



Centre for Promotion of
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Hum Sub

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A view of the Colorado State Parks, USA

In This Issue

1. From Editor's Desk
2. Amar Singh
3. Special Article
4. Why Meditation
5. Poem

Quotable Quotes

“God has no religion”.

Mahatma Gandhi

From Editor's Desk

This –third- issue of the Nesletter features articles relating to: (a) the role played by **Amar Singh** in the First Indian War of Independence (1857-58), (b) the interssting case of '**Ibrahim Masjid**' in Bihar, (c) an article titled '**Why Meditation**' and (d) as usual a beautiful **poem** at the end. I presume the readers would find them iformative as well as inspiring.

The Centre also launched its semi-annual online periodical '**The Journal of Centre for Promotion of Arts and Science**' in the month of February, 2025. An application for assigning the International Standard Serrial Number (ISSN) to the journal has also been made to the ISSN National Centre (National Science Library), India. This would enable easier accessability of the journal on the internet.

As I look forward to your suggestions for improving the Newsletter, I request you to contribute your own short essay, article or poem for the next issue of the Newsletter.

Sharat Kumar

Amar Singh

-Leader of the Guerilla Warfare in the first Indian War of Independence-



Capture Of Aarah from the British (August 1857)

Amar Singh was the younger brother of **Babu Kunwar Singh**. There was a good age difference between the two brothers. It is well known that Kunwar Singh joined the 1857 rebellion led by the native sepoys in the British Army in India even at the advanced age of eighty years.

Significantly, both Karl Marx (1818-83) and Frederich Engels (1820-95) covered this first national struggle of India against the British Rule in India. Their account is more vivid than the events of the period discussed in the several textbooks on Indian history. While writing for the New York Daily Tribune (July 1857), Karl Marx observed, 'It is the first time that..... Mussulmans and Hindoos renouncing their mutual antipathies, have combined against their common masters; those disturbances beginning

with the Hindoos, have actually, ended in placing on the throne of Delhi a Mohammedan Emperor'.

The discontentment among the sepoy's that began in Bengal Army soon spread to Meerut, and its reverberations were felt in Punjab, Bombay and Madras Presidencies. As Karl Marx mentions, the month of April was signalled by incendiary fires in several cantonments of the Bengal army at Allahabad, Agra. Umballah, (followed) by a mutiny in the 3rd regiment of light cavalry at Meerut, and by similar appearances of disaffection in the Madras and Bombay armies'. From Meerut, the sepoy's moved to Delhi at forty miles and declared Bahadur Shah Zafar as the Emperor of India.

The East India Company was on the defensive and took all necessary measures at their command. As reported by Marx, 'Punjab rebellion has been prevented by disbanding the native troops. In Oudh the English can only be set to keep Lucknow, the residency while everywhere else the native regiments have revolted, escaped with their ammunitionand joined the inhabitants who have taken up arms'.

Both Marx and Engels were, however, in doubt about the success of the of the revolt although their sympathies lay with the Indians. As Marx remarked, 'A motley crew of mutineering soldiers who have murdered their own officers, torn asunder their ties of discipline, and not succeeded in discovering a man whom to bestow the supreme command, are certainly the body least likely to organise a serious and protracted resistance'.

The East India company then had a native army of approximately 200,000 men officered by Englishmen and an English army of 40,000. Elaborating the composition of the Bengal Army, Marx remarks, 'The whole native Bengal army mustering about 80,000 men - composed of about 28,000 Rajputs, 23,000 Brahmins 13,000 Muhammadans, 5000 Hindoos of inferior castes and the rest Europeans - 30,000 have disappeared in consequence of desertion or dismissal from the ranks'.

The British Army, nevertheless, continued to have the upper hand due their control over larger artillery and generally a unified command. *Reinforcement was furthermore sent from England of another 35,000 European troops, which reached India in batches from September to December 1857.*

Although the nobility in India favoured the rebellion, they were a divided group. The more disgruntled among them came out openly in support of the native sepoys. Prominent amongst them were Nana Saheb, Jhansi ki Rani, Begum Hazrat Mahal and Kunwar Singh. Nana Saheb was angry with the British because of denial of pension to him on account of '**the Policy of Lapse**' as he was not the biological son of Peshwa Bajji Rao II.

Begum Hzarat Mahal allied with the sepoys due to annexation of Oudh by the East India Company; Rani ki Jhansi similarly joined the rebellious sepoys because of denial of the right to the throne by her adopted son on grounds of 'the Policy of Lapse' and Kunwar Singh aided the sepoys as he was annoyed by the ruling East India Company for reviewing his jaghirdari rights due to some debt owed to them.

The 'Policy of Lapse' was introduced during the tenure of Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General of India (1848-56). **He had annexed Punjab and Sind and had expanded the British Empire to Burma.** All these wars, however, seem to have impacted the finances of the East India Company that soon went into 'deficit'. Consequently, he resorted to all sorts of arbitrary measures to raise resources.

The Maharaja of Gwalior, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Maharaja of Kashmir and Rana of Nepal, on the other hand, remained allied to the East India Company. The revolt of 1857, at the same time, threw up some exceptional leaders. Kunwar Singh, among them, aided the rebellious sepoys and provided leadership to them at the Danapur cantonment, and occupied the district township of Araah in July 1857. The British Army, however, soon defeated him and reoccupied Araah in August 1857. Kunwar Singh then moved to the north and reached Lucknow in December 1857.

By September 1857, the British Army had overcome the resistance of the sepoys in Delhi and finally occupied the Red Fort with the use of heavy artillery fire. The larger number of surviving rebellious sepoys left the Fort and spread over in the countryside. Resistance to the British Army thus continued. Kunwar Singh later occupied Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh in March 1858. But he could not retain it for long and moved back to Bihar where he won yet another battle against the British forces near his home at Jagdishpur.

On the death of Kunwar Singh in April 1858, the leadership for resistance fell upon **Amar Singh** his younger brother. Amar Singh adopted guerilla tactics to engage the British and continued the resistance until October 1859. Because of his guerilla warfare tactics, Karl Marx highly praised him and saw a glimmer of hope in turning the tides against the East India Company. Amar Singh moved into the jungles of Shahabad and in the Tarai region of Nepal. He commanded quite a large force of cavalry and infantry. Perhaps due to his sizeable army, he was tracked down and was finally captured. Amar Singh died eventually in prison.

Special Article

Ibrahim Masjid

Sharat Kumar

The Communist Party in the erstwhile Soviet Union discouraged religion even in social life. On the formation of the Confederation of Independent States (CIS), however, a visitor noticed a young mother worshipping a Buddhist deity at her home. As this surprised him, he asked her on this transformation from 'atheism' to 'belief in religion'. The lady replied, 'I find it quite unthinkable to face life in the absence of some omniscient power overseeing us, especially so in times of distress'.

Perhaps, that is how the majority of people would opine. Different communities have, however, different modes and rituals of prayers. The Muslims, for instance, offer prayers to God ('namaz') five times a day, and they do it preferably collectively in their mosque (Masjid). Devout Muslims also go to different holy shrines (Dargahs) - which are graves of Muslim Sufi Saints – for prayers as Sufi-saints are considered very close to God.

The 'dargahs' in Bihar appear to outnumber the masjids. Often, both dargahs and masjid co-exist as 'namaz' ought to be offered in the masjid. Very recently, a masjid caught the notice of some young men because of its resemblance to the '**Babri Masjid**'. They posted it on the YouTube and since then it has been doing rounds on social media. This masjid is known to the local people as the '**Ibrahim Masjid**'. It is located in a forsaken place, on the borders of Gaya and Jahanabad districts of Bihar. This masjid may be seen in the picture below.



Ibrahim Lodi Masjid

Since the masjid is associated with the name of Ibrahim Lodi, it must have been built during the time when he was the ruler of the Delhi Sultanate. Since Ibrahim Lodi (1517 – 1526 CE) preceded Babur (1526 – 1530) as the ruler of Delhi and north India, the Ibrahim Masjid precedes the Babri Masjid. Given the resemblance between the two structures, it would be correct to say that the Babri Masjid was the replica of the Ibrahim Masjid and not vice versa.

As hardly any Muslim population resides today in the nearby vicinity, no prayers appear to have been offered for a long time and the masjid is in a state of sheer neglect. The nearest inhabited township is Ibrahimpur. The place is, however, surrounded by picturesque hills - famous for some of its ancient Buddhist caves. The serene waters of the river Phalgu also flows nearby (picture below).



Besides circulating the news of their discovery on the social media, these inquisitive young (Muslim) men approached the Muslim Wakf Board to come forward for the upkeep and restoration of the masjid. Quite happily, the Wakf Board has taken cognizance of the **Ibrahim Masjid**, and some restoration work has started.



Inner view of the Ibrahim Masjid

In this context, it may be worthwhile mentioning the three famous Masjids in Bihar, namely, (a) the *Sher Shah Suri Ki Masjid*, Patna, (b) the *Pather Masjid* in Patna City (built by the co-brother of Emperor Shahjahan who was also the Governor of Bihar) and (c) the *Masjid Mullah Mitan*, Patna (built during the time of Aurangzeb, which co-exists with the dargah of Mullah Mitan). The **Ibrahim Masjid**, in comparison, is the oldest of all these.

No less intriguing is the story of the masjid in the Nalanda district of Bihar. This may be listened to by going on the video link below.

https://youtu.be/8wkESg8i4tU?si=fU2QIGmfJ_QPhttL.

The historical monuments tell a lot about our past. India has a much richer historical heritage than say the USA, Canada or Australia whose history does not go beyond three hundred years.

Why Meditation?

Mrs. Usha Sinha



Meditation is the most meaningful activity in my life. It enables my life to function smoothly.

Meditation produces a healthy ego and enables people to cope better with the stresses of life.

The various demands placed in our life grind together and create inner stress, leading to some kind of physical or nervous breakdown. Meditation helps mitigate these tensions. Meditation gives mental peace and rest to the mind.

Meditation has shown significant gains in overcoming depression, neurotic behavior and social inadequacy.

Meditation develops concentration, so essential for success in every endeavor.



रिश्ते हैं तो जिंदगी है दोस्तों

रिश्ते हैं तो जिंदगी है दोस्तों
जिंदगी को भरपूर जीते जाइए
अपनों से रिश्ता मजबूत करिए ही करिए
अनजानों को भी अपना बनाईये
रिश्तों की गर्माहट महसूस करें
और जिंदगी को खुशनुमा बनाईये
अपनों की आवाज में मधुरता ढूँढ़िये
और जिंदगी का लुत्फ उठाईये
कुछ रिश्ते मुनाफा नहीं देते दोस्तों
पर अमीर हमें बना देता है जरूर
याद करिए फिल्म आनंद के किरदार को
राजेश खन्ना ने जिसे जीवंत किया
जानी वॉकर के पीठ पर
अनजान होकर भी धौल लगाना
एक खूबसूरत रिश्ते की शुरुआत कर गया
कितना सुकून, खुशी दे गया
भूले नहीं भूल सकते वो सुखद संदेश
रिश्तों को मजबूत बना गया
छोटी सी है जिंदगी हमारी
इसे भरपूर जीते जाइए
इसे भरपूर जीते जाइए।

Manoj Ranjan Sinha