamasha". Mr. Shashi Bhushan a former Rajya Sabha Member says that , " In this whole drama families of thousands of martyrs have found no place."

My experience on visiting several seminars sponsored by ICHR shows that the entire effort has been misdirected and was motivated towards wrong direction. ICHR a Government of India department authorized and encouraged and even financed those writers who were willing to tow their line of thinking and not those who could sincerely research and bring out the true facts from the Archives. What ever has been written or spoken were far from being truth. The real Martyrs were not brought to the fore. Private individuals such as Amrish Misra did make a purposeful effort. However No Justice Has been done to the real Martyrs rather their sacrifices have further been covered.

September,2009.